



HANDBOOK OF Fragile States

Edited by
David Carment • Yiagadeesen Samy



ELGAR HANDBOOKS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

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Edited by

David Carment

*Professor of International Affairs, The Norman Paterson School of
International Affairs, Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada*

Yiagadeesen Samy

*Professor of International Affairs, The Norman Paterson School of
International Affairs, Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada*

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Contributors

Nesreen Nasser Alanbar is an Assistant Professor with the School of Public Global Affairs and Public Policy at the American University in Cairo. She has a Doctor of Public Health (DrPH) and a master's degree in emergency and Public Safety Management both from Drexel University, Philadelphia. Her research is focused on public health, human rights, and development issues.

Hamid E. Ali is an Associate Professor and Dean of the School of Economics, Administration and Public Policy (SEAPP) at Doha Institute for Graduate Studies (DI). He taught at American University in Cairo (AUC) from 2008 to 2021. He was Chair of the Department of Public Policy and Administration at AUC from 2013 to 2016. He is author of *Natural resources, inequality and conflict* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2021) with Lars-Erik Cederman; *Institutional reforms, governance, and services delivery in the Global South* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2021) with Shahjahan Bhuiyan; *Darfur's political economy: A quest for development* (Routledge, 2014); and co-author with Christos Kollias of *Defense spending, natural resources, and conflict* (Routledge, 2017). Ali is also the author and co-author of articles in scholarly journals.

Julian Bergmann is a senior researcher in the Inter- and Transnational Cooperation research programme at the German Development Institute / Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik (DIE) in Bonn. His main research interests include EU foreign policy, EU development policy, international conflict management and mediation. He has published widely on these topics, including in the *Journal of Common Market Studies*, *Journal of European Public Policy*, *Cooperation and Conflict*, and *European Security*. He is the author of *The European Union as an international mediator* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2020).

Rachael Calleja is a Research Fellow with the Center for Global Development (CGD) and a Fellow at The Norman Paterson School of International Affairs, Carleton University. Prior to joining CGD, she held research roles with the Overseas Development Institute and the Canadian International Development Platform. Rachael holds a PhD in International Affairs from Carleton University.

David Carment is a Professor of International Affairs at The Norman Paterson School of International Affairs, Carleton University. He is a series editor for Palgrave's *Canada and International Affairs*, editor of *Canadian Foreign Policy Journal*, and Fellow of the Canadian Global Affairs Institute. He is also the principal investigator for the Country Indicators for Foreign Policy project. His research focuses on Canadian foreign policy, mediation and negotiation, fragile states and diaspora politics. His most recent books focus on diaspora cooperation, corruption in Canada, branding Canadian foreign policy, and state fragility.

Karla Cisneros Rosado is a PhD candidate in international affairs, specializing in international economic policy, at The Norman Paterson School of International Affairs (NPSIA) at Carleton University. Karla obtained her master's degree in economics, specializing in financial economics, at Carleton University, and her Bachelor of Commerce with honours in economics at Saint Mary's University in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Karla is also a strategic

foresight analyst with the Director General of Research and Development Policy and Advice at Development Research and Development Canada (DRDC), an agency of the Department of National Defence. Prior to joining the Strategic Foresight and Risk Assessment team, Karla was a labour market analyst at the Directorate of Pay Policy and Development of the Department of National Defence. Before joining the public sector, Karla worked for several years in the financial industry and business consulting. In addition to her professional and academic work, Karla volunteers with multiple equity, diversity, and inclusion groups to promote fully inclusive and diverse spaces in Canada.

Helder da Costa is General Secretary of the g7+ Secretariat, an association of 20 fragile and post-conflict affected countries, ranging from the Pacific, Asia, Africa and the Caribbean, based in Dili, Timor-Leste. He served as Senior Advisor on Aid Effectiveness to the Ministry of Finance, Timor-Leste (2008–2014) and represented the g7+ in the Steering Committee of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation in 2012–2014. Da Costa earned his PhD in Trade Policy at the University of Adelaide, South Australia in 2001. His professional career in management and academic fields includes holding senior posts with both the Asia New Zealand Foundation and Volunteer Service Abroad (VSA) based in Wellington, New Zealand. He has also consulted for various international development agencies including UNDP, UN, ADB, World Bank, AusAID and ACIAR Australia. He has contributed a number of book chapters and articles in academic journals on development in fragile and post-conflict settings.

Tobias Debiel is Professor of International Relations and Development Policy at the University of Duisburg-Essen (UDE), Deputy Director of the Institute for Development and Peace (INEF) as well as Co-Director of the Käte Hamburger Kolleg / Centre for Global Cooperation Research. His research interests are: state fragility and violent conflict, post-conflict peacebuilding, global governance and international intervention, and development policy in war-torn societies. Selected publications include: “Pluralisation of authority in post-conflict peacebuilding: The re-assignment of responsibility in polycentric governance arrangements”, in Ulbert, Cornelia / Finkenbusch, Peter / Sondermann, Elena / Debiel, Tobias (eds.): *Moral agency and the politics of responsibility*. London/New York: Routledge, 2017, 135–150; (editor with Thomas Held and Ulrich Schneckener) *Peacebuilding in crisis: Rethinking paradigms and practices of transnational cooperation*. London/New York: Routledge, 2016.

Harsh Desai is a Policy Analyst in the Financing for Sustainable Development division of the OECD’s Development Co-operation Directorate, where he oversees the processing and publication of statistics on development cooperation and other resource flows. He also advises on a range of ODA-eligibility issues and other thematic work in the Directorate. Previously, Harsh was a Data and Policy Analyst for Conflict and Fragility at the OECD, where he contributed to the production of the States of Fragility report series.

Stephan Dombrowski is an MA graduate in International Relations and Development Policy at the University of Duisburg-Essen (UDE). His research interests are: post-conflict peacebuilding and resilience, state fragility and violent conflict, development policy in war-torn societies, international aid effectiveness, rural development, and climate change adaptation.

Mahmoud Elmakkawe is an independent policy researcher. His research interests revolve around governance reform in fragile contexts. Elmakkawe received his BA in Mass

Communication from Cairo University (2016) and his master's degree in Public Policy from the American University in Cairo (2021). He is currently working at the Policy and Public Outreach Department at the EU-affiliated European Training Foundation (ETF) in Turin, Italy.

Francesco Femia is Co-Founder and Research Director at the Council on Strategic Risks and the Center for Climate and Security, as well as Co-Founder and Senior Advisor at the International Military Council on Climate and Security. He has published extensively on the security implications of climate change, water stress, and natural resource mismanagement in Syria and North Africa, including in the seminal report *The Arab Spring and climate change*, and is a frequent public commentator on climate security issues. Mr Femia served as CEO of the Council on Strategic Risks from 2018 to 2020, and President of the Center for Climate and Security from 2011 to 2018. Before that, he was Program Director at the Connect US Fund from 2007 to 2011, where he led programs ranging from climate resilience to mass atrocity prevention and response. Mr Femia holds a master's degree from the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) where he focused on European geopolitics. He served as a mentor and strategist for the Obama Foundation Scholars program, and serves on the Advisory Board of the Nuclear Security Working Group.

Ines A. Ferreira is an assistant professor in the Development Economics Research Group (DERG) at the Department of Economics, University of Copenhagen. Her research looks at different aspects related to institutions and inequality, both from a cross-country perspective and with a particular focus on Mozambique. She has been part of a project developing an institutional diagnostic in Mozambique and has recently engaged in work on the effects of inequality on different development outcomes, including governance. Her previous research looked at the impact of foreign aid on economic development in fragile states, reviewing the existing concepts and measures of state fragility, and using an alternative measurement approach based on indices of state ineffectiveness and political violence. She holds a PhD in International Development from the University of East Anglia.

Natalie Fiertz is a research associate with the Stimson Center's Environmental Security programme assessing climate and ocean vulnerability in coastal cities. She was previously a programmes manager at the Fund for Peace, working on conflict early warning and early response systems, state fragility and resilience, and contextual risk assessment frameworks. She earned her master's in Public Policy from the University of Chicago and has lived and worked across five continents.

Mark Furness is a senior researcher in the Inter- and Transnational Cooperation research programme at the German Development Institute / Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik (DIE) in Bonn. His research and policy advisory work focuses on German and EU development policy, development cooperation with the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), aid effectiveness, fragile and conflict-affected countries, and crisis response and resilience. He has recently published research articles on policy coherence and the 2030 Agenda, the social contract and peacebuilding in Iraq and Libya, Germany's MENA development cooperation programme, and norm contestation in EU development policy.

Michaël Goujon is Associate Professor at the University of Clermont Auvergne (France) and researcher at the Centre d'Études et de Recherches sur le Développement (CERDI, <https://cerdi.uca.fr/>). He has also been a consultant for the World Bank, the Agence Française de

Développement, the Global Development Network, and was head of the Indicators Program at the FERDI Foundation, 2009–2018 (<https://ferdi.fr/>). He is an economist specializing in issues of integration of developing countries into the global economy, development financing, and vulnerabilities, specifically of small island economies. He publishes regularly in international journals, recently in the *Journal of Development Studies*, the *Journal of Economic Surveys*, the *Journal of African Economies*, and the *Island Studies Journal*.

Sonja Grimm is a political scientist with a strong background in international relations, European integration and comparative politics and has a keen interest in applied qualitative and quantitative methodology of social science inquiry. In her research, Sonja specializes in the field of international crisis management, democratization and state-building in developing, transitioning, fragile and post-conflict contexts. Sonja's research focuses on causes and consequences of violent conflict, on state fragility, and on the politics of international state-building and externally overseen transition to democracy. She is Adjunct Professor at the Department of Politics and Public Administration, University of Konstanz (Germany), and serves as the scientific lead of the Horizon Europe project "Embracing Change: Overcoming Blockages and Advancing Democracy in the European Neighbourhood".

Nate Haken is vice president for research and innovation at the Fund for Peace. He designs and strengthens conflict early warning/early response systems and contextual risk assessment frameworks for multilateral, government, private sector, and civil society clients and partners. He has worked in over 20 countries in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. Previously he was a newspaper reporter and a TV producer.

Brigitte Hugh is a Research Fellow at the Center for Climate and Security (CCS), an institute of the Council on Strategic Risks (CSR). Prior to joining CCS, she worked on a range of climate security topics at the Woodrow Wilson Center, the United Nations Foundation, and the International Water Management Institute. Ms Hugh holds an MS in Political Science with an emphasis in Anticipatory Intelligence, and a BA in Political Science from Utah State University. During her master's degree she was part of the inaugural cohort of the Center for Anticipatory Intelligence (CAI) at Utah State, which emphasizes the importance of cross-disciplinary knowledge and cooperation for anticipating and building resilience against future security risks.

Said Yaqub Ibrahimi is an adjunct professor in the Department of Political Science at Carleton University in Ottawa. His current research interests include international relations, international security, fragile states, political violence, and conflict analysis with a special focus on the Islamic world. His forthcoming book (University of Michigan Press) examines the relationship between state fragility in the Islamic world and the rise of violent Islamist organizations and their impact on international peace and security. Dr Ibrahimi's work has also appeared in *International Journal*, *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, *Terrorism and Political Violence*, *Journal of South Asian Development*, and elsewhere.

Seth D. Kaplan is a Professorial Lecturer in the Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) at Johns Hopkins University, Senior Adviser for the Institute for Integrated Transitions (IFIT), and consultant to organizations such as the World Bank, USAID, State Department, IRI, and OECD. He is the author of the US State Department's Political Transitions Analysis Framework (2020) and co-author of the United Nations–World

Bank flagship report *Pathways for peace: Inclusive approaches to preventing violent conflict* and USAID's Fragility Assessment Framework (2018). He was the lead author, coordinator, and managing editor of both an eight country comparative study for the United States Institute of Peace on social contract formation in fragile states and a 100-page flagship publication for IFIT articulating a new approach to regime transitions in post-conflict and post-authoritarian countries. Dr Kaplan is the author of two books on fragile states – *Fixing fragile states: A new paradigm for development* (Praeger Security International, 2008); and *Betrayed: Promoting inclusive development in fragile states* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013) – and one book on human rights and culture, *Human rights in thick and thin societies: Universality without uniformity* (Cambridge University Press, 2018).

Diana Koester focuses her work on gender and governance, particularly in fragile and conflict-affected settings. Her doctoral research on the emergence of inclusive governance in conflict-affected contexts (University of Oxford) was awarded the Political Studies Association Elizabeth Wiskemann Prize for the best doctoral dissertation in the field of (in) equality and social justice and the University of Oxford Winchester Prize for outstanding thesis on international relations, with particular reference to human rights and fundamental freedoms. She also holds an MPhil (Politics) from the University of Oxford and a BSc in International Relations and History from the London School of Economics. Next to her academic work, Diana has developed extensive policy research and guidance on gender, conflict and fragility and advised international organizations, governments and civil society on these challenges. Amongst other engagements, she has served as Senior Expert/Advisor with the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC), the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (IDPS), and the Ministry of Women and Human Rights Development of the Federal Government of Somalia.

Nicolas Lemay-Hébert is an Associate Professor at the Department of International Relations, Australian National University. Nicolas' research focuses on state-building and peace-building, local resistance to interventions, and the cartography of risk. His most recent books are *The law and practice of peacekeeping* (with R. Freedman and S. Wills; Cambridge University Press, 2021) and *Normalization in world politics* (with G. Visoka; University of Michigan Press, 2022).

Jonathan Marley is a policy analyst in Crises and Fragility at the OECD where he leads the OECD's States of Fragility report workstream and overseas associated research and analysis on fragile contexts. Previously, he worked as security sector reform advisor for The Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance (DCAF), leading their project in the Gambia. As an officer in the Irish Defence Forces he led research and programming on higher education, peacekeeping and defence cooperation policies, and served on operational tours with NATO, the UN and EU. A graduate of the London School of Economics & Political Science (PhD), Cambridge University (MPhil) and the National University of Ireland, Galway (BA), his research has broadly focused on the utility of peace instruments in fragile contexts with an emphasis on peacekeeping, security sector reform and the security–development nexus.

Monty G. Marshall is a macro-comparative researcher, theorist, and political consultant specializing in complex societal-systems analytics, examining the critical nexus among societal and systemic conflict, governance, and development dynamics with emphasis on the problem of political violence. He directs the Center for Systemic Peace (systemicpeace.org)

which produces data informatics on conflict, governance, and development for 167 countries, including the Polity5, Minorities at Risk, Major Episodes of Political Violence, State Fragility Index, Coups, Electoral Boycotts, and Executive and Party Structures public datasets. He was a subcontractor and senior consultant providing key data and analytics in support of the global conflict forecasting efforts of the US government's Political Instability Task Force for over twenty years (1998–2020). His publications include the book, *Third world war; the Peace and Conflict and Global Report series*; and a two-volume video book, titled *Managing complexity in modern societal-systems*. He holds degrees in political science from the Universities of Colorado, Maryland, and Iowa and has held positions at the University of South Florida, University of Maryland, and George Mason University.

Charles Martin-Shields is a Senior Researcher at the German Institute of Development and Sustainability (IDOS) in Bonn, Germany where he currently co-leads the German Government-funded “Social Cohesion in Displacement Contexts” project. His wider research agenda is focused on refugees, humanitarian response, and new technologies, and he has published in *The Journal of Refugee Studies*, *International Peacekeeping*, and *Policy and Internet* among other outlets. Along with his academic work, Dr Martin-Shields has served as a consultant with the World Bank, UNHCR, and US Institute of Peace on issues related to refugees, humanitarian response, and new technologies.

Habib ur Rehman Mayar has served as Deputy General Secretary at the g7+ Secretariat based in Dili, Timor-Leste since 2013, leading on policy and advocacy work. With 15 years of work experiences in peace-building, state-building and international cooperation, he has contributed to the policy discourse on engagement in fragile and conflict affected contexts. He represents the g7+ in various international forums including collaboration with bilateral and multilateral organizations. Prior to g7+, he served as head of the aid coordination unit in the Ministry of Finance of Afghanistan. He has authored several articles on the related areas of peacebuilding, statebuilding and aid effectiveness including a review of the book on *Aid paradoxes in Afghanistan: Building and undermining the state*. Habib Mayar holds a master's degree in business administration (MBA) from Baluchistan University of IT, Engineering and Management Sciences (BUIITEMS). Like many Afghans, he grew up in a refugee camp in Pakistan.

Mark McGillivray is an Honorary Professor at the Australian National University Poverty and Inequality Research Centre. His previous positions include Research Professor of International Development in Alfred Deakin Institute at Deakin University, Deputy Director of the United Nations World Institute for Development Economics Research, Chief Economist of the Australian Agency for International Development and Research Associate of the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative at the University of Oxford. Professor McGillivray is also an Inaugural Fellow of the Human Development and Capability Association and a Distinguished Alumnus of La Trobe University. He has worked as a consultant for the World Bank, UNDP, UK DfID, the OECD-DAC, the Swedish International Development Agency, NZ MFAT, UN ESCAP and the Center for Global Development.

Robert Muggah specializes in cities, security, climate and digital transformation. Trained as a political scientist, he is the co-founder of the Igarape Institute, an award-winning think and do tank based in Brazil, and principal of the SecDev Group, a forecasting and data science firm in Canada. Robert consults widely with national and subnational governments, global

technology and management consultancy companies and international organizations such as the UN and World Bank. He has conducted field research and evaluations in countries spanning the Americas, Africa, Europe and Asia. He is faculty or fellow at University of Princeton, Singularity University, University of British Columbia, the University of Oxford, the University of San Diego, the Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro and the Graduate Institute in Switzerland. He advises the World Economic Forum's Global Risk Report and is a multi-term member of several Global Future Councils. Robert is the author of eight books, including most recently *Terra incognita: 100 maps to survive the next 100 years* (Penguin/Random House, 2020), over one hundred peer-review articles, and delivered TED talks in 2015, 2017, 2019 and 2021. He earned his DPhil at the University of Oxford.

Zina Nimeh is an Associate Professor of Public Policy at UNU-MERIT and Maastricht University, with over two decades of professional and academic experience in the areas of public policy, social policy, public sector reform and governance. Dr Nimeh obtained her PhD in Public Policy and Policy Analysis from Maastricht University through a Marie Curie research grant. She holds a bachelor's degree in Finance from Xavier University in Ohio, and a master's degree in Labour and Human Resources from the Ohio State University. Her content area of expertise is on public policy, social protection policy and financing, social cohesion and governance. Regionally she has extensive expertise in the MENA region, as well as in the emerging markets contexts. Outside academia she has had managerial and consulting experience in the areas of human development, social policies and public sector reform with focus on employment, education and social exclusion. She has applied experience in policy development and implementation and continues to work as a consultant for UN organizations such as the ILO and UNICEF.

Babatunde F. Obamamoye is a sessional academic in the Department of International Relations at the Australian National University and previously a faculty member at the Obafemi Awolowo University. He holds a PhD in International Relations from the Australian National University. His research interest focuses on (African) peace interventions, decolonising interventions, critical theory and world order(s). Outputs from his previous research have appeared in scholarly journals such as *African Security Review*, *African Security*, *Alternatives*, *International Journal of Conflict and Violence* and *Third World Quarterly*.

Felix Piedade has been the Chief Operating Officer (COO) at the g7+ Secretariat since 2018. He is not only responsible for operational matters but also engages with the various stakeholders to promote the importance of maintaining peace and stability for sustainable development. In addition, he has also been a lecturer for students in master's degree programmes at the Institute of Business (IOB) since 2018. He completed his Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) from Flinders University in Adelaide, South Australia in 2018 and he holds a master's degree in Public Policy and Management from Monash University in Melbourne, Australia in 2003. Prior to his current profession, he had over 15 years of work experience with government institutions and various international organizations and five years of teaching experience as part-time lecturer at different tertiary institutions in Timor-Leste.

Sarah Rose was a policy fellow at the Center for Global Development when this chapter was written. Her research there focused on aid effectiveness and US development policy. Sarah is currently a senior advisor at the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Previously, she worked for the Millennium Challenge Corporation and the USAID

mission in Mozambique. She holds a Masters degree in Public Policy from Georgetown University.

Robert I. Rotberg, Founding Director of the Harvard Kennedy School's Program on Intrastate Conflict, President Emeritus of the World Peace Foundation, and Professor of Political Science and History at MIT, was Fulbright Distinguished Professor at Carleton University's Norman Paterson School of International Affairs, at CIGI and the University of Waterloo, and at the University of Sao Paulo. He is a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts & Sciences, and the author of a number of books, the latest of which is *Overcoming the oppressors: White and black in Southern Africa*.

Yiagadeesen Samy is a Professor of International Affairs and currently the Director of The Norman Paterson School of International Affairs (NPSIA) at Carleton University. His research interests intersect the broad areas of international and development economics and his current research focuses on domestic resource mobilization, fragile states, foreign aid and income inequality. His most recent books are *African economic development* (Routledge, 2018), co-authored with Arch Ritter and Steven Langdon, and *Exiting the fragility trap: Rethinking our approach to the world's most fragile states* (Ohio University Press, 2019), co-authored with David Carment. Professor Samy has published in various scholarly journals such as *Applied Economics*, *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, *Foreign Policy Analysis*, *Third World Quarterly*, *International Interactions*, *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, *Canadian Journal of Development Studies*, and *Conflict, Security & Development*.

Erin Sikorsky is Director of the Center for Climate and Security (CCS), and the International Military Council on Climate and Security (IMCCS). Previously, Erin served as Deputy Director of the Strategic Futures Group on the National Intelligence Council (NIC) in the US, where she co-authored the quadrennial Global Trends report and led the US intelligence community's environmental and climate security analysis. Ms Sikorsky is an adjunct professor at George Mason University, a visiting fellow at University of Pennsylvania's Perry World House, and serves on the advisory board of the Smith College Center for Environment, Ecological Design and Sustainability. She has published articles in a range of outlets, including *Survival*, *Environmental Affairs*, *The Strategist*, *Lawfare*, *War on the Rocks*, *The Hill*, *Just Security*, and *The Cipher Brief*. Ms Sikorsky earned a Master of International Affairs at Columbia University, and a BA in Government from Smith College.

Safiullah Teye is a non-resident member of the Alfred Deakin Institute at Deakin University in Australia. Safi completed his PhD at Deakin University, writing on Negotiating a Securitized Aid within the fragile state of Afghanistan between 2002 and 2018. Safi's academic research and Op-eds have been on Afghanistan and the region with some of the work published by *Asian Studies Review*, *Middle East Critique*, *Aljazeera Centre for Studies*, *The Conversation* and several others. Since early 2022, Safi has been on the International Advisory Board Member of the *Middle East Critique Journal*. Along with research, Safi has also worked as a Lecturer and Assistant Lecturer at the Australian Catholic University, University of Melbourne and Deakin University. Safi is currently working with the Australian Red Cross with the Strategy and Influence programme whilst also lecturing at the Australian Catholic University.

Emilia Vydelingum is a PhD student at The Norman Paterson School of International Affairs at Carleton University, Canada. She holds a Master of Environmental Sciences and a Master

of Arts in Immigration and Settlement Studies. Her research areas include the geopolitical and security impacts of climate change, natural resources, and environmental disasters. Her interests extend to conflict management, fragile states, and migration.

Laurent Wagner is a Senior Economist at the Foundation for Studies and Research on International Development (Ferdì) with experience in applied research and strategic policy advice for policymakers and international organizations. He is Head of Ferdì Development Indicators programme. He has also been a lead consultant for the United Nations, the Commonwealth Secretariat, the African Development Bank and the World Bank. He is experienced in theoretical and applied research on the multiple dimensions of vulnerability and their relevance for international policies, notably concessional finance access and allocation. He is also specialized on issues related to fragility, aid effectiveness and aid allocation with a focus on vulnerability, notably of small island states, and is the author of several publications in peer-reviewed academic journals.

1. Introduction to the *Handbook of Fragile States*

*David Carment and Yiagadeesen Samy*¹

This *Handbook* has three objectives: to examine the causes, costs and consequences of state fragility, to understand how theory and methods are applied in fragile states² contexts, and to examine how effective policies can be developed and applied to fragile states contexts.

THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS

This volume's contribution to theory can be understood in the context of moving the debate forward on what fragility is and what it is not (see in particular Chapters 2, 3, and 4). A key question authors seek to answer is how to solve the fragility puzzle with specific reference to capacity and legitimacy traps, methodological and analytical limitations and boundaries, and conceptual framing. A related challenge is estimating the costs of fragility. Research shows that the costs of fragility are quite high. These costs can be understood as a loss of growth; where violence is present, an even greater loss of annual growth is expected. There are also those costs imposed on neighboring states which can be greater than in the fragile state itself.

The idea of fragility as a contested concept is central to these debates. Similarly, the proper role of institutions and the symptomatic effects of violence and instability need to be properly understood. Capacity traps are those where countries have failed to improve state capacity to provide security and social services and that consequently have failed also to establish state legitimacy. Legitimacy traps occur in countries that have demonstrated a high capacity to provide security and services to the population but that suffer from shaky legitimacy due to expanding inequalities and authoritarian management. Countries that combine low income with poor economic policies and institutions are often deemed fragile.

Thus, an accepted argument is that fragility relates to a state's (in)ability to fulfill its basic functions, something that is also denoted as statehood. Resilience is often understood as the logical inverse of fragility though this is not entirely correct. If we take as a given that fragility is multivariate and multidimensional (see Chapter 6) then a unidimensional linear link between resilience and fragility takes into account only some of the dimensions that are pertinent to defining fragility. Indeed, as authors demonstrate in this volume, fragility is multidimensional, which can be understood as effective control over territory and peoples, the degree to which a state serves as a means to service the public through the social contract, and developing and sustaining the means to build a common framing of the rules which govern that contract.

In the abstract we will find that there are many interpretations in the extant literature that hold a similar perspective on the need for multidimensionality embedded in theory. In turn, this general acceptance has allowed those who build theory and those who develop policies to identify core priority areas such as overcoming extreme poverty, addressing democratic deficits, and preventing vulnerabilities to conflict from being exploited. The idea is to put the emphasis on structural conditions as the root cause of state fragility and state failure, notably social fragility and the self-serving external interventions of foreign powers.

State-building is a complex, unpredictable, and endogenous endeavor, affected significantly by local contexts and conditions. There is no standard formula. It progresses through mutually reinforcing interactions between the enhancement of state capacity to deliver security and services, and the improvement of state legitimacy. In this context, there is the need to examine fragility in a country more broadly and consider regional spillovers, while also promoting the coordination of initiatives at the local, regional, and international levels. In turn, more accountability is needed from donors to ensure long-term coordination. This includes providing technical assistance to recipient institutions and organizations so that they do not become overly dependent on foreign aid.

Thus, this volume contributes to a better understanding of fragility by showing that indeed there are theoretical underpinnings without which confusion between causes, symptoms, and outcomes can persist. In turn policy development and effectiveness is weakened.

DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES

As the development challenges facing fragile states became better understood, the World Bank Group's terminology has evolved over the years: from Low Income Countries Under Stress (LICUS) from 2006 to 2009, to the Fragile States List in 2010, to the Harmonized list of Fragile Situations from 2011 to 2015, and currently the List of Fragile and Conflict-Affected Situations. These changes reflect the need to move beyond low incomes and problems related to governance and weak institutions, to those of conflict and instability, and more importantly to recognize the various types of circumstances facing fragile states.

Similarly, the OECD (see Chapter 6), which has been compiling lists of countries considered fragile since 2008, has increasingly recognized the multidimensional nature of fragility. In a recent States of Fragility 2022 report, the OECD (2022) identified 60 fragile contexts (including 15 extremely fragile contexts) while the World Bank Group lists 39 countries in fragile and conflict-affected situations in fiscal year 2023, and thus a much smaller number than the OECD (2022). Despite these differences, there is a consensus that a group of countries labeled as fragile, including a few that have been trapped in fragility for decades, has been continually vulnerable over time despite receiving significant amounts of development assistance.

After a brief period of declining fragility at the turn of the century, fragile states have become more prominent as their precarious situation worsens in a Covid-19 world now beset by a war in Ukraine that is having serious impacts globally. In the last decade or so, we have seen an increase in armed conflicts and violence around the world. Recent data from the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) indicate an increase in organized violence of 46 percent in 2021 due to conflicts in Afghanistan, Ethiopia, and Yemen. The Covid-19 pandemic exacerbated fragile states' performance in several important ways by further weakening their capacity for response and prevention, and by delinking their economies from global financial, trade, and aid flows. Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, more than three-quarters of the world's extremely poor were already living in fragile and conflict-affected contexts. The global pandemic has also had the effect of causing millions of people living in fragile contexts to fall into extreme poverty.

Although poverty has declined in a few fragile states, many are not on track to meet the global target of eradicating poverty and it is expected that poverty will become increasingly concentrated in these fragile states by 2030 (see Chapter 10). Aid or official development

assistance (ODA) is the second largest source of external finance for fragile countries (OECD, 2020) after remittance flows (and often the first when examined country by country). Unlike other countries where investment flows are more predominant, fragile countries depend much more on external official financing and do not mobilize enough resources domestically to create a strong fiscal pact and build legitimacy. So, unlike other developing countries where poverty has declined significantly and the need for foreign aid has declined relative to other resource flows, fragile states continue to be characterized by the persistence of poverty and a high dependency on foreign aid. The needs for both humanitarian and development assistance are pressing and real in fragile contexts.³ Nowhere is this clearer than in the case of Afghanistan (see Chapters 18 and 20) – a country trapped in fragility – where net official development assistance as a percentage of that country's gross national income was more than 20 percent in recent years (World Development Indicators Database, World Bank) before the return of the Taliban. With its foreign assets frozen, and cuts in aid spending from major donors that are reluctant to recognize the legitimacy of the new regime, the country cannot even provide basic services to its population and is now in the middle of a severe economic and humanitarian crisis.

ODA to fragile countries has steadily increased in the past few years as both bilateral and multilateral agencies have reallocated aid away from stable to fragile countries. For example, Desai (2020) uses the list of fragile contexts from OECD States of Fragility 2020 report and reports that Development Assistance Committee (DAC) member countries gave more than US\$60 billion, or 63 percent of their net country allocable ODA to fragile contexts in 2018. If we start from the premise that development is a homegrown process that cannot be dictated from outside, can foreign aid be effective in fragile states where, by definition, governance is lacking? Can aid buy reforms and improve governance in fragile contexts or could it even cause unintended harm? Since the seminal contribution by Burnside and Dollar (2000) – building on the World Bank (1998) assessing aid report – and those of other macro aid effectiveness studies that showed that the impact of aid on growth was conditional on the quality of policies and institutions, the effectiveness of aid in fragile states has been questioned. McGillivray (2006) and McGillivray and Feeny (2008) found that aid to fragile states was volatile, with both aid darlings and aid orphans. This speaks to both the volatility and unpredictability of aid flows, which have been shown to reduce aid effectiveness (Bulir and Hamann, 2008).

McGillivray and Feeny (2008) argue that aid works in the sense that it is associated with growth in fragile states, even if, as one would expect, the impact of aid on growth is higher in non-fragile countries. McGillivray and Feeny (2008) also find that fragile states face more difficulties in absorbing amounts of aid received when compared to non-fragile countries and that there are diminishing returns to aid. The issue of absorptive capacity seems to be less of an issue in post-conflict settings (Collier and Hoeffler, 2004), suggesting that more aid can be allocated after the end of conflicts. However, such an approach would only work if there are good policies in place.

Another issue that has been examined with respect to aid effectiveness generally is that of donor proliferation and aid fragmentation, given the emergence of new actors – such as non-DAC donors, private philanthropic foundations, and global funds – in recent years, in addition to traditional bilateral and multilateral donors. For example, Kimura et al. (2012) find that aid concentration (proliferation) has a positive (negative) impact on economic growth while Han and Koenig-Archibugi (2015) uncover a U-shaped relationship between health aid donors and child survival. While these studies do not consider fragile states specifically, there

is no a priori reason to assume that donor proliferation and aid fragmentation would not be relevant in such contexts. There have also been ongoing debates in the literature about the choice of aid modalities (e.g. technical assistance, project vs. program or budget support, multi-donor trust funds), whether bilateral vs. multilateral aid should be prioritized, and how these choices impact aid effectiveness, with no clear consensus emerging.

Going back to macro aid effectiveness studies, while the Burnside and Dollar (2000) results have been found to be less robust than expected, the fact that progress in fragile states has been lacking when compared to the amounts of aid spent in them has raised serious doubts about the latter's effectiveness in fragile contexts. Beyond aid effectiveness studies, there has also been much focus on aid practices and good principles of aid delivery, whether through the 2005 Paris Declaration, the 2007 Principles for Good International Engagement in Fragile States and Situations, or the g7+ New Deal (see Chapter 22 in this volume) on Fragile States. On paper and in theory, these principles make sense for the most part; their applications, however, have been more difficult.

IS LEGITIMACY THE ANSWER?

First generation analysis of state fragility and failure tended to not put proper emphasis on the role of society, citizenry, and the state as interdependent political entities. A key element in our understanding of state fragility is therefore the social contract which puts citizens and the state into a principal-agent relationship.

In response to state repression, populations may disengage from formal institutions with a commensurate decline in compliance with the law. In essence, societal compliance decreases when state institutions lose legitimacy in the eyes of large segments of the population. The idea of realizing legitimate political orders can thus become more rhetorical window dressing than the means to economic development; governments routinely base their legitimacy on a variety of other grounds, invoking ideology and external threats. Without any meaningful enforcement mechanism or clear understanding of how such process-ordered measures of legitimacy lead to effective outcomes, improving governance can prove difficult.

Under these conditions, a core problem is that external interventions are unable to solve the problems of fragile states because policy prescriptions advocate for the implementation of institutions and procedures mirroring those of developed Western countries. The key point is that political development can be reversed or become stagnant when elite interests deliberately undermine economic and political inclusivity. While it may be tempting to assume that reversal and decay among fragile states is primarily a function of the discarding or ineffectiveness of institutional structures inherited from colonial powers, the real reason is elite incapacity and an unwillingness to reform (Carment and Samy, 2019).

In fragility analysis, the term under-governed spaces has similar meaning (Carment and Samy, 2019). In spaces that are under-governed, we expect both diminished symbolic and material engagement of disadvantaged groups in national institutional structures, the economy, and the polity. The most obvious form of withdrawal would be the failure of a constitutional order to properly protect the autonomy (territorially, economically, or politically) of minority groups with the result that they are underserved and disengaged from the national political scene. The prevalence of hybrid regime design among fragile states reflects this relationship between governed and under-governed spaces. Hybrid states (see Chapters 8 and 9) are those

that have not transitioned towards fuller liberalization or consolidated democracy and are stuck in a low-level equilibrium. Many of these states are not partway through a “transition.” Hybrid regimes are deliberately designed to “maintain the appearance of democracy without exposing themselves to the political risks that free competition entails” (Ottaway, 2003, p. 3). Marshall, in Chapter 8 in this volume argues that hybrid regimes reflect inherent qualities of instability or ineffectiveness and are especially vulnerable to the onset of new political instability events such as outbreaks of armed conflict, unexpected changes in leadership, or adverse regime changes. Such instability is caused by the absence of a “principled” commitment to the rules of democracy by elites and the public.

Writing about horizontal inequalities, Stewart and Brown (2009) note that the exclusion of certain groups from political and economic benefits can harm the legitimacy of the state (see Chapter 15 for an examination of this issue in the case of Palestinian refugees in Jordan). At the same time, later efforts to reform these inequalities via direct action can be stymied by that same lack of legitimacy. Other authors focusing on states that rely on foreign aid, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, have noted that these states depend more on international legitimacy than domestic sources, and are less likely to provide effective institutions and services as a result (e.g. Moss et al., 2006). A disproportionate dependence on international support may weaken elite legitimacy.

Afghanistan (see Chapters 18 and 20) provides a sobering example. With a price tag of over \$2 trillion for the United States alone, the intervention in Afghanistan turned out to be one of the costliest and most unsuccessful campaigns undertaken by Washington and its allies (Carment and Belo, 2021). In terms of achieving a safe exit from fragility let alone the achievement of SDG 16 targets, Afghanistan stands out as the most prominent of failures not just for the United States but for its allies as well. Donor impact on bringing equality, peace, and stability to the peoples of Afghanistan was limited. Donor priorities often stood in the way of progress, especially in regards to gender equality. Poorly planned and mismanaged projects led to widespread mistrust among Afghan civilians and many projects collapsed after foreign troops left an area. In 2018, the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) reported that stabilization efforts that had been central to military and foreign policy in Afghanistan had largely failed. Aid efforts were implicated in that report in that they appeared to be fueling corruption more than development goals (Carment et al., 2019).

Afghanistan remains a country trapped in fragility and is likely to remain among the worst performers in the foreseeable future. With a significant focus on security and terrorism, aid distortions skewed Afghanistan’s development such that the core ultimately did not have a legitimate governance over the periphery. There were numerous national programs meant to encourage economic development and community-based governance in rural Afghanistan, but most were unsuccessful in bridging the urban–periphery gap. As a consequence, Afghanistan was at best a hybrid system with a weak central government unable to enforce rules across the entire territory.

Deeply fragile states such as Afghanistan face internal legitimacy challenges. Due to “isomorphic mimicry” and “premature load bearing,” Pritchett et al. (2013) attempts to reinforce authority structures in trapped states through aid interventions will fail when the legitimacy of the regime in power is not taken into account. More than the “process” of institutional performance, legitimacy must also be about “outputs” such as improved service delivery and human development, and the creation of more space for civil society. Basically, states that are

trapped in fragility or fail to exit fragility permanently, fail to provide public goods to most of their populations, even if capacity improves.

There are implications for how aid and interventions can be targeted. Due to the importance of legitimacy, participation in systems of governance at the local, regional, and national levels, and effective leadership must be considered. Indigenous forms of political and economic organizations must be allowed to flourish. The various aspects of output legitimacy, starting with service delivery, should be examined. These include under-governed territories where group cohesion is low with respect to how minorities are treated, and making sure that unfair and inequitable distribution of resources is addressed. Donors must be aware of the possibility that aid, even if well-intentioned, can distort incentives and contribute to increasing fragility. Even if the evidence is mixed, there are concerns that aid may itself reduce the legitimacy of states by creating a disincentive for them to build effective taxation systems, and thus a proper fiscal pact between people and governments.

It is often understood that the two most prominent features of fragility are armed conflict and chronic poverty. However, legitimacy traps show that these are more often than not symptomatic of more fundamental problems in which a lack of capacity to provide for citizens and low legitimacy are the primary determinants of state fragility. In this context it is useful to consider how a combination of legitimacy and capacity traps generated negative outcomes for Syria in the leadup to the conflict that emerged there during the Arab Spring (see Chapter 17 on the Middle East and North Africa). Although droughts for the period 2007–2010 served as an accelerant to increasing fragility, more important causal factors related to unsustainable policies in the management of groundwater and agriculture. Decreased rainfall reduced the effectiveness of irrigation canals, leading to an over extraction of groundwater. The net result was a significant decline in agricultural production over that period leading to the movement of over 1 million people from rural areas to urban centers. This mass internal migration added strain to neglected regions already under considerable pressure from strong population growth and an influx of Iraqi refugees. Migration increased unemployment, rampant unrest, and corruption and inequality.

In sub-Saharan Africa (see Chapter 16) we can see how capacity and legitimacy traps are endemic. These traps are more frequently understood as some combination of weak governments, insufficient security and legal frameworks, ineffective administration, poor public services, high rates of conflicts, and extreme poverty. Such persistence not only affects state performance, it also hinders the effectiveness of aid within the region. A key aspect inherent in fragility persistence is the importance of informal institutions and the leadership that generates rents as de facto power holders. Here the relationship between formal and informal governance structures and whether or not they have a positive or negative impact on formal state-building is central. Formal and informal state-building are two distinct processes that can be in conflict with each other (see Chapter 9 by Debiel and Dombrowski in this volume).

Consider that for more than 20 years, Somalia has been without a state; it is therefore considered a “failed state.” International depictions of Somalia tend to oscillate somewhere between the two extremes of Hobbesian state of nature akin to the post-apocalyptic dystopian world of *Mad Max*, and a libertarian paradise. In 1995, when the UN mission left the country, there was no functioning central government. However, very quickly there began to form a haphazard patchwork of political orders. These were heavily but not exclusively reliant on traditional authority and customary norms such as tribal elders. The precise nature of the political and social order that was created would be shaped significantly by the actors that

happened to be there. Where warlords existed in the new post-state environment, they formed military-backed regimes. In other places, women's groups and local community elders banded together. The vast disparity between these two examples of political orders is more reliant on the multi-faceted local environments than on what "natural" state formation looks like. In some instances, informal state mechanisms are superior to formal state mechanisms because of how quickly they form and their ability to do this without direction from a central state, how in-tune and compatible they are with local conditions as well as local actors and powerbrokers, and how they can simply perform qualitatively better than formal mechanisms.

Another key factor exemplified in the social contract that upholds state legitimacy is social identity and as noted earlier potentially damaging horizontal inequalities (see Chapter 15) that emerge therein. Social identity (e.g. gender and ethnicity) can indirectly make households more or less vulnerable to poverty. These dynamics are exacerbated in fragile states such that conflict is more likely where there are significant political or economic inequalities. This is because groups typically mobilize where there is persistent and chronic targeted actions that render such identities more salient. Although vertical inequalities are more recognized, international policy-makers often overlook the importance of including horizontal inequalities in their analysis, in particular ethnic, and more recently the gender emphasis (see Chapter 11 by Koester in this volume). It is possible to therefore understand how poor state legitimacy, horizontal inequalities, and fragility go hand in hand, if for example, a food shortage produced extreme vulnerabilities amongst vulnerable groups or conversely certain groups were provided access or given special rights over resources.

THE RENTIER STATE AND THE FAILURE TO REFORM AS IMPEDIMENTS TO DEMOCRACY

As we note above, aid can be a contributor to a breakdown in state legitimacy. Relationships with donors can incentivize a rent management architecture and patronage system that help to consolidate a ruling regime's hold on power. Rentier state theory in particular examines the effect of non-tax revenue on recipient states. Rentierism is associated with state fragility because it discourages the development of effective capacity indicators, reduces efforts to build legitimacy, and allows states to lean heavily on authority measures to govern. Rentier state theory focuses on stability (provisional versus sustainable) and political legitimacy (positive versus negative) to explain why rentier regimes can produce provisional stability.

In this context, rentier research has almost exclusively focused on natural resource rents with less attention paid to non-tax revenues delivered to states from the international community. While non-tax revenues certainly can contribute to the strength and dominance of a ruling party, they can also give the state a high level of autonomy. In contrast, high levels of foreign aid can reduce elite needs for the development of alternative revenue streams in the form of productive industries. Aid dependence can thus prevent both the development of effective state capacity (erosion of the tax base) and legitimacy (limited investments in democratic institutions). Aid and natural resource rents may lead to the ruling elite postponing reforms.

In a deglobalized world caught in an economic slump and recovering from a pandemic where inequality is increasing across and within nations, broadly focused economic outcomes are now more important than ever. This is certainly the message that China brings to the developing world and explains, in part, why it has achieved great success among developing

countries. As Chapter 5 shows, even for the US, democracy itself has provided fertile ground from which inward-looking nationalist policies have grown. The rise of populist nationalism emerges where liberal democracies coexist alongside deep-rooted inequalities. The economic and political grievances of today whether real or perceived have been framed by leaders like Donald Trump as an affront to their dignity.

What are the implications for aid effectiveness? Pritchett et al. (2010, 2013) and Andrews et al. (2017) argue that fragile states adopt “isomorphic mimicry” to maintain international legitimacy despite structural dysfunctionality. Isomorphic mimicry allows trapped states to exist while creating the illusion of implementing effective developmental policies. In contrast to capability traps driven largely by donor expectations regarding institutional capacity and development, legitimacy traps conjure up ideas of limited societal consent and participation in systems of good governance and effective leadership.

COVID-19

If fragile states perform poorly on authority and legitimacy measures as demonstrated above, capacity, especially in regards to poverty, is also problematic. Before the Covid-19 outbreak in 2019, which was subsequently declared a global pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO) in March 2020, the situation faced by fragile states was already worrisome for a number of reasons. First, several studies and reports had indicated that the geography of poverty was changing in such a way that extreme poverty would become more concentrated in places characterized by fragility and conflict in the next few years (Gertz and Kharas, 2018; Foresight Africa, 2019).

Second, evidence gathered in the last few years (see for example, ODI, 2018) had shown that very few fragile states were on track to meet their SDGs such as hunger (SDG 2), universal access to sanitation (SDG 6), and secondary school completion (SDG 4). Finally, conflict and violence, inequalities, refugees and forced displacement as noted above – all of which are exacerbated by climate change and Covid-19 (and the Ukraine–Russia conflict) – have also been on the rise in fragile contexts in recent years.

As a result of the pandemic, most countries, whether fragile or not, were moving into a recession by 2020, and that trend was further worsened by the Ukraine–Russia war (Carment and Belo, 2022). Early estimates on the impact of Covid-19 from the World Bank indicated that global absolute poverty would rise by 40 to 60 million, causing it to go back to 2017 levels, and more pessimistic scenarios by Sumner et al. (2020) indicated an increase in poverty of 420 to 580 million people under a 20 percent contraction. According to data from the OECD’s States of Fragility platform, due to their relative isolation from the rest of the world, the number of cases and deaths in fragile contexts has remained relatively low when compared to other non-fragile developing contexts. For example, confirmed cases and confirmed deaths from Covid-19 in fragile contexts were respectively 8 percent and 7 percent of total cases and total deaths globally in 2020. However, many of these calculations masked deep seated problems in accurately reporting cases and accurately measuring fatality rates due to Covid-19. Therefore, efforts to reduce the risk of exposure have not necessarily prevented countries from weakening even further.

Consider the case of Lebanon, which made headlines as a result of a massive explosion of ammonium nitrate on August 4, 2020 at the port of Beirut that killed nearly 200 people,

causing billions in damages and leaving an estimated 300,000 people homeless. Lebanon was typically not among the top 40 fragile countries in the ranking of the Country Indicators for Foreign Policy (CIFP) project⁴ and was in fact in 53rd position recently.

However, even before Covid-19, its situation had deteriorated as a result of a dysfunctional government and poor economy. The explosion contributed to the collapse of the government despite measures to contain Covid-19 that included protocols for social distancing, reduced mobility and border controls, as well as restrictions on refugees such as curfews.⁵ Low oil and gas demand worldwide due to Covid-19 has delayed offshore oil and gas exploration, and Lebanon's economy continues to face high levels of debt and unemployment rates exacerbated by the pandemic. As a mostly service-oriented economy heavily dependent on tourism, Covid-19 has led to massive unemployment and a scarcity of foreign currency (which normally comes from tourism, foreign aid, and remittances). The country does not have a solid industrial base and depends heavily on imports for food and other basic necessities such as medicine and fuel that are paid from foreign exchange that has now become scarce. It did not help that Lebanon had been pegging its currency to the US dollar, which thus required ever increasing deposits of US dollars from private investors with the Central Bank to maintain its value.

Over the next several years, Covid-19's impact combined with the fallout from the Ukraine crisis will make it more likely that worst-case scenarios will be more easily realized for those countries emerging from sustained humanitarian emergencies. For states trapped in fragility as well as those in the middle tier beyond the top 20 fragile states, long-term recovery depends on developing vaccines, containing the virus, and stopping re-infections. Indirect impacts include lower demand for commodity exports and reduced mobility for aid programming in urban centers. Covid-19 can only intensify economic crises and increase food shortages, especially in cases where countries lack resiliency and coping mechanisms. Strained health systems resulting from a shortage of medicines as well as doctors and medical professionals will weaken response even further.

For example, the Global Health Security Index score for South Sudan was 21.7 in 2019. This gave South Sudan an extremely low ranking of 180 out of 195 countries. Notably, South Sudan scored lowest within the category of having a sufficient and robust health system compared to the other categories that were analyzed. Fifty-six percent of people did not have access to primary healthcare services and over half of the health facilities in the country were not operational.⁶

In many fragile states, healthcare systems have a very limited capacity to provide adequate care for individuals who are infected. Many fragile states have few medical personnel per capita, weak or nonexistent infrastructure, long-term chronic underfunding, and limited numbers of hospital beds and ventilators. These structural issues limit the ability of fragile states to deal with the spread of Covid-19 and increase the mortality rates for their citizens who are infected. In several trapped states such as Afghanistan, Yemen, and Syria, longstanding violent conflict has directly destroyed hospitals, caused medical personnel to flee the country, and generally further weakened healthcare capacity (often funded by, and dependent on, foreign aid) in these states.

Fragile states also lack the capacity to implement containment and contact-tracing measures. For example, testing facilities and equipment are, in general, virtually nonexistent in many fragile states. In 2020, an average of only 685 Covid-19 tests per million people had been conducted across all African states. In contrast, at that point in time, European countries

had conducted just under 23,000 tests per million people. The most fragile state, Chad, was specifically noted as not having enough testing kits and was also experiencing staff shortages after many of those conducting tests fell ill. Instead of testing, aggressive and economically damaging shutdown policies were one of the only recourses for some states seeking to limit the spread of Covid-19.

The UN's Framework for the Immediate Socio-Economic Response to the Covid-19 Crisis warned, "The Covid-19 pandemic is far more than a health crisis: it is affecting societies and economies at their core. While the impact of the pandemic will vary from country to country, it will most likely increase poverty and inequalities at a global scale" (United Nations, 2020, p. 3). Another direct example of Covid-19's economic impact are mass job losses. These job losses will continue to impact the citizens of fragile states, with the International Labour Organization estimating that "1.6 billion workers in the informal economy – that is nearly half of the global workforce – stand in immediate danger of having their livelihoods destroyed."⁷ Given the relatively larger importance of informal economic sectors in fragile states, these job losses are likely to be felt even more strongly. Additionally, women often make up a greater proportion of the workforce in certain informal sectors and are likely to be significantly impacted.

The social impacts of Covid-19 have been troubling and widespread. Domestic violence is widely reported to have risen significantly globally, and it is believed that this trend has increased as the fallout of the Ukraine crisis takes hold. For example, several harrowing reports of domestic violence have emerged from the Al-Bureij refugee camp, in the Gaza Strip. Education systems globally have also been seriously disrupted by shutdowns, negatively impacting children and youth. In the most fragile education systems, the interruption of the school year is expected to have a disproportionately negative impact on the most vulnerable pupils. The most vulnerable students are impacted by conditions at home, such as lacking adequate internet, or a safe workspace, which negatively impacts their ability to continue learning remotely. In terms of the political impacts of Covid-19, the effect on fragile states varies. If governments handle the crisis poorly, and even more importantly if their policies are perceived poorly enough as a result of lack of trust in the governing regime, Covid-19 may further damage authority and legitimacy in the long run, increasing their fragility.

Whether longer term political changes occur with Covid-19 as a primary cause is uncertain at this stage. Some militant groups, such as Al-Shabaab, have attempted to use the pandemic to their benefit. It is clear that armed groups may take advantage of the uncertain environment created by the pandemic and as the case of Lebanon discussed earlier shows, Covid-19 may itself cause civil unrest as socioeconomic conditions in fragile states deteriorate further. In contrast, some limited and emergent evidence suggests that the pandemic might have contributed to a successful restart of stalled ceasefire negotiations in Afghanistan before the country eventually fell to the Taliban. However, in other areas of conflict, such as Syria, conflict has not slowed perceptibly at all, even during the early and intense stage of the pandemic. The concern, however, is that the longer the pandemic prevents a return to normalcy, the more difficult it will be to maintain the flow of humanitarian assistance and the momentum to continue efforts towards mediation and peace operations in conflict-affected regions. Whether Covid-19 will ultimately worsen current conflict situations or not remains uncertain at this point.

For the aid community, there are tough choices ahead looking to the next shock – health related or not. Beyond supporting measures to prevent the spread of the virus, donors will need

to consider the expected impact their policies, projects, and programs will have on local efforts to function despite the presence of the virus. A key question to ask is “Does the absence of a project contribute to increasing conflict and fragility risk?”

In answering this question donors need to think about how they plan to engage fragile states where the risks to aid workers are significant and vulnerable populations even more so. Will donors work “in, on, or around” Covid-19 like situations? By deciding to work “in” a Covid-19 situation, projects and planning should take into account an environment in which a pandemic is likely or current with procedures in place to ensure successful project implementation and reduce exposure to risk for those people involved in its completion as well as beneficiaries and stakeholders. By deciding to work “on” a pandemic, projects and funds should have very specific goals of reducing the spread and impact of the pandemic among the affected population whether as a positive externality or an impact specifically tailored to meet the needs of the affected population. Working “around” a pandemic means putting in place procedures to reduce any negative impacts the pandemic might have on the success of donor projects by avoiding those activities, populations, and stakeholders directly affected. These choices are obviously not mutually exclusive, and their successful application will be determined in large part by the capacities, needs, and interests of the local populations.

THE WAR IN UKRAINE

Sanctions on Russia are having a deleterious ripple effect on all parts of the post-Soviet region wherever diaspora sending nations benefit from a robust Russian economy. It is well known that sanctions impact many ordinary people in post-Soviet republics that rely on Russia’s economic wellbeing. With economic decline, Central Asian republics such as Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan, which depend on remittances from Russia, are experiencing a sharp deterioration in their gross domestic product. For example, some 3 million guest workers entered Russia in 2021 from these Central Asian republics. Remittances constitute some 30 percent of the gross domestic product of Tajikistan, 28 percent for the Kyrgyz Republic, and almost 12 percent for Uzbekistan. The fall of the ruble against the dollar had an immediate effect on the value of remittances being sent by workers to their home nations. Extreme reductions in these flows will have a catastrophic impact on Central Asia, generating additional political instability in an already fragile part of the world. Without gainful employment, Russia’s guest workers will return to their homelands placing a further burden on their local economies.

The war has also inevitably raised the price of agricultural products and energy globally. For example, Russia is the world’s third largest wheat producer and is among the top three oil producers in the world. Ukraine is also a major producer of grains and cereals, and a major exporter of products such as sunflower oil, maize, and wheat. Comprehensive sanctions have disrupted Moscow’s ability to export essential commodities such as wheat, oil, gas, and aluminum as well. Prices of wheat and corn have risen to their highest levels in over a decade. Concurrently, the severing of energy deals between Western companies and Russian energy producers and the removal of major Russian institutions from the SWIFT payment system have raised the prospects of fuel shortages in both the short- and long-run. Other commodity exporters not directly affected by the conflict but eager to reap windfalls that will be generated by constrained supply are looking to renegotiate their contracts, withholding exports as

a bargaining chip. Collectively, these decisions have placed an even greater constraint on the world's food and energy supply. Ultimately, developing and politically fragile states that are generally net food importers are among those most affected.

Since the end of the Cold War, the conventional wisdom driving foreign policies and the aid agenda was that strong economic relations and interdependence align strongly with peace. The West's response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine so far shows that, as the cost of engagement in conventional military operations increases, the economic domain becomes increasingly important for the exercise of power and overall interaction between states. The preference for economic warfare challenges prevailing beliefs about why states go to war and how they fight wars. But as we see in the current crisis, economic actions, just short of formal war declarations, can have broad and debilitating global effects far beyond those that are directly involved.

THE CHAPTERS

In a thorough review of the extant literature Sonja Grimm's Chapter 2 examines the root causes of state fragility. Grimm considers the baseline concept of a functioning and stable "state," and fragility at the sub-state level creating "situations of fragility," as well as the importance of specific societal and sub-state contexts. She concludes by showing that it is necessary to understand, analyze, and explain fragility in reference to existing well-functioning states.

Chapter 3, "Transforming conception(s) of state fragility and new containment interventions" by Nicolas Lemay-Hébert and Babatunde Obamamoye walks the reader through the discourse on state fragility and its evolution in relation to how the concept has influenced and impacted donors' policies towards fragile states. Their chapter focuses on the shift in the conceptualization of state fragility from purely capacity deficit to risk mitigation, and how this has given rise to new containment interventions in fragile states. The chapter draws on evidence from interventions in the West African Sahel to support their argument. The chapter concludes with insights on fragile states policies as a form of containment serving as the major instrument through which the developed world protects itself.

Chapter 4, titled "Current conceptualizations and measurements of state fragility: recent developments and remaining limits" by Ines Ferreira takes a critical view of fragility measures, specifically universally applied quantitatively derived indices. This chapter is not only an important stock taking, but it also provides insights on the methodological limitations underlying such single rank indices and the policies derived from them by highlighting the move towards multidimensionality, as well as the limits that remain in terms of the data used, and the transparency of the indicators chosen.

Chapter 5, "The United States is vulnerable: a flashing red light in the Fragile States Index" by Nate Haken and Natalie Fiertz takes up an important question in regards to fragility as a conceptually limited framing. The authors make a compelling case for a recasting of fragility by considering how a country's wealth and power can mask measurable long-term worsening in key cohesion indicators, and a rise in retrenchment populism and scapegoating. This chapter considers how tools like the Fragile States Index can be improved to diagnose fragility and resilience, and considers implications of precarity for countries such as the United States whose destabilization would have cascading effects across the entire world.

In Chapter 6, Harsh Desai and Jonathan Marley walk the reader through the argument underpinning the need for a multidimensional approach to measuring state fragility. The authors

draw on their experience with the OECD Fragility Index to illustrate the rationale behind and the importance of a multidimensional approach to measuring fragility. Fragility is a multidimensional phenomenon that evades simple or straightforward measurement. Nevertheless, a number of assessments, measurements, and indices have long been used to capture this multidimensionality to inform evidence-based policy and practice in fragile states.⁸ These approaches involve disaggregating fragility into its component parts – with different points of emphasis on the state, society, or system – and measuring countries’ performance along these parts to help better define vulnerabilities and entry points for interventions.

Chapter 7 on “Strategic approaches in fragile societies: targeting drivers,” by Seth Kaplan digs deep into questions regarding drivers of fragility. Kaplan looks at two key drivers, namely social cohesion and institutionalization, and argues that together these determine the capacity of a population to cooperate and more importantly to direct this cooperation toward national-level challenges. When they are both lacking, a population has few mechanisms to encourage cooperation, yielding an inherently unstable – fragile – sociopolitical dynamic.

In Chapter 8, Monty Marshall examines the importance of “hybridization,” which means mixing autocratic and democratic institutions. Hybridity is an important facet of fragile states analysis. Drawing on over three decades of research, Marshall examines what is meant by political authority. His study discusses the Polity-related research findings of the “Gurr School,” the US Government’s Political Instability Task Force (PITF), and Center for Systemic Peace, to summarize the transient and transitional effects of “hybrid authority systems” and, especially, factionalism on political stability and sustainability in complex societal systems. Marshall details his systemic “political process model” informed by the PITF “forecasting” initiative to map general system dynamics of political instability. The ability to anticipate, or forecast, political instability presumes a common, formal structure that conditions and channels systemic political behaviors in predictable ways. As such, Marshall demonstrates the value of systematic coding and evaluation for the purposes of improving policy responses to fragile states.

In the next and closely related chapter titled “Hybrid political orders in fragile contexts,” Tobias Debiel and Stephan Dombrowski frame hybridity as hybrid political orders (HPOs). By drawing on the example of Somaliland, the authors identify four decisive factors for resilient HPOs: the establishment of trust and respective interaction beyond the specific clan structures, the forming of dominant and inclusive political coalitions, the support of formal state structures, and Shared Mental Models (SMM). According to the authors, these prerequisites did not obtain in Afghanistan. When present, HPOs can contribute to the successful transition of violence-prone societies. Their inherent restrictions, however, become evident in the process of state formation that requires rule standardization rather than the plurality of norms and institutions.

In Chapter 10, “Implications of fragility for growth, poverty, and inequality,” Karla Cisneros Rosado and Yiagadeesen Samy critically evaluate the empirical evidence to determine which fragile states are likely to achieve some degree of success in overcoming low growth, achieving poverty reduction, and decreasing inequality. The authors note that fragile states have been deeply affected by the pandemic and more recently the war in Ukraine. Absolute poverty increased in fragile states in 2020 and it is concentrated in a few countries such as Nigeria (15 percent), the Democratic Republic of Congo (11.90 percent), Tanzania (5.38 percent), Ethiopia (4.25 percent) and Madagascar (4.11 percent). Their study shows that poverty will continue to be concentrated in fragile states. By 2030 large portions of the

global population living in extreme poverty will be concentrated in Nigeria, the Democratic Republic of Congo, at 18.1 percent and 11.7 percent respectively, as well as Tanzania (4.4 percent), Madagascar (4.3 percent), Venezuela (3.9 percent), Angola (3.8 percent), Yemen (3.7 percent), and Afghanistan (3.3 percent). The chapter also examines the relationship between growth, poverty, and inequality in fragile states.

In Chapter 11, “Just ‘add women and stir’? Bringing gender into fragility debates,” Diana Koester argues that research on the relationship between gender and fragility is underemphasized in the literature. Koester argues that considering gender not only adds individual issues to the analysis but it also helps bridge the public–private divide inherent in common perspectives on fragility. Gender analysis improves our understanding of the nature of fragility risks as both threats and opportunities. Koester makes a strong argument pointing to the limitations inherent in the state-centered paradigm commonly at the heart of fragility debates. By contributing to a more comprehensive perspective on fragility, Koester’s chapter identifies a greater diversity of entry points for practical efforts to address fragility and gender inequality.

Charles Martin-Shields’ chapter on “The relationship between state fragility and refugees” shows how refugee movements and state fragility are interlinked. Martin-Shields uses quantitative measures to show that a substantial number of people decide to move between states characterized by low capacity and not just in response to conflict and violence. This chapter comes at a crucial time when international efforts like the Global Compacts are being implemented. To fully realize the policy and research opportunities that come with understanding the relationship between state fragility and forced displacement, processes like the Global Compact on Refugees will need rigorous data analysis. This chapter provides a clear path forward for both research and policy development.

Chapter 13, “Climate change and fragility: improving early warning and climate-proofing development and conflict interventions,” by Erin Sikorsky, Francesco Femia, and Brigitte Hugh shows how climate change and fragility are related. A number of factors can be identified, including climate pressures on land, food, and water and energy systems, and states’ abilities to govern and manage these systems. In addition to assessing causal effects and impacts, the authors provide solutions consistent with the Responsibility to Prepare and Prevent (R2P2) framework: improved early warning capabilities and “climate-proofed” development and conflict interventions.

In Chapter 14, Robert Muggah revisits the nascent concept of urban fragility and its evolution in academic and policy communities. The author applies state-level concepts of authority, capacity, and legitimacy to cities, and finds that most cities around the world exhibit varying dimensions and degrees of fragility that change over time. Muggah argues that a quantitative evaluation of the risks of fragility in cities, as opposed to nation states, may offer a better avenue to address fragility and can help inform strategies to strengthen urban resilience. Chapter 15 by Zina Nimeh considers the case of Palestinian refugees in Jordan to discuss horizontal inequality as a contributory element of fragility. Horizontal inequality is operationalized by examining wellbeing, which is in turn conceptualized multidimensionally. The chapter finds that there are inequalities and variations among Palestinian refugee groups. Such unequal outcomes in terms of wellbeing, access to basic services, and resources and employment, reinforce prejudice, discrimination, and social exclusion, and ultimately exacerbate fragility. A key message of the chapter is to focus on equality and social cohesion when thinking about policies and programs for human development and state-building.

Robert Rotberg's chapter on "The African fragility problem" argues that most African countries are weak and lacking in good governance in that they do not provide enough of high quality essential political goods to their peoples. The author explores a number of these political goods, namely security, safety, rule of law, transparency, political participation, respect for human rights, and human development, to illustrate how they are lacking across most African countries. After discussing the challenges that African countries faced due to Covid-19 and the poor medical situation across the continent, the chapter concludes that there is a need to focus on responsible leadership – through both external and internal efforts – to reduce the spread of fragility.

Chapter 17 by Hamid Ali, Mahmoud Elmakawe, and Nesreen Nasser Alanbar focuses on the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region from 2006 to 2020 and examines the dynamic interplay between state fragility and sustainable development. The authors conduct an empirical analysis of the impact of fragility – which consists of social, economic, and political indices from the Fragile States Index – on measures of sustainable development that include GDP growth, the women business and law index, and health expenditure as dependent variables. The chapter finds that factors such as group grievances and military expenditures have significantly affected GDP and spending on social services, and that women were particularly impacted by the forces of repression, ultimately increasing the region's fragility. Perhaps surprisingly, the authors argue that fragility in the MENA region may have more to do with the social aspects of services instead of the political aspects of democratic governance, which policymakers should keep in mind when designing interventions.

Chapter 18 by Said Yaqub Ibrahim examines the causes and conditions that led to the fall of Afghanistan to the Taliban. Drawing on both empirical evidence and qualitative analysis, the chapter uses the three variables of legitimacy, authority, and capacity to examine the causes and consequences of state collapse in Afghanistan from 2001 to 2021. The chapter concludes that lack of legitimacy was the most significant factor that led to the destruction of institutions and the sense of statehood. Such a result, in the words of the author, "challenges external state-building and its neo-institutional philosophy" that failed to achieve a comprehensive political settlement, thus weakening the influence of the US in the region while opening the door for regional players to increase theirs.

In Chapter 19, Michaël Goujon and Laurent Wagner examine the fragility of Small Island Developing States (SIDS), that tend to be generally characterized by good levels of governance and an absence of large-scale conflict. Caribbean SIDS, for example, are characterized by a high level of criminality due to drug trafficking, and fragility in SIDS is disconnected from usual drivers of conflict such as income and human development. The authors argue that the fragility of SIDS should be examined through other specific vulnerabilities that affect sustainable development, namely structural economic vulnerability (such as smallness, remoteness, and dependency on trade, remittances, or aid), vulnerability to climate change (such as sea level rise), and situational factors (such as crime and vulnerability to pandemics). SIDS will only achieve sustainable development if they can become more resilient to environmental and economic shocks and this includes a combination of institutional reforms and development plans to reduce general vulnerability.

In the next chapter on "Securitization, divergent agendas and the sectoral allocation of development aid within Afghanistan," Mark McGillivray and Safiullah Taye focus on the official development assistance that Germany – as the second largest donor – has provided to Afghanistan since 2002. Germany's approach was deemed interesting not just because of the

volume of support that it provided but also because of its participatory approach with a range of stakeholders. The authors carefully document how donors' economic and political motives diverged from those of the Afghan government, making it difficult to agree about which sectors aid should be allocated to. Specifically, the securitization of aid shows the challenges that donors face in fragile states in trying to find the right balance between security and development, especially when security objectives are over-emphasized.

In Chapter 21, David Carment and Emilia Vydelingum examine how diaspora can shape exits from fragility using host–homeland relations between Canada and Bangladesh as their case study. The authors draw on concepts related to positionality (the extent to which the diaspora associates itself with, and has the capacity to influence, host state policy) and alignment (the extent to which diaspora and host state interests converge) to understand diaspora strategies in host states and then examine the conditions under which diaspora can influence policy reform in home states. The chapter then analyzes six linkages or proxies (two for each of authority, legitimacy, and capacity) that shape Canada–Bangladesh diaspora relations. It finds that the Canadian Bangladeshi diaspora does not rank high on positionality but enjoys reasonable alignment, and concludes that it supported Bangladesh's exit from fragility, even if that is not the only factor.

The next chapter by Habib ur Rehman Mayar, Helder da Costa, and Felix Piedade examines the factors that led to the creation of the g7+, its agenda and impact, and the challenges that it has faced. As an intergovernmental organization, first established as an informal group of conflict-affected countries in 2010, the g7+ was formed to allow recipient countries to own their trajectories and be more vocal about the design of peacekeeping, humanitarian, and peacebuilding operations. Bringing together g7+ members and donors, the forum of the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (IDPS) developed a new set of principles for engaging in fragile situations, known as the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States. These principles were endorsed in 2011 at the 4th High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness. Despite limited progress in implementing the principles, the authors suggest that the New Deal contains useful tools to reform peacebuilding and state-building policies and that its success will depend on the commitment and support of IDPS members, namely g7+ and OECD donors.

Chapter 23 by Julian Bergmann and Mark Furness discusses the EU's approach to fragile states and argues that its evolution has been shaped by contestation over norms, actors, and practices in EU foreign and development policy. Specifically, there is a contestation between solidarity with people living in fragile countries and the protection of European interests, values, and citizens. This is illustrated through an examination of the EU's engagement in Afghanistan, Libya, and Mali, which has yielded mixed results and incoherence as a result of diverging security interests of EU member states. As a result, the EU's contribution to conflict prevention and peacebuilding has become weaker despite the successful development of a comprehensive strategic framework for addressing state fragility.

The final chapter by Rachael Calleja and Sarah Rose delves into aid coordination and analyzes the "country platform" coordination model as a potential solution to coordination challenges in fragile states. Country platforms are government-led coordinating bodies that bring donors and other partners (development partners, civil society, and the private sector) together to coordinate development and peacebuilding or security efforts. The chapter discusses six principles for effective country platforms, the main tradeoffs and risks that the country platforms face in fragile states, and how to manage these challenges. The authors argue that there

is still room to better coordinate development efforts and that more investments in critical aid architecture systems are needed by donors.

NOTES

1. We would like to thank the Faculty of Public Affairs at Carleton University, and the editors and production team at Edward Elgar Publishing, for supporting this project.
2. Unless otherwise indicated, we use the terms “fragile states” and “fragile and conflict-affected states (FCAS)” interchangeably in this volume, even if not all fragile states are affected by conflict while most (though not all) conflict-affected states are fragile almost by definition.
3. The rise in the frequency and severity of natural disasters due to climate change is already having a disproportionate impact in fragile states; a case in point are the recent floods in Pakistan. More frequent and severe natural disasters are partly responsible for the steady increase in humanitarian assistance per capita and as a percentage of total aid (Milante and Lilja, 2022).
4. See <https://www.carleton.ca/cifp>.
5. See <https://carleton.ca/cifp/2020/fragile-states-and-covid19-lebanon-project/>.
6. See <https://carleton.ca/cifp/2020/fragile-states-and-covid19-south-sudan-project/>.
7. See https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_743036/lang-en/index.htm.
8. See for example <https://www.carleton.ca/cifp>.

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2. Investigating the root causes of fragility

Sonja Grimm¹

INTRODUCTION

This chapter seeks to clarify *what are the root causes of (state) fragility?* It theorizes the root causes as drivers of fragility, bringing in structural, institutional, and behavioural dimensions to describe, understand, and explain the phenomenon. While each case of fragility is unique, some common patterns can clearly be identified. The chapter discusses fragility with reference to the state as the baseline concept. Being aware of this concept's shortcomings, it acknowledges, first, that the baseline concept of a functioning and stable "state" is contested as such as it might be a potentially Western-based blueprint of a "democratic and capitalist state governed by the rule of law" (Krasner and Risse, 2014, p. 548). Second, the chapter admits that fragility (instead of putting the complete state in turmoil) can also occur at the sub-state level creating "situations of fragility", as the OECD (2007) has famously labelled it. Third, it contends that the emergence of stable and effective institutions in specific societal contexts does not necessarily coincide with the existence of a (nation) state at the federal level. However, given the importance of the state as a structure creating or preventing war or peace, poverty or prosperity at the local, regional, and global stage, it is nevertheless necessary to understand, analyse, and explain (situations of) fragility in reference to existing well-functioning states and their dysfunctional counterparts.

Since Helman and Ratner's (1993) seminal *Foreign Policy* article on "Saving failed states", there has been much research regarding (state and sub-state situations of) fragility and the respective categorization of dysfunctional statehood (see Chapter 4 by Ferreira in this *Handbook*). While some researchers have studied the phenomenon empirically and substantially contributed to identifying the negative consequences of weak statehood for peace and security in the international realm, others have heavily criticized the concept for being a "political notion" foremost leading to the devaluation of states as non-reliable partners in foreign relations (for more details on this discussion see Grimm et al., 2014).

However, so far, research has found it challenging to identify the root causes of state fragility. This is mainly due to a long-term lack of consensus on the definition of state fragility. Such a consensus has only recently begun to emerge due to improved quantitative approaches to the measurement of fragility. To study the root causes of (state) fragility, however, it is necessary to define what is meant by fragility in the first place.

Early researchers refer to one-dimensional concepts of fragility, defining it in terms of "weakness" or "instability". They perceive states that qualify as "fragile" simply as a "poor performer" due to one-dimensional causes (Helman and Ratner, 1993; Rotberg, 2004; Zartman, 1995). In more recent work, researchers have focused on multidimensional concepts of fragility. For example, Carment et al. (2010, p. 84) understand "fragility" as "a measure of the extent to which the actual practices and capacities of states differ from its idealised image". Such actual practices and capacities need to be identified in three distinct, though interdependent, dimensions. Following Carment et al. (2010, 2015), Carment and Samy (2017) and

Ziaja et al. (2019), these are *state authority (A)*, *state legitimacy (L)*, and *state capacity (C)*. Each dimension represents a particular constellation of state–society relations; consequently, failures in any of these dimensions can be traced back to different root causes, leading to multidimensional bundles of root causes in specific cases of fragility.

State authority means the ability of the state to control the use of physical violence within its territory. Fragility in this dimension becomes apparent through violent conflict, one-sided violence, intra- or inter-state war. Violent conflict and war are both causes and consequences of state fragility. *State legitimacy* means the ability of the state to obtain the consent of the population to the state’s dominance. Fragility in this dimension becomes apparent, for example, through gross human rights violations, limitations in press freedom, or the arbitrary prosecution of citizens. The dominance of a small winning coalition, the lack of efficient checks and balances enshrined in the institutions of the political system, and the lack of a vivid civil society drive fragility in terms of state legitimacy. *State capacity* means the ability of the state to provide basic public services to its population. Fragility in this dimension is displayed by the failure to deliver public services (such as access to food and clean water, health care, primary education, or transportation infrastructure) and by weak administrative capacity (for example, weak capacity to manage the implementation of political decisions, to provide an institutional framework for economic investment, or to absorb foreign aid). Weak state institutions, lack of capacity among state officials, competing domestic interests and political elites rivalling for state resources and public goods exploiting political institutions for their own purposes result in weak state capacity.

This chapter relies on the three dimensions of the ALC framework and identifies for each of the three key areas (authority, legitimacy, capacity) a bundle of reasons that finally lead (in specific constellations) to (state) fragility. This chapter argues that it is a mix of factors related to actors (such as unable, unwilling, constrained, or predatory (groups of) actors), institutions (such as weak, unbalanced, and unchecked institutions that cannot prevent the abuse of political power) and structures (such as a history of violent conflict, unfavourable socio-economic conditions, bad neighbourhood, and international dependencies) that negatively reinforce each other in a vicious circle causing state fragility.

The chapter is organized as follows: It begins with contextualizing the debate on (state) fragility and its root causes from a historical perspective. It continues by introducing the reader to Max Weber’s understanding of “statehood” as the commonly used baseline concept of a well-functioning state and problematizes this concept. Next, it discusses the root causes of fragility in the three dimensions of authority, legitimacy and capacity and shows why the ALC framework leads to an understanding of state fragility caused by a so-called “vicious circle”. The vicious circle debate is complemented by the somewhat neglected dimension of actors’ behaviour to the so far rather structures-based understanding of fragility. The concluding section summarizes the findings and suggests three topics for further research on the root causes of fragility.

CONTEXT AND HISTORY OF THE ROOT CAUSES DEBATE

Over the last four decades, expressions such as “weak state”, “failing state”, “failed state”, “collapsed state” and other variations have become pervasive, both in practitioners’ discourses and in scholarly works. Bueger and Bethke (2014, p. 42) identify four stages in the develop-

ment of the (state) fragility agenda: in the late 1980s, fragility and failure were only loosely mentioned in academia (phase one); in the 1990s, the concept was extended to numerous disciplines and foreign policymakers (phase two); in the early 2000s, it was securitized and globalized (phase three); and contemporarily (phase four), there has been a double trend of homogenization through quantification and heterogenization through criticism.

In the 1990s, state fragility was *grosso modo* understood as insufficient state capacity or the unwillingness of a state to meet its obligations, namely delivering “core functions to the majority of its people” (DFID, 2005). This intersection between policy and research priorities was the crucial element behind the rise of the fragile state agenda in phase two. Helman and Ratner’s 1993 article played a crucial role in attracting policy and academic attention to failed states, understood here as “a situation where governmental structures are overwhelmed by circumstances” (Helman and Ratner, 1993, p. 5). Although the authors make a loose distinction between degrees of collapse and advocate new conservatorships to deal with bona fide failed states, they do not delve much deeper into the analysis of the failed state phenomenon. Their contribution is nevertheless considered “authoritative” (Wilde, 2003, p. 425), in the sense that it succeeded in setting a new research agenda that was quickly expanded by authors such as Fukuyama (2004), Rotberg (2004), or Zartman (1995). This period also featured rising interest from major donors and international organizations in state fragility issues, such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (Doornbos, 1994, p. 281). The 1990s also saw a gradual rapprochement between the development and security fields – what has been termed the “security-development nexus” – under the overarching umbrella of the fragile state agenda, primarily through a merger of security and development policy and the re-problematization of security as both the result of and the precondition for development in a broader sense (Duffield, 2007).

After 11 September 2001 (henceforth 9/11), when the Al-Qaeda terrorist network attacked the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon in Washington, DC, the idea that state fragility could be a threat to the national security of Western countries gained additional traction. Because the government of Afghanistan was hosting members of this terrorist network, countries with no legitimate or institutionalized government were suddenly perceived as potential sanctuaries for criminal activities and global terrorism. Whether they were considered “failed” or “failing” in the US discourse on security or “fragile” from a development aid perspective, most analysts agreed that new policies for international security would require a focus on the capacity of national governments in the South to control security within their territories and to provide essential services to their citizens. The phase three discourse on fragility played a role in the diffusion of this new conception of foreign policy based on the security and development nexus (Annan, 2001). It paved the way towards a new aid allocation system addressing the capacity of state institutions in countries under turmoil (World Bank, 2002, 2011) and seeking to increase the effectiveness of foreign aid given by international donors (OECD, 2005, p. 3, para. 3; OECD, 2008; United Nations, 2002). OECD Development Assistant Committee (DAC) members were particularly concerned about aid spending in fragile states and situations of fragility suggesting new principles for international engagement (OECD, 2007, 2011).

Homogenization through quantification as well as heterogenization through qualification and criticism characterize both contemporary policy discourses and scholarly research of the fourth phase. In the quantification strand, scholars inform the policy debate by intensified classification of state fragility through quantitative measurement (Carment et al., 2010;

Tikuisis and Carment, 2017; Ziaja, 2012; Ziaja et al., 2019; see also Chapter 4 by Ferreira and Chapter 6 by Desai and Marley in this *Handbook*) and seek on its basis to forecast potential state collapse (Grimm and Schneider, 2011). In the qualitative strand, scholars investigate the causal mechanisms of state fragility in specific structural and behavioural contexts through case study analysis. They hint at the importance of traditional and non-traditional actors in state-building processes, as well as the current production of normative standards and good practices in international state-building (Brinkerhoff, 2007; Wesley, 2008). Critical scholars complement the agenda by examining the manipulation of the norm by powerful state actors, a process that has deprived local actors of their agency and legitimized interventions by Western governmental agencies (Boas and Jennings, 2007; Richmond, 2010; Richmond and Mitchell, 2011), dating back to the imperial discourse about colonizing Africa and other non-European societies (Gruffydd Jones, 2013). Critical researchers have also questioned the linkages between failed or fragile states and terrorism that underlie the rationale behind the “security-development nexus” (Hehir, 2007; Newman, 2007). Some even doubt the validity of the state fragility concept after all, as it might be based on a “teleological belief in the convergence of all nation-states” that is inherent in the Western concept of “state failure” (Hagemann and Hoehne, 2009). Be that as it may, given the importance of statehood as a structuring principle in world politics, the lack of it in fragile states has attracted attention of policymakers and scholars alike.

Simultaneous to the interest in the phenomenon and its treatment in security and development politics, the debate over the root causes of (state) fragility evolved. While first- and second-phase scholars foremost described the phenomenon and its consequences for peace, security, and development, they did not particularly take care of its root causes. In contrast, third-phase scholars have focused on violent (intrastate) conflict as the single most important condition under which fragility emerges. Two camps can be distinguished here. The first camp consists of more structurally oriented approaches that focus on those conditions that allow poverty or conflict to happen and, consequently, make fragility more likely (see for example Fearon and Laitin, 2003; Kraay and McKenzie, 2014). The second camp includes more agency-focused approaches that emphasize how state and non-state actors, in pursuing competing political agendas, interact to produce conflict (Berdal and Malone, 2000; Collier and Hoeffler, 2004, among many others). Poverty is a crucial structural variable for the first camp, whether defined in absolute or relative terms, while the latter group looks at actor motivations, including both greed and grievance.

Although valuable, most fourth-phase scholars meanwhile agree that fragility is a multidimensional concept, and accordingly, the reasons for its emergence and persistence need likewise to be described as multidimensional. They argue that violent conflict might be one but not the only driver of fragility and, as likely as to be a cause, it can also become a consequence of fragility. In Naudé et al.’s (2011, p. 7) words, “weak or fragile states, due to low development status, in themselves can lead to conflict and an ensuing vicious cycle from fragility to conflict, and from conflict to further fragility. Thus, the causality between state fragility and failure and conflict is multi-directional.”

The trend towards quantification in measuring fragility has revealed the interconnectedness of the identified dimensions and reinforces the notion of a vicious circle in which fragile states are trapped. The reasoning goes as follows: weaknesses in some dimensions of statehood spill-over and might negatively affect other dimensions of statehood, leading to complex situations of protracted fragility and, finally, state failure.

An intensive strand of literature deals with efforts to stabilize fragile (commonly labelled as “post-war” or “post-conflict”) societies through international state- and peace-building and its mostly failed efforts by external actors to succeed with this task (Chandler, 2010; Chandler and Sisk, 2013; Chesterman, 2004; Hameiri, 2009; Lemay-Hébert, 2011; Paris, 2005). In parallel, scholars have begun to analyse those conditions that enable states (or at least their sub-states units, as Menkhaus (2014) convincingly shows) to successfully transit from fragility to situations of greater stability, prosperity, and peace. Researchers study the poor performers at the lower end of the fragility scale that are trapped into fragility and have only limited chances to overcome it and compare them to those states that have recently succeeded in overcoming situations of fragility (Carment et al., 2015; Carment and Samy, 2017). This emerging strand of research seeks to identify the conditions that make a transition from fragility to something else more likely, seeking to systematize the causes for (state) stability and resilience.

WEBER’S (CONTESTED) CONCEPT OF A FUNCTIONING STATE

To study (state) fragility, one needs to define what is in the concept. Ever since the emergence of the term, scholars and practitioners alike have struggled to reach a consensus on how fragility should be conceptualized and whether it should be connected exclusively to the state as a structuring principle in world politics (Nay, 2014). To define what is meant by a “functioning state”, scholars in the institutionalist tradition refer to the Weberian notion of a state as a hierarchical structure of authoritative decision-making that enjoys external and internal sovereignty. In his 1919 lecture “Politics as a vocation”, German sociologist Max Weber characterized the state as “a human community that successfully claims the *monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force* within a given territory” (Weber, [1919] 1948, p. 78, italic in the original). Hence, in Weber’s view, a state consists of three main elements: territoriality, violence, and legitimacy. Each state can claim certain borders and is respected (more or less) by other states (= territoriality). Within its borders, the state can demand allegiance from its citizens, and in the case where some people are reluctant to show allegiance, the state is allowed to use violent measures (= violence).

However, Weber ([1919] 1948) argues that this violence is not unlimited but needs to be justified (= legitimacy). Legitimacy can be derived from several sources: it may be based on commonly accepted ancient heritage, individual charismatic leadership, or rationally created rules. Whatever the source of legitimacy might be, it depends on the belief among the ruled in the rightfulness of the state bodies’ authority to claim the right to rule. The legitimacy of the modern state is founded predominantly on rationally constructed authority, that is the commitment to a code of legal regulations, Weber ([1919] 1948) continues. Hence, the state claims authority over its people; it takes and implements decisions for the sake of all (not for the sake of a small group of the privileged) while it is necessarily bound by (constitutional) law.

To be effective, the Weberian state needs to be bureaucratic. It is built on a system of administration and law where well trained and experienced executive staff have all necessary capacity to exert authority while all decisions need to be justified on the basis of predefined impartial law. In Weber’s view, the continued existence of modern Western states is dependent on the constant progression of their bureaucratic foundations over time. Consequently, Weber saw administration and the provision of security as the benchmarks by which states can

be judged (Lemay-Hébert and Mathieu, 2014). From this perspective, security is the central criterion of state strength.

In the decades to come, other criteria have been added by various authors to further refine the description of the state's capability to organize society. According to Fabra Mata and Ziaja (2009, p. 6), what most of these definitions have in common is that they include one or more central attributes of the state, such as "effectiveness" (how well state functions that are necessary for the security and well-being of citizens are performed), "authority" (understood as the enforcement of a monopoly on the legitimate use of force), and "legitimacy" (meaning the public, non-coercive acceptance of the state). In a subsequent analytical step, these criteria have been used to identify a state's malfunctions and to classify the state on a continuum between the poles of "consolidated" (meaning "well functioning") and "failed" (meaning "not functioning at all"), with "fragile" (meaning "functioning to various degrees") falling somewhere in the middle (François and Sud, 2006, p. 143). The thresholds for classification have been subject to contention ever since (for more details on this debate, see Chapter 4 by Ferreira in this *Handbook*).

Early on, critical scholars have challenged the analytical validity of the "fragile state" concept as defined above, as well as the underlying state concept (see Grimm et al., 2014 for an overview). Researchers such as Hagemann and Hoehne (2009), Nuruzzaman (2009), and Nay (2013), to name but a few, have suggested that using the Weberian notion of a state might imply transferring a basically "Western" understanding of "statehood" to parts of the world in which different understandings of how communities organize themselves prevail. Empirical research has shown that this conceptual vagueness does prevent policymakers from creating efficient tools to overcome fragility (Grimm, 2014) and enables corrupt elites to exploit situations of "fragility" for their own political purposes (Fisher, 2014; Heiduk, 2014). Chandler (2006, p. 6) predicted that the concept might even allow powerful (Western) countries to deprive certain states of the privileges of sovereignty, opening the door to external military interventions. An example might be the Russian military aggression against Ukraine since February 2022. In a public speech given three days before the illegal invasion started, Russian president Vladimir Putin (2022) justified the – in his words – "special operation" as a necessary preventive act of protecting Russian security interests against an "unstable" Ukraine that is led by an "extreme right-wing", "neo-Nazi", and "highly corrupt elite" of "Ukrainian oligarchs" that is "acting against the will of its people".

ROOT CAUSES OF FRAGILE AUTHORITY, LEGITIMACY, AND CAPACITY

Given that the criteria for what constitutes a "fragile state" are disputed, it is no wonder that the causes of "state fragility" are likewise uncertain. Scholars disagree over whether (state) fragility is the result of internal malfunctions (Fabra Mata and Ziaja, 2009; Rotberg, 2004), the result of the structure of the global political economy and fragile states' position in this economy (Clapham, 2003; Engberg-Pedersen et al., 2008), the result of colonial legacies (Tusalem, 2016), or the result of external interferences and various transnational forces and their (cost- and time-intensive) efforts to construct stable states following the Weberian model (Hagemann and Hoehne, 2009; Nuruzzaman, 2009). Carment (2003) summarizes these factors under macro, intermediate, and micro processes leading to state failure. Macro pro-

cesses concern the system and structural parts of it weakening the state, whereas intermediate processes emphasize internal pressures of the state and relate failure to domestic issues. The micro-level perspective relates state failure to behavioural aspects and tendencies towards violence.

As elaborated in the previous section, a functioning state in Weber's sense is characterized by the three dimensions of authority, legitimacy, and capacity that are systematically interwoven. Well-functioning states manage this interdependence well, while in dysfunctional states, deficiencies in one or more dimensions can negatively affect the other core dimensions.

Fourth-phase scholars in the quantitative research tradition ambitious to measure fragility have come to sort of a consensus on the multidimensionality of statehood and with it the concept of fragility. Leading scholars of this literature strand (Call, 2011; Carment et al., 2010; Carment and Samy, 2017; Fabra Mata and Ziaja, 2009; Faust et al., 2015; Rocha Menocal, 2011; Tikuisis and Carment, 2017; Ziaja et al., 2019) coincide in differentiating the already mentioned dimensions of authority, legitimacy, and capacity, even when certain labels might differ. Mostly, however, they focus on operationalizing the selected dimensions without discussing in greater depth the root causes of fragility. Therefore, to theoretically ground the causes of fragility, it is fruitful to look beyond the proper fragility literature and include findings from peace and conflict studies, comparative politics, transition studies, development studies, and the study of international relations to trace the multiple causes of fragility in the three dimensions of state authority, legitimacy, and capacity.

State Authority

As stated above, state authority means the ability of the state to control the use of physical violence within its territory. If a state tolerates unauthorized violence, it risks losing its monopoly of violence against competitors. The ability to use force enables the state to maximize profit, for example, through the extraction of taxes (Tilly, 1985). However, in turn, the state needs to offer something to the ruled. In the sense of political philosopher Thomas Hobbes ([1651] 2010), state authority is a "Leviathan" that ends anarchy by protecting the population. In Hobbes' perspective, the Leviathan provides security: the ruled rely on the state who guarantees their physical integrity and enforces legitimized rules. On this basis, socio-economic activities can flourish to the benefit of all.

Recent quantitative indices measure fragility in terms of state authority through variables operationalizing the existence and scope of violent conflict, one-sided violence against unarmed civilians, or intra- or inter-state war. These functional equivalents indicate a lack of ability by state authority to mute competing claims to control the monopoly of violence (Ziaja et al., 2019, pp. 305–306).

It is, however, conceptually and empirically unclear whether (state) fragility is a cause or a consequence of violent conflict or war (and vice versa). Imagine the following situation: A high-capacity state incites war against an internal or external enemy, but the attacked successfully fight back. As a consequence, war backfires on the aggressor state's authority. In the course of the war, the infrastructure of the aggressor gets destroyed, as is its social fabric, for example, due to massive refugee flows. Original supporters of war turn into war opponents who increasingly question the legitimacy of state bodies that incited a war in the first place and have thereby brought the country into turmoil. While the ruled lose the belief in the legitimacy of state authority, state bodies lose their ability to legitimately control the

use of physical violence on the state's territory. This process can turn a prior stable state into a situation of fragility and eventually lead to governmental turnover and, finally, institutional regime change. Serbia's transition to democracy in 2000 as a long-term consequence of the Balkan wars in the 1990s is a case in point: During the 1990s, the regime of authoritarian leader Slobodan Milošević, whose political career was characterized by war, communism, and nationalism, seemed relatively stable. But the Balkan wars and a severe economic crisis that followed the UN sanctions regime triggered mass mobilization on the streets, massive public protest, and the unification of the political opposition around the more moderate candidate Vojislav Koštunica. Consequently, Milošević was overthrown in the 2000 presidential elections which opened the way to Serbia's democratic transition (Bieber, 2003; Vladisavljević, 2016; Zakošek, 2008).

Likewise, fragile states might easily become the breeding ground for violent conflict and war as deficient state authority per definition only vaguely disposes of the ability to control the use of physical violence. Competing political factions and non-state actors who are willing to use force might exploit weak state authority to incite coups d'état, rebellion, violent conflict, or war (Aliyev, 2017). The situations in Somalia since the 1990s (Menkhaus, 2014) or in Afghanistan after 9/11 (CIFP, 2007) can be named examples. In another scenario, threatened state governments might incite war with neighbouring countries to divert from their own deficiency and incompetence (Fordham, 2005; Oneal and Tir, 2006; Weeks, 2012). Weak or fragile statehood might also provide enabling conditions for terrorism, although, as Newman (2007) argues, fragility is not a sufficient condition for terrorism.

Harff (2003), who studied the causes of genocide and politicide, showed that ongoing situations of violent conflict and war make genocide and politicide as a form of state-sponsored violence against unarmed civilians more likely. Hence, if a state cannot protect its own people against violence, the ability of the state to legitimately control the monopoly of force is questioned. If it is the state itself that organizes or at least tolerates the organization of genocide, is the occurrence of genocide then a sign of a weak or a strong state? In fact, Uzonyi (2021) finds that in more fragile states, the likelihood of genocide and politicide decreases as fragile states have less capacity to organize large scale murder; this conclusion stands in stark contrast to Harff's (2003) original findings.

To sum up, most states at the lower end of the fragility scale share a history of outbreaks of violent conflict, war, or gross human rights violations such as genocide or politicide. Without studying the single case, for scholars, it is, however, difficult if impossible to generalize as to whether (state) fragility is a cause or a consequence of repeated episodes of violent conflict or war. So far, this can only be decided individually in reference to the study of each particular case. The question of whether conflict and political violence is a cause or a consequence of (state) fragility comes down to being an empirical one and is context dependent.

State Legitimacy

State legitimacy means the ability of the state to obtain the consent of the population to the state's dominance. Legitimacy as a resource can be domestically derived in various ways. As elaborated above, Weber ([1919] 1948) differentiates traditional, charismatic, and rational-legal types of rule. Whatever way, *empirical* legitimacy crucially depends on the belief among the ruled in the rightfulness of the state bodies' claim to rule. Following this

perspective, consequently, both democratic and authoritarian leadership can be empirically legitimate if the ruled believe so (Ziaja et al., 2019, p. 304).

Empirical legitimacy needs to be contrasted to *normative* legitimacy as the extent to which the state's claim to rule conforms to a predefined set of norms. In this perspective, democratic rule is perceived to be more legitimate than authoritarian rule as per institutional design; the former is based on the will of the people guaranteeing that state authorities are held accountable to popular control (Dahl, 1971), a feature that is clearly missing in the latter. In democratic, rule-of-law-based representative political systems, mechanisms of checks and balances – such as regular free and fair elections, the separation of constitutional powers, or the institutions of horizontal and vertical accountability – guarantee to protect the people against arbitrary state authority. In authoritarian states, per definition, the mechanisms of checks and balances are frequently violated or totally missing (Levitsky and Way, 2002; Merkel, 2004). In the quantitative state fragility literature, scholars disagree on whether to include (variations of) empirical or normative measures of legitimacy in order to study the extent of fragility in the legitimacy dimension. Whereas Ziaja et al. (2019, p. 304) prefer the former, Carment et al. (2010) opt for the latter.

Quantitative scholars find it notoriously difficult to measure empirical legitimacy as there exists hardly any dataset that covers publicly expressed belief in the state's legitimacy over a substantive set of country-years both for democratic and authoritarian states. Moreover, from a policy-focusing standpoint, legitimacy is also the most difficult aspect to address. As proxies for measurement, scholars rely on indicators assessing deficiencies in the protection of political rights and civil liberties, the freedom of the press, or the quality of the legal prosecution of citizens. The number of asylums granted in other countries might be another good indicator of domestic support, as low numbers of asylum-seekers indicate the absence of politically motivated exit (Ziaja et al., 2019, p. 307). If researchers prefer to include a normative dimension in the measurement of legitimacy, they incorporate indicators for regime type (such as varieties of democracy and autocracy) or gender empowerment (Carment et al., 2010, pp. 88–89; Carment et al., 2011).

Depending on whether one prefers to focus on empirical or normative legitimacy, scholars come to different conclusions about the sources for deficiencies in this dimension. A lack of *empirical* legitimacy is closely connected to weaknesses in government performance (“output legitimacy”). The dominance of a small winning coalition and its activities to extract resources prevent larger parts of the society from profiting from socio-economic welfare gains, that in turn weakens the state's ability to acquire political legitimacy via the output side (Rothstein, 2009). In this regard, deficiencies in state capacity (to be discussed further below) backfire on empirical state legitimacy and contribute to (situations of) fragility.

A lack of *normative* legitimacy is clearly attributed to a lack of effective forms of interest articulation and a lack of efficient checks and balances enshrined in the institutions of the political system (“input legitimacy”). In terms of normative legitimacy, democratic political systems clearly outperform authoritarian political systems as the latter miss political institutions such as regular free and fair elections or the constitutionally fixed separation of powers that the former typically dispose of (Levitsky and Way, 2002). Following this line of reasoning, authoritarian political systems per se are more fragile than democratic ones because of the institutional layout of the system that misses input legitimacy from scratch.

Conflict researchers hint at the contribution of democratic transition as a phase of high institutional uncertainty to the creation of fragility in the legitimacy dimension. The process

of establishing electoral democracy (assumed to increase input legitimacy) generates a considerable amount of political violence (Mann, 2005), particularly in ongoing war situations (Höglund et al., 2009). When citizens get the right to participate in reasonably free and fair elections and choose representatives who in due time will adopt policies mandated by the will of the people, things are expected to go well. However, often, they do not. Instead, the resulting political representatives are “elected to fight”, as Mansfield and Snyder (2005) argue. Weak political institutions and increasing mass political participation create the motive and the opportunity for relevant political actors to play the nationalist card in an attempt to rally popular support against domestic and foreign rivals (Mansfield and Snyder, 2009). Such processes lead to failure in creating stable political institutions, a necessary precondition for input legitimacy, and might even endanger the survival of the state as a whole.

In the constructivist literature, a state might also gain legitimacy through the imagination of a political community through a nation-state (Anderson, 1991; Croucher, 2003). If the inclusion or exclusion of specific parts of a society (whether these parts be ethnically, politically, economically, or otherwise defined) and their right of belongingness to the nation is contested, the process of building of a nation can turn into a source of fragility. State legitimacy through the imagination of a nation requires a clear consensus about who belongs to the nation and who has to accept rules made by state bodies (Linz and Stepan, 1996). If such a consensus among the constituent entities of the nation is missing, state legitimacy is in vain. Resulting (violent) political conflicts over nation-building contribute to (state) fragility. Bosnia and Herzegovina’s protracted weak statehood because of unfinished nation-building after the Yugoslav secession wars in the middle of the 1990s provide a striking, but surely not the only example in world politics (Bose, 2005; Džihić and Segert, 2012; Gromes, 2009).

The discussion above allows us to conclude that the more legitimate a state is, the more stable it is, and the less likely is the emergence of (situations of) fragility. However, note that the sources of legitimacy might vary. Both democratic and authoritarian states can be regarded as legitimate by their people. However, by design, democratic states have a higher likelihood of being perceived as legitimate due to higher input legitimacy. Whether a lack of input legitimacy can permanently be compensated through output legitimacy and whether this keeps a state resilient towards fragility, as the literature on the developmental state suggests (Heberer, 2016; Johnson, 1982; Woo-Cumings, 1999), remains to be seen.

State Capacity

State capacity means the ability of the state to provide basic services to its population. The scope of basic services provided by real states (and expected by their populations) varies substantially, from rather minimalist “night-watchman” states to rather extensive welfare states (Fukuyama, 2004). There is, however, an almost universally shared expectation as regards a minimal set of services that any state – even the most authoritarian or libertarian one – is expected to provide. These services include those that improve life chances at a fundamental level, including access to food and clean water, rudimentary health care, and primary education. Call (2011, p. 306) names them the “core public goods”. More demanding concepts also count in economic, demographic, and environmental features such as active labour-market programmes, transportation infrastructure, or the ecological footprint per capita as relevant public goods (Carment et al., 2010; Carment and Samy, 2017).

A prerequisite for the delivery of public goods is the existence of a civilian administration that can cope with the requested tasks and includes some administrative and executive staff (to administer and implement tasks), at least a basic system of courts (to regulate conflicts in a sort of reliable way), and some tax authorities (to extract the resources necessary to pay for the delivery of public goods). The administration should demonstrate capacity to manage the implementation of political decisions, to provide an institutional framework for economic activities, or to absorb foreign aid. The state fragility literature is explicit about the state's obligation to provide these tasks to the people in return for their obedience. Hence, if the state fails to deliver core public services and does not cope with the required tasks, fragility in the capacity dimension becomes easily apparent and might, in turn, also reduce the perceived legitimacy of the state on the output side (see also above).

In the quantitative literature, the capacity dimension is the least contested one. Most scholars coincide in those basic services that a well-functioning state should deliver when measuring state capacity. In turn, failures to deliver expected results quickly disclose state weaknesses. Additionally, socio-economic indicators such as the share of the population with access to improved drinking water sources or the rates of child mortality or primary school enrolment are easily available for a large set of countries over a considerable time period (Ziaja et al., 2019, p. 306). Additionally, the MDG/SDG process at the United Nations has substantially improved global coverage of state performance indicators (UNSTATS, 2022), making empirical information easily accessible for researchers. Even for the more difficult to measure dimension of administrative capacity, indices such as the Bertelsmann Transformation Index (BTI) (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2016) meanwhile offer reliable scores.

To explain fragility in the capacity dimension, institutional, behavioural and structural sources can be named. Weak political institutions contribute to weak state capacity (Bertocchi and Guerzoni, 2012). For example, insufficient property rights limit the ability of individuals to generate economic benefits and lower their motivation for economic investment, preventing the national economy from growing and the state from extracting more taxes (Andrimihaja et al., 2011). Consequently, low tax revenues keep state bodies back from their ability to finance core public goods. From a path-dependent institutional perspective, bad political decisions on institutional design in the past (such as deficient market or tax extraction regulation) negatively influence state capacity in the present and the future (Besley and Persson, 2009).

A lack of professionalization – skills, knowledge, and experience – as well as insufficient payment of state officials negatively affect state capacity. State officials might be inadequately trained to perform the duties they are expected to do; they might be overwhelmed with bureaucratic tasks (for example, due to reporting obligations as demanded by foreign aid donors) and unrealistic expectations (both by external actors and the local public); and they might be poorly paid making them vulnerable to bribery. Under these conditions, it is highly demanding that a modern, efficient, well-functioning state administration develops the capacity to deliver core public goods. Instead, Pritchett et al. (2013) observe ubiquitous corruption of state officials and systemic isomorphic mimicry, wherein structures and practices of a functional state are adopted to camouflage a persistent lack of function; as a result, “workers do not even show up, doctors do not doctor and teachers do not teach” (Pritchett et al., 2013, p. 1).

Competing domestic political interests and political elites that rival around state resources might also result in weak state capacity. Scholars argue that such elites “capture” the state (Richter and Wunsch, 2020), specifically its political institutions and administrative capacity, for their own purposes at the expense of the benefit of all. If state legitimacy mechanisms are

weak, and ruling elites risk being easily replaced once in office, they have hardly any incentive to invest in the long-term production of public goods (Acemoglu, 2005). Patronage and clientelism are typical features of captured states leading to weak capacity (Bratton and Van de Walle, 1994).

Finally, scholars from the foreign aid and state-building literature cite a high dependency on foreign aid combined with a permanent interference of external (military or development) actors into domestic state affairs as contributing to weak state capacity (Fisher, 2019; Malejacq, 2016; Pérez Niño and Le Billon, 2014). Such permanent external interference that some even date back to colonial times (Chandler, 2006; Gordon, 1997; Ignatieff, 2003) prevents state representatives from strengthening locally rooted independent institutions on their own terms and risks delegitimizing local power holders in the eyes of the ruled on the output side (Brinkerhoff, 2010, pp. 75–76; Peters, 2015).

To sum up, the literature discussed in this section names various institutional, behavioural, and structural sources for weaknesses in the capacity dimension, and it clearly reveals the negative effect of weak capacity on state legitimacy.

THE VICIOUS CIRCLE OF STATE FRAGILITY (AND ITS VIRTUOUS COUNTERPART)

Scholars agree that all three dimensions of statehood – authority, legitimacy, and capacity – interact in various ways (for a visualization, see Figure 2.1), and the above-presented discussion has clearly revealed manifold connections between the three dimensions.

However, the main patterns of this three-dimensional interaction are still a matter of contention. Nevertheless, it seems plausible to assume that substantial deterioration in any one dimension will sooner or later lead to concomitant deterioration in the other two. Moreover, and as a mirror image to the logic of a vicious circle, an argument could be made for a virtuous circle: if one dimension improves, the others will follow soon.

In fact, recent empirical research suggests that the dyadic interaction effects between dimensions of statehood may be more complicated than the vicious and virtuous circle arguments predict. Mcloughlin (2015) demonstrates that better service delivery – a typical element of implementation capacity – does improve the empirical legitimacy of a fragile or conflict-affected state under certain circumstances; but not necessarily and by far not always. Instead, she found that “there is no straightforward alignment between objective service outputs and legitimacy gains” (Mcloughlin, 2015, p. 352). Legitimacy, she argues, is to a too high degree socially and normatively constructed to merely be a function of state performance.

Ziaja et al. (2019, p. 317) find that states with severe deficits in all three dimensions of statehood or at least in the state authority dimension (the former “dysfunctional states” and the latter “low-control states” in their diction) rarely, if ever, improve their implementation capacity. With a hint at better-performing Estonia, Romania, and the former Yugoslav republics, they argue that increasing state capacity coincides with increasing state legitimacy (Ziaja et al., 2019, p. 317). These cases clearly profit from an external actor’s strong influence, namely the European Union (EU), which exerts democratizing leverage through its approximation and accession procedures. This leverage has supported democratization and the implementation of the rule of law in the named countries (Grimm and Mathis, 2015, 2018). Ziaja et al.’s finding evidently speaks against the idea of authoritarian development in the development state and

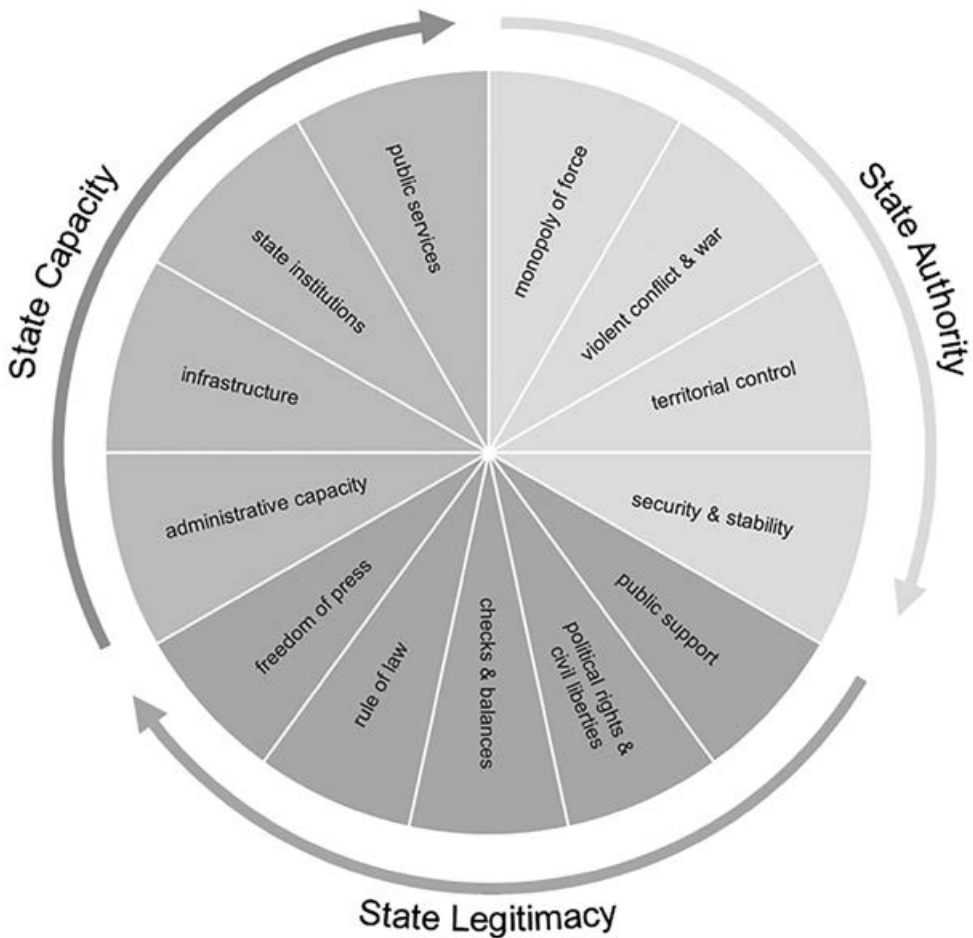


Figure 2.1 *Three dimensions of statehood and their interdependency creating a vicious/virtuous circle of fragilization/stabilization*

supports the idea of a virtuous circle under the condition that state legitimacy (based on legal, maybe even democratic rule) is improved first.

BRING THE STATE BACK IN? IT IS THE ACTORS, STUPID!

At times, the state fragility literature reads as if it is a bad fate following unfavourable structural conditions that drives states into fragility. However, informed by peace, conflict, and transition studies, the author of this chapter seeks to promote another, more actors-focused perspective. Relevant (political, economic, religious, or civil society) actors can bring a state

into turmoil; and on the other side, even in the least conducive circumstances, they can create situations of stability. Influential actors can turn a fragile state into a stable one or fragilize a stable state and turn it into a fragile one (see Rotberg, 2012 and Chapter 16 by Rotberg in this *Handbook*). Actors can create and exploit the vicious circle, but they can also create and advance a virtuous circle.

Scholars studying political violence understand these atrocities to be primarily instrumental and orchestrated by powerful actors seeking to achieve tangible political or military objectives (Valentino, 2014). These powerful actors exploit state authority and state capacity for their own political or economic purposes and seek to increase state legitimacy at the expense of the victims of state-sponsored violence. If weak statehood serves their interests well, they actively engage in protracting fragility. Aliyev (2017), for example, analyses all nation-states included in the State Fragility Index (SFI) between 1995 and 2014 and demonstrates for this large-n sample of cases a direct link between the presence of violent non-state actors and state failure. In his analysis, the likelihood of state failure in fragile situations increases significantly if non-state actors are present who are willing to use force.

On the other hand, even in the most fragile situations, networks of responsible and reliable actors can create situations of stability. Menkhaus (2014, p. 165) shows for selected territories in highly fragile Somalia how weak provincial administrators together with civil society leadership – composed of women’s market groups, religious leaders, and businesspeople – created informal networks of local governance and re-established peace and order. Contributors to a special issue edited by Gisselquist (2015) demonstrate the same (even though to various degrees) for collaborations between international peace-builders and non-governmental or sub-national partners, at times even national state agencies, in countries as diverse as Afghanistan, Yemen, and Nicaragua. Following Collier (2012), Gisselquist concludes that “one promising strategy for donors to have impact in fragile states is to work outside the state by supporting independent public service agencies” (Gisselquist, 2015, p. 293) on a regular basis.

Reading this strand of the literature, it is undoubtedly the actors who exploit or create economic or social structures or political institutions that are (more or less) conducive to (situations of) fragility. Additionally, it becomes apparent that external actors can support reliable domestic actors, but in principle, overcoming fragility is a process that needs to be domestically driven. To support such processes from the outside, external actors (such as aid givers, peace-builders, or democracy promoters) might refer to the fruitful strategy to invest *both* in the strengthening of reliable political institutions *and* the building of capacity among relevant actors (such as state officials and non-state agents) to help fragile states to overcome (situations of) fragility, conditional upon the domestic actors’ willingness and ability to support and get engaged in this process. Empirical research also suggests that more efforts should be invested into the improvement of state legitimacy as a factor positively influencing state capacity. However, given that state authority, legitimacy, and capacity are substantially interwoven, a prioritization of one aspect over another is a challenging task, both in theoretical and in practical terms, and there is so far no consensus among scholars and practitioners how and what to prioritize.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has argued that it is a mix of factors related to actors, institutions, and structures in the three dimensions of statehood – authority, legitimacy, and capacity – that negatively reinforce each other in a vicious circle causing state fragility (or respectively creating a virtuous circle overcoming state fragility). A consensus among scholars is emerging about the multidimensionality of fragility. Consequently, it is plausible to assume that multiple root causes combined lead to (situations of) fragility. Whereas the measurement of fragility through a multidimensional framework is now well established, the analysis of the root causes of fragility still deserves more attention among scholars and practitioners alike. More research is needed to identify those constellations of root causes that are conducive to produce fragility as well as to shed light on those constellations of factors that enable actors to overcome (situations of) fragility. Given the complex nature of fragility, it remains a challenge to disentangle the various influences that lead to fragility, identify the exact causal pattern(s) and generalize about causes versus effects of fragility over a large sample of cases. In fact, the empirically informed observation of the vicious circle creates methodological problems of endogeneity (e.g., state deficiencies are at the same time cause and consequence of fragility) that need to be solved in order to ground methodological sound analysis and the formulation of policy advice that is meaningful in practice.

If the root causes are more thoroughly investigated, a couple of research questions can be answered: First, why do some states perform better than others although structural conditions are similarly unconducive to state stability? Much research has been devoted to the study of the negative state of fragility. Few studies deal with states that have successfully resisted fragility. Hence, it could be fruitful to study the better performers, as Ziaja et al. (2019, p. 317) have already suggested, to understand the conditions under which states are resilient towards fragility. Along this line, second, following Carment et al. (2015), it needs to be asked how to overcome (situations of) fragility. What are the conditions conducive to stabilization and prevention against destabilization and the (re-)emergence of fragility? For all these questions, it is definitively necessary to bring the actors back into a rather structures- and institutions-focused analysis.

Third, it needs to be discussed to what extent can and should third party actors compensate for state deficits. Particularly in the dimension of state capacity, non-state actors inside the state or external actors from outside of the state take over service delivery while it is unclear whether this approach increases or decreases the capacity of the state as such (and in the worst case, might even contribute to protract state fragility). It is time to go beyond the dichotomy of either totally condemning or praising third-party intervention in (situations of) fragility. Instead, when measuring and analysing fragility, researchers need to account for third-party contribution to better capture a state's endogenous capacity; and policymakers need to better understand which template to choose for which constellation of fragility. So far, astonishingly few studies seek to identify those concepts that help manage and overcome fragility while accounting for its root causes.

Understanding the root causes of a specific fragility situation can help tremendously to overcome the situation. If the nature and root causes of fragility are conceptually clarified and domestic actors (and their interests) are taken seriously, it becomes easier for third party actors to develop tailor-made support programs for (situations of) fragility, taking all three dimensions of statehood – authority, legitimacy and capacity – seriously into account.

NOTE

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3. Transforming conception(s) of state fragility and new containment interventions

Nicolas Lemay-Hébert and Babatunde F. Obamamoye

INTRODUCTION

The conceptual framework of the fragile state has been an important feature of the discourse on international development, security, reconstruction, and intervention since the 1990s (Paris, 2011, p. 58; Barakat and Larson, 2014; Nay, 2014). As such, the idea of fragile statehood has become an operative prism through which many international donors and their varying agencies interact with the projects of development, aid assistance, and state reconstruction in the developing world. At the same time, fragile states have increasingly become “wicked problems” for practitioners (Menkhaus, 2010; Brinkerhoff, 2014), creating a series of conundrums for the international community. In 2008, for instance, the President of the World Bank, Robert Zoellick, noted that “[f]ragile states are the toughest development challenge of our era” (Zoellick, 2008, p. 68). In the same way, in 2010, the US Secretary of Defense, Robert Gates, asserted that fragile states constitute “the main security challenge of our time” (Gates, 2010, p. 2). One thing that is worth emphasizing in this process is that the interpretative framing of fragile states has not remained constant. The deployment of the concept for intellectual and policy purposes has experienced specific transformations in the last few years (Lemay-Hébert, 2019). This transmutation in the formulation of what constitutes fragile statehood has, in turn, impacted the nature of security-development interventions carried out by donors in many designated fragile polities.

This chapter looks at how the conceptual discourse of state fragility has evolved over the years and how this has impacted donors’ policies towards fragile states. We address this question in two ways. First, we dissect how the abstract conception of “fragile states” has undergone a transformation in the last few years. Second, we analyse how this phenomenon ushered in a specific policy adjustment in donors’ approaches to security-development projects in the developing world. We explore how this episode influences the ways international development practitioners undertake interventions that are meant to manage political transitions out of fragility. The central argument of this chapter is that the shift in the conceptualization of state fragility from purely capacity deficit to risk mitigation has given rise to new containment interventions in fragile states. To illustrate this development from an empirical point of view, we use the case of the ongoing American, European, and French interventions in the West African Sahel. This regional focus is relevant for this analysis for at least two key reasons. First, the ongoing external international interventions in the region were motivated by their broad categorization of the West African Sahel as a fragile zone. Second, these interventions were designated to first and foremost contain securitized threats and not to perform statebuilding in the area. Overall, this chapter aims to extend the frontiers of the evolving debates on state fragility, particularly by unravelling how its conceptualization plays a crucial role in determining the policy responses of bilateral and multilateral donors.

The analysis in this chapter is structured into four sections. In the next section, we explore the invention of “fragile states” as an analytical category in the lexicon of the mainstream actors who are directly involved in the practice of international development assistance. Following this section, we dissect the transformation of the conceptual framing and representation of “fragile states” in the policy discourse of international donors, especially from the beginning of the last decade. In the third section, we analyse how this shift in the delineation of state fragility gave rise to the idea of new barbarism and repositioned donors’ policy towards fragile states from solely (re)building development institutions to creating structures for containing securitized risks. In the fourth section, we draw on the case of the West African Sahel to illustrate the practice of these new containment interventions which are mainly designed to advance the interests of donors rather than the yearnings and aspirations of the people in the fragile communities.

THE CONCEPTUAL INVENTION OF “FRAGILE STATES”

As previously mentioned, the insertion of “fragile states” in the vocabulary of international development donors is not completely new (Grimm et al., 2014; Fisher, 2014; Nuruzzaman, 2009). It dates back to the scholarly discourse that unfolded in the late 1980s through which analysts attempted to disaggregate states into different categories of “weak states”, “fragile states”, “failed states”, and “collapsed states”. For instance, Joel Migdal (1988, p. 4) broadly categorizes states into “strong states” and “weak states”. For him, weak states are a set of states with low or inadequate “capacities to *penetrate* society, *regulate* social relationships, *extract* resources, and *appropriate* or use resources in determined ways” (Migdal, 1988, pp. 4, 5). A similar analysis was advanced in the aftermath of the Cold War with the collapse of countries like Haiti, Yugoslavia, Somalia, Sudan, and Liberia. Very prominent in this regard, was Helman and Ratner’s (1993) demarcation between “failed states” and “failing states”. In their view, “failed states” are states “whose governmental structures have been overwhelmed by circumstances”, while “failing states” are states “where collapse is not imminent but could occur within several years” (Helman and Ratner, 1993, p. 5). While Zartman delved into the conceptual analysis of “state collapse” as “a situation where the structure, authority (legitimate power), law, and political order have fallen apart” (1995, p. 1), Rotberg sought to disentangle “state collapse” from “state failure” (2004).

The use of the concept of fragility in policy and decision-making circles, nonetheless, changed from the beginning of this century. The first factor centred on the *indirect* influence of the prior burgeoning academic discourse on weak, fragile, and failing states (Paris, 2011). The second, and indeed the most significant, factor was the marked impact of the 9/11 attacks on the territorial integrity of the United States (Barakat and Larson, 2014, p. 24; Grimm et al., 2014; Wolff, 2011, p. 954; Patrick, 2006; see also Chapter 2 by Sonja Grimm in this volume). This incident dramatically redirected the attention of the leading actors in the international community to the issue of fragile states. In 2002, for instance, the US administration under President George W. Bush maintained that “America is now threatened less by conquering states than we are by failing ones” (White House, 2002, p. 1). The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) acknowledges the causal impact of these attacks when it submits that the “perception [towards the issue of fragile states] changed following [the] 9/11” (OECD, 2006, p. 17). Predominantly from the early 2000s, different international

development agencies and donor governments integrated the framework of “fragile state” into their policy discourse and practice. The two major multilateral organizations that took the lead in this process are the World Bank and the OECD (Nay, 2014; Grimm et al., 2014). In 2002, for instance, the World Bank launched a programme on “low-income countries under stress” (LICUS). This LICUS initiative allowed the Bank to classify countries with weak policies, institutions, and governance (World Bank, 2002). In 2005, the World Bank replaced the term “countries under stress” with “fragile states” and, in the process, conceptualized fragility in terms of weak capacity and political instability (World Bank 2005).

Similarly, around the same time, the “fragile states” concept found its way into the policy discourse of the OECD. Through its Development Assistance Committee (DAC), the OECD established the Fragile States Group (FSG) in 2003 and developed its first “Principles for Good International Engagement in Fragile States” (OECD, 2006). Conceptually, the organization defines fragile states “as those countries where there is a lack of political commitment and/or weak capacity to develop and implement pro-poor policies” (OECD, 2006). Aid agencies of different developed countries incorporated it into their foreign policy programmes. While the US Agency for International Development (USAID), for instance, developed its “Fragile States Strategy” in 2005 (USAID, 2005), the British Department for International Development (DFID) also in the same year articulated its policy agenda on “why we need to work more effectively in fragile states” (DFID, 2005). For DFID, fragile states refer to “those [states] where the government cannot or will not deliver core functions to the majority of its people, including the poor” (DFID, 2005, p. 7). USAID shared the same perspective and defined *fragile states* as “those unable or unwilling to adequately assure the provision of security and basic services to significant portions of their populations” (USAID, 2006, p. 4).

The “early” deployment of “state fragility” as a conceptual tool by international development actors was mainly done for the purpose of identifying and ranking state capacity in the Global South. From this perspective, some analysts refer to “fragile states” as a “political concept” (Grimm et al., 2014), and others consider it a “donor-serving concept” (Barakat and Larson, 2014). The labelling and ranking of states in this regard were based on capacity indicators, which revolved around governance, institutional (in)capacity, poverty, and political (in)stability. For Zoellick (2008, p. 69), these key ranking indicators could be grouped into “ineffective government, poverty and conflict”. In this case, the initial conception of fragile states in global policy arenas was principally state-centric, with an overwhelming focus on capacity and performance deficits (Nay, 2014, p. 217; Brinkerhoff, 2010, p. 66).

REFORMULATION OF THE CONCEPT: FROM FRAGILE STATES TO STATES OF FRAGILITY

After gaining traction in the global policy discourse, the conceptual formulation of fragile states underwent some specific adjustments, especially in the second decade of this century. In this regard, the decision-makers within some key national and multilateral institutions switched from using the term “fragile states” (which emphasizes ranking of states based on lack of institutional capacity) to the term “states of fragility” (which depicts the constitutive contexts of risk; see Lemay-Hébert, 2019, p. 75). A close look at a few policy contents of donor agencies from the Global North would suffice to underscore this phenomenon. In 2011, as a deliberate departure from its earlier compilation of a “fragile states list”, the World Bank

shifted attention to a “harmonized list of fragile situations” (World Bank, 2016). The basis for this transition was premised on the contention that the “discrete classification systems [of fragile states] tend not to capture the nuances, fluid nature and multi-dimensional complexities of the concepts of state fragility, conflict or instability” (World Bank, 2016). Subsequently, the Bank contends that “fragile situations tend ... to be characterized by the inability or unwillingness of the state to manage or mitigate risks” (World Bank, 2020, p. 6). Following suit, in 2015, the OECD equally abandoned the analytical utility of “fragile states” and replaced it with “states of fragility”. The organization makes a claim that the reconceptualization was necessary since a “more universal approach for assessing fragility will be needed in the post-2015 period, one that moves beyond a single categorisation of fragile states” (OECD, 2015, p. 19). More specifically, the OECD defines “fragility as the combination of exposure to risk and insufficient capacity of the state ... to manage, absorb or mitigate those risks” (OECD, 2020, p. 15). Due to the centrality of both the World Bank and OECD in global policy debates, it is not surprising that this reconceptualization has since impacted how state fragility is being understood and deployed. Essentially, it invoked the characterization of fragile states as zones of risk and threat (see Chapter 4 by Ines Ferreira in this volume for an overview of current thinking about fragility).

The underpinnings for substituting “fragile states” with “fragile situations” (or states of fragility) could be attributed to specific realizations and acknowledgements. At the heart of these developments was the apprehension within the development epistemic community that the act of binary labelling and categorization of states as fragile and non-fragile would never offer a comprehensive analytical standpoint for capturing the multifaceted dimensions of fragility. The reformulation was an outcome of discursive efforts by donor governments and international development agencies to avoid equating fragility with strict underdevelopment and state-centric capacity deficits (Lemay-Hébert, 2019, 2021). In this way, it bolsters the contention that the act of “defining fragile statehood remains a donor-driven exercise” (Barakat and Larson, 2014, p. 25). It is important to note, nonetheless, that the countries characterized as fragile also played a key role in this reconfiguration process. In 2010, for instance, some fragile countries established the g7+ “to advocate for reforms to the way the international community engages” in their internal affairs (The g7+, 2013).

This transition in the representation and deployment of state fragility within the context of global security-development discourse has created at least three major outcomes. First, it allows the departure from a pure state-centric analysis of fragility to a more multi-dimensional framing that accommodates its cross-national manifestations (see Chapter 2 by Sonja Grimm and Chapter 6 by Harsh Desai and Jonathan Marley in this volume). The move from listing fragile states to describing situations of fragility paved the way for a framework that accommodates subnational and transnational dimensions of fragility. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and a few other agencies of the UN were very unequivocal in this regard when they asserted that the reconceptualization paved the way for “broadening [of] the scope of analysis ... in addressing fragility at subnational, transnational, regional global levels” (UNDP et al., 2016). While making a similar assertion, the OECD maintains that the new analytical lens of “states of fragility” would offer “a new tool for assessing fragility that is more comprehensive than the traditional single categorization of ‘fragile states’” (OECD, 2015, p. 13). Second, this reformulation expands the discussion of fragile states beyond the exclusive issue of state capacity deficits. With the new focus on “situations of fragility” in global development governance, variables such as “risk vulnerability” and risk externalization

became essential indices for unpacking fragility. The overarching vista for viewing a zone categorized as fragile became partly and more about its constitutive dangers and threats to contemporary global modernity. The OECD echoed this consequential outlook in 2016 when the organization concluded that “fragility is a mix of risk and capacities” (OECD, 2016, p. 22). The third outcome of this reconceptualization is that it wittingly or unwittingly invokes the notion of “new barbarism” in donors’ policy discourse (Richards, 1996). As Duffield (1996, p. 178) reminded us, the conceptual notion of new barbarism often “lends itself to arguments for isolation and disengagement from a dangerous, unpredictable and unhealthy world”. Since state fragility is now equated with the source of risk and threat, many donor agents have escalated their policy interactions with fragile states but with a new containment agenda.

FROM INSTITUTION-BUILDING TO CONTAINMENT INTERVENTIONS IN FRAGILE STATES

The practice of intervening in the domestic affairs of countries in the Global South by international donors has become an integral feature of contemporary international society. It is worth noting, of course, that the extent and nature of these interventions vary greatly across contexts and their goals usually depend on the issues and circumstances at hand. One of our key assertions in this chapter is that the conceptual formulation of state fragility at any point in time is at the heart of the variables shaping donors’ approaches to security and development projects in fragile states (also see Lahai and Lahai, 2019, p. 23). The way donor governments and international development practitioners think about fragile states plays a role in what they envision as the most suitable strategy for dealing with such a situation. In other words, donors’ perceptions of the constitutive nature and meaning of state fragility do influence the framework of action through which they empirically respond to the problems in fragile states.

In the 1990s and early 2000s, when the concept of fragile states was first introduced into the global policy discourse, most intervening strategies of international donors were aimed at (re)building functioning government institutions with the aim of improving effective domestic governance. In 2006, for instance, the USAID identified enhancing stability, improving security, and developing the capacity of institutions as its core approaches in fragile states (USAID, 2006, p. 7). Likewise, in 2007, the European Union (EU) resolved to integrate “institutional developments” into its Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development (LRRD) strategic framework as a cardinal pathway for addressing fragility in the Global South (Council of the EU, 2007, p. 4). Since fragile states were conceptualized through the lens of inadequate institutional capacity, the overarching goal of this interventionist approach was directed to transform domestic structures and, perhaps, (re)invent liberal governance. It fundamentally aims at reforming or building government institutions to make them conform to the ones found in the Global North as a pathway for reversing fragility, instability, and underdevelopment. Hence, this set of interventions often manifests as capacity-building programmes. Affirming this practice, the EU focused its attention on “reconstructing state capacities” in the designated fragile states of Burundi, Guinea-Bissau, Sierra Leone, Timor-Leste, and Yemen (Hout, 2010, p. 153). Where necessary in this engagement, donor states and their representative agencies would mobilize “various forms of ‘technical assistance’” (François and Sud, 2006, p. 150) for “transplanting Western models of social, political and economic organization” into the affected countries (Paris, 1997, p. 56). However, some analysts pointed out that this interven-

tionist approach “has not been an effective framework for action, given its limited ownership by national actors” (Pantuliano, 2009).

What is observable predominantly since the second decade of this century is that many donor governments are now avoiding purely institution-building interventions in the designated fragile states. As we have pointed out earlier, this change in policy strategy marked the period when the leading donor governments and international development agencies recalibrated their conception(s) of fragile states to involve risk mitigation rather than purely capacity deficits or weak performance. The OECD made it clear in 2016, for instance, that the idea of state fragility entails “the combination of exposure to risk and insufficient coping capacity of the state” (OECD, 2016, p. 22). It further asserted that “if ignored, these risks can turn into crises that reverse hard-won gains” (OECD, 2016, p. 72). The Australian government buttresses this standpoint in its 2017 Foreign Policy White Paper, stating that “the problems posed by fragile states will continue to undermine international security” (Australia Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2017). As a result of this conceptual shift, states designated as fragile are primarily considered to be sources of danger and threats to the global community. This framework allowed fragile states to be characterized as sources of threats to the donor community since they are liable to serve as “ungoverned spaces” for illegal migration, drug trafficking, transnational terrorism, and criminal networks (Diggins, 2011). The US Secretary of Defense categorically asserted in 2010 that “[i]n the decades to come, the most lethal threats to the United States’ safety and security... are likely to emanate from states that cannot adequately govern themselves” (Gates, 2010, p. 2). From this perspective, Diggins (2011) argues that fragile states are now in the lexicon of Western donors as “threat[s] to Western security because of their incapacity to be governed effectively”. Echoing a similar viewpoint, Clapton (2014, p. 43) contends that “the management of risk has become a core part of the business of Western governments”. The point is that the shift in the conception of state fragility has propelled a corresponding adjustment in donors’ approaches to security-development interventions in the affected states. More recently, Brinkerhoff (2019) describes this new engagement as the “fourth generation of international development policy and intervention”.

Our argument is that this new form of policy action in fragile states could best be described as new *containment interventions*. Some scholars had previously pointed to this policy direction. In 2013, for instance, Mary Kaldor (2013, p. 4) expressly advised that “the best policy response [to new wars in fragile states] is containment”. Conceptually, a containment intervention is a kind of interventionist operation that seeks to restrain, limit, or manage the mobility of (potentially) threatening realities within a locale (Duffield, 2008, p. 146). Even though it has an element of institution-building, a containment intervention is not designed primarily to transform government institutions or promote liberal normative governance in the societies where they are not in existence. Rather, the cardinal hallmark of containment interventions is that they are orchestrated to put a risk under control, particularly by restraining the securitized threat within a locality without necessarily bothering about how to resolve its root causes. This type of intervention is embedded in a complex securitization logic that bolsters the division between “us” and “them” where the security of “us” is conceptualized as an effective containment of the risks emanating from “them” (Lemay-Hébert, 2019, p. 88). This buttresses the argument by Duffield (2008, p. 161) that “to complete the nexus between development and security, the term *containment* needs to be included” (emphasis in original). Donors’ commitment to this paradigm of intervention is premised on the idea of helping others to contain our existential threats. The epistemological orientation that upholds containment as

an interventionist approach shares the perception that weak and fragile states often generate regional-wide instability and costs to the external world (Obamoye, 2019; Chauvet et al., 2010). It is underpinned by the logic of “new barbarism” and based on the datum that “you cannot have development *or* security *without* containing the mobility of underdeveloped life” (Duffield, 2008, p. 146, emphasis in original). As a course of action, it aligns with Duffield’s (2008) analysis of “a global civil war” in which “development and underdevelopment” are portrayed as “insured and non-insured life”, with containment serving as the major instrument through which the “insured” world protects itself.

The new containment engagement of donors in the context of state fragility has some specific attributes. First, as a policy agenda, it prioritizes light footprint and local partnership. In other words, it usually involves the deployment of a few numbers of experts in partnership with the local authorities. Second, even though the “building partner capacity” project is incorporated in such a policy undertaking (Gates, 2010, p. 2), its fundamental goal is *not* for a transformative (re)invention of development and prosperity. Rather, its primary aim is to contain and prevent externalities of securitized threats. In this case, to use the framing of Knoll and de Weijer (2016), containment intervention is a policy strategy that allows the developmental imperative to be subsumed under a containment agenda.

Carment and Samy (2019, p. 3) argue that the deep-rooted ambiguity in the conceptual formulation of fragility permitted policymakers to deploy it for their personal agendas. The authors use the analysis to emphasize the need for development agents to rethink their approaches to the most fragile states. What is discernible, however, is that many international development practitioners have not yielded to this suggestion. The question worth asking now is: What are the issues associated with containment interventions in the internal affairs of fragile states? In our analysis, two key issues could be drawn attention to in this regard. First, the approach prioritizes donors’ interests over the concerns and aspirations of the recipient communities. It trivializes the need to find a lasting solution to the drivers of fragility and underdevelopment while elevating the reactionary commitment to contain its threats. In other words, it embodies the politicization of interventions by valorizing the core security concerns of the donor community (which lie in checkmating the externalities of existential threats) while downplaying the primary interests of the local population (which lie in finding permanent solutions to the very problem of fragility). The logic of this approach corroborates the contention by Barakat and Larson (2014, p. 22) that the “fragile state” label currently serves donor purposes above and beyond the reconstruction needs of the contexts in question. Second, because the resolution of fragile statehood is not central in the strategic calculation of its course of action, the new containment intervention tends to present risk management and resilience as normalcy, which in the process perpetuates an unending reality of fragility. This intervention practice is liable to create a dangerous scenario in which an endless world of complexity is envisaged for the local community that needs to be governed through “highly regulatory and interventionist regimes” (Chandler, 2014, p. 48). The implications of this engagement are simple. On the one hand, it underscores the fact that a containment approach to fragile situations can promote unending governmentality and a resilience agenda of governance (Chandler, 2014, p. 47). On the other hand, it suggests that the new containment operations can fan and invoke the possibility of local resistance against the technologies of interventions.

NEW CONTAINMENT INTERVENTIONS IN WEST AFRICAN SAHEL

The recent introduction of containment in donors' policy responses to state fragility in the Global South can be observed empirically. In this section, we focus on the ongoing international interventions in the West African Sahel, and we decided to do so for two reasons. First, the Sahel is one of the Global South's regions seen by many donor governments and development agencies as harbouring "fragile situations" with the potential to serve as a source of security threats to the global community. Second, the description of the region as fragile – in relation to its constituting states – and the securitization of its threats have informed a dimension of externally coordinated policy programmes in the region that could be categorized as containment interventions. From this context, Cold-Ravnkilde and Jacobsen (2020, p. 858) contend that the Sahel as a spatial zone "offers a favourable context for exploring different manifestations of contemporary interventionism". In what follows, we briefly present the empirical account of a new containment exercise in West African Sahel: a region often dubbed by pundits as "a laboratory of experimentation" for new forms of external interventions (Lopez Lucia, 2017; Venturi, 2017).

As a trans-state security complex, West African Sahel does not have clearly demarcated boundaries. Nonetheless, some countries that have all or part of their territories fall within this regional space include Mali, Niger, Mauritania, Burkina Faso, and Nigeria (Obamamoye, 2020, p. 162). Increasingly from the early second decade of this century, the donor community underscored the "fragile situations" of the Sahel and how it posed existential threats to the international community. In 2011, for instance, the EU described Sahel as "one of the poorest regions of the world" with challenges of "fragile governance, corruption, unresolved internal tensions, the risk of violent extremism and radicalisation, illicit trafficking and terrorist-linked security threats" (EU, 2011). From this analytical standpoint of fragility, the EU further asserted that the "problems facing the Sahel [do] not only affect the local populations but increasingly impact directly on the interests of European citizens" (EU, 2011). Many analysts have joined in this narration of the fragile situations of the region. While Renard (2010, p. 2), for instance, describes the West African Sahel as a "hotbed of threats", Charbonneau (2017a, p. 408) contends that it is "a geographic space where terrorists breed, bloom and plot against Western and African interests".

Notwithstanding this characterization of Sahel as a dangerous, fragile zone, the region did not gain prominent attention until late 2011. The position of the mainstream donors to the region changed in January 2012 when northern Mali collapsed due to the insurgency of Tuareg nationalist rebels with the assistance of some terrorist organizations such as Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO), and Ansar Dine. By March, the development had resulted in a coup d'état in Mali. By June, the combination of AQIM, Ansar Dine, and MUJAO had "imposed their rule and control over the conquered territories of the north" (Charbonneau, 2017b, p. 417). This audacious advancement of terrorist operations in Mali (and subsequently in neighbouring countries of Niger, Burkina Faso, and Mauritania) consolidated the existing donor analysis of the Sahel as a fragile zone that poses a threat to the existence of the Western community. Of course, this analysis was not unexpected due to the recent experience of the 9/11 terrorist attacks and the active mindset of a global war on terror. Beyond this delineation of the region as a haven for anti-Western terrorists, European countries securitized the fragile situations of the Sahel from 2015 as a source

of “irregular migration crisis” to Europe. To this end, in 2015, the EU asserted that the issues of “irregular migration and related crimes such as trafficking in human beings and smuggling of migrants, radicalisation and violent extremism are serious challenges to the [Sahel] region and have potential spill-over effects outside the region, including the EU” (Council of the EU, 2015). In this regard, their actions towards the region centred primarily on containing and mitigating threats rather than resolving the root causes of fragility or underdevelopment.

Understandably, France has been one of the leading extra-regional actors responding to the threats posed by the West African Sahel region since 2013. On 11 January 2013, the French government launched Operation Serval in Mali with the involvement of 4,000 French troops (Charbonneau, 2017b, p. 417). The key mandate of the operation was not capacity building to resolve the fragile situation of Mali. Rather, its overriding agenda was to push back the expansion and threats of armed terrorists in the country and, thereby, restore Mali’s lost territorial control. Reinforcing this point, Charbonneau (2017b, p. 418) argues that the “Serval intervention was the watershed moment that focused international attention on the terrorist threat”. With a level of success in restricting the terrorist operations in Mali, France transformed its Operation Serval into “Operation Barkhane” in August 2014 with a region-wise agenda of countering and containing terrorist undertakings in the West African Sahel while partnering with the affected states. In other words, Operation Barkhane was launched as a regionalized fight against the threat of terrorism – across Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso, Mauritania, and Chad – which corresponds with the existing securitization of fragile situations in the Sahel. Hence, for France’s Ministry of Defence, the new operation’s mandate lies in helping West African Sahel states fight terrorist networks and prevent terrorists from using the region as a haven (Larivé, 2014). To make this exercise effective, France prioritized partnership with local actors (Obamamoye, 2020, p. 165). It facilitated the creation of the Group of Five (G5) Joint Task Force in February 2017 to join in the effort “to combat the threat of terrorist organisations operating in the region, tackle international crime and reduce migration flows” (Chafer et al., 2020, pp. 496–497). In this regard, as the local community would have expected, France’s empirical action in the West African Sahel was not for reconstructing enduring development structures, which have the leverage to resolve the underpinning of fragility in the region. On the contrary, its operation aims at containing the mobility of existential threats.

The US is the second leading donor state that equally responded to the states of fragility in the West African Sahel. The American intervention in the region equally has a containment agenda. As far back as 2002, the US government launched the Pan Sahel Initiative (PSI) to assist Mali, Niger, Chad, and Mauritania in combating terrorist operations in the Sahel. This initiative was later transformed into the Trans-Saharan Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP) in 2005 to include Burkina Faso, Algeria, Nigeria, Morocco, Tunisia, and Senegal (Tankel, 2020, p. 882). Despite this reorganization, the core agenda of the operation continued to revolve around building the local capacity to prevent the creation of a haven for extremism and terrorism in the Sahel. However, with the collapse of northern Mali in 2012 and the subsequent growing securitization of the West African Sahel as a risk zone, the US government adjusted its response towards the region to a more direct engagement. By 22 February 2013, the US government increased its military presence in Niger to 100 personnel, mainly for regional intelligence collection and sharing in the West African Sahel (Obama, 2013). By 2018, the US military presence in Niger had soared to about 800 troops (Callimachi et al., 2018). At the regional level, between 2015 and 2020, the US spent US\$209.6 million on its interventionist programmes in the Sahel, mainly to “provide training, equipment, and logistical support

to militaries in Burkina Faso, Chad, Mauritania, and Niger” (United States Office of the Inspector General, 2020). Even though some of these undertakings involved building local capacities, they are not empowerment projects aiming to find a lasting solution to the fragile situation in the Sahel. Instead, the cardinal goal of the US government in this region revolves around gathering information for the containment of existential threats.

The third major donor actor that equally intervened in West African Sahel through a containment approach is the EU. In 2011, the EU launched its “Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel” with a specific focus on Niger, Mali, and Mauritania (and later extended to Burkina Faso and Chad). The policymakers within the EU initiated this strategy because they underscored the inextricable link between the fragile situations of the region and the safety of Europe. Hence, they note unambiguously in the Strategy that: “An urgent and a more recent priority is to prevent AQIM attacks in the Sahel region and its potential to carry out attacks on EU territory, [and] to reduce and contain drug and other criminal trafficking destined for Europe ... Improving security and development in [the] Sahel has an obvious and direct impact on protecting European citizens and interests and on the EU internal security situation” (EU, 2011, p. 4). In 2015, the EU refined this Strategy and launched its 2015–2020 Sahel Regional Action Plan (RAP) as a modified, integrated framework for responding to the fragile situations in the Sahel. This framework, which is also known as the EU Sahel Strategy, identifies four principal domains for EU actions in the Sahel: preventing and countering radicalization; creating appropriate conditions for youth; migration and mobility; and border management, fight against illicit trafficking and transnational organized crime (Council of the EU, 2015, p. 5). The mandate has undoubtedly guided the activities of the EU in West African Sahel in recent times. In this case, the EU development aid to countries in the region has been fundamentally “re-orientated to meet the Strategy’s security objectives” (Lopez Lucia, 2017, p. 458).

Within this framework of thought, the EU has carried out three major interventions in the region. In 2012, European policymakers launched the European Union Capacity Building Mission (EUCAP) Sahel Niger to “strengthen the capacities of Nigerien security agencies to fight terrorism and organized crime, and to foster their interoperability” (Lopez Lucia, 2019, pp. 29–30). The mandate of the EUCAP Sahel Niger was, nonetheless, expanded in 2015 to prevent transnational irregular migration to Europe (Frowd, 2020, p. 350). The same approach was replicated on 15 January 2015, when the EU took another move and inaugurated the EUCAP Sahel Mali to offer training and strategic advice for the Malian security agents to aid their security enforcement. To showcase their regional outlook, the EU authorized both the EUCAP Sahel Niger and EUCAP Sahel Mali to carry out targeted activities for Chad, Burkina Faso, and Mauritania (EU, 2020). Also, as an integral part of its policy response to the states of fragility in the Sahel, the EU established the EU Training Mission (EUTM) Mali in 2013 with the initial mandate of training the Malian armed forces for professionalism and reduction of terrorist threats. Since May 2018, the mandate of the EUTM has been expanded to include the provision of training and advice to the G5 Sahel Joint Force (EU, 2020). Based on these empirical actions, just like France and the US, the EU’s undertakings in the Sahel have been tailored towards an attempt to contain security threats (and illegal migration) or mitigate their risks. The EU’s containment project is informed by its operative conclusion on the Sahel as a fragile region that presents the menace of terrorism and unlawful migration to Europe (Bøås, 2021). Zooming in on this connection, Frowd (2020) concludes that the categorization

and securitization of Niger as a “transit state” for illegal migration in the Sahel motivated the nature of recent donors’ interventions in the country.

Looking at it closely, three key issues could be identified concerning these containment actions in the West African Sahel. First, while there is no doubt that the Sahelian region needs external assistance, the containment interventions rolled out in the region prioritized donors’ core interests over the fundamental interests of the local community. Unlike the donor community, whose prime agenda focused on limiting the operation and mobility of (potential) threats, the fundamental interest of the local community revolves around the need to trigger irreversible progress towards holistic development and societal cohesion with the prioritization of local knowledge and agency. This elevation of the donors’ agenda in the Sahel tends to trivialize the main issue of holistic development assistance and reconstruction of the region, which, of course, needs to be tackled from multiple socio-political and economic fronts (see, for instance, Obamamoye, 2017). Second, because the fundamental priority of these interventions is containment, they *cannot* resolve the root causes of the fragile situations in the Sahel. The securitized situations in the region have further deteriorated despite many years of these interventions. The 2021 Fragile States Index Annual Report shows that the recipient Sahelian states have not recorded any significant improvement in their fragility index (The Fund for Peace, 2021). The United Nations stated in its July 2021 Security Council Report that “the security situation in the Sahel continues to deteriorate” (UN Security Council, 2021). To further demonstrate this worsening situation, between 2020 and 2022, the region experienced four military takeovers, and the main reason stated by military leaders for three of these cases related to the deteriorating realities in the region. Finally, the present containment interventions in the West African Sahel have started provoking local resistance. On 26 June 2021, for instance, a large segment of the local population publicly protested against the military presence of France in Mali. During this demonstration, one of the protesters (Bakary Coulibaly) noted that he “would be so happy, like a party, if France quit Mali today ... because [e]ver since we trusted with our security, everything has become worse” (Africanews, 2021). Of course, this local resistance movement is inevitable. Every containment project tends to produce highly regulatory biopolitics and unending, normalizing realities of fragility and resilience, which are inimical to the actual aspiration of the recipient community. By and large, this means that any external intervention that would be effective in dealing with the problem of state fragility would have to be robust enough to respect and incorporate the interests and sensibilities of the local community in its agenda and design.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has explored the development and transformation of the conceptual discourse of state fragility in global policy circles and how the (re)formulation of the concept impacted donors’ foreign policy actions towards fragile states. More specifically, the chapter dissected how the framing of the concept experienced a shift in the last few years and how this phenomenon ushered in specific policy adjustments that allowed the overarching prioritization of donors’ worries and interests in the broad effort to manage transitions out of fragility. It precisely argued that the shift in the conceptualization of state fragility from purely capacity deficits to risk mitigation gave rise to donors’ commitment to containment interventions in

fragile states. To demonstrate the empirical reality of this development, we have drawn on the case of the ongoing American and European interventions in the West African Sahel.

Fundamentally, the analysis in this chapter shares the analytical standpoint of different scholars who have been unequivocal on the need for policymakers within the international donor community to rethink their responses to the issue of fragility and their engagement in fragile states (Carment and Samy, 2019; Cooke and Downie, 2015; De Weijer, 2012). This is particularly because, as we have demonstrated, the current donor-coordinated containment interventions in different fragile states only compound, if not worsen, the very problem of state fragility.

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4. Current conceptualizations and measurements of state fragility: recent developments and remaining limits

*Ines A. Ferreira*¹

INTRODUCTION

Almost three decades have passed since state fragility assumed its prominent position in the development discourse. The increasing interest in fragile states emerged at different points in different disciplines (Carment et al., 2009).² While related terms, such as “state failure” and “state collapse,” had been applied before within the field of international relations in association with concerns over global security, it was only after a change in the views regarding human security in the late 1990s (Nay, 2013, p. 327; Call, 2010, p. 305; Clapham, 2002, p. 784) – and especially after the 9/11 events – that development organizations and academics started to employ the term “fragile states” with development concerns (see Chapters 2 and 3 in this volume for a more detailed discussion of the development of the state fragility agenda and the use of the concept in the policy arena). Fragile states imposed a dilemma for development assistance: while aid towards countries with low levels of policy and institutional quality was expected to be less effective, they were also in greatest need (e.g. Feeny and McGillivray, 2009).

Notwithstanding the criticism of the concept and skepticism towards the usefulness of the term altogether, state fragility retained its importance and continues to hold sway, especially in the policy arena, with great implications in decision-making, for example, in terms of aid allocation and foreign policy. The recent COVID-19 crisis has imposed further implications for countries affected by state fragility, through its contribution to deteriorating their response capacity as well as through its global economic implications (e.g. Carment et al., 2020).

This chapter takes stock of where we are today in terms of how state fragility is conceptualized and measured, adopting the perspective (and focus) of development economics. The main arguments relate to methodological issues underlying the measures of fragility, and indices in particular. The chapter highlights that fragility measures have been progressively adapted to recognize the multidimensionality of the concept, namely through avoiding the over-reliance on single indices, and bringing more clarity into the selection of different dimensions as well as presenting their individual scores and rankings. However, it is argued that some lack of clarity remains in terms of the choice of indicators used (with implications for the distinction between causes and consequences of fragility). Moreover, even if significant progress has been achieved in providing user-friendly tools for data visualization and representation, improvements can still be made related to the data used and how current measures can be applied in analysis that is also tailored to the context.

CONCEPTUALIZING STATE FRAGILITY

There has been great conceptual ambiguity in how the term fragile states is employed. It was initially frequently used interchangeably with an array of other related expressions, such as “weak,” “failing,” “failed,” or “collapsed” states, “difficult partnerships,” “difficult environments,” “poor performers,” and “situations of fragility,” whose definitions were sometimes clear only to the authors applying them (Cammack et al., 2006; Stepputat and Engberg-Pedersen, 2008; Chapter 3 by Lemay-Hébert and Obamamoye in this *Handbook*).

The term increasingly established itself in the development vocabulary, but not without criticism. Some critiques related to the concept itself (Boege et al., 2008; Nay, 2013) and to the associated concept of state failure, namely their lack of grounding in theory (e.g. Hameiri, 2007; Di John, 2010), while others related to the broader discourse surrounding these concepts, namely the political implications of labeling countries as fragile (e.g. Grimm et al., 2014). I return to some of these elements in the following paragraphs, which briefly reflect on the current thinking about state fragility, focusing on recently proposed conceptual frameworks and the definitions of fragile states used by academics and policy actors, and refer to Chapter 3 in this volume for more detailed insights into the recent developments in the conceptual discourse on state fragility and their implications for donor actions.

Current Thinking About Fragility

Previous reviews of the earlier conceptualizations distinguished between different generations of definitions of state fragility and highlighted a set of caveats that undermined the use of the term (e.g. Cammack et al., 2006; Carment et al., 2009; Bertoli and Ticci, 2012; Nay, 2013). One of the concerns raised was that conceptualizations of fragility lacked clarity in terms of their underlying theoretical bases (see Ferreira, 2017, for more details; Lambach et al., 2015, p. 1303). Recognizing that despite the economic consequences of state fragility, there was this lack of attention by mainstream development economics on the theoretical underpinnings of the concept, Besley and Persson (2011) proposed a theoretical framework to explore the origins of state fragility, highlighting “*state ineffectiveness* in enforcing contracts, protecting property, providing public goods and raising revenues” and “*political violence* either in the form of repression or civil conflict” as two pathologies of the state (Besley and Persson, 2011, p. 373, emphasis in original). This framework contributed to unpacking the complexity of the concept by enabling a clear distinction between causes, symptoms and consequences.

More recently, the LSE-Oxford Commission on State Fragility, Growth and Development (2018) and Werker and Sen (2021) also offered analytical frameworks to understand the link between state fragility and development. In parallel, a number of studies have focused on the roots of fragility (see Chapter 2 in this volume), fragility traps (LSE-Oxford Commission on State Fragility, Growth and Development, 2018), the reasons behind the persistence of fragility (Carment and Samy, 2019) and what causes countries to enter into and exit fragility (Akanbi et al., 2021), as well as the type of policies that may help countries escape these traps (Bandiera et al., 2021; Chami et al., 2021).

At the same time, there have been recent changes in the international development community, namely in terms of how fragility is defined. Some of the definitions proposed by regional and international organizations and by national governments are included in

Table 4.1 Selected list of definitions

Organization	Term: Definition
African Dev. Bank Group	Fragile situation: “condition of elevated risk of institutional breakdown, societal collapse, or violent conflict.”
OECD	Fragility: “The OECD characterises fragility as the combination of exposure to risk and insufficient coping capacity of the state, systems and/or communities to manage, absorb or mitigate those risks. Fragility can lead to negative outcomes including violence, poverty, inequality, displacement, and environmental and political degradation.”
World Bank Group	Fragility and Conflict Situations: “Fragility: Countries with deep governance issues and state institutional weakness are identified through policy-based and governance indicators. Fragile situations tend to be characterized by deep grievances and/or high levels of exclusion, lack of capacity, and limited provision of basic services to the population. Fragile situations tend also to be characterized by the inability or unwillingness of the state to manage or mitigate risks, including those linked to social, economic, political, security, or environmental and climatic factors.”
g7+	Fragility: “A state of fragility can be understood as a period of time during nationhood when sustainable socio-economic development requires greater emphasis on complementary peacebuilding and statebuilding activities such as building inclusive political settlements, security, justice, jobs, good management of resources, and accountable and fair service delivery.”
United States of America (government)	Fragility: “Fragility refers to a country’s or region’s vulnerability to armed conflict, large-scale violence, or other instability, including an inability to manage transnational threats or other significant shocks. Fragility results from ineffective or unaccountable governance, weak social cohesion, and/or corrupt institutions or leaders who lack respect for human rights.”
Fund for Peace	State fragility: “A state that is fragile has several attributes, and such fragility may manifest itself in various ways. Nevertheless, some of the most common attributes of state fragility may include: the loss of physical control of its territory or a monopoly on the legitimate use of force; the erosion of legitimate authority to make collective decisions; an inability to provide reasonable public services; the inability to interact with other states as a full member of the international community.”
Center for Systemic Peace	State fragility: “A country’s fragility is closely associated with its state capacity to manage conflict, make and implement public policy, and deliver essential services, and its systemic resilience in maintaining system coherence, cohesion, and quality of life, responding effectively to challenges and crises, and sustaining progressive development.”
German Development Institute	State fragility: “State fragility is defined as deficiencies in one or more of three core functions of the state. These functions include state authority, state capacity and state legitimacy. Authority refers to the state’s ability to control violence. Capacity refers to the state’s ability to provide basic public services. Legitimacy refers to the state’s ability to obtain the population’s consent to the state’s claim to rule.”
Carleton University	Fragility: “The definition of fragility [...] considers fragility as a multidimensional phenomenon. [...] states are the main units of analysis and must exhibit the fundamental properties of authority, legitimacy and capacity (ALC) to function properly. States are affected by internal and external forces that are constantly changing over time and fragility measures the extent to which the actual characteristics of a state differ from their ideal situation. Weaknesses in one or more of the ALC dimensions will negatively impact the fragility of a particular state.”

Sources: Author’s elaboration based on African Development Bank Group (2014, p. 7); OECD (2020, Executive Summary); World Bank (2020, p. 6); g7+ (2013, p. 1); US Department of State (2020, p. 3 – footnote 1); Fund for Peace (2021a); Marshall and Elzinga-Marshall (2021, p. 7); Grävingsholt et al. (2018); Ziaja et al. (2019); Carment et al. (2020, p. 2).

Table 4.1, together with selected definitions proposed by think tanks and academic organizations (which also have links to national development organizations).

Based on these definitions, four general observations can be drawn about the current thinking on state fragility and what has changed in recent decades. First, there is a clear emphasis

in some of the current definitions on risk and vulnerability/resilience. For instance, the current approach by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) mentions this explicitly.³ Similarly, the United States government considers that fragility refers to a country's or region's vulnerability to different outcomes, while the Center for Systemic Peace mentions the association between fragility and "systemic resilience" (Marshall and Elzinga-Marshall, 2021, p. 7). Lemay-Hébert (2019) interprets these changes as a shift in the normative system towards resilience-building, which is also expressed in the discursive move away from "fragile states" to "fragile and conflict situations" (World Bank Group) or "states of fragility" (OECD).⁴

Second, the link between fragility and conflict/violence (see Saeed, 2020, p. 768; Carment et al., 2009, p. 3) is still reflected in current approaches. A recent change in the World Bank Group's (WBG) approach considers the two concepts separately. The current classification distinguishes between countries with high levels of institutional and social fragility, and those affected by violent conflict. Violence appears as one of the potential negative outcomes of fragility in the OECD's approach (OECD, 2020), and the definitions by the African Development Bank Group and the US government describe fragility as the risk or vulnerability of armed conflict and violence. This reflects an understanding that, if not addressed, fragility results in added violence and underdevelopment with consequences at the national level but also beyond the state's borders (Saeed, 2020, p. 768).

Third, there has been a more pronounced move away from a binary distinction between fragile and non-fragile states to a more nuanced view of fragility as a complex phenomenon, and as encompassing a continuum with failure or collapse at one end of the spectrum. This is explicit, for instance, in the way in which the group at Carleton University conceptualizes fragility by assuming that "all states are fragile to some extent" and that fragility is a matter of degree not kind (Carment et al., 2020, p. 2). Also mentioned by this group is the fact that fragility is established in comparison with an ideal situation. This is reflected more broadly in the understanding of fragility as a deviation from an expected performance of an ideal state. Earlier critiques of the concept argued that the notion of fragile states was based on a narrow state-centric perspective (Boege et al., 2009) and consequently suffered from analytical reductionism (Nay, 2013, p. 333). The view that deviations from a Weberian ideal-type of state are associated with state weakness, fragility and failure was accused of being intrinsically relational and normative, i.e. based on a comparison with an ideal performance of an effective, capable, legitimate, and stable state (Bertoli and Ticci, 2012, p. 216; Bhuta, 2012, pp. 236–237). Some contended that this ideal state does not exist in reality beyond the most advanced industrialized countries (Milliken and Krause, 2002, p. 755; Boege et al., 2009; Nay, 2013, pp. 332–333) and, more recently, that it does not exist at all (Saeed, 2020).

Fourth, while the state still plays a central role in current definitions, there have been some changes in the discourse around the need to move beyond the state. Compelling arguments for maintaining a state-centered approach were advanced, for instance, by Grävingsholt, Ziaja and Kreibaum (2012, p. 1) related to the fact that most actors in development policy have country-based operation models and allocation systems, and that states retained an important role in the international system. However, the excessive emphasis on fragility as a deficit in state capacity was criticized for disregarding the role of non-state actors, namely in the performance of functions that are attributed to the state in the Western world as well as in state-building processes (Lemay-Hébert, 2019, p. 82). Recent developments can be observed, for instance, in changes in the labeling to "situations" by the WBG and the

African Development Bank. The OECD also refrains from mentioning the word “countries” in its description of the methodology used and refers instead to “contexts” affected by fragility (OECD, 2021). Additionally, the new proposed framework highlights the need for a “whole-of-society approach,” which considers actors at different layers of society (OECD, 2016, p. 140), and promotes a people-centered perspective of fragility, for instance, by including indicators that represent people’s risk and resilience (Desai and Forsberg, 2020, p. 22). This change reflects an increasing recognition of the need to consider the role of different actors as well as the problems of those living in fragile states, and has contributed to broadening the discourse towards a more well-rounded approach to fragility. Yet, some skepticism remains on whether this change in thinking will actually lead to further interactions with the people in local communities (Lemay-Hébert, 2019, p. 84).⁵

MEASURING STATE FRAGILITY

Turning to current proposals to operationalize the concept and measure state fragility, this section starts by reflecting on the dimensions considered and the indicators selected (linking to the discussion in the previous section), and then looks at the data and methods employed, as well as the type of outcomes offered. Before turning to this, a note is needed on the popularity of measures based on indicators. As described in the previous section (and in other chapters in this volume), as fragile states assumed an increasingly ubiquitous place in the discourse of international donors, there was a pressing need for quantification⁶ which was met by a proliferation of indices. Indicator-based measures allow users to simplify reality and enable aggregation, comparison and generalization on a large scale (Gutiérrez et al., 2011, p. 8). Still, they of course have limits and other alternatives have been proposed, to which we return below.

The focus here is on six prominent approaches in the fragile states discourse (see Table 4.2 for a summary of their main characteristics). Two are proposed by international development organizations: (i) “States of Fragility” by the OECD; and (ii) “Fragile and Conflict Situations” advanced by the WBG. The first publications from the OECD on engagement with fragile states date back to 2005, and until 2014, the measure proposed by this organization was derived from indices of development progress, and used to compile a list of fragile and non-fragile contexts (Desai and Forsberg, 2020, p. 21). In 2015, there was a change to adopting a multidimensional framework to the analysis of state fragility, which was further updated in 2016 and used in subsequent reports. This framework is built on the application of systems thinking and combines quantitative and qualitative approaches to analyses of fragility across five dimensions: economic, environmental, political, security and societal (see details in Desai and Forsberg, 2020).

The WBG’s classification of fragile states has transformed over the past almost two decades, from “low-income countries under stress” (LICUS, publicly disclosed from 2006) to Fragile States list (2009–2010), Harmonized List of Fragile Situations (2011–2020) and list of Fragile and Conflict Situations, which is the most recent classification and linked to the Bank’s first Fragility, Conflict and Violence strategy (World Bank, 2021c). This new classification aims to overcome some limitations of the previous by distinguishing between various types of situations and allowing for differentiated approaches.

The remaining four measures are proposed by think tanks/academic institutions: (i) “Country Indicators for Foreign Policy (CIFP) Fragility Index” (by Carleton University);

Table 4.2 Measurement tools

Name	Dimensions	No. indicators	Data type/ availability	Method	Weighting	Outputs	No. countries (latest year)	Predictive vs. status quo	Years covered
OECD	Economic Environmental Political Security Societal	44	Type: Public statistics; expert opinion Availability: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final fragility and indicator scores available for the selected countries Raw data from publicly available sources and available from public repository 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Stage 1 Principal component analysis: fragility score for each dimension. Hierarchical clustering based on the values of the first two principal components: 6 clusters (ranked based on expert qualitative assessments). Stage 2 Principal component analysis of the first two principal components: aggregate fragility score. 	Weights resulting from principal component analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> List of fragile contexts: those with aggregate score of -1.2 or lower (“fragile,” with those with a score of -2.5 or lower being “extremely fragile”) Overall score and indicator score for the fragile contexts Designated interactive website 	57 (2020)	Ambiguous!	2016, 2018, 2020
WB	Institutional and social fragility Violent conflict	5	Type: Public statistics; expert opinion Availability: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lists of countries available, but not the underlying data Raw data from publicly available sources 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Definitions based on threshold levels and minimum criteria. 	No aggregation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> List of fragile and conflict situations, divided into “high-intensity conflict,” “medium-intensity conflict,” and “high institutional and social fragility” 	39 (2021 – FY2022)	Status quo	2006–2021

Name	Dimensions	No. indicators	Data type/ availability	Method	Weighting	Outputs	No. countries (latest year)	Predictive vs. status quo	Years covered
CSP	Security Political Economic Social, each with an Effectiveness and Legitimacy component	8	Type: public statistics; expert opinion Availability: ● Final fragility index and indicator scores available, but not the underlying data ● Raw data from publicly available sources	1. Each indicator converted to a four- (or five-) point fragility scale. 2. Composite index, based on the aggregation of scores. Use of highlight/ referent indicators for comparison (not included in the calculation).	Equal weighting of the dimensions	● Ranking of countries according to fragility index and scores for the different dimensions and referent indicators	167 (2018)	Status quo	1995–2018

Name	Dimensions	No. indicators	Data type/ availability	Method	Weighting	Outputs	No. countries (latest year)	Predictive vs. status quo	Years covered
Fund for Peace	Cohesion Economic Political Social Cross-cutting	12 (broken into over 100 sub-indicators)	Type: global media data; public quantitative data; independent reviews Availability: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final fragility and indicator scores available Raw data not available 	Conflict Assessment System Tool (CAST): <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Content analysis to assess the saliency of each sub-indicator through Boolean search phrases. Identification of trends based on pre-existing quantitative data and comparison with content analysis. Independent qualitative review by social science researchers. Triangulation and final review. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 12 indicators equally weighted My:FSI option on the website to manually select the weight of indicators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall score and rank of fragility, and change from previous year, and scores for each indicator Division of countries in 11 categories, from “very sustainable” (lowest levels) to “very high alert” (highest levels) Designated interactive website 	179 (2021)	Predictive	2006–2021

Name	Dimensions	No. indicators	Data type/ availability	Method	Weighting	Outputs	No. countries (latest year)	Predictive vs. status quo	Years covered
DIE-GDI	Authority Capacity Legitimacy	10	Type: public statistics; expert opinion Availability: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final scores for the indicators, constellations and clean data used available Raw data from publicly available sources 	1. Standardization of each indicator and imputation of some values. 2. "Weakest link approach": determine the final scores. 3. Finite mixture modelling: identify the 6 clusters.	No weighting, each score results from the lowest value among all of the indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Division of countries into 6 constellations, from "dysfunctional" (lower scores) to "well-functioning" (higher scores), and respective probabilities of belonging to that cluster Scores in the three dimensions Designated interactive website 	171 (2015)	Status quo	2005-2015

Name	Dimensions	No. indicators	Data type/ availability	Method	Weighting	Outputs	No. countries (latest year)	Predictive vs. status quo	Years covered
Carleton University	Authority Legitimacy Capacity Performance clusters: Demography Economics Environment Governance Human development Security and crime	78	Type: ● CIPP: structural data, events monitoring and qualitative assessments ● Reports: public statistics; expert opinion Availability: ● Final scores for dimensions, clusters and fragility index available, but not underlying data ● Raw structural data from publicly available sources	Index based on structural data: 1. Quantitative indicators converted to a nine-point scale based on the performance of the country relative to the global sample; averaged over five-year time frames. 2. Averages to create six cluster scores. 3. Averages to create three dimension scores. 4. Averages of all indicators to obtain fragility index.	Equal weighting	● Website includes tables with full coverage of scores for 2010–2012 ● Partial rankings of countries and scores for dimensions, clusters and overall index can be found in reports	197 (2020)	Status quo and predictive ²	2006, 2008, 2012, 2014, 2016, 2017, 2020

Notes:

¹ While “risk” and “coping” dimensions point to predictions, it is noted that the framework should not be interpreted as predictive but rather as providing an analysis of the current state of fragility (OECD, 2016, p. 74; Wencker and Verspohl, 2019, p. 19).

² Fabra Mata and Ziaja (2009, p. 36).

Sources: Author’s elaboration based on: OECD (2020, 2021); World Bank (2021a, 2021b, 2021c); Marshall and Goldstone (2007); Marshall and Elzinga-Marshall (2021); Fund for Peace (2021b, 2021c); Grävingsholt et al. (2018); Ziaja et al. (2019); Carment et al. (2009, 2020); Carleton University (2021).

(ii) “State fragility index and matrix” (by the Center for Systemic Peace – CSP hereafter); (iii) “Constellations of Fragility” (by the Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik and the German Development Institute – DIE-GDI hereafter); and (iv) “Fragile States Index” (by the Fund for Peace – FSI hereafter). Carleton University hosts a project on Failed and Fragile States which offers an overview of countries’ fragility scores and the trends over time. The methodology combines extensive structural data on different indicators divided into six clusters – governance, economic, security and crime, human development, demography, and environment – with dynamic events monitoring.

While already under development over previous years, the “State Fragility Index” was first released in 2007 by the CSP. It is based on systems analysis that considers three key dimensions: governance, conflict and development. These dimensions have critical effects on each other, and changes within each of them will depend on applied coordination (effectiveness) and voluntary compliance (legitimacy) combined (Marshall and Goldstone, 2007, p. 4). According to this approach, there is a close association between fragility and two elements: state capacity and systemic resilience. The proposed fragility index is built using a matrix of indicators on effectiveness and legitimacy in security, political, economic and social dimensions.

The DIE-GDI “Constellations of Fragility” proposes a typology that distinguishes between states that are well-functioning, semi-functional, states with low-authority, low-capacity, or low-legitimacy, and dysfunctional states (Ziaja et al., 2019). The typology is derived from a model-based clustering approach which considers state fragility as “deficiencies in one or more of three core functions of the state,” namely authority (or violence control), capacity and legitimacy (Ziaja et al., 2019, p. 299), each representing an element of the state–society relation and rooted in political theory. The authors highlight that the main focus is in identifying general patterns across countries and over time, rather than precisely measuring the fragility of a country at a particular point in time (Ziaja et al., 2019, p. 301).

In contrast with other indices that were generated with the goal of measuring fragility, the FSI was created after its underlying methodology – the Conflict Assessment System Tool (CAST) – had been developed. The CAST framework was intended to enable a better understanding and measurement of conflict drivers and dynamics in complex environments since the 1990s and has been used as the basis for the FSI since 2004 (Fund for Peace, 2021c, p. 37). This index results from the triangulation and review of pre-existing quantitative data sets, content analysis and qualitative expert analysis, and scores countries based on twelve cohesion, economic, political, social and cross-cutting indicators. The authors highlight that, although the index enables the ranking of countries, the focus of the analysis should be instead on trends within countries (Fund for Peace, 2021c).

Dimensions and Choice of Indicators

First, current measures reflect the progressive shift to understanding state fragility as a multidimensional phenomenon and to recognizing the need to consider its different dimensions separately.⁷ The approach by the DIE-GDI and the initial papers proposing the framework underlying the “Constellations of Fragility” explicitly aimed at addressing multidimensionality. The shift is particularly clear from the changes made by OECD with its new fragility framework. Moreover, the focus on different dimensions is apparent as well in the proposals by the groups at Carleton University and by the Fund for Peace. Considering different dimen-

sions separately also has implications for the aggregation step, to which we return in the next section.

In some cases, the different dimensions of fragility refer to elements of state performance in what are assumed to be its core functions.⁸ In line with Call (2010), both the proposals by DIE-GDI and Carleton University are built on a three-dimensional approach that considers authority, legitimacy and capacity, while the measure by CSP considers effectiveness and legitimacy only.⁹ From a different perspective, the OECD structures its measure by distinguishing between indicators of risk and of coping capacity. Considering the critique on the lack of theoretical grounding mentioned earlier, progress has been achieved in terms of the clarity of the choices made. For instance, the justification for choosing each of the dimensions used is described in detail by DIE-GDI and by the group at Carleton University in several papers, and there has been a noticeable effort from OECD to clarify the systems thinking underlying their approach (Desai and Forsberg, 2020). Still, in the case of the latter, there could be more clarity in terms of how this approach translates into the different dimensions identified. Moreover, there is no explicit reference to the theory behind the five clusters (cohesion, economic, political, social and cross-cutting) identified by Fund for Peace or the definitions of fragility and conflict employed by the WBG. The lack of theoretical foundations has implications not only for the clarity of the concept derived, but also for the derived measures, often leading to confusion between symptoms, correlates and causes of fragility (Besley and Persson, 2011, p. 372; Gutiérrez-Sanin, 2011, p. 21).

This leads to the next point regarding the indicators used. On the one hand, despite drawing on similar dimensions (as highlighted above), different approaches select different indicators to proxy for them. This is the case, for example, of the approaches by DIE-GDI and Carleton, with the number of indicators used by the former being much smaller than that of the latter. On the other hand, pooling together the lists of indicators used in all of the measures considered (with the exception of the FSI, given that this information is not available) shows that certain indicators are frequently used. While choices are certainly limited by the lack of data availability, most approaches fail to explain the link between the indicators selected and the dimension being measured (Ziaja, 2012). For example, even if on the “States of Fragility” website it is possible to read about the link between each indicator and state fragility, this could be complemented by information on the link between the indicator and the respective dimension of fragility.

Comparing the group of proposals considering indicators across different clusters (e.g. economic, social, political, etc.), they have a broader scope than more narrow definitions of fragility, namely from the WBG.¹⁰ Still, one can also question whether some of these indicators confuse causes and consequences of fragility. While, as mentioned in the second section, the notion of fragility is explicitly linked to conflict, Glawion, de Vries and Mehler (2018, p. 4) describe how by using indicators on degree of conflict to assess fragility in the security sector, the FSI may be disregarding the complexity of the relationship between institutional settings and the occurrence of conflict. It can be questioned whether in conflict-affected cases, these indicators are measuring fragility or mechanisms leading to more fragility (Glawion et al., 2018, p. 4). Furthermore, many of the indicators used are composite indices (subsequently aggregated with other indicators), which further precludes the precision in the measurement of fragility and its dimensions. While composite indices are useful in providing a summary of different attributes (proxied through a variety of indicators), they may distort reality if the data

available does not correspond to the period of interest, and they may also lead to challenges in establishing attribution or causality (Tikuisis et al., 2015, p. 568).

Types of Data Sources and Methods

As alluded to in the previous section, another limitation in the measurement of state fragility is data availability. Across the different measurement approaches, there is an overall reliance on a common pool of open source indicators that compare countries over time, including both data from public statistics and expert data (Ziaja, 2012). Public statistics (e.g. based on household surveys) are plagued by measurement error related, for example, to the process of data collection, which is exacerbated in fragile contexts. Even if data based on experts' assessments present an alternative, these are subjective and may also be biased given that they rely on experts that are mostly international academics with analogous background and experience (Fabra Mata and Ziaja, 2009, p. 15).

Moreover, while these structural data are helpful in identifying societal factors and root causes, and in accounting for changes over long periods of time, they are limited in explaining specific events or patterns of social interaction, as well as variation in these patterns (Carment et al., 2009, p. 159). According to the CIFP approach (Carment et al., 2009, p. 159), this type of data should be complemented with dynamic data (or events-based information analysis) to identify and provide context and detail about updated trends in perceptions and behavior. Given issues of data availability and the costs of data collection, open-source indicators are readily available and offer a plethora of indicators to proxy for different factors. Still, contextual analysis is important to enable an understanding of the performance of the state and of causal factors and fluctuations of stakeholder behavior over time (Carment et al., 2009, p. 62).

Finally, a note on aggregation. Many of the selected measures of fragility aggregate different indicators to obtain scores for dimensions of fragility and an overall score, and for the latter, several measures apply equal weights to aggregate the different dimensions. Earlier discussions warned of the underlying problems of weighting procedures, namely that they allow for compensation of scores between indicators and introduce hidden biases (Gutiérrez-Sanin, 2011). Some questioned whether the weights attributed to different indicators (some of which, as mentioned above, are already composite indicators) were suitable, and, in particular, considered the implications of assuming that different indicators contribute equally to an overall score.

I refer to others who have discussed the problems related to weighted averages and the weighting of indicators (e.g. Gutiérrez-Sanin, 2011; Ziaja, 2012) and highlight some efforts made to tackle these issues. For instance, the DIE-GDI proposal derives each score from the lowest value among all of the indicators. While the Fund for Peace employs equal weighting of the indicators to obtain the dimension scores, there is an option on its website that allows users to manually select the weight of indicators and observe the corresponding changes in the scores, which contributes to increased transparency regarding the obtained rankings.¹¹ In general, one notes that there has been an increased effort to improve transparency, namely by providing more detailed information about the methodology used in the construction of the indices, which is an important element for users to assess the suitability (and impartiality) of the measure for a specific application as well as its replicability (Fabra Mata and Ziaja, 2009).

Outputs Produced

Turning now to the type of output produced, i.e. lists or clusters of countries, overall scores, etc., while there are still elements that can be improved, progress has been made in the face of the criticism that was leveled at earlier proposals.

First, as mentioned in previous sections, recent approaches have moved away from providing single fragility scores and one overall ranking of countries, to also presenting scores for the different dimensions and the rankings of countries according to these. While one-size-fits-all indices appeared in the policy discourse as appealing tools to rank countries from “best” to “worst” performers, they also over-simplify reality and mask differences across contexts that are crucial to derive meaningful policy implications (Tikuisis and Carment, 2017). Earlier approaches were criticized for not giving information about particular gaps experienced by countries and about the changes or processes necessary to respond to them (Goldstone, 2008, p. 287; Call, 2010, pp. 316–317).

Improvements in this regard are reflected in some of the existing approaches. For instance, it is possible to see how each country performs in each of dimensions considered by the FSI, the “States of Fragility” framework, or the “Constellations of Fragility” approach. While academics were already arguing for taking the multidimensionality of state fragility seriously (e.g. Gisselquist, 2015; Grävingholt et al., 2015), the move away from single rank indices results, at least in part, from the realization in the policy community that one-size-fits-all approaches were not enough to address the complexity of the problems affecting fragile states and as a response to the critique of earlier approaches (see Chapter 3 in this volume for a critical perspective on this shift and Chapter 6 for further discussion on multidimensionality).

Another limitation of earlier approaches was the establishment of “ad hoc” cut-off points to distinguish between fragile and non-fragile countries. The approach by the WBG is a case in point, given that historically the Bank identified fragile states based on a threshold level of the CPIA. This was questioned by some (e.g. Balamoune-Lutz and McGillivray, 2008; Milante and Woolcock, 2017, p. 1) for different reasons. Namely, a score below a certain threshold level could be obtained in many ways, focusing on threshold levels leads to overlooking the differences between countries just above or just below this cut-off point, and, finally, choosing different cut-off points may lead to identifying different groups of countries (Gutiérrez et al., 2011, p. 30). In its current approach, the Bank (see World Bank, 2021a, for details on the classification) continues to consider CPIA scores below 3.0 to define fragile situations, but has added additional criteria (some also based on cut-off points). Similar concerns can still be applied to the division of countries into groups suggested, for example, by the Fund for Peace, which are solely based on thresholds for the overall scores. Clustering methods have been proposed as a way of avoiding the manual definition of thresholds. This is the case of the “Constellations of Fragility,” the OECD’s “States of Fragility” and the categories of countries based on the CIFP approach proposed in Tikuisis and Carment (2017).¹²

Finally, it should be highlighted that there has been great progress in the way the final scores and rankings are presented, especially in terms of data visualization. A number of different online platforms have been created, namely by the Fund for Peace, OECD and the DIE-GDI group, which are user-friendly and facilitate access to data. Still, in other cases there are constraints in terms of the frequency with which data is updated (for instance, on the website offered by Carleton University). Moreover, while there have been great improvements in the transparency of existing measures (for example, OECD’s methodology is described in detail

and the underlying data are available from its website), overall there are still some challenges in terms of accessibility of the underlying data used. This is more so in cases with more complex data collection methods such as the FSI by the Fund for Peace.

CONCLUSION

This chapter gave an overview of current conceptualizations and measurements of state fragility, highlighting important changes since the term was initially employed in the development discourse, and pointing to some of the limits that remain. An overview of prominent definitions of fragility suggests an increasing focus on risk and vulnerability/resilience, a growing understanding of the complex link between fragility and conflict/violence, a more nuanced understanding of fragility as a continuum, and a greater number of voices highlighting the need to move beyond the state when conceptualizing fragility. Similarly to early evaluations of fragility indices (e.g. Ziaja, 2012), this chapter then took a careful look at what has changed and what has stayed the same in the past decades. It highlighted, in particular, that progress has been made in terms of taking multidimensionality seriously, but also that there is still room for improvement in terms of the choice of indicators and the data used.

Bearing this in mind, the chapter ends with some suggestions for improvement. First, some of the limitations of current approaches could be overcome by increased clarity and transparency in terms of the indicators chosen to measure the different dimensions of fragility, as well as in terms of the confidence intervals of the outputs produced. The former would avoid concerns over a confusion between causes and consequences of fragility, while the latter would enable policymakers to evaluate the certainty of an assessment (Wencker and Verspohl, 2019, p. 22). Moreover, greater transparency would also be achieved by improving data accessibility and providing timely updates to the overall indices, which would also contribute to more clarity in the overall discourse.

Second, some of the limits of current measures relate to data availability. Given the constraints imposed by data scarcity, there is a continuous need for collecting new data, in particular, data that allow for increased granularity in the analysis and to more disaggregated measures of fragility at the geographical level (Wencker and Verspohl, 2019, p. ix). I concur with Desai and Forsberg (2020, p. 38) that analyzing data at the subnational level can help uncover additional sources of variation and complement existing forms of data collection methods. Others have also highlighted the need to consider the spread of fragility across borders as well as, for example, contexts of fragility within a region (Wencker and Verspohl, 2019; Desai and Forsberg, 2020).

Big data has gained increased importance as a promising alternative approach to data collection (Cilliers and Sisk, 2013, pp. 72–73). Geospatial data, mobile phone surveys and the use of social media have been recently proposed (Corral et al., 2020, p. 68) alongside other innovative approaches (Hoogeveen and Pape, 2020), which can offer new data useful for both status quo measures of fragility as well as approaches with a predictive character (see Corral et al., 2020, for further elaboration). Still, efforts should also be made to avoid that collecting data remotely leads to less engagement with local communities (Lemay-Hébert, 2019, p. 84).

This relates to the final point which highlights the need to take context into account. Importantly, it is crucial to involve actors in contexts of state fragility in the debate, and the role of the *g7+* (see also Chapter 22 in this volume) has been particularly significant in this

regard. Moreover, it is imperative to generate analysis that is context-specific. Thus, in line with other proposals, I agree with the need to consider different types of data and analysis. While quantitative indicators collected for multiple countries play an important role for comparisons and for observing trends within countries, one could argue that they are limited in the information they provide in terms of specificities at the country and subnational level. Additionally, indicators that show a weakness in a certain area may equally disguise weaknesses in other areas, and improvements in the score of that indicator may not necessarily mean that actual progress has been achieved (Milante and Woolcock, 2017, p. 3).

Some other alternatives have been proposed. These include making use of dynamic data, which combined with structural data, allows for an improved understanding of the underlying factors contributing to state fragility (Carment et al., 2009; Tikuisis et al., 2013). Additionally, the combination of quantitative indicators with the analysis of qualitative data (e.g. focus group discussion, interviews with key informants) and, for instance, the use of specific case studies (e.g. Carment and Samy, 2019; Glawion et al., 2018) can also offer valuable insights. Making use of complementary approaches can contribute to further overcome the problems of aggregation that undermine the meaning of quantitative indices and to take multidimensionality into account.

NOTES

1. The author is grateful to the editors and other contributors to this volume for thoughtful feedback and helpful interactions. All remaining errors are my own.
2. For a detailed account on the history of state fragility theory in other academic disciplines, namely comparative politics and international relations, see Carment et al. (2009).
3. In a similar view, Stewart and Brown (2010) classified countries with “failure” or at “risk” of failure in three dimensions – authority, legitimacy, and service delivery.
4. Relatedly, understanding fragility as a risk shifts the focus to forecasting possibilities (Lemay-Hébert, 2019, p. 83). Of the measures considered here (see Table 4.2), the Fund for Peace has an explicit predictive character. The proposal by OECD is ambiguous: while its definition points to a predictive approach, it is explicitly noted that the framework simply provides an analysis of the current state of fragility (OECD, 2016, p. 74; Wencker and Verspohl, 2019, p. 19). Reference is also made to Mueller (2018) who interprets fragility as a state at risk of failure and proposes a forecasting framework.
5. See further discussion in Lemay-Hébert (2019, pp. 84–85) and in Chapter 3 in this volume.
6. See Saeed (2020) for a link with the critique of quantification of complex social phenomena.
7. See also Chapter 6 in this volume.
8. This can be linked to the understanding of fragility as a deviation from an ideal state and its critique in the second section.
9. It builds on previous work suggesting a matrix for assessing four dimensions of state–society relations (political, economic, social, and security) with respect to their effectiveness and legitimacy (Goldstone et al., 2003).
10. The CPIA, used in one of the criteria applied by the WBG, combines four dimensions: economic management, structural policies, policies for social inclusion and equity, and public sector management and institutions.
11. There is some indication that even small changes in rankings can affect the overall rank of countries (Gutierrez et al., 2011, p. 33).
12. See also Corral et al. (2020) for a typology of fragility profiles obtained with latent mixture analysis, used to illustrate the diversity of fragile and conflict situations as well as to derive common traits that are of relevance for policymaking.

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5. The United States is vulnerable: a flashing red light in the Fragile States Index

Nate Haken and Natalie Fiertz

INTRODUCTION

Over the past decade, it has become increasingly apparent that “state failure” is not a useful frame through which to diagnose and prevent the systemic collapse of socio-political economies around the world. Not only because it is too categorical of a binary term, but also because “state failure” puts the entire onus on the state institutions rather than situating those state institutions within the broader ecosystem of endogenous and exogenous forces (such as climate), organizations, groups, and relationships. In that regard, the ascendance of the term “state fragility” is welcome, which is widely used by international financial institutions (IFIs) such as multilateral development banks with reference to “fragile situations” rather than characterizing a country as intrinsically fragile or not fragile. Still, there has been a presumption, among high-income countries in particular, that fragility is something that needs to be staunched abroad so that the contagion does not spread through such vectors as refugees, violent extremism, and pandemics. While this is a legitimate consideration, if there is one thing recent years have made abundantly clear, it is that complexity needs to be factored into fragility assessments more than has been done in the past. For example, a health crisis might not be only (or even primarily) a health crisis, if it turns into an economic crisis, a social crisis, or a political crisis with cascading and compounding effects and feedback loops that can upend even an apparently robust system.

This chapter looks at the question of vulnerability through a systems lens. If by “vulnerable” we mean those countries that are stuck in a fragility trap and who find themselves perennially at the top of lists, like the Fund for Peace’s Fragile States Index, the World Bank’s harmonized list of Fragile and Conflict Situations, or the OECD’s list of Fragile Contexts, then the United States is not. But if by “vulnerable” we mean countries that whatever their current capabilities and good fortune, may not have the necessary resilience to withstand the next social, economic, political, or security shock, then, as suggested by the events of 2020, the United States may well be. It is no coincidence that in the United States, 2020 was the year of Covid-19 as well as recession, mass protests, political violence, and racial grievance.

Looking beyond the top-line ranking of the Fragile States Index for signals of systemic weakness, this chapter explores four models of fragility. First, the Quagmire is the conventional definition of fragility, where countries are trapped in a vicious cycle of ongoing social, economic, and political crisis. Second, the Plateau is a situation where a country was hit with a shock and never fully recovered, even after several years, suggesting a lack of absorptive capacity that must be addressed otherwise the next crisis may be the one that tips the balance. Third, Volatility, where shocks occur with increased frequency and amplitude, suggests a degradation in the ability to manage existing pressures, let alone the big shock, which will inevitably strike every 10 or 15 years. In the fourth model, Masked Fragility, symptoms of structural

weakness can be hidden by a country's wealth or power, while a measurable long-term worsening in key cohesion indicators and a rise in retrenchment populism and scapegoating create a situation of potential precarity in the event of the next big shock.

For the last 16 years, the Fund for Peace (FFP) has been employing the Conflict Assessment System Tool (CAST) methodology to produce an annual index of country risk. From 2006 to 2014, it was called the Failed States Index but, in recognition of the complex dynamics that lead to state fragility, in 2014, FFP changed it to the Fragile States Index (FSI). This was also done in part to be able to better respond to queries from country representatives, from embassy staff to foreign affairs ministries, who would ask for more details on what state failure meant, and which countries were being considered failed, and which were not. In response to these queries, FFP explained that risk of failure was on a continuum across 12 indicators, and that every country of the world was constantly moving up and down the scale of each of those 12 indicators, often in different directions. This, it was explained, limited the value of using the aggregate score, or even more so, the rank, as a meaningful measure of risk in isolation. By changing the name to the Fragile States Index, it helped to more accurately frame what was being measured. But the aggregate score and the overall rank continues to be reductive.

TYPOLOGIES OF STATES

The FSI assesses the overall level of pressure across 12 social, economic, political, and security indicators in 179 countries around the world, and the short- and long-term trends in those pressures. But absent additional analysis, the aggregate score does not tell much at all about how a country will perform if faced with a future shock, because dynamics need to be factored in that account for vicious cycles and systemic weaknesses that may be masked by wealth and scale.

The OECD definition of resilience is, “the ability of households, communities, and nations, to absorb and recover from shocks, whilst positively adapting and transforming their structures and means for living in the face of long-term stresses, change, and uncertainty” (OECD, 2014, p. 6). By that definition, it is demonstrably true that a country with a good FSI score is not necessarily more resilient. Conversely, it is also true that a poor score in a single year does not necessarily imply a lack of systemic resilience. Every country in the world will experience shocks from time to time which will be reflected in the scores. The fact of a crisis in a single year does not make a country fundamentally fragile. Setting aside the ranking, however, there are (at least) four dynamics measurable through the FSI which are suggestive of systemic weakness and should factor into crisis preparedness efforts: (1) the Quagmire, (2) the Plateau, (3) Volatility, and (4) Masked Fragility.

The Quagmire

The first is the most obvious – countries caught in a fragility trap (Carment and Samy, 2017). Even a casual glance at the FSI scores from year to year reveals that the same countries seem perennially at the top of the list. These are the countries traditionally thought of as fragile. And they are fragile, with recurrent or protracted humanitarian crises that preclude traction in development and governance. However, over a period of 15 years, some countries have been able to dig themselves gradually and incrementally out of this trap.

In the early 2000s, countries in Figure 5.1 (Bangladesh, Colombia, Cote d'Ivoire, Kyrgyz Republic, Nepal, Pakistan, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka, Uzbekistan) were in situations of political crisis, active conflict, or just coming out of conflict. Since then, they have each gradually reduced the level of violence, democratized their governance institutions, and developed economically, with large reductions in poverty. This improvement is not inevitable. Other countries, like Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Somalia have remained trapped in a situation of protracted fragility for the duration. And even those who have climbed out of the fragility trap must remain vigilant, otherwise the trailing effects of old grievances, conflicting interests, patterns of power imbalance and uneven resource distribution can drag them back in, particularly in situations of increased social and economic stress.

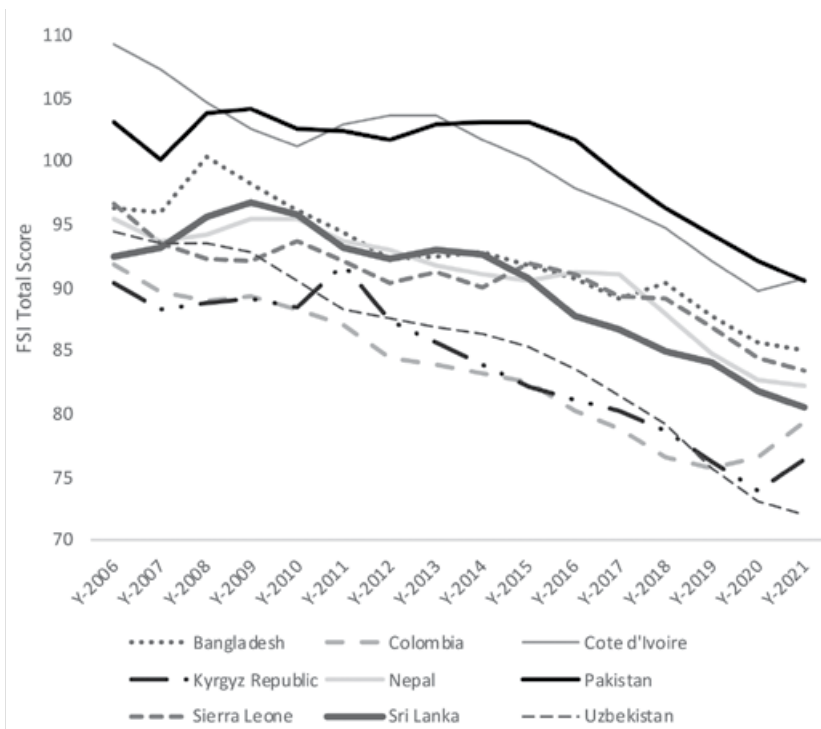


Figure 5.1 Climbing out of fragility

The Plateau

The next three fragility scenarios may be less immediately intuitive. The second scenario is one in which the FSI scores spike during a shock, and then do not immediately come back down to baseline, but rather settle at a new normal of elevated pressure over an extended period. This shows a lack of capacity to bounce back, which is suggestive of underlying systemic fragility that may not have been evident prior to the shock. If and when another shock eventually strikes, the country may spiral, unless measures are taken to prepare. Some countries, for instance, experienced a spike in pressures during the 2009 financial crisis and the aggregate scores remained elevated ever since.

Before FSI 2009 (calendar year 2008) the average fragility score for Argentina was 41.2. Since then, the average has been 5.7 points higher, at 46.9, and never lower than 44.7. A top-line score of 46.9 is not a bad score. Argentina is one of the most stable democracies in the region. But a 14 percent worsening in the set point is counter to the normal trends of a healthy system and suggestive of potential weakness (Roy, 2022).

In Madagascar (Figure 5.2), before FSI 2009, the average fragility score was 76.6. Since then, the average has been 5.8 points higher at 82.4. Worsened scores include Economic Inequality, Human Flight, and Factionalized Elites, starting with a cyclone in 2008 and a political crisis in 2009 that led to the fleeing of the president to South Africa. This elevated set point suggests vulnerability to a future shock which could be more destabilizing.

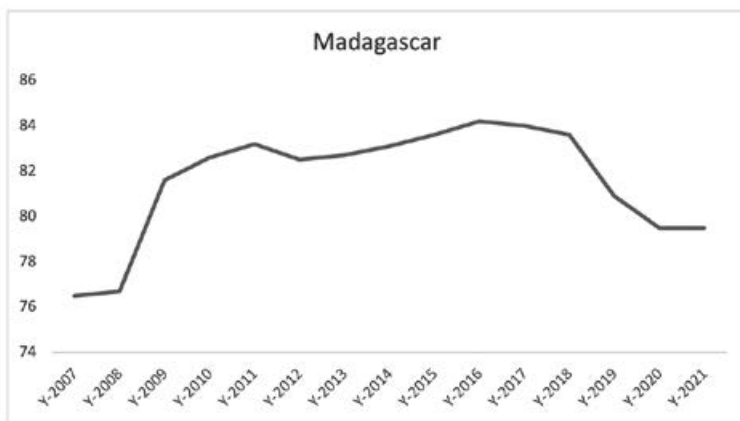


Figure 5.2 Examples of “the plateau”

Volatility

The third scenario is one in which a country may or may not have a particularly bad score overall but is experiencing increased frequency and amplitude of shocks as measured by the FSI scores. This suggests an erosion of capacity and the potential veering toward a tipping point (Figure 5.3).

Over the last 16 years, the fragility score for Turkey has spiked and plunged by an average of over 1.5 points per year, with a full 3.5 worsening in 2017. This volatility suggests strong capacity to respond to a crisis, but a high frequency of such crises to be managed, including natural disasters, protests, attempted coups, and a refugee crisis from neighboring Syria. The increased frequency and intensity of these crises suggest a worrying trend and a potential erosion of resilience over time.

Particularly since 2017, Ethiopia has had very sharp changes in its fragility score, with a 3.9 worsening in 2016 (due to violent protests and a state of emergency). Then in 2018 the score improved dramatically due to political reforms, the end of the war with Eritrea and a peace deal with the Ogaden National Liberation Front. Then in 2020 the score worsened again by a record 4.4 as conflict broke out in the Tigray region.

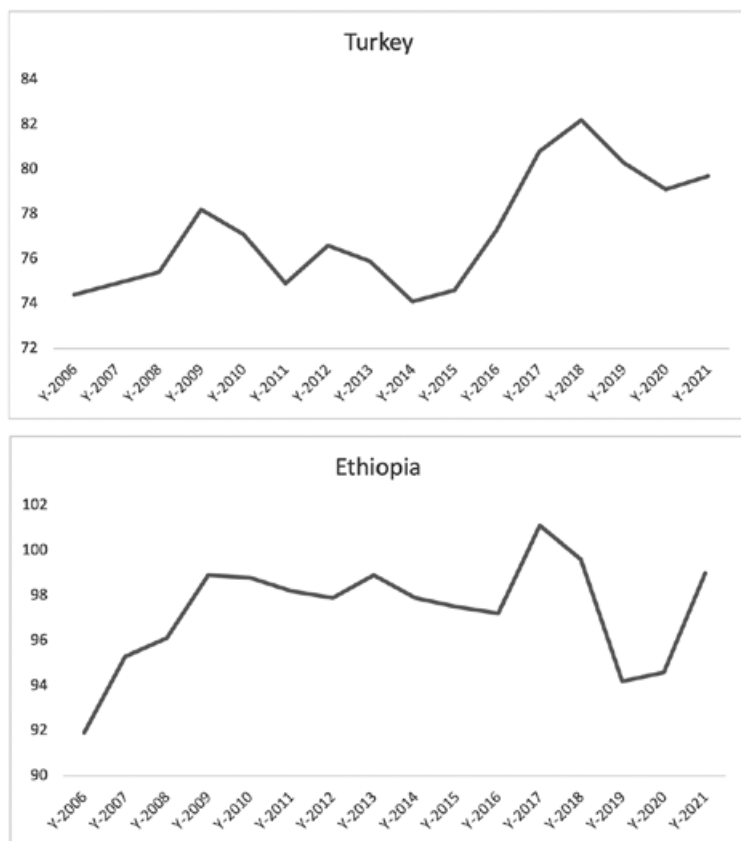


Figure 5.3 Examples of “volatility”

Masked Fragility

The final scenario is perhaps the most insidious (Figure 5.4). This is one where the overall scores are not particularly bad and have not been particularly volatile. However, over a long period of time, there has been a sustained worsening in two or more indicators, even as the rest of the indicators may be flat or even improving. Two or more highly correlated indicators worsening over time suggests an area of systemic weakness that may be masked by the overall trends and could be triggered into a cascading crisis in the event of a shock.

The United States is emblematic of this last scenario. When the Global Financial Crisis hit in 2008, there was an initial economic shock as thousands lost their homes, jobs, and savings. At this point, there was a major diversion in the long-term trends in the scores. First, the economic crisis stabilized over time, as the financial institutions and certain critical industries were bailed out and stimulus measures took effect. This stabilization is reflected in the FSI indicator for “Economic Decline.” Second, the FSI indicator for “Uneven Development,” which measures inclusive access to essential services more than income inequality, also improved over time, particularly with increased health insurance coverage, investment in

public education, public services, and social protection systems. To the extent that the financial crisis was an economic crisis, the United States was able to wield enormous financial and human capital to successfully bounce back. However, it was not just an economic crisis, as it turned out, but cascaded across the indicators to become a sustained and worsening social and political crisis as well. Public confidence in financial institutions, media, and government was savaged (Dubner, 2011) and Americans began to gravitate into their social and cultural corners, even as information became more democratized due to internet and social media. Freedom House classifies the United States as “Free” on the 2021 Freedom on the Net Report, although signals a five-year worsening from a high of 82 in 2016 to 75 in 2021 due to issues of radicalization, surveillance, and cybersecurity concerns (Freedom House, 2021). The Fragile States Index indicators for Factionalized Elites and Group Grievance began to worsen and have continued worsening over the last 13 years. At the same time, the indicator for Security Apparatus worsened, as militias formed, and armed protests proliferated across the country. Competing yard signs for “Blue Lives” vs. “Black Lives” spread across the country. Mass shootings became commonplace. While the overall FSI score remained essentially flat from 2006–2017, the steady rise in Group Grievance, Factionalized Elites, and Security Apparatus suggested a deep structural weakness, and the potential that the United States would not be able to respond to a major shock if it were to strike. Then in 2020, faced with a pandemic, and lacking social and political capital, the United States was unable to take collective action or mobilize buy-in to a national strategy, and spiraled into disorder.

This sharp increase in US fragility, broadly, in 2020 was largely unexpected. But even setting aside the social, economic, and political impacts and focusing narrowly on health outcomes, the US performed much worse than experts predicted, which in itself is attributable to a long-term breakdown in inclusion and social cohesion. The failures that led the US to having one of the highest Covid-19 fatality rates in the world were not technical. The country’s technical strengths in preventing, detecting, and responding to outbreaks are reflected in the Global Health Security Index (GHSI), on which the United States has had the highest score since the Index’s inception in 2019 (Global Health Security Index, 2021). The Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the National Institutes of Health, and many American universities remain among the premier institutions of public health expertise in the world.

But uneven access to healthcare, especially among historically disadvantaged populations, exacerbated the pandemic’s impacts. And as the pandemic wore on, risk reduction measures, such as mask wearing and vaccines, became increasingly polarized (Sharfstein et al., 2021), the very notion of public health becoming politically controversial. These challenges are reflected not only in the Fragile States Index’s Group Grievance and Factionalized Elites indicators, but also in the indicators of the GHSI. Two indicators, Healthcare Access and Political and Security Risk, are among the country’s four-worst ranked indicators, particularly the former, on which the United States is ranked 183rd of the 195 countries on the Index.

This stands in contrast with the other G7 countries, none of which experienced such a severe long-term worsening in Cohesion indicators as did the United States, from 2006–2019, and none of which were as destabilized by the compounding effects of events in 2020. The country that comes closest is the United Kingdom, which also had a long-term deterioration in Group Grievance and Factionalized Elites, but only about half as severe a worsening in those indicators as did the US. Then, in 2020, the UK also had a significant worsening in its fragility score but only by 3.2 as compared to 6.3 in the US, and a slightly lower number of Covid fatalities, normalized by population as the United States.

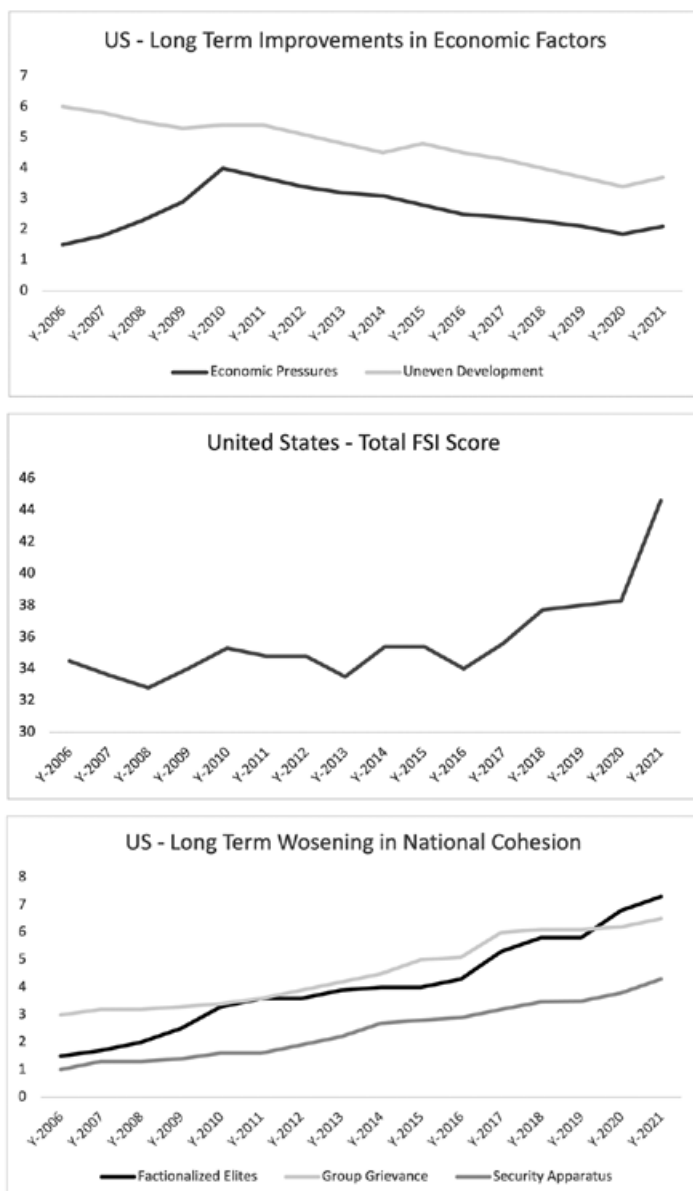


Figure 5.4 Example of “masked fragility”

Other sources measuring democracy around the world, though perhaps not picking up on the long-term trends in a breakdown of social cohesion in the United States, certainly did identify a shock in 2016 (V-Dem, 2022) and in 2020 (IDEA, 2021). V-Dem’s indicators for Electoral Democracy Index, Liberal Democracy Index, Participatory Democracy Index, and Deliberative Democracy Index all drop significantly in 2016, as well as CSO Participatory Environment,

and Government Dissemination of False Information. All these scores begin to tick back up in 2020, which would indicate an outlier during the Trump administration, except for the fact that there then occurs a drop in three important indicators related to a broader breakdown in social cohesion in 2020: (1) Social Group Equality in Respect for Civil Liberties, (2) Online Media Perspectives, and (3) Online Media Fractionalization. Building on those worrying trends, the IDEA Global State of Democracy 2021 Report, says, “Significantly, the United States, the bastion of global democracy, fell victim to authoritarian tendencies itself, and was knocked down a significant number of steps on the democratic scale” (IDEA, 2021, p. iii).

This decline is occurring in a context in which the United States is awash in small arms, with nearly 400 million guns in private hands, the most in the world by a large margin, and a number which has grown rapidly in recent years. At the same time, right-wing militias from the Proud Boys to the Oath Keepers and the Three Percenters have gained increasing prominence, particularly through their participation in the January 6 insurrection and election-related protests (Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project, 2020).

RETRENCHMENT POPULISM IN THE UNITED STATES AND BEYOND

The pattern that the United States has experienced over the last 13 years has three notable characteristics. First, the long-term worsening in the Cohesion indicators preceded the sharp political realignment in 2016 and was a driving force in the broader crisis that has unfolded in recent years. Second, the specific type of pattern, the increase in pressures along those two indicators, is not unique to the United States, but instead shows up as a common pattern across states facing similar challenges. Third, the subsequent impacts of the increase in these pressures have cascaded in repeated and predictable ways, often both accelerating and broadening to encompass other indicators.

To a degree that is now sometimes easy to forget, the election in 2016 was received with widespread shock, especially in the days immediately following. Former Barack Obama advisor David Axelrod called it “a primal scream” (Glum, 2017, para. 6) and conservative blogger Andrew Sullivan wrote that the US had “jumped off a constitutional cliff” (Sullivan, 2016, para. 2). The *New Yorker* called it “An American Tragedy” (Remnick, 2016, para. 1). The *New York Times* headline described the “shock across a wide political divide” as the “American political establishment reeled” (Healy and Peters, 2016, para. 1). The shock was quickly followed by searching and introspection. The nation’s journalists fanned out to the diners of small-town America while books like *Hillbilly Elegy* and *Strangers in Their Own Land* shot to the top of bestseller lists (Figueroa, 2016) as observers and commentators sought an explanation for the seemingly inexplicable. At first blush, the Fragile States Index had little to offer; the total score for the US was almost unchanged between the 2006 and 2016 releases. Yet, beneath the surface there had been an inexorable rise in the pressures assessed by the indicators for Group Grievance (a rise of 70 percent) and Factionalized Elites (nearly 190 percent) – both of which were among the ten largest rises in the world in that time period – and Security Apparatus (a rise of almost 200 percent), which should have been a warning sign. In the years after 2016, the pressures charted by these three indicators cascaded, and the US scores on other indicators began to rise as well, particularly those assessing State Legitimacy and Human Rights & Rule of Law. And in 2020 and 2021 as the Covid-19 pandemic hit, these pressures

broadened into a generalized crisis as efforts to take collective action were thwarted by a lack of social and political capital and leaders often appeared more interested in scoring personal victories than mobilizing a national strategy. This culminated in nearly a million confirmed deaths from Covid-19 and an attempted insurrection to overturn the 2020 presidential election as the US saw the largest overall worsening on the Fragile States Index in the 2021 report.

This pattern is not a specifically American phenomenon. A few months before the US election, the UK voted for Brexit, a result that was also greeted with “shock and rage” (Kennedy, 2016, para. 1). Like the US, between the 2010 and 2016 FSI reports, the UK had experienced six consecutive years of worsening on the Group Grievance indicator, even as its overall score had actually improved. In 2018, Jair Bolsonaro was elected president of Brazil by promising to “break the system” (Kirby, 2018, para. 4), a shock that “upend[ed] the political parties and norms that ha[d] governed Brazil since the end of military rule” (Londoño and Andreoni, 2018, para. 7). The election was preceded by rapid deterioration in the scores for Human Rights + Rule of Law, State Legitimacy, and Public Services, reversing years of prior improvement. Democratic backsliding in Poland and Turkey, beginning in 2016 and 2010 (Haggard and Kaufman, 2021) respectively, were also preceded by Group Grievance and, in Turkey’s case, Factionalized Elites. The pattern suggests a long slow build-up of pressure, punctuated with a major, populist realignment event like an election or a referendum. But this event does not halt the slide. On the contrary, these events often herald a further acceleration of the worsening in the cohesion indicators, frequently accompanied by the cascading of the effects of that pressure into other domains as captured by other FSI indicators. As previously mentioned, in the years immediately following the 2016 elections, the US scores began worsening on the State Legitimacy and Human Rights + Rule of Law indicators. This was accompanied by continued worsening in the Group Grievance and Security Apparatus indicators and an acceleration of worsening in Factionalized Elites. Similarly, the years after Brexit saw new and rapid deteriorations in the Factionalized Elites and State Legitimacy indicators alongside a new worsening in Security Apparatus. Brazil represented the mirror of the United States, as pressures which had first been reflected in the Political indicators – which continued rapidly worsening after Bolsonaro’s election – spilled over into the Cohesion indicators, particularly Group Grievance and Factionalized Elites. In Poland and Turkey, continued worsening in Group Grievance was joined, like in the United States, by rapid deterioration in State Legitimacy and Human Rights + Rule of Law. In Hungary, a sustained worsening in the Group Grievance and Human Rights + Rule of Law indicators began in 2010–11. In five of these countries – Brazil, Hungary, Poland, Turkey, and the United States – this transition, this propagation of pressures to additional FSI indicators, is also the beginning of what is widely recognized to be a process of democratic backsliding (Haggard and Kaufman, 2021).

The consistent presence of substantial pressures in the Group Grievance indicator across these cases lends support to the argument made by Brown University’s Patrick Heller in a recent paper that populism in recent years is predicated on a new framework (Heller, 2020). Heller, following Kenneth M. Roberts, notes that the core of populism is defined as “the top-down mobilization of mass constituencies by personalistic leaders who challenge elite groups on behalf of an ill-defined pueblo, or ‘the people’” (Roberts, 2007, p. 4). Heller goes on to note that under this new recent populism, the definition of who constitutes the elite against which the people must prevail has shifted: “If under classical populism this was elite socio-economic classes, in the age of reaction it has become a motley construction of ‘others’, namely religious, ethnic, racial, and sexual minorities, immigrants, intellectuals, secularists,

and human rights activists” (Heller, 2020, p. 592). Heller’s focus is primarily on explaining populism in Brazil and India, which draws its principal support not from the economically precarious or those who have lost out from globalization, but is instead “rooted in the upper class, the professional middle class, and no-middle class” (Heller, 2020, p. 594). In Brazil, this has meant the othering of “young black men from poor backgrounds [...] with leftists, gays, feminists, and intellectuals”, while in India it has meant “demonizing Muslims and [...] castigating rights activists as ‘urban naxalites’ and anti-national” (Heller, 2020, p. 592).

But Heller’s description of the new definition of the undeserving “elite” as “religious, ethnic, racial, and sexual minorities, immigrants, intellectuals, secularists, and human rights activists” applies far beyond these two countries. In the United States, Trump’s administration prioritized cracking down on both legal and illegal immigration, denigrated intellectuals and experts, and “doubled down on trans discrimination” (Thoreson, 2020, para. 1). In Hungary, Orbán used his new power to rule by decree in late March to prohibit transgender people from legally changing their gender (Walker, 2020) and in mid-2021 proposed a two-year total ban on immigration (Info Migrants, 2021). At the end of 2021, Orbán announced that he would defy a EU court ruling over his immigration policy and that his upcoming agenda would be dominated by “migration and LGBTQ rights” (Reuters, 2021, para. 2). This type of populism is not unprecedented as there have been others, such as the rise of populist authoritarianism in interwar Europe and post-Reconstruction backlash in the United States, that were based on similar lines.

While the first and second phases of this deterioration were confined to the Political and Cohesion indicators, the emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic would provide a clear demonstration that its effects are likely to cascade. The United States, incapable of marshaling an effective collective response to the pandemic, has now suffered over a million confirmed deaths from Covid-19, the most in the world. A factionalized political class was slow to react, waiting nearly two months between the country’s first confirmed case and declaring Covid-19 a national emergency. National and state governments largely abdicated their roles early in the pandemic, implicitly adopting a policy of “every county for itself” (Lewis, 2021, p. 224). Cleavages between groups both racial (African Americans, Hispanics, and indigenous Americans have died at approximately twice the rate of White Americans – Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2022), and political – as response actions from mask wearing to shutdowns to vaccines were politicized – played an enormous role in determining the impacts of the pandemic. The US, however, is far from the only country whose pandemic response has been hampered by its pressures and vulnerabilities in the Politics and Cohesion indicators of the Fragile States Index. As of January 12, 2022, Hungary had suffered the 4th-highest number of confirmed deaths per capita in the world, Brazil the 13th, and Poland the 17th. Brazil, whose slide into crisis mirrored that of the United States, responded to the pandemic in very similar ways. Bolsonaro, like Trump, consistently minimized the threat of the pandemic, encouraging mass gatherings and discouraging masks (Nicas, 2021). However, while the Trump administration spent billions on Operation Warp Speed to accelerate the development of vaccines, a government inquiry found that Bolsonaro’s administration “failed to purchase or rejected offers to sell Brazil vaccines more than 14 times” (Diaz, 2021, para. 9).

It is Peru, however, the country that has seen the greatest number of confirmed deaths as a percentage of population due to Covid-19, that best illustrates both the strengths and the weaknesses of the Fragile States Index. Over the past decade, even as the country’s total score continued a steady improvement, its Group Grievance score rose almost without interruption

and its Factionalized Elites and State Legitimacy scores remained high, reflecting persistent significant levels of pressure. Unlike in the United States, or Brazil, in Peru the government acted swiftly, imposing a lockdown just 10 days after the first case was detected. It also extended extensive economic support to a population heavily dependent on the informal economy, which employs 70 percent of the workforce (Vázquez-Rowe and Gandolfi, 2020). However, in a country which had absorbed nearly one million Venezuelan refugees over the previous three years – a significant driver of recent group grievances – these economic supports did not include migrants and refugees (Vázquez-Rowe and Gandolfi, 2020), forcing them back into the workforce and out across the country in search of work. A fragile and factionalized political system – Peru has had four presidents over the course of the pandemic – has also hampered the country’s response efforts. What the Fragile States Index does not capture, however, is the inability of the Peruvian state to effectively implement much of its response efforts, particularly the critical economic supports. The state “failed to deliver the cash and food that were supposed to keep citizens at home,” compounded by infection hotspots in the form of long queues and poorly regulated markets (Dargent and Gianella, 2020, para. 6). While the Fragile States Index does a good job of measuring pressures and shocks, assessing *state capacity* is outside the scope of the Fragile States Index but is core to FFP’s new State Resilience Index (SRI), which was launched in late 2022.

The failures of states suffering from high levels of Political and Cohesive pressures in managing the Covid-19 pandemic have been well documented. As a result of years of building pressures, many of these states entered the pandemic in the midst of democratic backsliding, governed by populist regimes with fragile state legitimacy and an erosion of social trust. All of these factors contributed to the mismanagement that has characterized the two years of the pandemic. A recent paper from May 2021 found that populist governments “enact[ed] far less far-reaching policy measures to counter the pandemic [and] lower[ed] the effort of citizens to counter the pandemic,” ultimately resulting in excess mortality twice that of “conventional countries” (Bayerlein et al., 2021, abstract). Democracies have also been shown to be more effective in managing epidemics more broadly. A recent paper found that democracies reduce epidemic deaths by approximately 70 percent relative to other types of regimes, thanks to the incentives for and the constraints that operate on democratic executives in order for them “to act rapidly in pursuit of the common good” (McMann and Tisch, 2021, abstract). Finally, during the last major epidemic, the 2014 West African Ebola crisis, in those areas with higher levels of trust in the government and in public health workers the disease spread almost 20 percent slower and resulted in approximately one-third fewer deaths (Christensen et al., 2021).

Just as the US 2016 election, the 2018 Brazilian election, or the Brexit referendum deepened and accelerated the growth of existing pressures even as it introduced new ones, so too have existing Political and Cohesive pressures continued to heighten during the pandemic. In the United States, the pressures around the Security Apparatus exploded into months of widespread protests in the summer of 2020, welfare systems suffering from decades of underinvestment groaned as millions fell into unemployment, and efforts to delegitimize the 2020 presidential election culminated in the attempted insurrection of January 6, 2021. Early in the pandemic, in the closing days of March 2020, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán pushed legislation through the Hungarian Parliament that gave him sweeping new powers. In what some referred to as the “coronavirus coup,” the legislation canceled elections and gave Orbán the ability to suspend any existing law or create any new ones (Zerofsky, 2020).

In sum, the rise of ethnonationalist populist regimes across the world, regimes that have consistently mismanaged the worst pandemic in over a century, has been prefigured in the indicators of the Fragile States Index, which has recorded the growth of structural pressures in a predictable pattern. These pressures first appear in a few indicators in the Cohesion or Political groups, most frequently Group Grievance. They then spread more widely across those groups of indicators before spilling over into a general crisis, even as the original areas of pressure continue to worsen, often at an accelerated rate. In this way, the FSI reflects the rise of a new populism, one that sees itself as fighting against a collection of minorities, intellectuals, immigrants, secularists, and rights activists.

SHORTCOMINGS

While the Fragile States Index has been able to track the growing pressures that have given rise to ethnonationalist populist regimes, it was not specifically designed for this purpose. To fully assess this phenomenon, a tool should accomplish three goals. First, it should highlight early warning indicators that the risk of ethnonationalist populism is growing, that the drivers are becoming more prominent. Second, it should track the rise of ethnonationalist populism once it appears and starts to expand. Third, it should assess the consequences of ethnonationalist populism, whether that be democratic backsliding, crisis mismanagement, or repression of marginalized groups.

Despite its successes, there are two principal structural shortcomings of the Fragile States Index that, if addressed, would improve its capacity to fulfill these objectives. First, as briefly touched on above in the discussion of Peru's failure to effectively manage the pandemic, the FSI only assesses pressures, it does not measure resiliencies. These resiliencies can include the type of state capacity that Peru lacked in its efforts to extend economic support during the Covid-19 pandemic but can also take diverse other forms. For example, the process of democratic backsliding is governed not just by the pressures that a state is experiencing, but also by its resiliencies, particularly strong judicial constraints on the executive and strong, consolidated democratic institutions (Boese et al., 2021). The level of social cohesion is another important type of resilience, playing a strong determining role in violent extremism (Raineri, 2018), disaster response (Patel and Gleason, 2018), and mask usage during the Covid-19 pandemic (Jackson et al., 2021). The Fund for Peace has recently launched the State Resilience Index, precisely to fill this gap, to assess cross-country levels of resilience as the FSI assesses cross-country levels of fragility and pressure.

The second key shortcoming of the FSI is that due to its nature as a country-level index, it fails to capture subnational geographic heterogeneities. These heterogeneities are important because every stage of the cascading process described above is likely to play out differently on a subnational level, both as cause and consequence of these heterogeneities. For example, the first stages may manifest in specific subnational areas before becoming sufficiently salient on a national level to be picked up by the FSI or analogous cross-national indices. The turn against the constructed collection of "others" that Heller describes in his discussion of retrenchment populism may become prominent earlier in certain states or provinces. Second, the broadening of the initial pressures into a more general political-cohesive crisis is also likely to take place in a heterogeneous way, rather than uniformly across a country. This pattern may also persist through the later stages as the political-cohesive crisis deepens and accelerates.

CONCLUSION

While the Fragile States Index has been primarily used to diagnose fragility in those countries trapped in a state of protracted or recurrent humanitarian crisis, a deeper look at the patterns in indicator-level trends presents an opportunity to better identify situations of structural fragility, even in wealthy and powerful countries like the United States. In a flattening world (Friedman, 2005), where distance and time mean less and less, even as environmental and demographic pressures grow, fragility can no longer be seen as something far away to be contained, but rather something that can emerge in any context. A tool like the FSI must be re-purposed if it is to be useful in the coming decades. As such, a deeper understanding of the four different ways that fragility can be expressed will enable leaders and investors to better allocate resources so that the next time there is a shock, countries will be better positioned to absorb, adapt, or if necessary, transform (OECD, 2014).

Through this lens, countries like the United States, with long-term deterioration in political and social capital, may be vulnerable to the next shock, even if they do not find themselves high on the Fragile States Index. If such a country wishes to reverse a trend of increasing vulnerability, compensatory mechanisms require innovation and political courage. Possible approaches could be at the level of election reforms to incentivize coalition-building, such as ranked-choice voting in Alaska or anti-gerrymandering efforts by legislatures or the courts. High profile bi-partisanship efforts can send a positive message, whether at the federal, state, or local level. But all of this is extremely difficult to do, let alone at scale, in an environment where most social interactions occur on platforms that sort millions of users into like-minded categories and where the most extreme messages are echoed and amplified through the gamification of clicks, likes, and shares, then further amplified in partisan print and broadcast media outlets. For media and technology companies to address this aspect of the problem will require innovation certainly, and possibly financial risk.

But even if the problem of polarization in the virtual space is solved, that may be too little too late, because according to an analysis by the University of Virginia, for decades people in the United States have been increasingly *physically* moving to areas where people share their political views, leading to an increasing number of blowout elections at the county level (Cook, 2022), even as the national elections are decided by the narrowest of majorities, pluralities, or even minorities as measured by the popular vote.

Good practices, such as those developed for preventing/countering violent extremism in regions such as the Sahel or the Middle East, could be useful here, with large investments in the amplification of inclusive messaging and the promotion of key influencers such as religious leaders, community leaders, celebrities, and government officials coupled with educational, cultural, and professional exchanges nation-wide. If this could be achieved at scale, at the same time as the necessary technological innovations and electoral reforms, then these dangerous trends really could be reversed. But it will take money and leadership.

If not, then there is a risk of contagion of fragility globally, spread from within countries and exacerbated by foreign adversaries, starting with the weaponization of algorithms for disinformation and internal division. Then after a country has been sufficiently weakened, it can be flattened by sanctions, embargoes, and tariffs; or an accidental economic shock like a financial crisis, a commodity price shock, or a pandemic that shuts down global trade.

Perhaps this issue of social cohesion was the thing that Russia did not account for in its military adventurism in Ukraine. According to the FSI, before Russia's invasion, Ukraine

had a very high Factionalized Elites score (8.0), but a better Group Grievance score (5.7) than the United States (6.5). And more to the point, Ukraine's Cohesion scores had been on a positive trajectory over the last seven years. So, when Russia attacked, instead of creating further division, Ukrainians pulled together, showing more resilience than anyone anticipated. As of this writing, there is no guarantee that Ukraine will ultimately prevail, but it does serve as a counterexample to those countries who, when faced with an external shock, proved to be much less resilient than anticipated, like the United States of America.

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6. The case for measuring multidimensional fragility: is disaggregation the answer?

Harsh Desai (OECD) and Jonathan Marley (OECD)

INTRODUCTION

As highlighted throughout this volume, fragility has evolved significantly as a concept in the policy discourse and academic scholarship over the past three decades. This chapter outlines one aspect of this evolution: the shift in conceptualizing fragility as a binary phenomenon – with a state either being fragile or not – to a multidimensional understanding that unpacks the various ways in which fragility affects broader trends in sustainable development and peace, and vice versa. Such an evolution reflects an acknowledgement of the complexity of working in fragile states and the need for tailored and differentiated approaches to address the root causes of fragility. It also mirrors the emergence of international paradigms that highlight the diversity and universality of global challenges, such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Finally, it builds on the growing availability of data sources and attempts to measure social and political phenomena in more nuanced ways (Ziaja, 2012).

The concept of multidimensional fragility has increasingly taken centre stage: institutions such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the World Bank, alongside major providers of development cooperation such as the United States (US) and European Union (EU), have recently embraced multidimensional approaches in their development cooperation and foreign policy. For example, multidimensional fragility is at the core of the OECD’s *States of Fragility* series and has a prominent role in the World Bank Group’s Strategy for Fragility, Conflict, and Violence (FCV) 2020–2025 (World Bank, 2019), the latter of which builds on the emphasis on multidimensional risks in *Pathways for Peace* (United Nations and World Bank, 2018). The recent US State Department Strategy to Prevent Conflict and Promote Stability, a response to the US Global Fragility Act’s call for a Global Fragility Strategy, commits to “adopt a multi-pronged, multi-sector approach to strengthen the resilience of partner nations” (US State Department, 2020, p. 7) in recognition of the complexity of fragile states. Academic scholarship has kept pace with these developments by seeking to better theorize and measure multidimensional fragility (Ziaja et al., 2019). However, such efforts are not without their detractors, ranging from wholesale critiques of attempts to “tame the wickedness of the [fragility] problem set by parsing fragility into its component parts” (Brinkerhoff, 2014, p. 335), to criticisms of the concepts and measures used. One such prominent critique is the tendency of multidimensional measures to conflate causes, symptoms, and outcomes and thereby distort policy and practice in fragile states (Ferreira, 2017; Mueller, 2018).

Ongoing debates about theory, classification, and measurement raise questions about whether a multidimensional measure that disaggregates fragility into its component parts is feasible or even desirable. This chapter answers this question by reviewing the concept’s evolution, its strengths and weaknesses, and the way forward for it to inform better thinking and

practice in fragile states. This initiative is especially important in light of international actors' focus on fragile states: members of the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC) gave 60 per cent of their official development assistance (ODA) to fragile states in 2020 (OECD, 2022c). As of 30 June 2021, the World Bank Group's financing to FCV situations in its IDA19 replenishment amounted to USD 13 billion, or 39 per cent of total resources (World Bank Group, 2021). These actors are embracing the concept of multidimensional fragility to varying degrees of disaggregation to guide their strategic planning and investments. However, is disaggregation the key? This chapter answers this question in four subsequent sections. The next section surveys the roots of a multidimensional measure of fragility. Following this historical overview, we offer an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of such a measure, and then present various approaches to improve the quality and utility of such measures for policy and practice in the next section. The chapter concludes with a brief discussion of next steps.

WHAT ARE THE ROOTS OF A MULTIDIMENSIONAL MEASURE OF FRAGILITY?

Surveying the Landscape of Measures

Despite a growing consensus over time that fragility is multidimensional, there is little agreement on what those dimensions are, how many of them are necessary and sufficient, and even which terms to use to refer to the dimensions of fragility. For example, Call (2010) proposes three analytical "gaps" to categorize fragile states, whereas Carment, Prest, and Samy (2008) offer a framework according to the three "components" of the state: authority, legitimacy, and capacity (ALC). Kaplan (2014) outlines a categorization based on countries' level of social cohesion and institutionalization. These measures involve conceptualizing dimensions; identifying quantitative cross-country, time-series indicators to assess countries along these dimensions; and computing scores that define the relative degree to which countries are experiencing fragility. The number of dimensions used in prominent indices has ranged from two (Kaplan, 2014) to as many as six (OECD, 2022b), with three being a popular compromise (Ziaja et al., 2019). Some multidimensional measures have focused on the role and function of the state as a provider of basic services and as an institution with a monopoly on the exercise of violence (Ziaja, 2012). In recent years, other measures have moved beyond a state-centric approach to recognize dimensions that shape fragility in the society, economy, or environment, particularly as international agendas have highlighted the need to consider issues and objectives beyond the state to secure sustainable development (OECD, 2015). The indicators and statistical techniques used to define dimensions have also varied. For example, rather than constructing quantitative indices, recent efforts have used mixed-methods data collection, such as the Fund for Peace (2022) Conflict Assessment System Tool Framework, or unsupervised machine learning techniques to identify patterns in quantitative measures (Ziaja et al., 2019; World Bank, 2020a). Some scholars have also questioned the use of quantitative measures in favour of case studies (Siqueira, 2014; Brinkerhoff, 2011, 2014), whereas others have proposed a synthesis of methods to ground quantitative comparisons in qualitative insights (Glawion et al., 2018; OECD, 2016). Thus, there is little consensus on the definition of multidimensional fragility, either in concept or measure.

The choice of measurement, and the concepts underlying these measures, has in turn influenced how international actors engage in fragile states and consequently shaped advocacy, academic research, and policy support (Grimm et al., 2015). This influence is especially prominent in recent years as aid agencies and multilateral institutions have developed their own measures of fragility to inform financing and programming, rather than merely using existing measures from third-party sources. For example, starting in 2015, the OECD piloted a multi-dimensional model after a decade of having synthesized indices such as Carleton University's Country Indicators for Foreign Policy, the World Bank's Country Policy and Institutional Assessment (CPIA), the Harmonized List of Fragile Situations from multilateral development banks, and the Fund for Peace Fragile States Index. Another recent example is the internal model informing the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) new Framework for Development Solutions for Crises and Fragility (Okai, 2021), notable in light of the UNDP's operational role in fragile states. Major donors are also in the process of retooling their strategies for conflict and fragility and have placed a premium on data analytics, such as in the case of the US State Department's Strategy to Prevent Conflict and Promote Stability, which "prioritizes learning, data-driven analysis, diplomacy, and information-sharing" (2020, p. 2). There is a trend towards the proliferation of such measures for policy application, underscoring the need to understand their utility and application.

The diversity of initiatives reflects an effort to define and analyse "varieties of fragility" (Gisselquist, 2017, p. 4), specifically its component parts, degrees, and duration. These component parts are considered to be more understandable and therefore actionable (Brinkerhoff, 2014), even if there is a lack of consensus on what they are and how they shape fragility as a whole. The latter points to the broader challenge of unpacking the links between dimensions and understanding whether fragility is more than the sum of its parts (Call, 2010). Some of the consequences of fragility are a product of the interaction between dimensions (Desai and Forsberg, 2020). Such interactions speak to the compounding nature of challenges affecting fragile states, including the impact of overlapping crises such as Covid-19, conflict, and climate that have led to clear setbacks in economic growth and development in these countries (da Silva, 2021; OECD, 2022c). They also emphasize the need for policy solutions that address both intra- and inter-dimensional root causes that impede progress towards sustainable development and peace, echoing the interconnectedness at the heart of the SDGs.

The shift to conceptualizing fragility through its varieties has happened gradually, partly due to an acknowledgement of the limits of one-size-fits-all approaches and single-ranked indices that tend to conflate and rank countries that otherwise have vastly different fragility profiles. Alongside the evolution of the concept and its measurement, a tension has emerged between the need for parsimonious measures to enable comparisons across countries and the recognition of the inherent complexity in each fragile state, which complicates meaningful comparison (Faust et al., 2013). Such a tension has led to a tendency for producers of these measures to acknowledge the multidimensional nature of fragility, collect indicators to quantify this complexity as much as possible, and aggregate these indicators to produce a list or index of fragile states. However, this process of aggregation results in a one-dimensional composite value that undermines the premise of measuring fragility's multidimensional characteristics in the first place (Grävingholt et al., 2015). Aggregation thus poses another challenge in the attempt to identify appropriate approaches to disaggregate fragility. Recent efforts have attempted to address this challenge of aggregation by defining and constructing typologies that offer insight into the varied conditions that shape fragility without combining them into

a single, composite measure (Ziaja et al., 2019; Tikuisis and Carment, 2017). The OECD's multidimensional fragility framework looks to reconcile this tension by offering a two-step approach that investigates typologies of fragility in each dimension while also providing an aggregated measure across all six dimensions on its framework to highlight fragile states that merit closer attention (OECD, 2022c).

Constraints in Data Availability and Methods

The trend towards more sophisticated approaches to modelling multidimensionality has also met clear data and methods constraints, especially in data-poor environments, leading scholars to resort to second-best options. This reliance is inevitable to a certain degree, especially trying to analyse social phenomena and human systems that are unpredictable, indeterminate, and therefore difficult to quantify. Producers and custodians of data for development have made significant strides to develop measures for better capturing socio-economic dynamics. For example, the advent of satellite data has allowed researchers to use granular sources of data in countries with a dearth of data, enabling novel applications such as the subnational targeting of resources based on indicators of need (Hoogeveen and Pape, 2020). Additionally, prominent producers of data on conflict and fragility, such as the Uppsala Conflict Data Project or Varieties of Democracy, have continued to expand their core data offerings. Nevertheless, data gaps exist in both the concepts and units of observation being studied. For example, measures of informality are scarce despite the prominence of informal institutions in fragile states (OECD, 2018). Additionally, comparatively fewer sources of data and measurement are available to identify the characteristics of multidimensional fragility in small island developing states in the Pacific or Caribbean (OECD, 2020; Carment et al., 2004). In addition to contributing to blind spots, such deficiencies can also lead to biases if they are concentrated in particular sectors or issues. They underscore the potential of using qualitative approaches to complement quantitative measures of multidimensional fragility. They also highlight the need for international organizations to continue to invest in foundational data and statistical systems in fragile states; although more than two-thirds of ODA to data and statistics went to fragile states in 2019, this volume is a fraction of total ODA (OECD, 2021).

Existing data and methodological constraints raise questions about the feasibility and appropriateness of disaggregating fragility. The initiative to disaggregate happens in a spectrum, with different tools serving different purposes over time. For example, certain tools provide a retrospective snapshot to guide prioritization, while others support early warning and anticipatory response, or provide a common framework for policy coherence and coordination among actors, or highlight mechanisms or conditions to support transitions out of fragility (Ziaja, 2012). The diversity of these applications points to the potential of multidimensional assessments. The next section unpacks this potential by exploring the strengths and weaknesses of a multidimensional measure.

WHAT IS THE VALUE OF A MULTIDIMENSIONAL MEASURE OF FRAGILITY? WHAT ARE ITS DRAWBACKS?

The Potential Pitfalls of Disaggregation

The trend towards disaggregation reflects a pursuit for more specific definitions and refined analytical categories of state fragility to assist scholarship and policymaking, especially in light of events such as the 9/11 terrorist attacks and the Arab Spring (Grimm et al., 2014). For example, the potential of fragile states to be a locus of terrorism, conflict, and other geopolitical challenges contributed to an effort to better understand, define, and address the determinants of fragility (Kaplan, 2008a, 2008b). The Covid-19 pandemic has reinvigorated discussions on the role and capacity of the state to provide basic services as part of the social contract, with particular relevance to failing states (Steven et al., 2021).

However, disaggregation is a means to an end rather than an end in itself. There is a risk that pursuing disaggregation simply for its own sake can lead to an infinitively regressive exercise that affects a measure's policy relevance. Including more indicators or dimensions, however relevant, can also undermine actors' ability to make meaningful use of the information and analysis to fulfil a specific purpose, such as strategic planning, financing or programming. The balance between nuance and application is thus an important consideration. Another related consideration is the means of disaggregation, or alternatively, the process of aggregating the component parts of fragility (Gisselquist, 2017). Scholarship has looked to develop multidimensional measures to respond to one-dimensional rankings that were influential due to their accessibility and simplicity but tended to conflate countries' performance across the dimensions of fragility (Call, 2010; Tikuisis and Carment, 2017). For example, even though Colombia and Mozambique were fragile and next to each other on the 2012 Failed States Index, the former lacked authority but not capacity, whereas the latter struggled with capacity but did not face challenges to its authority (Faust et al., 2013). Simplified rankings would fail to capture such nuance and thus provide a partial or distorted perspective of the root causes of fragility. This implication is especially important in light of the increasing consensus against the use of standard templates for policy intervention in favour of adaptive, locally driven and politically informed approaches (World Bank, 2018). A measure's simplicity could thus be a double-edged sword that affected the accuracy of its characterization of reality. Scholars have relied on multidimensional measures to assess countries' performance on each component part and as a whole, often using the former to explain the latter. However, the extent to which these measures analysed the part-to-whole relationship varied, and some initiatives faced criticism for reproducing a one-dimensional measure in the process of aggregating indicators. As described previously, such criticism has encouraged a recent move towards defining typologies of fragility, which help identify similar characteristics across countries that may influence policy interventions but avoid the tendency to rank countries according to these characteristics (Ziaja et al., 2019; Tikuisis and Carment, 2017). Additionally, qualitative studies have suggested that the relevance of certain indicators differed based on the circumstances across countries and regions, and thus, the manifestation of a certain indicator could vary considerably, even across countries that were next to each other on a list or index. For example, Glawion et al. (2018) find that the worst performers on the FSI – Central African Republic, Somalia, and South Sudan – scored almost identically even when manifestations of security fragility varied considerably across the three countries and thereby problematized

a straightforward comparison. This criticism accounts for the fact that the FSI provides a multidimensional assessment of fragility, although it aggregates indicator-level scores into a composite measure. It is thus important to question the validity of any disaggregated measure that relies, ultimately, on aggregation to assess fragility; taken to its logical conclusion, such a critique is an indictment of the enterprise of quantification and classification rather than simply an observation specific to multidimensional measures.

Elaborating on the Benefits to Disaggregation

With these shortcomings in mind, there are several benefits to disaggregation. One such benefit is the ability to identify diverse entry points to address specific risks to fragility and state failure. These risks vary based on their scope, scale, duration, and intensity. They thus merit scrutiny to ensure that interventions are targeted appropriately and “do no harm”, as in, they do not risk reproducing the problems that they are attempting to address (OECD, 2010). The imperative to do no harm has prompted calls for conflict sensitivity in fragile states and furthered a paradigm of action that prioritizes context-specific avenues of engagement rather than prescribed templates of intervention (World Bank, 2018). A disaggregated perspective is thus important to support locally led, problem-driven ways of working. Sources of resilience against complex risks are similarly diverse, existing in various aspects of the state and society and offering entry points for policy action and scalable solutions (Desai and Forsberg, 2020). Such entry points provide avenues for change at the systemic level, thereby helping guide countries’ diverse trajectories from fragility to resilience. The interplay of risks and sources of resilience in fragile states, as described in detail in *States of Fragility 2022*, underscores the need for disaggregated perspectives on fragility; in the absence of such disaggregation, actors would treat root causes as monocausal and lack insights into specific pathways out of fragility. The high-level identification of complex, intersecting risks and their corresponding sources of resilience is thus a prerequisite to guiding countries across these indeterminate and non-linear pathways. In turn, such analysis has important implications for existing initiatives to enable better policy coherence and effectiveness across the whole of government, most recently articulated in the OECD’s Recommendation on the Humanitarian, Development, and Peace (HDP) nexus (OECD, 2019). The World Bank Group’s Risk and Resilience Assessments, the Recovery and Peacebuilding Assessments led by the EU, UN, and World Bank, and the UN’s multidimensional peace operations in fragile states are other examples of such initiatives to enable joint approaches that have a multidimensional analysis of crises and fragility at their centre. Such efforts illustrate the policy relevance of disaggregation.

However, the potential for disaggregation depends on the accurate and timely identification of risks and sources of resilience in these assessments. The lack of a sound theoretical foundation or missing data can lead to the misidentification of certain risks or blind spots, as discussed earlier, thereby providing a partial or provisional assessment of multidimensional fragility. In recognition of this challenge, the OECD recently sought to revisit and update the methodology for its fragility framework, originally developed in *States of Fragility 2016*, in an attempt to keep pace with existing theory and practice on multidimensional measures of fragility. This revision involved an investigation of the theoretical underpinning of each indicator in the framework across the five dimensions of fragility. The result of this two-year exercise – between *States of Fragility 2020* and *States of Fragility 2022* – resulted in an introduction of the human dimension, a sixth dimension intended to reflect the need for people-centred

solutions to fragility, especially in light of contemporary crises in fragile states (OECD, 2022a). In doing so, the OECD aimed to address a potential blind spot that had emerged from the exclusion of human-centred perspectives from its original model. This effort is one of many examples of institutions updating their approaches towards measuring and analysing fragility, as also reflected in the fragility strategies of pre-eminent multilateral institutions such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund. Nevertheless, with the increasing complexity of these measures, there is a risk of a declining policy appetite for them, especially among actors that are not familiar with or lack the capacity for such analysis. The proliferation of these measures can also lead to slightly incongruous perspectives at the country level, depending on the institution that is leading them and their specific purpose. These issues are not an indictment of disaggregation in and of itself, but rather, they point to the need for actors to ensure that efforts to disaggregate are coherent across parties and align with actors' objectives, capacities, and political will. Relative to single-table rankings and one-size-fits-all measures, the shift towards disaggregation can offer diverse opportunities for policy influence and change if implemented with appropriate ambition and resources. The breadth of available multidimensional measures from various institutions offers actors, especially those at the country level, a menu of options at their disposal. Such breadth also provides an opportunity for initiatives to learn from each other and draw on similar tools or techniques. This peer learning is an important characteristic of the evolution of multidimensional measures of fragility, from the initial frameworks proposed by works such as Call (2010) or Carment et al. (2008), to recent innovations and applications by the OECD and World Bank.

Another benefit of disaggregation is the opportunity that it provides to move beyond state-centric approaches to fragility. The universality of fragility merits greater attention to other geographic and administrative levels of engagement, from subnational or local entities to regional and global boundaries (Desai and Forsberg, 2020). This notion of universality is also implicit in the SDGs. Crime, violence, and terrorism are increasingly transnational and implicate a range of actors beyond the state, especially in countries with customary norms and systems (World Bank, 2021, 2022). Borderlands, such as in the Horn of Africa, have unique manifestations of conflict and fragility arising from the interplay between migration, customary institutions, and global networks of capital and exchange, for example (World Bank, 2020b). Additionally, disasters are localized and spill over across borders, affecting entire fragile sub-regions and ecosystems. The Covid-19 pandemic has illustrated the globalization of risk and the necessity of orienting international institutions toward prevention and resilience at a global scale (OECD, 2020). Donors are adapting their strategic planning and financing with this broader context in mind, as reflected in dedicated strategies and analytical tools for sub-regions with high needs such as the Lake Chad Basin, the Sahel, or the Horn of Africa. While these developments towards regionalization and globalization are not new, they highlight the urgency of adapting measures to analyse institutions beyond the nation state, which has thus far been the unit of analysis in multidimensional measures. This focus on the state highlights its importance for development outcomes, and it aligns with the initial policy challenge of identifying fragile or failed states that need more attention and resources from the international community (OECD, 2005; Call, 2010). At the same time, there is a case for assessing other units of analysis to strengthen development effectiveness, especially when specific areas or sectors of a country may be more susceptible to crises and fragility than others. This distinction is especially important in countries that are in the process of transitioning out of fragility or are on the precipice of becoming fragile: a subnational perspective can offer

more nuance to inform actors' approaches to the varying degrees of fragility in a country and thereby inform efforts to prevent (re)lapses into fragility.

A multidimensional understanding thus offers an opportunity to broaden the aperture of analysis without overlooking or undermining the role of the state; rather, it positions the state as part of a broader system influencing the fragility that is affecting people. Disaggregation allows actors to observe these different parts individually and analyse how they fit into the system as a whole. This opportunity is also implicit in the analysis of dimensions other than the political or security dimensions, which tend to be state-centric. However, geographic disaggregation to move beyond state-centric approaches faces unique data and methodological challenges due to the lack of availability of, for example, subnational and regional indicators at a scope comparable to what is available at the country level. This challenge is implicit in the varying character of root causes of fragility at these levels. The growing availability of citizen-generated data initiatives or satellite imagery and remote sensing to develop proxy measures of root causes of fragility is promising but also far from being accessible at-scale.

A potential solution to the lack of the availability of quantitative data, especially for different levels of geographic and sectoral disaggregation, is the use of qualitative case studies to complement quantitative measures, as previously discussed. The potential for this complementarity suggests another benefit to multidimensional measures, especially for ones that integrate qualitative elements into the measurement itself rather than as a by-product or add-on to the analysis. Examples of this latter approach include the Fund for Peace's Conflict System Assessment Tool, which integrates qualitative insights in its data collection, or the OECD's multidimensional fragility framework, which uses experts' ranking of clusters that result from a hierarchical clustering technique to inform a classification of the intensity of countries' fragility in each dimension. The use of qualitative insights is not new or unique to multidimensional measures. However, such measures can offer more opportunities to use these insights at different stages of the construction of the measure given the diverse factors being analysed or due to the potential for case studies to highlight aspects of fragility that are not measurable or available in existing data sources. In turn, qualitative insights can bring further attention to topics for which quantitative indicators are needed to improve the salience or relevance of a multidimensional measure. The integration of insights from such studies can also help address critiques of quantitative approaches, such as that they homogenize the manifestation of certain root causes of fragility across countries (Glawion et al., 2018), or that they introduce bias by excluding meaningful indicators in a given dimension. A multidimensional measure, with a focus on disaggregation, thus has the potential to enrich the nuance and specificity of measures of fragility by facilitating mixed-methods approaches that integrate qualitative insights alongside the foundational, quantitative measure. It is important, however, for these mixed-methods initiatives to be positioned to capitalize on the strengths of each approach, rather than being susceptible to critiques of each of them.

The benefits of multidimensional measures discussed in this section are not exhaustive. Rather, they illustrate three clear opportunities for disaggregation to inform the development of measures and classifications of fragility for academics, policymakers, and reformers working in fragile states. Other benefits of a disaggregated measure include its potential to align the measurement with the policy context; its adaptability based on the specific needs of its audience; and its potential to inform the scaling of solutions for development effectiveness. The following section elaborates on these benefits when outlining the way forward for a better multidimensional measure of fragility.

THE WAY FORWARD TO A BETTER MULTIDIMENSIONAL MEASURE OF FRAGILITY

As more data becomes available and improved methodological approaches abound, there is significant potential for researchers to innovate on multidimensional measures. This section explores two potential avenues for such innovation: first, using clustering techniques to identify typologies and trajectories of fragility, and second, applying multidimensional measures to policy and programming in fragile states.

Developing Typologies and Understanding Trajectories of Fragility

In recent years, scholars have increasingly developed clustering techniques to reconcile the tension between the need for parsimony in analysis and assessment with the reality of complexity in policymaking. Various initiatives from academic scholarship (Ferreira, 2015; Tikuisis et al., 2015; Ziaja et al., 2019) and international institutions (OECD, 2018; World Bank, 2020a), have used clustering to group together similar countries according to their shared characteristics, based on both quantitative indicators and qualitative assessments. Such an approach has helped identify patterns across countries, thereby supporting a process of aggregation that can help “tame the wickedness of the [fragility] problem set” (Brinkerhoff, 2014, p. 335) without reducing it to a one-dimensional measure. Scholars in other sub-fields of political science, as well as in the natural sciences, use clustering analysis regularly for the similar purpose of identifying patterns and highlighting complementarities between their units of observation (Ziaja et al., 2019). In the context of fragility, scholars have aligned clustering methods with other techniques, such as dimensionality reduction, to address the “curse of dimensionality”, a known problem in multidimensional measures relating to the number of features present in a model (Desai and Forsberg, 2020). The OECD, for example, uses principal component analysis (PCA) in two stages, with the first stage helping to consolidate 8–10 indicators in each dimension into two principal components that serve as inputs to a hierarchical clustering analysis (OECD, 2022b). Ziaja et al. (2019) propose a similar approach without creating a composite measure, in order to “identify general patterns of fragility” (p. 301) expressed as “constellations” (p. 310) that provide insight into distinct characteristics of groups of countries. Meanwhile, Tikuisis et al. (2015) cluster fragile states along the ALC framework to identify specific vulnerabilities among groups of countries that can help explain transitions in and out of fragility. In each of these studies, the number of proposed clusters and the specific clustering technique used depends on the research question and initial framework used to construct the clusters; above all, Ziaja et al. (2019) highlight the importance of weighing utility over other factors, even model fit, when choosing the clustering technique.

As these studies suggest, there is considerable momentum to continue to apply clustering techniques to analyse multidimensional fragility. These techniques are conducive to a mixed-methods, multidimensional analysis of fragility, such as in the case of the OECD’s multidimensional fragility framework, which integrates expert assessments of clusters in each dimension to inform a final determination of each country’s “states of fragility” (OECD, 2022b). Clustering also allows scholars to interrogate, in greater detail, prevailing theories about the root causes of fragility and how they emerge across countries and over time. For example, an analysis of the distribution of countries across regions and income groups within each cluster can help scholars better understand whether fragility occurs uniformly within

these country classifications, or if its nature and manifestation is independent of them. In doing so, clustering can inform analysis of regional or sub-regional fragility, insofar as it can help identify to what extent countries within a region share characteristics in a given dimension. Finally, as demonstrated in the literature, clustering can be a useful approach to highlight specific vulnerabilities that merit greater attention in programming and financing. For this purpose, scholars have used additional statistical techniques, such as Tukey's method in the case of OECD (2022c) and World Bank (2020a), to highlight which characteristics are unique to a particular cluster relative to all others. Such methodological innovations can further help policymakers target specific vulnerabilities to fragility across countries and over time.

There are several other potential benefits to clustering techniques, some of which have yet to be fully realized in a policy context. For example, the universal nature of fragility is implicit in the concept of multidimensionality, especially as the fragility agenda has become increasingly linked in recent years to the achievement of the SDGs (Kharas and Rogerson, 2017). This link has highlighted the need to reconsider the binary classification between "fragile" and "non-fragile" states. For example, the OECD proposed a discursive shift in 2016 from "fragile states" to "states of fragility" (OECD, 2016). Clustering can inform efforts to move beyond a binary classification by grouping countries according to their shared characteristics, rather than ranking or placing them on a composite, one-dimensional measure. Such an approach can help highlight specific areas that indicate latent fragility in a group of countries rather than in the aggregate, thereby also supporting more targeted and differentiated approaches to addressing fragility and its drivers. Additionally, by providing a middle ground between one-size-fits-all approaches and context-specific interventions (Ziaja et al., 2019), clustering offers a blueprint for scaling development programmes across countries that share certain characteristics or vulnerabilities. Such efforts to achieve scale are an important element of development effectiveness, especially in fragile states that require an ambitious agenda to achieve the SDGs (Chandy and Linn, 2011). Thus, in light of the benefits outlined in this paragraph, clustering techniques offer much potential as an approach in donors' and other actors' analytical toolkit for engaging on this issue.

Applying Multidimensional Measures of Fragility to Policy and Programming

While there is no agreed definition of strategy, most OECD members adhere to ideas around maintaining a balance between ways, ends, and means: objectives and the resources and methods available to meet those objectives. This need for balance is relevant in the present discussion: navigating fragility's multidimensional nature involves balancing the consideration of the root causes of fragility that give rise to negative consequences such as conflict, against the manipulation and aggravation of issues in order to sustain conflict (OECD, 2020). The recent preference for stabilization among Western actors in particular has highlighted shortfalls in strategic thinking that indicate a misalignment across humanitarian, development, and peace instruments and thereby highlight the potential of a multidimensional and context-wide assessment of fragility (SIGAR, 2021; Zurcher, 2020).

As discussed in this chapter, the use of data and evidence inherent in multidimensional approaches can produce actionable insights to help navigate complex systems in fragile states. Where all levels of these systems – from the international to the subnational – affect each other, multidimensional approaches offer valuable insight to connect historical currents of fragility over time to contemporary issues and events. Even though the analytical frameworks

informing these approaches are not real-time, they offer the advantage of a historical and cross-dimensional perspective, illuminating windows of opportunity for action. The practitioner's task is to unpack these cross-dimensional intersections and devise interventions that capitalize on openings within the system to create change, all the while ensuring that they do no harm.

The aftershocks of Covid-19 also demonstrate the universality of fragility, with significant impacts across each of the dimensions outlined in the OECD's multidimensional fragility framework (OECD, 2022c). Such consequences highlight the limitations of the earlier state-centric, binary model of fragility in contrast to multidimensional approaches that show significantly greater potential for explaining manifestations of risk and resilience for people, places and systems. The potential for identifying presentations of fragility affords policy and programme designers the scope to be both more specific in response while also being mindful of the variables that may affect the delivery and impact of different policy choices. Where complemented by qualitative research, it can also serve to encourage approaches that address root causes of fragility that place symptoms in a clearer context. This is particularly important for conflict-affected contexts where programmes and policies, whether humanitarian, development or peace, can become entrenched in short-term cycles of engagement that prioritize response over prevention and preparedness.

As noted above, policymaking in fragile states varies greatly according to donors and partners. In light of such variation, a multidimensional approach to understanding and analysing fragility can help to bridge knowledge and operational gaps between actors and partners. To date the application of multidimensional lens to fragility has had most traction in the development space and to an extent with humanitarian actors.¹ On the other hand, it has little traction with peace and security actors, where it is mentioned rarely in policy documents or official statements, albeit a recent increase in uptake among diplomats (US State Department, 2020, p. 6). Nevertheless, the concept of multidimensionality more generally, beyond its application to fragility, is familiar to these actors. Multidimensional tools applied by many security actors, such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's COP-D process or the UN's multidimensional peacekeeping tools, align significantly with the multidimensional approaches described above. With few exceptions,² this overlap has not led to closer policy alignment where highly specialized, hierarchical and classified structures (especially in the military), with unique political cultures have negated closer alignment or cooperation. This gap between analysis and application among development and humanitarian actors on one side, and peace actors on the other, resonates with much of the analysis on stabilization over the last twenty years (MacGinty and Williams, 2016), as well as in the evidence base for agenda-setting and advocacy in fragile states (Grimm et al., 2015).

Confronting policy challenges through a multidimensional perspective

The evolution of approaches to multidimensional fragility reflects a variety of concepts and approaches that challenge and complement each other. This variety offers policymakers a choice to apply approaches that suit their needs in different contexts and at different times. Such flexibility is especially important to enable adaptive ways of working in difficult-to-navigate settings (Laws et al., 2022). Amidst this variety, the use of a multidimensional analysis can help to highlight connections between issues, systems, institutions and people, thereby allowing for the better alignment and coordination of programmes. In this way, such an approach to analysis has the potential to support efforts to share information and

learning across a donor and partner landscape that is often complex, fragmented, and incoherent. It is thus a unique tool to support the formulation of policies and strategy in fragile states.

Starting point for addressing concentrations of fragility

In addition to understanding fragility across and beyond borders, multidimensional approaches offer a valuable starting point for addressing concentrations or pockets of fragility at regional and subnational levels. The idea of focusing on pockets of fragility is not new (Connolly, 2013); however, a shift toward a multidimensional perspective can offer new, and often surprising, insights on how these pockets emerge over time, why they exist, and how they influence their surroundings, and vice versa. For example, Jené and Englebort (2019) find that the centralized patronage system at the national level in the Democratic Republic of Congo undermined efforts towards decentralization and shaped the nature and character of pockets of fragility throughout the country. Given that most pockets present at subnational levels, qualitative studies are necessary to offset the data limitations discussed earlier in this chapter. Nonetheless, the strength of disaggregated approaches for identifying the trends, patterns and relationships that inform an understanding of pockets of fragility serves to underline their value as part of an analytical process. This value extends to opportunities for comparative approaches across disciplines. For example, applying ecological and fragility analysis to a specific region or context can help to identify critical drivers or significant relationships across dimensions.

A greater appreciation of multidimensional fragility also raises the potential for the better coordination of programming. With greater awareness of how causes of fragility relate to each other with and across different systems, programmes that target specific issues or vulnerabilities can adjust for the multidimensional landscape they find themselves in, both in terms of the implications of their response to a particular issue and the implications of other programmatic approaches on their actions.

Unlocking approaches to conflict prevention

Against a backdrop of stabilization and counter-insurgency efforts that have prioritized tactical over strategic elements, multidimensional approaches to fragility have significant potential for unlocking new approaches to conflict prevention (OECD, 2020). Where elite decision-making in conflict-affected contexts is informed by responses to different risks and coping capacities, multidimensional analysis can help to identify sets of factors that inform the political space or settlement (Cheng et al., 2018). In addition to the points noted above, enhanced knowledge of such factors can also help inform more scaled-up approaches capable of addressing several root causes simultaneously.

It is appropriate to question whether the sheer number and increasing technical complexity of analytical approaches available to policymakers is overwhelming institutions and agencies that were already struggling to adapt to the challenges of fragility. For example, translating the innovations discussed in previous sections, such as clustering analysis or complexity thinking, will introduce additional burdens in terms of resources, personnel, and skills for actors operating in fragile states. Additionally, contemporary political and media narratives in Western states are not conducive to detailed technical discussions on policy responses to root causes of fragility. This disconnect in part explains the resilience of binary approaches that deliver easily appreciated, albeit technically limited, findings. Such an embrace of binary – fragile vs. non-fragile – classifications have, however, been a double-edged sword. Although they offer

a veneer of analytical rigour, sufficient to inform a specific course of action, they are limited in the breadth of insights and entry points that they can offer practitioners who are working on addressing the complexity of fragility. On the other hand, multidimensional approaches can often be difficult to explain and implement, especially when political elites are intent on pursuing quick-wins. This issue presents a challenge in communicating the value of the use of multidimensional approaches to fragility: it is important that the style or format of the presentation be as strong as the substance for the analysis to resonate with political decision-makers. At the same time, as outlined in this chapter, these approaches are worthwhile to help facilitate pragmatic policy choices amidst complexity. A key part of the communications challenge is to resist the inclination to oversell and to be frank on the limitations, such as the lack of data discussed earlier in the chapter or the normative and statistical bias of the indicators used as inputs to multidimensional measures.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS ON NEXT STEPS

Referring back to the initial question motivating this chapter, the discussion has explored several reasons why disaggregation is key to effective solutions in fragile states. Disaggregation, in both analysis and programming, can guide nuanced interventions that are sensitive to the context and responsive to the complexity inherent within fragility. When coupled with the innovations presented in this chapter, disaggregation fills the gap between one-size-fits-all approaches and a localized approach that remains disconnected from the rest of the complex systems in fragile states. In doing so, it presents an opportunity for pragmatic policy and programming in fragile states. Reflecting a history of modifications and improvements over the past two decades, there is still potential to develop better multidimensional measures to respond to today's pressing challenges. In particular, a measure that can help understand typologies and trajectories of fragility and identify concentrations of it can be an entry point for more adaptive strategies that respond to different kinds of fragility. Such a measure can also help unlock windows of opportunity for the better prevention of fragility and conflict, thereby helping shift away from a culture of rapid response to an embrace of prevention and sustaining peace. In doing so, disaggregation through a multidimensional approach to fragility offers the key to development effectiveness in fragile states – especially because the Decade of Action to achieve the SDGs is well underway, and Agenda 2030 marks its halfway point.

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NOTES

1. For example, the World Bank, African Development Bank, Asian Development Bank, and International Monetary Fund all have published fragility strategies that reference one or more multidimensional approaches.

2. The four-pillar structure established in the aftermath of NATO's intervention in Kosovo in 1999 is another example of alignment between humanitarian, development, and peace actors in a post-conflict situation.

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7. Strategic approaches in fragile societies: targeting drivers

Seth D. Kaplan

INTRODUCTION: FRAMEWORKS THAT WORK

In recent years, practitioners, policymakers, and scholars have made immense progress in understanding the unique challenges fragile states face and strategizing how they might be overcome. There is, for example, a greater focus on issues such as inclusive politics (International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding [IDPS], 2011), societal dynamics (Marc et al., 2013), and local solutions than ever before. Assessments are now understood to be essential for developing a clear roadmap to reducing fragility (IDPS, 2014, pp. 1–2). However, this understanding often fails to translate into how fragile state governments and their international partners work to address fragility’s underlying drivers. These drivers are, in short, a function of deficiencies in two key variables: social cohesion and institutionalization.¹ Together, these determine the capacity of a population to cooperate and to direct this cooperation toward national-level challenges. When they are both lacking, a population has no mechanism to encourage cooperation, yielding an inherently unstable – fragile – sociopolitical dynamic.

Among major development actors, there are weaknesses in how fragility is defined, flagged, assessed, and addressed. Too often, the wrong issues are emphasized, possible trouble spots go unidentified, and lessons gained from assessments are not operationalized. Leaders in fragile states and the international community clearly require a more comprehensive framework for both understanding *and* addressing state fragility; one that builds upon existing efforts such as the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States. The best approach would be rooted in the societal and institutional dynamics that cause such fragility. These fundamental dynamics frame how more formal institutions and processes work and thus determine the quality of government, the inclusiveness of the economic and political systems, and the strength of the centripetal or centrifugal forces acting on society. Bolstering fragile states, then, depends not on technical approaches to reforming formal institutions or on targeting fragility’s visible symptoms such as corruption or inequity. Instead, a clear focus on the underlying drivers of fragility can point the way to developing a smarter toolbox for strengthening states. A more precise diagnosis will yield a more adaptive approach – a set of remedies that targets a particular context’s unique needs.

This chapter begins by offering a comprehensive framework to analyze fragile states and then uses this framework to discuss how such systematic assessments should be carried out. It concludes with ideas for how development actors such as the World Bank can better address the drivers of state fragility – weak cohesion and a dearth of institutions robust enough to manage conflict and hold powerful actors accountable. Of course, it is the domestic actors who must ultimately drive any change process; international institutions, at best, only catalyze

such efforts. By moving beyond the traditional focus on formal processes and institutions, we will arrive at very different identifying markers and policy mixes from those currently in use.

CHALLENGES IN DEFINING AND DIAGNOSING FRAGILITY

There is confusion regarding what constitutes a fragile state. The widely cited lists of fragile states² represent the ambiguity surrounding their definition. These lists comprise measures that have no causal relationship with fragility (two examples are population growth, which can both spur economic growth as well as put pressure on a weak state, and income levels, which may depend on natural resources rather than actual economic development); they are products rather than causes of fragility (such as violence and corruption levels); or they are based on Western political norms (such as regime type). Assessments of state fragility then suffer from two main shortcomings. First, they focus much more on symptoms than on causes, partly because of the hunger in academia and the policy world for easily observable and broadly comparable quantitative data for use in large-scale comparisons. These studies are helpful in making broad generalizations; they are less useful for assessing (and bolstering) individual countries.

Second, the concept of fragility is often based on a number of political and moral suppositions that underlie the Western conception of how states (should) work – and thus how they ought to be improved. Discussion inevitably focuses on the importance of the social contract, democracy, and human rights (and on how to reduce those security threats that affect donors). Normatively, these are important principles, but there is little evidence that existing ways of promoting such ideas can yield solutions to the fundamental challenges faced by fragile states. A state needs a certain minimum level of cohesion and institutionalization before it can effectively implement a democratic social contract.³ Looking more closely at these presuppositions, we can observe how international actors believe fragility is the result of a weak state and state–society relationship. In this view, governments lack legitimacy because of how they are chosen. Their inability to provide quality public goods is seen as stemming from a lack of either capacity or willingness. Accordingly, those holding this faulty understanding believe bolstering fragile states will depend on holding regular elections and increasing the ability of government to execute core functions, such as education, healthcare, and providing security (Marc et al., 2013, pp. 1–2, 12).

For instance, a 2012 OECD report on fragile states defined these places as unable to “develop mutually constructive relations with society” and often having a “weak capacity to carry out basic governance functions.” It proceeded to highlight the importance of the state–society relationship fifteen times and the social contract thirteen, yet never touched upon the societal dynamics that determine these relationships (Letouzé and de Catheu, 2012, p. 11). Efforts to assess and counteract fragility have repeatedly failed because they concentrate far too much on the formal institutions of the state (which may appear to be effective while only acting in a form of isomorphic mimicry), ignoring the broader informal societal factors that influence these and matter most (institutions are important, but not in the way donors conceive them to be).

Although many international actors have recognized that fragile states have unique problems and therefore require specialized responses,⁴ they have not made substantial advances in determining what such specialized responses would entail. In some policy circles, there has

been more emphasis on civil society, social capital, and the need for institutions to mediate between groups, but such ideas still operate at the margin of thinking on policy and have had little impact on programming.⁵

POLITICAL ORDERS AND MARKERS OF FRAGILITY

Underlying social and institutional dynamics affect how economies, politics, security apparatuses, administrative organs, and legal systems perform. Though we often use the term *fragile states* – and will continue to use it here – in a more foundational sense we are talking about the dynamics of *fragile societies*. With weak bridging institutions and unbridgeable social divisions, these places feature a different set of sociopolitical dynamics than robust states. These dynamics, in turn, create formidable obstacles to stability, development, and democracy; instability and underdevelopment are often mutually reinforcing. Moreover, social divisions hamper efforts at improving governance and fostering economic opportunity, which in turn creates discontent and a zero-sum competition for power and resources. It is virtually impossible to construct sturdy formal institutions in a place like Afghanistan or Somalia without addressing the social cleavages that threaten to rip them apart.⁶

As such, structurally, fragile states are not like other states (Kaplan, 2014). In non-fragile states, social cleavages are present, and institutions are less than perfect at times – especially if we define “perfection” as what exists in Western countries – but there is not a self-reinforcing vicious cycle. Non-fragile states have sufficient social cohesion and institutions maintain a decent amount of legitimacy across groups such that there is a foundation for promoting economic and political progress. Cooperation occurs, and conflict is managed in a reasonably constructive manner. Institutions may be weak, but they are less susceptible to capture by a particular group. Social cohesion – defined as the quality of relationships between groups – determines levels of trust and collaboration and how institutions interact with one another. The more cohesive the society, the greater the likelihood that different groups and institutions will work together and manage conflict constructively and be able to establish a social contract (defined as the relationship society and the state) that is seen as legitimate across all groups. Even if consensus is ever elusive, the great majority understands the importance of working together according to a commonly accepted set of rules and values.

Social cohesion is especially important in less developed countries because formal institutions are weak and often susceptible to control, corruption, and bias; too often the state advances the interests of some groups over others, and is not autonomous enough to form a social contract seen as legitimate across all parts of a society. Unlike their more institutionalized brethren in the developed world, these states feature formal institutions incapable of neutral mediation and enforcement of rules and unable to deliver truly public goods. As a result, elites and officials have undue discretion to bend the rules and appropriate the resources of the state. When formal institutions are weak, social cohesion can, to a certain extent, work to encourage leaders to resolve problems with amicability and a public spirit, as has happened at crucial points in the histories of places such as Somaliland, Chile, and Tunisia. State capacity matters, but the functioning of the state is strongly influenced by the dynamics of the society in which it is embedded. Moreover, without social cohesion, it is very hard to improve formal institutions – the approach typically advocated by donors – because elites and officials have strong incentives to undermine reform (as it can be harmful to their interests).

On the other hand, if a state is strongly institutionalized, these social fractures matter much less because the government will be much more likely to act according to a principle of neutrality, and thus be a much better and fairer manager of conflict and distributor of resources. As William Easterly, Jozef Ritzan, and Michael Woolcock (2006) explain, “good institutions are most necessary and beneficial where there are ethnolinguistic divisions. Formal institutions substitute for the ‘social glue’ that is in shorter supply when there are ethnolinguistic divisions” (p. 14). Institutionalization of the state is not synonymous with strong security forces; a country can have powerful security forces that only serve the interests of a particular clan, ethnic group, or ruling clique. Rather, it is about the ability of political parties, large government ministries, NGOs, and companies to effectively coordinate large numbers of people and departments, manage interactions with many other entities, and perform across many locations and over long periods of time. It is about “the extent to which the political organizations and procedures encompass activity in the society” and are able by their “adaptability, complexity, autonomy, and coherence” to resiliently respond to the ever-growing needs of rapidly evolving societies (Huntington, 1965, pp. 393–394).

Seen this way, fragility can be understood as existing along two dimensions (see Table 7.1), with low institutionalization and low social cohesion at one corner (occupied by countries such as Somalia, the Central African Republic, and South Sudan), and cohesive, highly institutionalized nation states occupying the opposite one.⁷ Systems marked by low political fragmentation and high institutionalization (category I), as in the case of almost all developed countries and developing countries such as Turkey, China, and Chile, are genuinely robust. Only this group is capable of fully tackling the challenges of economic and political development. Political systems with low fragmentation and institutionalization (category II) are relatively stable but sluggish. These have potentially bright futures if they can foster good investment climates and improve state capabilities. States with high identity fragmentation but also high government coercion capabilities (category III), such as the Soviet Union (and to a lesser extent, Russia) or Ethiopia (before its civil war), are inherently weak and potentially unstable. States that combine low institutionalization (especially in the security realm) with highly fragmented political cultures (category IV) are fundamentally weak and unstable. Fragile states are concentrated in categories III and IV (Kaplan, 2014).

Table 7.1 Four types of political orders (with examples)

	High Social Cohesion	Low Social Cohesion
High Institutionalization (I) or High Coercive Capacity (III)	<i>I. Dynamic</i> Botswana Turkey Chile China	<i>III. Fragile but Controlled</i> Syria (before 2011) Soviet Union Iraq (before 2003) Saudi Arabia Ethiopia (before 2020)
Low Institutionalization	<i>II. Stable but Sluggish</i> Senegal Armenia Tanzania Bangladesh	<i>IV. Fragile and Unstable</i> Nigeria DRC Somalia Libya (after 2011) Syria (after 2011)

Source: Adapted from Kaplan (2014).

Wherever they are on the spectrum – and no matter how successful they are – states need to consistently reinforce their cohesion and institutions or risk seeing their fragility increase. As Marc et al. note, progress need not be linear (2013, p. 2), but it is always difficult. Of course, as fragility is more a societal phenomenon than a state one, it can be concentrated in some pockets or regions of a country much more than in others, and encompass parts or all of more than one country at times. States that feature societal fragmentation and weak institutions are often caught in a destructive cycle. The combination of rigid social divisions and weak state institutions in Lebanon, Libya, and Yemen, for instance, mean that institutions become stages for the sometimes-violent competition over power. In African countries such as Nigeria and Ethiopia, the state may have islands of effectiveness, but they are constrained by networks of patronage and corruption. In such countries, the state lacks the autonomy and capacity to manage conflict and drive development forward constructively. Instead, it is beholden to competitive power dynamics within society.

IDENTIFYING SOURCES OF FRAGILITY

Existing indices and tools have repeatedly performed poorly in predicting conflict or state failure; many of the Arab countries now in turmoil (e.g., Libya) did not make fragile states lists before 2011 (Kaplan, 2014, pp. 50–51). Some conflate resilience (or luck) with true robustness. This can lead to characterizing as “non-fragile” those states that have enjoyed stability but, in fact, sit atop combustible societies. Instead, our analysis should systematically focus on the most important forces that can potentially drive a society together or apart – the “critical fault lines.” The list in Table 7.2, which is based on over fifteen years of research on fragile states, uniquely seeks to bring together the twelve most important societal and institutional drivers of fragility. These can be used to gauge the forces working on the various groups and institutions that exist within these countries (see the assessment framework discussed below).

Both fragile states and their international partners have increasingly recognized the importance of doing more systematic assessments of fragility.⁸ The New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States, a 2011 agreement between fragile states, their development partners, and civil society designed to enhance development policy and practice (IDPS, 2011), places fragility assessments at the center of its approach, arguing that they are crucial to “generate a better understanding of the sources and drivers of fragility,” “develop country-owned solutions,” and “help ... policy makers and planners to work on the PSGs [Peacebuilding and Statebuilding Goals] in a more integrated fashion and ‘avoid silos’” (IDPS, 2014, pp. 1–2). The World Bank and a number of key bilateral donors (such as France) also regularly undertake such assessments, but only for internal use (negating the second and third goals of the New Deal). Peacebuilding organizations, such as the United Nations, also regularly undertake conflict assessments, which have many similarities to these.

Although each of the various assessments provides useful insight, they each have weaknesses. The New Deal’s fragility assessments are somewhat limited by how the PSGs frame the issues,⁹ and they are likely to be compromised by being part of a highly political process. Donor assessments are rarely shared outside organizations, have limited local input, and focus on issues that matter most to those commissioning the work. Conflict assessments are, by definition, limited to issues involved in conflict. Each assessment risks producing incomplete or mediocre results if it fails to sufficiently focus on – as the New Deal’s Guidance Note on

assessments declares – “identify[ing] critical fault lines that need to be considered by policy makers and planners when setting priorities and designing interventions” (IDPS, 2014, p. 2). Although any tool will inevitably have its limits, a fragility assessment that focuses on the core issues in a more systematic and inclusive manner is more likely to correctly identify precipitants rather than products of crisis, and yield a practical policy toolbox capable of reducing the likelihood of conflict, fostering more inclusive politics and producing greater prosperity.

The assessment framework presented in Table 7.2 aims to fill this gap. Although all of its components are a product of both dimensions of fragility as discussed above, five are largely influenced by societal drivers and five are largely influenced by institutional drivers. The other two are a more balanced combination of both dimensions. Altogether, they provide a ready framework by which to analyze and assess fragile states. By bringing together all twelve societal and institutional sources of fragility, the assessment framework offers a guide for analyzing the context-specific challenges faced by individual fragile states. The tool can also be used to roughly gauge the degree of a country’s fragility in order to make cross-national and inter-temporal comparisons, though the highly qualitative nature of the metrics may limit the precision of such measurements. Even though the framework does not directly provide solutions, it does yield a toolbox of practicable policy options for local politicians, policymakers, NGOs, and civil society leaders as well as their international partners to better target fragility. Though many of these will be familiar to policymakers, they have rarely been used systematically and to the extent necessary to reduce fragility.

Table 7.2 Sources of fragility

Category	Type	Area of analysis
Political Dynamics	Societal	Political discourse – uniting or dividing at crucial moments
		Political narrative – overarching or particular to each group
		Political mobilization – by or across groups
Historical	Societal	Media – unified or separate for each group
		Historical legacies
		Unresolved trauma
		State organic or imposed?
Social Cooperation	Societal	Political geography
		Rigidity of identity boundaries
		Relationships (personal/work/family) across or within groups
		Political, economic, and social associations – across or within groups
		Trust between groups
Horizontal Inequalities	Societal	Socialization/integration of youth
		Population movements (tensions with host communities)
		Strength/flexibility of traditional institutions
		Political inequalities (e.g., representation in government, military, etc.)
		Economic inequalities (e.g., quality of public services, land ownership, income levels, etc.)
		Sociocultural inequalities (e.g., recognition of holidays, use of language, etc.)
		What are the perceptions of ethnic and religious groups related to political, economic, and sociocultural inequalities? Why do their perceptions differ from reality?

Category	Type	Area of analysis
Transnational Influences	Societal	How are regional events shaping elite behavior and population expectations? Are external actors providing weapons and money to particular groups within a society? How are prices for commodities affecting different segments of society? How are transnational ideas and norms affecting how religious and political actors behave?
Effectiveness and Interaction of Institutions	Institutional	How well do institutions (state and non-state) deliver public goods? Are they relevant for the needs of the disadvantaged? What is the quality of interactions among different institutions? Can public and civil society institutions bring people together across cleavages? How well do (often informal) local governance systems work with (formal) regional and national systems? Are institutions robust enough to enforce elite commitments?
Equity of Institutions	Institutional	Do state institutions act impersonally, equitably, and inclusively? Do civil servants prioritize private over public? Do different types of people receive different treatment from the state? Do all groups and regions receive equal public services?
Perceptions of Justice	Institutional	How do elites and groups feel they are being treated by the state? How do elites and groups feel they have been treated historically? How effective are institutions at managing conflict? What does justice mean to each group? Can they achieve it?
Security	Institutional	Weapons/violence: How do they affect political competition? Security of various groups Does the state security apparatus favor any side? Does the state have a monopoly on violence?
Accountability Mechanisms	Institutional	How dependent is the state on taxes from the population and business? How capable are institutions (including political parties, NGOs, courts, etc.) and processes (e.g., elections) of holding leaders accountable? Do accountability mechanisms bring people together across groups or divide them by group? What are widely accepted human rights norms?
Breadth of Economic Activity	Both	Dependency on natural resources Does one group dominate economic activity? How diversified and broad is a country's productive economic activity? Can the economy generate opportunity for youth?
Behavior of Leaders	Both	Do national leaders act inclusively or exclusively? Do group leaders depend on or promote a sectarian agenda? Do leaders of political parties and other major political organizations depend on broad or narrow support? Are accountability mechanisms based on all groups or just one's own?

Many of these drivers depend on the distribution of power, which is very uneven in fragile states. In many cases, a small number of important political, economic, social, and religious actors have a disproportionate influence on what their groups do, and what other groups are able to do. Ordinary citizens typically have little or no control over the state, and the state itself is limited in its ability to make or implement policy independent of these elites. The relative importance of each category varies by country. In some, strong identity groups and starkly divided politics may be the biggest challenges (e.g., Iraq). In others, horizontal inequalities

may create such anger that they matter most (e.g., Kenya). In yet others, weak institutions and insecurity make it very hard to bring groups together at all (e.g., Libya). However, none of these drivers work in isolation. Instead, they tend to reinforce each other, either positively or negatively. The more insecurity there is, the more likely people will depend on their primordial identities and mistrust those from other groups. Similarly, the greater the existence and weight of unresolved grievances or trauma, the more likely political narratives will diverge. The less integration there is, the more likely institutions will work inequitably and horizontal inequalities will emerge. As such, action on multiple fronts is necessary to significantly alter these dynamics.

Assessments should ideally be done independently of political actors – including fragile state governments and donors – to ensure the validity of results. They should take into account variations at different levels (national, regional, local) and in different parts of a society, and examine differences across the broad range of institutions, seeking islands of excellence as well as problems with performance, interactions, and inequities. They should yield a comprehensive strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis for each country as well as a set of short-term and long-term recommendations. The assessments should be regularly repeated to take change into account, and to identify triggers for potential conflict. Assessments should ideally be undertaken in a way that engages key stakeholders – especially local political, economic, and social leaders – but not in a way that allows them undue influence over the process.

Change ultimately depends on how indigenous actors conduct themselves and treat each other. Accordingly, assessments produce the best results when they engage in extensive consultation with local actors (as well as expert input) as part of their data collection process and yield products that are widely used within countries. This is why the New Deal puts the government – ideally the best mechanism for bringing actors together and producing a society-wide consensus – at the center of its process. However, given the many limitations of this approach in fragile states, alternative mechanisms (e.g., national dialogue and traditional institutions) may be necessary – mechanisms that bring people together to build institutions which promote collective action to resolve the identified issues. While international actors may be more able to take action in the short-term, they will always be limited by their external position. They should concentrate on catalyzing domestic processes as much as possible (e.g., convening events, promoting dialogue, etc.) as well as investing in the specific areas identified in the assessment where their policies can have an impact (e.g., horizontal inequalities and economic imbalances).

SHIFTING FROM A TECHNICAL TO ADAPTIVE APPROACH

Although addressing fragility is fundamentally a challenge for domestic actors, international aid plays an important role in these contexts. Many development actors (including governments) have undertaken assessments of fragile states; however, turning their results into practical programming has proved both difficult and disappointing. As a result, the need to better operationalize the results of such analyses remains just as important and necessary as improving their quality.

Studies show that there are a wide range of reasons why fragility assessments have not yielded the anticipated improvements in the performance of foreign actors:¹⁰

- programming often does not adequately reflect the findings (Center on International Cooperation [CIC], 2011);
- analyses are not sufficiently institutionalized in programming or management;
- incentives, including pay, yield “overwhelming pressure [on employees] to get money out of the door” through lending or spending (Yanguas and Hulme, 2014, p. 16);
- the proliferation of assessments has yielded different, even conflicting, priorities (OECD, 2008);
- data collection in fragile states has been difficult (g7+, 2013);
- crises have reduced the quality of studies;
- standardized indicators are used in highly dissimilar contexts, yielding unrealistic goals that countries cannot possibly achieve (g7+, 2013, p. 5);
- marginalized groups are not sufficiently included or heard;
- conceptual frameworks and assumptions are not clearly articulated, yielding misinterpretations of the results;
- the aggregating, weighting, and categorization of data are not clearly articulated (UNDP, 2012; Mata and Ziaja, 2009);
- trade-offs go unacknowledged and unreported (CIC, 2011).

The assessment framework outlined above can be used to develop a much more comprehensive set of policies for increased and systematic use to address fragility (see below) – but this alone will not be enough. A new mindset, a new set of skills, a new programming approach, and even new institutions are necessary to address the multifold challenges in these countries.

The most important problems faced by fragile states are of a substantially different nature from those of other countries. A one-size-fits-all approach may address the technical problems that are more common elsewhere (because national governments and leaders can handle domestic politics), but it is unlikely to address the more difficult adaptive problems (because countries have weak institutions and collective action capacities) that are crucial to reducing fragility. As Frauke de Weijer (2012, p. 2) argues:

[O]ne of the main failures of international development is to differentiate between problems that are technical and those that are adaptive; e.g. between problems that have a clear – though perhaps complicated – technical solution, and problems that need to be worked through in more open-ended ways and where the solution is not always clearly in sight. Technical problems are well served by our current reductionist way of thinking, whereas adaptive problems are not. These latter problems are deeply embedded in complex systems, where change is not always predictable and often non-linear. Dealing with adaptive problems requires different diagnostics, different approaches, and different management and accountability frameworks.

To address adaptive problems, development organizations should ensure that their professional staff have the following: better incentives (more oriented to long-term performance); more expert knowledge of the countries (and regions within those countries) and languages; longer on-the-ground postings; stronger skills in handling political issues (e.g., knowledge about transitions, coalition building, mediation, etc.); and better ability to work across disciplines (including economics, politics, business, institutional change, military reform, and humanitarian concerns) (Barder, 2015). Political development has to become as important an issue

to organizations working in fragile states as economic development, and political and social scientists as important as economists. Assessments need to be prioritized and institutionalized to ensure that programming decisions (not just the how but the what) reflect their findings.

Empirical research shows that aid works better in fragile states when people working on the ground or in implementing organizations have more autonomy (and less centralized monitoring and control) to adapt projects to unpredictable and rapid-changing environments. While simpler projects are more likely to succeed in the complex environments in these countries, greater autonomy yields a much lower decline in performance for the more complicated projects (Honig, 2015). Donor incentive schemes only hurt – not help – matters: they statistically create a substantial and *negative* effect on performance. Performance on complex projects is often much worse than on simple projects. The flexibility to adapt and respond to changes in local environments outweighs whatever benefits these incentive schemes might bring, especially when trying to implement complicated initiatives.

Intrinsic motivations seem to matter more than anything else to the organizations working in these places. As such, performance monitoring as currently conducted ends up having a significant, harmful effect on the ability of people working in fragile states to deliver results (Rasul and Rogger, 2013). Only if development organizations broadly shift their perspective on performance evaluation and grant more and substantial autonomy to staff working on fragile states, without micromanagement, will these dynamics be likely to change.¹¹

Considering adaptive problems and solutions should lead to an increased emphasis on the non-financial elements of projects as well as the need to invest more resources in non-financial programming. The real problem in fragile states is not the shortage of money but the inability of international and domestic actors to find ways to use it effectively. Catalyzing local efforts to tackle difficult political, societal, and institutional challenges – arguably the only way they can be tackled – requires a lot more creativity, iterative learning, and adaptability than we see in current practice. It also means a much greater emphasis on convening different actors to discuss issues, developing new platforms for dialogue, and fostering various forms of peacebuilding and diplomacy. New organizations may be necessary to reduce collective action problems and fill institutional voids as well as improve the delivery of public services and foreign aid. And a lot more should be invested in developing practical, inclusive leaders; in many cases, a focus on building a new generation of political, business, and civic leaders can yield the changes these countries need.

Of course, technical solutions like financial instruments will also have to become much more flexible: faster so as to respond to opportunities and crises; able to handle riskier investments, more failure, and smaller projects (investing in many more projects with higher risk will yield better overall returns but produce more disappointments); able to better combine and synthesize humanitarian and development assistance; and able to lend or grant money directly to subnational (e.g., regional governments and cities) and supranational entities (e.g., ECOWAS, East African Community).¹² Marcus Manuel, Maia King, and Alastair McKenchnie (2011) point out how right now, development aid is mostly “provided in exactly the same way as it is in more resilient countries with stronger institutions, applying the same procedures and the same approaches to risk” (p. 1). Instead, an approach that emphasizes the development of domestic institutions but includes much better safeguards to protect investments is called for. This will require higher standards for speed and flexibility, but not in ways that undermine domestic institutions.

TOOLBOX TO COUNTER FRAGILITY

One of the advantages of using the assessment framework laid out above is that it readily captures the underlying sources of tension in society and opens a toolbox of practicable policy and program options. While many of the ideas suggested are currently used in some form, they are rarely, if ever, emphasized or used systematically enough to reduce fragility. Instead of being an integral part of a broader strategy, they often play a very secondary role. Each broad issue and area can be connected to countermeasures to reduce fragility in a way that current practice cannot: issues are often assessed piecemeal and therefore many issues remain insufficiently addressed. For instance, if the quality of interactions among different institutions is deemed weak, a government, NGO, or donor could launch an initiative to improve it. In Somaliland, the government is documenting customary institutions, examining how they interact with the state, and considering how shifts in policy might build on the strengths of these institutions and ensure they work together effectively. In Ghana, the state is nurturing a hybrid system of justice by expanding the use of informal dispute-resolution mechanisms and ensuring that they complement those of the state (Crook, 2011).

If particularistic political mobilization exacerbates sectarianism, then country leaders could reform institutions and electoral rules to reduce this tendency. Nigeria and Indonesia have enacted electoral rules that require political parties to aggregate support from across groups and regions and achieve a certain minimum size to gain power, forcing politicians to build broad-based coalitions combining groups from across the country. Alternatively, leaders could work together to develop and promote nationalistic political rhetoric to counter particularistic appeals, as Tanzania, Singapore, and Indonesia did following their independence. If unresolved trauma or resentment drives sectarianism, institutions of transitional justice, such as South Africa's post-Apartheid Truth and Reconciliation Commission, could effectively address fragility. Of course, power plays a significant role in the dynamics that make countries fragile, and meaningful reform is certain to encounter opposition from those whose power it challenges.

Balancing the short-term and the long-term is crucial in order to get policymaking right. While many of the drivers require gradual change over a long time horizon, short-term triggers cause crises and must be actively managed. Such crises may be the result of shocks (e.g., price spikes or the death of a leader) or stresses that have built up over a long time horizon (such as social, demographic, or media change).¹³ Unfortunately, action that aims to reduce the impact of shocks often comes too late; action that aims to reduce longer-term threats to fragility remains under-prioritized because of uncertainty surrounding long-term policy outcomes. Similarly, acknowledging the trade-offs between different issues – and the political difficulties some pose – instead of assuming that all can be accomplished simultaneously is crucial to implementation. Some ought to be prioritized, while others ought to be set aside, at least in the short-term (unless they can trigger a crisis). The key will be to understand what might have the largest impact with the least pushback, as well as to examine what might encourage the creation of a more inclusive dynamic with the least risk.

Table 7.3 lists a broad range of practicable tools to address each source of fragility. It is not meant to be comprehensive, merely indicative. There are many other tools that might work to address each item. Leaders and specialists who know a particular country well can choose the most salient before strategizing about what combination makes sense given the context.

Table 7.3 Policy toolbox to reduce fragility

Category	Type	Possible tools
Political Dynamics	Societal	Change electoral rules to force political parties to aggregate votes across groups and regions Change institutional design to weaken presidency
Historical	Societal	Enact new media laws to reduce sectarian media Establish reconciliation and restorative justice programs Bring people together around new inclusive national identity and narrative to counter negative sectarian narratives Establish patriotic nation-building programs (e.g., national sports teams, national competitions, etc.) Creatively change institutional design to better match political geography (by, for instance, using decentralization)
Social Cooperation	Societal	Launch a national service scheme Present soap operas and television shows that promote integration Use government service as a way to promote integration Establish job-training programs for youth Launch cross-generational dialogues to better integrate youth into communities
Horizontal Inequalities	Societal	Strengthen community-level institutions Target inequalities for direct (e.g., affirmative action) or indirect (e.g., investments to broadly reduce) amelioration Reduce political inequities – which have the strongest impact on perceptions Recognize minority languages and holidays
Transnational Influences	Societal	Provide temporary relief to governments or segments of a population hit hard by changes in prices Reduce incentives for regional actors to intervene (e.g., inclusive politics, declare a country neutral) Establish regional security mechanisms (e.g., ECOWAS) and norms or behavior (e.g., against coups, for human rights)
Effectiveness and Interaction of Institutions	Institutional	Coopt religious groups instead of suppressing Establish commitment mechanisms to hold leaders accountable for their promises to others Initiate a series of programs to improve the interface and interaction between different institutions Establish international governance partnerships to increase the capacity of particular institutions Establish civil society organizations that can bridge social divides and facilitate cooperation between groups
Equity of Institutions	Institutional	Pass anti-discrimination laws Decentralize power and resources to regions and/or communities Expand citizenship to ensure it encompasses everyone in the country Strengthen the autonomy of institutions particularly susceptible to capture

Category	Type	Possible tools
Perceptions of Justice	Institutional	<p>Establish truth and reconciliation commission to deal with grievances from the past</p> <p>Ensure that all important state institutions have balanced leadership and employment</p> <p>Be transparent about budgets and spending</p>
Security	Institutional	<p>Ensure that each group's sense of justice is taken into account</p> <p>Ensure all political leaders enjoy equal protection</p> <p>Provide incentives for military to stay out of politics</p> <p>Promote accountable and professional values within all security and judicial organs</p> <p>Reduce the amount of weaponry held by non-state actors</p>
Accountability Mechanisms	Institutional	<p>Strengthen democratic institutions, processes, and culture</p> <p>Broaden income and property tax base</p> <p>Establish commitment enforcement mechanisms for elites; reinforce the judicial system</p> <p>Use governance partnership agreements to build up institutions to hold leaders accountable</p> <p>Build up the institutional capacity and cross-group representation of political parties, NGOs, etc.</p>
Breadth of Economic Activity	Both	<p>Improve the entrepreneurial ecosystem</p> <p>Take steps to make it easier for companies with no special connections to elites to operate</p> <p>Ensure that business owners from all ethnic, religious, geographical, and social backgrounds have equal playing field</p> <p>Introduce positive discrimination policies to ensure minorities, women, etc. increase share of economic pie</p>
Behavior of Leaders	Both	<p>Provide incentives for leaders to act more inclusively</p> <p>Promote inclusive values found within local cultures</p> <p>Encourage coalitions of inclusive actors and the isolation or marginalization of spoilers (where possible)</p> <p>Change institutional and electoral design to promote collaboration across groups</p> <p>Strengthen institutions that cut across groups and can create collective action to pressure leaders</p>

CONCLUSION: PERSPECTIVE OVER PRESCRIPTIONS

Instead of maintaining a fixed prescription for political and economic reform, leaders within countries and their international partners need to keep a flexible, agile, and long-term perspective when looking to address the challenges of fragility. Unfortunately, the trend in donor circles is to implement short-term, rigid programming that can be easily evaluated – the very opposite of what is needed in fragile contexts.¹⁴ Policies to address state fragility should target the type of fragility existing in that state. By rooting diagnoses in sources of fragility, rather than in symptoms of it, policymakers can better bolster states before they fail. Deterioration in one component of the framework can herald a particular problem requiring particular attention. Of course, because reform is inherently painful to the elements of society that profit from the status quo, success requires more than simply matching hypothetical reform to an existing problem. Some issues will lend themselves more easily to a new approach (e.g., security,

which affects everyone), while others will not (e.g., equity of institutions – which may hurt some while helping others). Sometimes, only interim or partial solutions are possible. Every situation is different: there is no fixed formula or method of prioritization that will work everywhere.

While some countries will have substantial obstacles to reform, the current (at least relative) success of countries such as Malaysia, Northern Ireland, Indonesia, and Kenya – despite their histories of conflict – shows what is possible even in difficult contexts. After deep social and economic divisions led to ethnic riots in the late 1960s, Malaysia's government was heavily motivated to put into practice policies that substantially reduced horizontal inequalities, broadened economic activity, and lowered the salience of identity in politics. Kenya has struggled with ethnic divisions and bouts of violence around elections, but it managed to avoid major conflict and arguably achieve more economically than any other sub-Saharan African country (with the exception of South Africa, which has a different history). Kenya's relative stability results from power sharing arrangements, decentralization, a strong judiciary, broader economic opportunity than most places on the continent, and outside intervention at critical junctures; much still remains to be done.

Considering societal and institutional dimensions as foundational to reducing fragility has powerful implications for fragile states currently undergoing crises. It highlights, for instance, the true sources of America's failure in Afghanistan: overly centralized government; winner take all electoral system; exclusion of key stakeholders – including the Taliban – from power until it was too late; inability to leverage traditional institutions and leaders more effectively; Pakistan's support for the insurgency; ongoing perceptions of unjust governance; sectarian narratives; and chronic insecurity. Unless the country's challenges were addressed on multiple fronts and simultaneously from early on – by, for instance, leveraging local sources of public authority, creating a much more decentralized and inclusive system of governance, addressing grievances more effectively, and taking a tougher line on external intervention – it is unlikely that there was anything the US could do to achieve a different result. The challenges are highly adaptive – Afghanistan is one of the world's most fragile states – but the US approach was highly technical from the start; while military force mattered to the Taliban's success, ultimately it was their better reading of local conditions and ability to adapt to them that mattered. Whether they will be able to govern as well as they fought a government, however, is an open question – the challenges are far greater, and they may have their own rigidities that prevent them from learning from our mistakes.

Libya's centrifugal forces can only be countered by a power-sharing arrangement that makes no major group feel excluded. Given the many political divisions, this probably requires a weak national government and strong city or regional governments in places such as Misrata. In a country that lacks an entity capable of holding powerful and potentially violent forces at bay, institutions must be established – probably in partnership with outside actors – to ensure that security is restored, commitments are kept, and a minimum level of rule of law is maintained.

In Nigeria, any solution to the spreading Boko Haram chaos must include a credible policy to address stark horizontal inequities, the feelings of resentment in the north, and the weaknesses of the security forces. Muslim leaders will have to establish a strong positive narrative to counter extremist views. If security forces cannot defend northern citizens, a set of regional or state guards may have to be established or outside actors brought in.

Bolstering deeply troubled states and societies such as Iraq, Libya, and Nigeria is a task both urgent and incredibly daunting. Recognizing the extent of the challenges and the diversity of fragile states illustrates that any generalized remedy for state fragility is no more credible than alchemy. Addressing state fragility in its many shapes and forms requires an understanding of the specific dimensions of each country and tailoring policies that fit them. As we have seen, this work is best done internally, with strong buy-in, consultation, and participation from a wide range of local actors. Externally, international development organizations can play constructive roles in catalyzing these domestic processes from the outside.

NOTES

1. For a fuller examination of how to identify fragile states, see Kaplan (2014).
2. See, for example, those formulated by the Fund for Peace and *Foreign Policy* (which together publish the Fragile States Index), the Political Instability Task Force (originally the State Failure Task Force), the Brookings Institution, the World Bank, the OECD, or the Institute for Economics and Peace.
3. Samuel Huntington argued as much almost half a century ago. See Huntington (1968). Intellectual blinders are further solidified by the needs of donors and international organizations to find strong leaders, centralized governments, and formalized processes and institutions with which to work. Their own financial instruments, accountability mechanisms, and human-resource policies limit their ability to do otherwise. This strongly biases action in particular directions whether local situations call for it or not.
4. See, for example, OECD (2007).
5. For an example of new thinking, see World Bank (2011) and Marc et al. (2013). Britain's Department for International Development (DFID), for example, takes a more holistic approach than many other aid organizations, yet still ends up focusing on "core state functions" including "citizen security, justice and financial and economic management," and "strong state-society relations." See UK DFID (2010, pp. 6–7).
6. By *formal institutions* we mean not only state institutions but also corporations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), political parties, and other non-state actors that operate as structured organizations.
7. There is some similarity between this analysis and the limited access orders used in North et al. (2012).
8. The 2015 annual OECD report on fragile states repeatedly "highlights the need for new approaches to assessing and monitoring fragility using metrics that do not reduce fragility measures to a single index but rather allow for tracking across multiple (and potentially uncorrelated) dimensions" (OECD, 2015, p. 45).
9. Two of the PSGs (#4 Economic Foundations and #5 Revenues and Services) are more developmental in nature. The other three form an excellent but rather narrow base from which to work.
10. Many of these ideas come from Herbert (2014, p. 23).
11. David Booth has discussed these issues at length in a different context. See, for instance, Booth and Chambers (2014) and Booth and Unsworth (2014).
12. The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) can lend directly to subnational organizations.
13. Huntington highlighted this dynamic in his early work. See Huntington (1968).
14. See, for example, Natsios (2010).

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8. Hybrid authority systems and political instability

Monty G. Marshall

INTRODUCTION

The author's plan for this contribution to the volume on state fragility is two-fold: one is to present a brief introduction to the societal-systems approach to political conflict analysis along with a debriefing of the author's twenty-one-year commitment to the United States Government's Political Instability Task Force (PITF; originally known, until 2003, as the State Failure Task Force, SFTF) and the other is to detail the systemic "political process model" informed by the PITF "forecasting" initiative to map the general system dynamics of political instability. Until his death in November 2017, Ted Robert Gurr was generally acknowledged as the world's top authority on political conflict; he also served as this author's mentor and research partner since 1985. Gurr's macro-comparative "politimetric" research method (Gurr, 1972) was designed in direct response to the "behavioral revolution" in computational, empirical research in political science and was founded on the core belief that there is a formal theoretical basis for both social order and political organization in human societies (e.g., Duvall and Gurr, 1976; Lichbach and Gurr, 1981). The "politimetric method" called for systematic, comparative research covering the entire universe of cases relevant to the issue of interest; this approach required the creation and collection of coded information that could be analyzed for patterned associations across key attributes of state actors interacting within and across societal systems. The Task Force was established "in response to a 1994 request from senior policymakers to design and carry out a study of the correlates of state failure" (Esty et al., 1995, p. i; see also Esty et al., 1998). Gurr, in collaboration with eleven other senior academics, served as an original architect of the "Task Force's central objective ... to use open-source data to develop statistical models that can help policymakers anticipate, avert, and react to the onset of acute political instability" (Goldstone et al., 2003, p. 1). The ability to anticipate, or forecast, political instability presumes a common, formal structure that conditions and channels systemic political behaviors in predictable ways.

This author joined the Task Force research effort in August 1998 and remained a full-time, core consultant and subcontractor through February 2020 (full-time analysts numbered about six; most consultants were brought into the Task Force on an ad hoc basis for relatively short periods of time).¹ The Task Force is funded by the Central Intelligence Agency's Directorate of Intelligence and has continued its research efforts through the current writing in mid-2022.² Even though the Task Force has used only open-source information and its work has remained unclassified, the secretive culture of the US intelligence community has narrowly limited the dissemination of Task Force research efforts and findings. Although the Task Force submitted regular reports to the US Government detailing its work, the sole publication produced for public access was the 2010 report on its "Phase V" modeling effort, titled "A Global Model for Forecasting Political Instability," published in the *American Journal of Political Science*

(Goldstone et al., 2010). The refinement of the global model was the core task and represented the culmination of fifteen years of concerted, collaborative efforts. The CIA direction and oversight created three parallel research tracks: one was secret and known only to those holding the proper security clearances, another was openly shared and discussed by Task Force members and remained unclassified, and a separate track fed into the societal-systems research approach of the “Gurr School.”³ The “Gurr School” published regular reports on its findings in the *Peace and Conflict* and *Global Report* serials and distributed research materials continuously on the Center for Systemic Peace public website.⁴

Of course, the current treatment cannot summarize the full breadth of the Task Force’s systematic, applied research efforts. This treatment focuses on the role of “hybrid authority” in the political process resulting in state fragility, here understood as a form of “societal-system” vulnerability to disturbance, disruption, or breakdown. In the Task Force research, the conditions and characteristics (independent variables) that were strongly and significantly associated with onsets of political instability events (dependent variable) could be understood as the principal parameters of a state’s “fragility” (susceptibility to instability). The common link for nearly all Task Force statistical analyses, that is, the lingua franca, was the use of the *Polity* data on political regime authority characteristics and transitions to control for regime type in the computational modeling. Despite the fact that the Task Force collected and integrated all known state-level data resources in the “Merge” mega-dataset and tested all conceivable relationships between and among thousands of relevant variables using all known statistical methods, the candidate independent variables tended to fall into a few “baskets” or “clusters” of related variables, of which only one variable drawn from each could be used in the global model at any time to minimize the confounding effects of autocorrelation. A large variety of model specifications were discussed at regular Task Force meetings with a preferred model emerging based on compatibility with established theory and communicability of meaning and practical implications to policymakers. The concerted effort to “drill down” in the data to gain better insight in key relationships also led to refinements in data resources and additional data collection efforts. Despite intensive and extensive research efforts and inclusion of the full analytic universe of cases (all independent countries with more than 500,000 total population in the most recent year – 167 countries in 2018 – and all years from 1950 to 2018), the best-performing models remained relatively simple and parsimonious.

We originally expected that no simple model could capture the processes associated with varied kinds of instability onsets. Rather, we expected that we would need different models for different kinds of political instability. Moreover, given the large number of variables that had previously appeared as significant in the literature, we assumed that useful models would have to be complex, incorporating not only many variables, but also their rates of change and various interactions between them. To our surprise, these expectations proved wrong. Despite testing many independent variables in many combinations and specifications, we have not found greater predictive power than in the parsimonious model shown in the reported four-variable model (Goldstone et al., 2010, p. 204).

The centrality of the Gurr-designed *Polity* data series to the Task Force modeling effort was due partly to its practicality (*Polity* includes annual observations for all countries and all years) and partly due to its empirically established validity and relevance to the study of regime instability. The scalar POLITY index measure of regime authority ranges from “fully institutionalized autocracy” to “fully institutionalized democracy” with the middling scalar region containing “mixed authority” or “hybrid” regimes shown by prior research to be associated

with relatively high risk of regime instability. Apart from some qualitative categorizations of regime types, there was no practical, alternative measure of regime authority available at the time that was adaptable to the modeling efforts. *Polity* is ubiquitous in quantitative research; it is based upon well-specified, standardized coding guidelines applied systematically to reported observations of political behaviors in the target countries; as such, it is considered comparable across all cases and all times. Most importantly, Task Force scrutiny and analyses have shown the *Polity* coding scheme accurately distinguishes autocratic and democratic authority characteristics across all regimes and through time.⁵

The Task Force global model has been found to be over 80 percent accurate in forecasting onsets of both civil wars and relatively nonviolent adverse regime changes (autocratic backsliding⁶) with a two-year lead time, suggesting that there are common factors accounting for all major forms of political instability in all countries in all regions of the world (Goldstone et al., 2010). Four general, system factors inform the Phase V global forecasting model:

- *Polity* regime characteristics (mode of central conflict management),
- infant mortality rate (general level of development),
- state-sanctioned ethnic group discrimination (identity group exclusion), and
- a geopolitical “neighborhood effect.”

Different measures of the key variables proved interchangeable and, so, the reported model specification can be considered a representative accounting of the core determinants of state fragility in the world. The Task Force agreed to include the neighborhood effect in the Task Force global model to recognize the systemic nature of the political process.⁷ The simplicity and commonality of the forecasting model specification strongly suggests a scientific and systemic basis for social order and disorder in human societies.

In many ways, the Task Force global forecasting models, by themselves, are little more than artifacts of the 25-year collaborative research effort. The real value of that effort lies in the research process itself, that is, the scientific mapping of the relationships among the wide variety of conditions and circumstances within which human societies forge and sustain their existence. While local conditions and circumstances distinguish social groups from other groups living under different conditions and circumstances, the commonality of group behavioral responses makes successful, systemic conflict management both possible and sustainable. The specific intent for the remaining discussion, then, is to build upon one of the “most striking results” of the PITF global modeling effort: “the extraordinarily high relative risk of instability onsets in partial democracies with factionalism” (Goldstone et al., 2010, p. 197). In examining the special role of “factionalism” (commonly termed “polarization”), this chapter will discuss the findings of a third parallel research tract to the Task Force effort: the macro-comparative, “societal-systems” approach and, especially, a dynamic political process model developed by the Center for Systemic Peace (CSP) and the “Gurr School” of political conflict research. The next section discusses “societal-system analytics” and the mechanics of Gurr’s “politimetric” research method and the following section introduces a “political process model” incorporating the Task Force research findings regarding the dynamics of hybrid regime authority, (polar) factionalism, and societal-system breakdown.⁸

HYBRID AUTHORITY AND SOCIETAL-SYSTEMS ANALYTICS

The appropriateness of using a systems approach in the study of political behaviors is a crucial innovation that has yet to be incorporated in mainstream political science in the United States. In fact, this author was very actively dissuaded from using a systems approach in his graduate studies and postgraduate research. The use of force (power) has been the most studied dynamic in political relations and the analysis of power potential has remained the preoccupation of most politicians, policymakers, and political scientists through the end of the Cold War. The principles of sovereignty and national security that characterize the Westphalian state system of the Western world led the state authorities to systematically suppress critical information on both internal and external political behaviors in order to prioritize and maximize the power of states. Mainstream academia generally presented the complex mechanics of the political process as opaque (e.g., Easton's "black box"; Easton, 1965) and pragmatic (e.g., Waltz's "anarchic interstate system"; Waltz, 1979); in opposition to that view, neo-Marxians presented theories of a collusive imperial political order dominated by "great powers" (e.g., Wallerstein's "world systems"). Operating in the background, Weberian "bureaucratic systems" were viewed as ensuring the central administration necessary to create and preserve state power. The sovereign, or executive, authority commanded applications of state power to produce political actions that enforced state interests both internally and externally. By its nature, the sovereign state disciplines and compels preferred behaviors through the threat and exercise of effective, central power as autocratic (executive-directed and coercive) authority. Perhaps ironically, the generation and maintenance of central (state) power in human societal complexes requires largely compliant societal dynamics to create the capacity for political action that supports central authority. As Arendt (1972) presciently observed, democratic (decentralized and cooperative) authority provides the ultimate source of systemic power then wielded as violent autocratic authority, implying a naturally "hybrid" structure for, and tension between, sources of autocratic and democratic authority in complex societal-systems.⁹

In its most fundamental sense, democratization is an advanced function of the coordination of the political system and predicated on the free flow of information. Although democratic authority has always been prominent in social organization, it only slowly gained favor as a conflict management system at the state level over the past two centuries; democratic authority systems finally achieved global preeminence with the end of the Cold War. Empirical research prior to the end of the Second World War rarely rose above the level of the anecdotal; societies were largely organized around idealized, symbolic narratives and material structures interwoven to create the fabric of "national identity" held together in rhetorical systems based on shared values. As general circumstances change over time, rhetorical systems must adapt their core narrative to incorporate these changes; failure to adapt to changed circumstances raises system vulnerability to breakdowns in social cohesion and order as alternative narratives mobilize challenges to the dominant identity and its allocation of authority. The articulation of contending group identities creates tensions that weaken the system and increase the use of coercion, force, and violence within the system. The development of societal-system capabilities itself increases the plurality of organized groups and associated political perspectives. The democratization of the state can be understood to have been necessitated by the demands of administration in increasingly large, complex, and technologically advanced societal-systems incorporating multiple group identities. The advent of computers and the development of statistical analytic techniques made global data collection imperative; early on, most state-level

data was heavily biased toward Western countries and data on non-Western countries was generally sparse and low quality. Given the multi-faceted interconnections and interactions among factors in social settings and the large and biased error terms in comparative measures, statistical assumptions of independence are routinely compromised in the analysis of complex societal-systems. Furthermore, as inter-group conflict behaviors are often strategic interactions, political action has an inherent element of unpredictability that makes stimulus-response scenarios probabilistic at best. As such, tests based on statistical “significance” can only produce suggestive or confirming findings; systems analysis must establish systematic and patterned results across the full systemic universe of analysis to increase confidence in research findings.

The author’s partnership with Ted Gurr began in 1985 when he enrolled in Gurr’s undergraduate course on “Political Violence and Revolution.” In reviewing Gurr’s opus of research it became clear that the foundational work in *Why Men Rebel* (1970), *Politimetrics* (1972), and *Patterns of Authority* (1975, with Eckstein) formed a solid basis toward developing a systems approach to the study of political conflict. The application of these perspectives in the design and analysis of the first *Polity* dataset (Gurr and Gurr, 1984) would later serve as the prototype for the Task Force research (144 countries; 135 variables). The “societal-systems analytics” approach was built on the “Gurr School” and, further, incorporated Muzafer Sherif’s (1966) “common predicament” social-psychological and Kenneth Boulding’s (1985) “world as a total system” peace economics perspectives; it was first proposed in a paper written to complete a year-long graduate seminar on civil and interstate conflict co-taught by Gurr and Manus Midlarsky in 1987. The key concept for this approach was the proposition stated in Eckstein and Gurr (1975) that the political “state” is a governance construct (“polity”) common to all forms of “social identity groups.” As such, “polities” are understood to be the building blocks for both societies and systems in a global, shared space.

Unfortunately, in the late 1980s, “societies” were largely uncharted spaces, whereas the interactions of states in the world system were well-documented in political science. In early 1988, Gurr tasked me to begin collecting information on “politically active” ethnic groups occupying the “societal spaces” in all countries of the world in what came to be known as the Minorities at Risk project (118 countries; 324 groups; 975 variables) (Gurr and Scarritt, 1989; Gurr, 1993, 2000). Based on insights from that research, Marshall (1999) first used societal-system analytics to detail the structural dynamics of the “diffusion of insecurity” in six “protracted conflict region” sub-systems characterizing the global system during the Cold War period. The State Failure Task Force was established in 1994 with Gurr as the principal architect and, in 1998, Gurr invited the author to join the Task Force effort. Creating the Task Force’s “Merge” database fueled the effort and eventually grew to contain over 3,000 variables covering 167 countries over the period 1950–2018 (policy restrictions preclude the inclusion of data on the United States in Task Force analyses; for an application of the global model implications to the United States, see Walter, 2022). As a direct result of this body of research, a 20-part video lecture series detailing the formal theoretical underpinnings of societal-systems analytics was produced by the author in two volumes: *Structuration* (Marshall, 2014) and *Problematation* (Marshall, 2016).

The *Polity* data series provides the lynchpin connecting the myriad research and modeling efforts of the Task Force over the two-decade research effort; it also connects this effort to the research done by independent quantitative modelers in academic settings. In many ways, *Polity* has become the “master key” to unlocking the scientific precepts of a modern political

science. What is unique about the theoretical propositions made in *Patterns of Authority* is that, rather than ideal types, democratic and autocratic authority are distinct forms and applications of interactive authority that can be identified in varying mixtures in the authority patterns of all “polities.”¹⁰ This conceptualization, rather than categorizing regimes as one type or another, posits that all regimes are complexly unique and exercise some hybrid form of authority with varying mixtures of practices that changes over time and in response to changing circumstances. Both democratic and autocratic authority patterns are found in every societal-system and can be gauged on “sliding scales” and combined in a single index to characterize the prevailing quality of governance in any regime ranging from autocratic to democratic. Whereas regimes that are scaled toward the opposite ends of the POLITY index scale can be considered relatively “coherent” or “ideal” examples of autocratic or democratic authority regimes, regimes whose combined authority characteristics fall in the middling reaches of the POLITY scale are considered “mixed” or “incoherent” authority regimes, that is, mixing enforcement and compliance measures to provide and ensure social order. Gurr originally termed these mixed authority regimes, “anocratic” (Gurr, 1974). Early research established an “inverted U-curve” relationship between regime authority and political stability along the POLITY index scale: mainly autocratic and mainly democratic regimes are seen as relatively stable or durable (persisting over time without substantial change in the nature of their authority), whereas anocratic regimes are seen to be volatile and short-lived. This original finding has been reinforced consistently with further research and became the starting point for the Task Force research efforts.

UNPACKING HYBRID REGIME AUTHORITY: THE POLITICAL PROCESS MODEL

Given my background and preferred methodology and considering the shortage of opportunities for systems research in American academia, the State Failure Task Force provided a unique and well-supported research opportunity and a perfect fit for my interests and systems approach.¹¹ The end of the Cold War in 1990 was not anticipated by mainstream academics, policymakers, or intelligence analysts in the US. The sudden “fall of communism” and “collapse of the Soviet Union” appeared to represent deep contradictions to mainstream theories of both communism and anti-communism and suddenly deconstructed what was seen as a stable Cold War order in world politics (Marshall, 1999 shows that armed conflicts increased steadily across the period, affecting mainly Third World countries). Having grown comfortable with practical demarcations dividing the world into rival spheres of influence (between “first” and “second” worlds) and spheres of rivalry (in the “third world”), the world’s lone surviving hegemon (the US) suddenly faced the opportunity, and responsibility, for establishing and managing a singular world order now visibly replete with failed states and found itself ill-prepared to fulfill that role. The mandate for establishing the State Failure Task Force was, at once, a directive by senior policymakers in the US Government to the intelligence community both to “think outside the box” and “cast a wide net” in building a practical understanding of the problem of failed states and, in doing so, develop an improved institutional capacity to anticipate such failures in the future.¹² The perceived stasis of the Cold War world had suddenly given way to the burdensome dynamics of political change. Perhaps ironically, the ability to anticipate the occurrence of a “state failure” rejects the notion that such failures are

random occurrences but, rather, are (more or less) predictable outcomes linked to identifiable inputs (conditions or circumstances). Easton's "black box" would need to be unpacked and charted in some reliable and "actionable" way.

A first step would involve a practical understanding and operationalization of the problem condition wanting prediction (i.e., the "dependent variable"), that is, state failure. A narrow definition was understood to include "all instances in which central state authority collapses for several years." The narrow definition yielded too few cases for reliable analysis. A broader definition would identify cases that posed a significant challenge to US foreign policy, so, "the task force broadened the concept of state failure to include a wider range of civil conflicts, political crises, and massive human rights violations that are typically associated with state breakdown" (Esty et al., 1995, p. 1). The agreed "problem set" includes four categories of events: revolutionary wars (75), ethnic wars (92), adverse regime changes (serious autocratic backsliding, 136), and political mass killings (45); the numbers in parentheses indicate the numbers of events listed in the most recent version of the problem set (covering the period 1955–2018). Eventually, the Task Force research determined that onsets of the fourth category of problem events listed above, termed genocides and politicides, only occurred during ongoing political instability events. As the Task Force chose to model on the problem of state failure onsets and, further, consolidated multiple events that overlapped in duration or occurred within a period of five years of one another (171 cases total), the dependent variable used for global modeling purposes (i.e., the onset of a consolidated instability episode) begins with an onset of civil warfare or adverse regime change. Research on the relationship between adverse regime change and civil war (ethnic or revolutionary) showed that an autocratic backsliding event would very often take place during an instability episode (except in extant autocratic regimes) and could occur prior to, simultaneous with, or following an onset of civil warfare; this suggests that state military authorities institute, or support, autocratic authority as a way to forestall the outbreak, respond to the onset, or manage the course of open civil warfare. An ongoing debate within the Task Force was whether major regime changes away from "stable" autocratic authority should be considered political instability events. The US Government position was that democratic change should not be considered problematic and, instead, actively promoted in policy.

A general consensus informed a starting point for the Task Force modeling effort, that is, the very powerful relationship between violence and poverty. Some have referred to this elemental relationship as the "first law of political conflict." Systemic poverty presents a very limited number of options for coordinating and directing collective transactions, managing conflicts, or resisting core group directives; whereas force and the threat of violence are readily available and easily recognized options that can serve as powerful management tools under any circumstances. Any model designed to predict group behaviors would need to control for the actors' general level of societal-system development. The Task Force research documented a basic congruence among most measures of political economy, such as measures of GDP, educational attainment, transportation or communication infrastructure, or public services, meaning that such measures were largely interchangeable in model specifications, although each measure brought particular nuances or structural bias into the models. After careful consideration, the Task Force chose a measure of "infant mortality rate" as the favored measure of the regime's investment in societal-system development.

The political direction and regulation of group activities by a central authority is directly related to both the relative development of group capabilities and the nature of social conflict,

both among group members and between groups. Classical European theories of the “state” as central authority for the “nation” group are predicated, first, on “sovereign” hegemony (unitary actor) in policymaking and, second, upon a “monopoly of the use of force” by state authorities in the management of conflicts. Sovereignty can be seen, in this way, as an elemental function of autocratic authority. Theories of democratic authority in the modern era first emerged in response to the perceived arbitrary and excessive uses of force by autocratic authorities. From this we can understand that the elemental consensus of democratic authority is the *rejection of the use of force* in group relations, except as prescribed in legitimately conceived, articulated, and codified laws.¹³ This conflict management distinction between autocratic authority as managing social conflict through essentially arbitrary enactment of coercive, enforcement actions by state officials and democratic authority as managing social conflict through essentially cooperative arrangements fostering voluntary compliance with codified laws informs the *Polity* measures of state authority.

As explained in the preceding discussion, the *Polity* dataset established itself as a core resource in the Task Force research and modeling efforts; *Polity* variables are included in the specifications of all reported Task Force models. Figure 8.1 plots the annual likelihood of PITF (non-consolidated) problem event onsets for each given value along the POLITY index scale; the chart illustrates the distinct “inverted-U” curve relationship between the POLITY index and the observed onset of problem events, covering the years 1955–2018.¹⁴ Three basic types of political authority regimes are presented along the POLITY scale, ranging

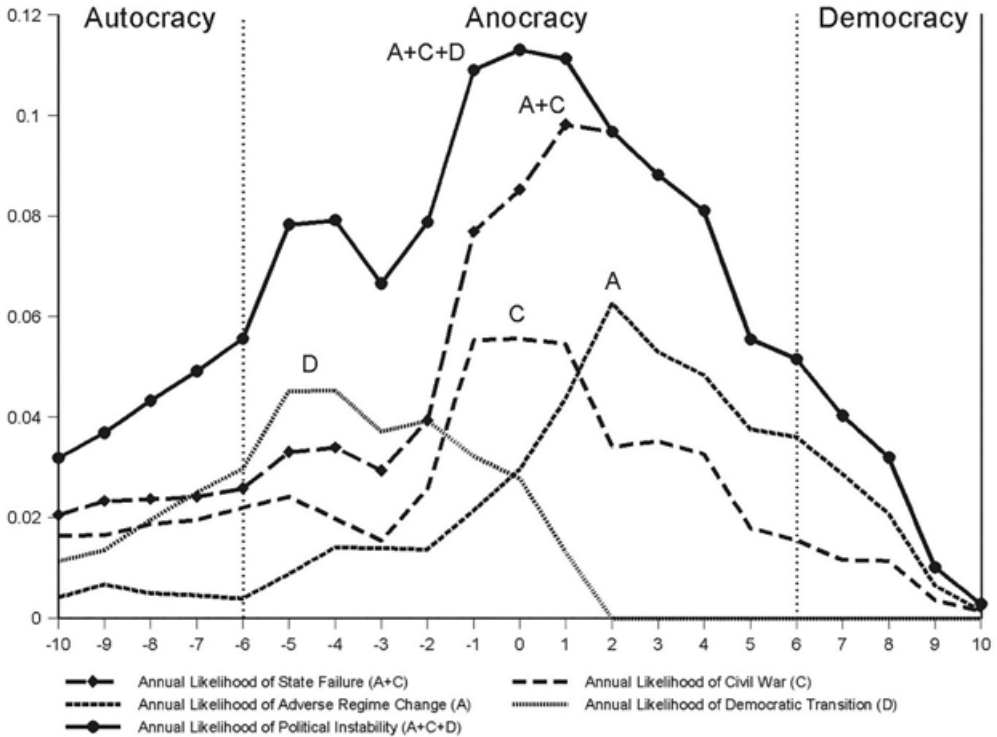


Figure 8.1 *Regime authority and the onset of political instability events, 1955–2018*

from -10 to +10; the POLITY index is constructed by subtracting the regime's autocratic authority (AUTOC) score from its democratic authority (DEMOC) score (both are ten-point scales). Autocracies are considered to span POLITY values from -10 (fully institutionalized monarchy) to -6 (less institutionalized "personalistic" dictatorships) and democracies span values from +6 (less consolidated democratic authority) to +10 (fully consolidated democratic regimes). Populating the gap between Autocracy and Democracy, and spanning values from -5 to +5, are the hybrid or "incoherent" authority regimes that have been termed Anocratic.¹⁵ What is not shown are the numbers of "country-years" for each value along the scale. The plot of the numbers of country-years takes the opposite "U-shaped" curve with far greater numbers on the ends of the scale and far fewer in the middle-range. Evidence suggests that modern regimes gravitate toward the two relatively stable authority poles. Mixed authority regimes are relatively rare and anomalous manifestations that appear to be a reflection of the complexity of societal-systems and the difficulties of maintaining, altering, or reforming prevailing authority patterns. The numbers at the far left (autocratic) end of the scale are attenuated in the current period as institutionalized monarchies have become increasingly rare; contemporary autocracies have relatively uninstitutionalized rules of succession and include military juntas, one-party states, or military-backed personalistic dictatorships (cases peaking at -7 on the scale).

Figure 8.1 presents five separate plots, corresponding to five distinct groupings of problem events. It is interesting that each of the five plots shows a similar shape in which the apex of each curve occurs at a different value on the POLITY scale.¹⁶ The three lesser plots show the annual likelihoods of the three event components: democratic transitions (D), civil wars (ethnic or revolutionary, C), and adverse regime changes (A). The larger curves in the figure show the two composite event plots – state failure, which combines the Task Force problem events: adverse regime change and civil war – and political instability, which adds democratic transition events to the state failure events. The plotted annual likelihood values show that the more "coherent" authority patterns of mainly autocratic or democratic regimes are similarly, relatively stable as compared with the "incoherent" authority patterns of the middle-range anocratic regimes; regimes scoring toward the ends of the POLITY scale tend to persist about twice as long as the middling regimes (i.e., without experiencing a major regime change event). During the target period, institutionalized monarchies (-10) persisted without substantial change (i.e., 3-point or more change in POLITY score) about 30 years on average; the less-institutionalized autocracies (-9 to -6) lasted about 20 years; anocracies (on the whole) averaged less than ten years; and the less-consolidated democracies (+6 to +8) lasted less than 14 years. Anocracies are essentially, or inherently, transitory or transitional regimes, whether intentionally or unintentionally; few regimes with mixed authority patterns persist more than 20 years (Bumiputra Malaysia and Apartheid South Africa are among the longer term exceptions). The more-consolidated democratic regimes (+9 and +10) have proven the most durable, lasting over 40 years on average with +10 democracies lasting over 60 years without substantial change, on average.

As mentioned, the known vulnerability of hybrid regimes provided an important input for the Task Force instability modeling efforts. Over the years, Task Force analysts tried many different configurations and ongoing refinements of key model variables to increase the explanatory, and predictive, power of the model specifications. We were also expanding and refining the coding and data collection efforts to better fine tune the statistical analyses and better understand the systematic findings. With the Phase III effort of the Task Force, the

results of the research started pointing to a particular value of a *Polity* component indicator (PARCOMP=3) as having a very strong, antecedent association with the onset of instability events, especially with the onset of an adverse regime change and particularly in anocratic regimes (Goldstone et al., 2000). PARCOMP refers to the Competitiveness of Participation and the coded value “3” is identified as “factional: politics with parochial or ethnic-based political factions that regularly compete for political influence in order to promote particularist agendas and favor group members to the detriment of common, secular, or cross-cutting agendas” (Marshall et al., 2018, p. 27). The *Polity* “factional” condition can also be referred to as “polarized.” Social polarization is commonly referred to as a problem in narratives of social conflict.¹⁷

The level of Task Force interest in this particular *Polity*-coded condition intensified with the Phase V research effort. “One of the most striking results [of the Phase V research effort] is the extraordinarily high relative risk of instability onsets in partial democracies with factionalism” (Goldstone et al., 2010, p. 197). I was tasked directly with what turned into a five-year effort in reexamining all “factional” cases during the Task Force study period (appearing in 110 countries, many having multiple episodes) and reporting on the identifying characteristics (such as identifying the factions involved, special interactive dynamics, and events marking the beginnings and endings of factional periods). The most important finding of this systematic reexamination was that the condition coded as factionalism could be accurately and reliably identified from open-source journalistic reports; the concept proved to be conceptually distinct and valid (all coded cases were confirmed; no non-coded cases were found). A second important finding was that the *Polity* dataset itself was a “rough-cut” in many respects and needed to be refined and revised to correct some inaccuracies and minor inconsistencies, especially with the specification of temporal parameters and pivotal events. The more pressure the Task Force analyses placed on the input variables, the greater the effort that was needed to confirm, refine, and revise the data. The reexamination effort produced the *Polity5* version of the data (in progress) and a series of country chronologies identifying and detailing all changes in the regime codes over the contemporary period.¹⁸

What we discovered from looking at the beginnings of periods of factionalism was that the coded beginnings were not generally marking the beginning of the condition itself but, rather, its actual emergence into the open political discourse of the subject countries. It became clear that the condition we termed factionalism pre-dated the coded condition: the deep social divisions characterizing factionalism in recently reformed autocracies were found in countries with autocratic authority more generally. It appears that the ideal of the “nation-state” is a largely European and fictional construct; most countries spatially encompass and, so, are comprised of, multiple, contending social identity groups and, during early stages of development, these countries rely on autocratic authority (supported by one or more, relatively cohesive and militarized, social identity groupings) to forcefully suppress dissent in order to manage conflict among contending constituent groups.¹⁹ We found that nearly all of the newly independent and lesser developed countries showed evidence of deep social divisions and that central authorities struggled to establish and maintain unity among constituent groups, especially when available resource and tactical options are severely limited. Contention among constituent groups is particularly problematic when those groups are territorially concentrated and even more so when those territorially based groups have enjoyed group autonomy prior to their political incorporation within the larger polity (often termed “sons of the soil”) (Gurr, 1993). The erosion and ultimate end of “colonialism” following the Second

World War provides an “experimental treatment” in state-building: despite the fact that many former-colonial states were established with some democratic institutions, within ten years of their official dates of independence nearly all of these countries were governed by autocratic regimes (Marshall, 2006).

Historically, we know that all modern states were originally governed by autocratic regimes; the United States is the lone exception. The evidence leads to the conclusion that early stages of societal-system development are characterized by polar factionalism and that instrumental (autocratic) authority is considered necessary to establish and maintain central authority in deeply divided societal-systems. In addition, states that attempt to reform their authority practices, or which experience an effective erosion in their capacity to control conflict through instrumental force, will experience an increase in public contention among constituent groups in the former (potentially triggering an autocratic crackdown to maintain social order) or a buildup in military confrontation and a crisis of autocracy (“CA” in Figure 8.2) in the latter case. The history of human development provides ample evidence that there is a natural equilibrium point for autocratic authority centered on the condition of polar factionalism. We term this latent form of (polar) factionalism, *developmental factionalism*. Factionalism becomes openly problematic as autocratic regimes either attempt to reform by permitting opposition groups to act more openly or fail to suppress oppositional activity due to a lessening of their instrumental capabilities. We term this open form *transitional factionalism*. Very often, as opposition groups have gained access to the public political system, the rising strength of

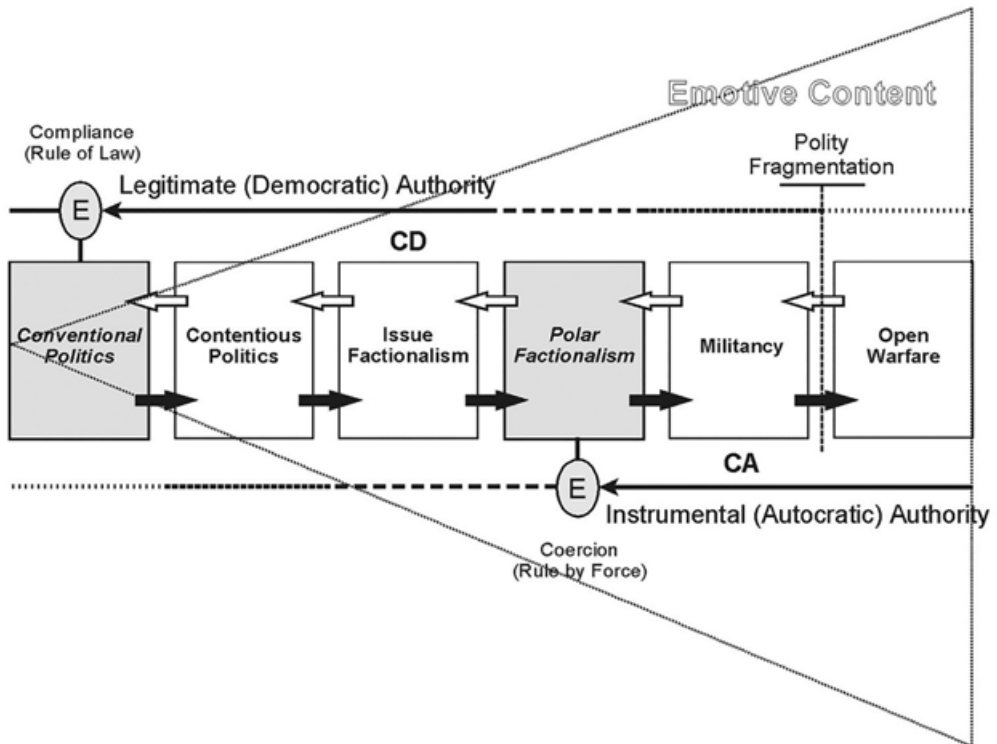


Figure 8.2 Political Process Model

opposition to the governing regime is seen as a direct threat by regime authorities and triggers an autocratic backlash as security forces are directed to move forcibly to repress opposition activities and arrest leaders. As more countries have managed to transition to various forms of democratic authority, we have found evidence that long-standing democratic regimes may also degenerate or disintegrate into a form of *atrophic factionalism* as unresolved issues of contention accumulate over time and aggrieved groups coalesce into opposing groups vying for control of the regime and its instrumental capacities to channel advantages to one group and discount the interests and aspirations of the other(s).²⁰

The Political Process Model (Figure 8.2) summarizes the important findings resulting from the systematic reexamination of the condition of (polar) factionalism within the general context of political competition as it is operationalized by the *Polity* coding scheme. Six distinct qualities of political competition have been identified: conventional politics (characterized by effective deliberations, negotiations, and allocations among competing group interests), contentious politics (where conventional politics are ineffective in producing non-discriminatory outcomes), issue factionalism (where contending groups fail to identify or implement common solutions regarding one or more key issues of contention), polar factionalism (where groups polarize according to complex, symbolic formulations of identity regarding a political impasse involving multiple, linked issues), *militancy* (political impasse triggers mobilization of instrumental action and strategies of contention between/among polarized identity groups), and *open warfare* or fragmentation (armed conflict over control of or separation from the central authority system). Democratic authority is favored under the conditions found toward the left end of the model; it establishes an equilibrium in Conventional Politics (where social conflicts are effectively managed in inclusive policies) and lapses into crisis (“CD”) as unresolved issues of contention accumulate and accentuate disintegrative social dynamics. Anocratic “incoherent” authority patterns appear to accompany or result from crises in either democratic or autocratic authority systems as societal-system authorities and other actors scramble to discover and implement mechanisms by which central authority can be augmented and, so, move the societal-system toward one of the more stable, equilibrium points.

Polar factionalism can be understood, then, as the “gateway” to autocracy, militancy, and open (civil) warfare. Task Force modeling efforts show that polar factionalism very strongly predicts both adverse regime change (reversion to autocratic rule) and the onset of civil warfare. “Polity fragmentation” can be understood to occur with the onset of open warfare as the warring groups distance themselves (socially and spatially) and refuse to accept the authority of the other. The white and black arrows in Figure 8.2 indicate the direction of authority changes: white arrows indicate greater autocratization and black arrows indicate greater democratization. What appears to drive the autocratization of central authority is the inability, or unwillingness, of political leadership to effectively manage or resolve social conflicts, especially as regards highly valued issues. The main driver for democratization is the need to integrate and incorporate the efforts of a greater proportion of constituents in the political process to ensure that stakeholders have the proper incentives to maintain the system over time, that is, to manage intensifying levels of system complexity. The Political Process Model is not a linear progression model but, rather, a conditional vacillation model with system breakdown at the right end and managed political and progressive stability at the opposite end. Democratic authority, then, should be understood as the product of successful societal integration and conflict management and finds its natural equilibrium in Conventional Politics. Democratic authority begins to break down when deliberation and negotiation practices fail to identify and

implement collective solutions to common problems. The consolidation of democratic authority is signified by the construction and maintenance of structural resilience which, in turn, works to inhibit the degradation and vacillation of authority patterns in response to changing dynamics within societal-systems under duress. However, structural resilience does not appear to prevent system breakdown; it simply dampens the dynamics of social change and provides authorities more time, more options, and greater resources to manage emerging conflicts and resolve issues of contention before these tensions escalate social divisions.

CONCLUSION

The earth's human population remained limited for most of its history but has grown exponentially since the discovery and application of scientific methods about three hundred years ago. Reaching one billion about 1800, the world total may have reached eight billion at the time of this study. The human embrace of science has not only enabled a rapid rise in its total population but, also, a concomitant increase in its level of consumption and exploitation of its ecosystem (Meadows et al., 1972). We have entered the Age of Complexity where "simple" human societies are no longer managed by environmental constraints and must learn to accept responsibility for managing the impacts of human behavior on the global ecosystem or face a Malthusian resolution to their "common predicament" (Sherif, 1966; see also Sherif and Sherif, 1953). Each country's societal-system is regulated through local authority patterns associated with extant social structures and networks; a democratic authority system must be perceived as legitimate and sustained by its constituents in some symbiosis with its local environment and, so, cannot be imposed or implanted by "others." However, our research strongly supports both the positive and negative effects of "neighborhoods." Both autocracies and democracies are "comfortable" when situated among similar regimes, although democracies are more supportive of other democracies. The increasing complexity of human societal-systems favors democratic authority systems that can successfully integrate diverse social identities and effectively manage conflict dynamics. Autocratic authority now may be best understood as a final resort "political safety net" holding the line between complexity and chaos.

The current global pandemic dramatically draws our attention to the good governance imperative. Using the *Polity* data in charting global trends in governance, the Center for Systemic Peace has shown that democratic authority has been ascendant almost continually since 1800; the only exception to this trend can be seen to begin during the Spanish Flu pandemic, when there were 23 democratic regimes, and fall dramatically during the Great Depression until there were only 8 at the onset of global warfare in 1939. The current study has examined the link between hybrid authority systems and state fragility, but we must also acknowledge that there is a critical link between hybrid authority and global fragility. What most clearly distinguishes the various stages presented in the Political Process Model (Figure 8.2) is the *emotive content* of political discourse in the affected societal-system. Emotive content immerses issues of conflict in non-negotiable "ideals" of identity, principles, and values to the detriment of reasoned treatments and progressive supraordinate goals. The emotive content of political rhetoric and messaging contributes to, and even drives, the degradation of political and social relations. Democratic authority is necessarily based in rationality as cooperation and compliance require reciprocity and mutual benefit; emotionality stimulates political action by

creating social divisions and the autocratic enforcement of political boundaries. Complexity is the source of societal-system fragility; gaining an understanding of the scientific, systemic basis of social order and how it works must inform effective conflict management for all polities. Societal cohesion, structured resilience, mutual respect, accountability, and due diligence provide the tools with which we can secure our sustainable future (Marshall, 2014, 2016; Marshall and Cole, 2008, 2017).

NOTES

1. Task Force subcontracts for producing key data deliverables (i.e., *Polity*, major episodes of political violence, PITF problem set, elite characteristics, leaders' years in office, coups, and ethnic group discrimination) and consulting fees paid over my nearly 21 years' association totaled more than \$4.5 million. Basically speaking, the Task Force bought nearly all my professional time.
2. Standard disclaimer: the Task Force does not represent the view of the US Government, the US intelligence community, or the Central Intelligence Agency.
3. Although strongly encouraged to do so, I refused to seek a security clearance in the conviction that secret knowledge is inherently autocratic practice and a serious impediment to the development of science.
4. The *Peace and Conflict* (2001, 2003, and 2005) and *Global Report* (2007, 2008, 2009, 2011, 2014, and 2017) issues can be accessed from the Center for Systemic Peace at <http://www.systemicpeace.org/cspvirtuallibrary.html>.
5. The relative strength of the *Polity* measures in the global model specification is largely due to the fact that it is a far more dynamic, behavioral measure as compared with the other, largely structural (slow changing) variables in the model.
6. The term "autocratic backsliding" refers to any decline in a regime's POLITY score. The Task Force designated a 6-point or more continuous decline in POLITY score as an "adverse regime change" (political instability) event.
7. The Task Force, at one point, contracted an outside party to conduct a blind neural network analysis of the full global "Merge" dataset to identify the "most powerful predictors" of impending political instability. The top predictor variable was discovered to be the numeric country code! The country code groups countries by geographic region; the risk of political instability is shown to cluster in certain regional sub-systems.
8. The full societal-systems analytic approach is explained in a two-volume series of video presentations (i.e., video book) produced by CSP, titled "Managing Complexity in Modern Societal-Systems: Structuration and Problemation" (Marshall, 2014, 2016).
9. The term "societal-system" refers to the common configuration of modern, complex social systems incorporating the internal, structural dynamics of (plural) identity groups (societies) and the external interactions between/among identity groups (system).
10. The term "polity" refers to the central organizing structure of any self-aware and self-actuating societal-system. Polities are most commonly equated with the "state" governance structures of independent countries but are theoretically contained in any "social identity group." To better distinguish these two forms of practical authority from classical notions of autocracy and democracy ideals, I emphasize the interactive nature of these two forms of authority: instrumental/coercive (autocratic) and sociational/cooperative (democratic) authority (Marshall 1999, 2014, 2016).
11. The Task Force leadership only began discussing the need for a systems approach around 2017 and never fully embraced the societal-systems approach.
12. I was told, unofficially, that the original directive had come from the office of then Vice President Al Gore; indeed, a major impetus within the Task Force was to detail the supposed links between environment factors and state failure.
13. The rejection of force as an arbiter in political disputes necessitates the implementation of some mechanism(s) for formulating a political agenda and decision-making among multiple interests and

- sources of authority. Voting and similar electoral procedures can provide such pluralistic mechanisms when they are deemed fair and just.
14. The plot in Figure 8.1 uses the POLITY2 variable, which assigns POLITY scale values to two categories of special regime conditions: “-88” transitional regimes where authority patterns are being changed incrementally by governmental fiat and “-77” interregnum regimes in which central authority has mostly collapsed and some form of anarchy prevails. The plots are smoothed by taking three-point averages for each value along the scale.
 15. The term “anocratic” was first used by Gurr (1974).
 16. Actually, the POLITY2 variable is used because it includes POLITY values for the coded special situations of “transition” (-88) and “interregnum” (-77).
 17. In describing the use of the term “factional” in the *Polity* scheme, I add the qualifier “polar” to acknowledge that the term is used to refer to a more advanced form of political factionalism where factional groups have coalesced by way of “unnatural alliances” leading to a bipolar confrontation between “state” and “anti-state” groupings. The “unnatural” factor in the alliances helps to explain why these alliances break down relatively quickly without the polarizing influence of the “other.”
 18. The *Polity5* country chronologies are posted on the Center for Systemic Peace website at: <http://www.systemicpeace.org/p5reports.html>.
 19. The idea of the “multi-nation state” is largely absent in Western political theory; “primordial identities” are expected to assimilate to a national identity over time through direct or indirect pressures for social cohesion as the source of “national power.” The “national question” became a major issue of debate among policymakers in the establishment of the Soviet Union in 1917 and continued through its demise in 1991.
 20. Marshall (2017) identified nine cases of factionalism in advanced or long-standing democracies during the study period. Of these, four cases, Cyprus, France, Solomon Islands, and Venezuela, experienced a subsequent adverse regime change and three cases, India, Israel, and Sri Lanka, experienced civil warfare. The United States experienced serious political violence during its factionalism period in the late 1960s and came very close to having an adverse regime change event in early 2021; Belgium (ongoing) has not experienced a political instability event as of the end of 2021.

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9. Hybrid political orders in fragile contexts

Tobias Debiel and Stephan Dombrowski

INTRODUCTION

This chapter takes the growing body of critical literature on dominant notions of the fragile state as a starting point. In particular, post-liberal peacebuilding approaches have challenged the normative assumptions which take the Weberian ideal type of the state as a yardstick for political orders beyond the Global Northwest. Against this background, hybridity thinking has emerged as an alternative way to approach war-torn or violence-prone societies by overcoming the state bias. It replaces the notion of a solidified political organization by the acknowledgement that different layers (local-international, formal-informal, etc.) intermingle in incoherent ways.

The concept of hybrid political orders (HPOs) has its roots in hybridity thinking. As we will show in the second section, it assumes that the weakness of formal institutions does not create “empty spaces”, but rather arenas in which an increasing number of diverse actors and institutions interact. Accordingly, it reconceptualizes the term “political order”. Central characteristics of HPOs are the coexistence, overlapping and competitiveness of multiple authorities with respect to the monopoly on the use of force, the mechanisms for settling and regulating conflicts, and the performance of societal responsibilities (Mac Ginty, 2015a, p. 269).

We maintain that HPOs can enrich research in fragile contexts, but also highlight shortcomings. The third section, accordingly, elaborates on the methodological reductionism of the HPO concept, its romanticizing of traditional and local authorities, its neglect of political economy and power relations as well as its exaggerated trust in institutional pluralism.

As a result, we still have very limited knowledge why some hybrid peacebuilding processes were successful and why others failed. By way of illustration, the fourth section provides first insights on how comparative research could overcome this drawback. It refers to the case studies of Somaliland and Afghanistan and identifies preconditions for hybrid peace and the resilience of HPOs. In the last section, we conclude that the HPO concept – with its tentative, experimental propositions – can facilitate pragmatic peacebuilding that aims at “good enough” instead of “ideal type” solutions. Finally, we draw two policy recommendations from our findings.

FROM “FRAGILITY” TO “HYBRIDITY” THINKING

The term “state fragility” became prominent in the 2000s at the interface between academic and policy research. It was generally defined as the inability of a state to provide security and public goods to its citizens, to collect taxes, and to formulate, implement, and enforce policies and laws. Central to such an understanding are conventional definitions of the “state”. Thus, “state fragility” is usually defined as diverging – albeit to varying degrees – from an ideal (and idealized) type of the state (examples of such an approach are DFID, 2005, p. 7; OECD/DAC,

2007, p. 2). “Fragility”, in this context, can be understood “as the combination of exposure to risk and insufficient coping capacity of the state, systems and/or communities to manage, absorb or mitigate those risks” (OECD, 2020). In other words, fragile states are characterized by a particular vulnerability to internal and external shocks. This distinguishes them from consolidated states on the one hand, but also from “failed” states on the other. Unlike the latter, they are able to preserve their basic functions and their own existence from collapse (Di John, 2008, pp. 9–10).

The post-liberal literature criticizes the fact that concepts of “state fragility” or even “state failure” implicitly presume that the Weberian state and “Western” socio-political life is the ideal form and just awaits implementation (Brown, 2018, p. 27). This flawed assumption was also reflected in the peacebuilding strategies of the 2000s which were mainly designed as top-down and large-scale state-building interventions focusing on formal institutions at the national level. In following a “methodological nationalism” (Wimmer and Glick Schiller, 2002) the scope of the analysis was limited to the national-state level and the territorial boundaries of the state. “Methodological nationalism”, in this context, can be defined as “an ideological orientation that approaches the study of social and historical processes as if they were contained within the borders of individual nation-states” (Glick Schiller, 2009, p. 4). This “coherent epistemic structure” (Wimmer and Glick Schiller, 2002, p. 308) conceptualizes modernity only in national frameworks. It takes shared norms, values and institutions for granted and ignores how the “project of modernity” is prone to undermine alternative frameworks that exist beyond, or cut across, the nation-state (Debiel and Rinck, 2017).

This leads to the underestimation and underrepresentation of the subnational and local levels. As a consequence, post-liberal research argued primarily for strengthening bottom-up processes (“local turn”) and incorporating everyday practices into peacebuilding processes (Mac Ginty, 2015b, p. 851; Bargués-Pedreny and Randazzo, 2018, p. 1354). They no longer emphasized what fragile contexts lack and what makes them vulnerable, but what characterizes them (Mallet, 2010, p. 76). In this respect, it was a shift from “fragility” to “hybridity” thinking. In general linguistic usage, a hybrid or hybridity is widely understood as anything which is a mixture or combination of two or more things. Especially in biology, this implies the coming together of at least two separate organisms. Out of this mixture, something new develops which unites parts of both things. But it also leads to the development of novel peculiarities. Translated to the field of peacebuilding and state formation, hybridity as something new arises from the mixing of two (or more) “pure” or “distinct” different parts and forms of institutions, practices and discourses (Albrecht and Moe, 2015, p. 5). These conceptual dichotomies have three dimensions. They are actor-centred (local-international level), institutional (formal-informal) or socio-cultural (modern-traditional).

The term “hybrid” can be used descriptively-analytically on the one hand, and more normatively-prescriptively on the other (Brown, 2018, p. 32; Millar, 2014; Simangan, 2018, p. 1525; Wilcock, 2021, pp. 222–223). As a descriptive-analytical category, hybridity is mainly used in academia to shed light on the diverse and complex practices which form socio-political ordering. This application of hybridity has a strong background in critical and postcolonial theory (Hunt, 2018, p. 51). In postcolonial studies, the approach to hybridity was strengthened to include the legacy of colonial rule and colonial state formation. In other words, it is a diagnostic instrument that first of all seeks to understand the essence of orders without rashly measuring them against normative ideals.

The normative-prescriptive usage of hybridity is especially relevant in policy arenas and orients itself towards “something to be aimed at” (Brown, 2018, p. 32). It usually assumes that hybridity is a good thing and can promote peacebuilding processes. In particular, this use of the word emphasizes the involvement of authentic actors at the local level. This recommendation runs the risk of underestimating the deep historical anchoring of hybridization processes. Accordingly, as Popplewell (2019, pp. 136–140) points out with reference to Burundi, hardly any authentic institutions exist today. Rather, “they are often deeply politicised and even part of and reinforce the prevailing social and political hegemony” (Popplewell, 2018, p. 142). Popplewell (2019, pp. 142–143) thus warns against the technocratic misconception that hybridity can be consciously created:

The risk with prescriptive approaches towards hybridity and post-conflict civil society is that they may assume it is possible to construct hybrid forms of organizing, which will support the emergence of predictable and stable hybrid peacebuilding outcomes.

BRINGING IN HYBRID POLITICAL ORDERS

The concept of hybrid political orders was originally based on research from the 2000s on local peace processes. This research, particularly in Bougainville in Timor Leste as well as on other conflicts in small Pacific states, showed that international notions of peace- and state-building were mixed with local understandings of peace and informal institutions (Boege et al., 2008; Clements et al., 2007). Caused by the integration of traditional and local authorities in the peace processes informal institutions remained influential. Especially in rural realms, they were not replaced by formal institutions. The process of adaptation and transformation by local actors rather led to the emergence of new, hybrid forms of political orders (Boege, 2012, p. 88).

The concept of hybrid political orders is based on hybridity thinking, but at the same time combines it with the concept of order. As Mielke et al. (2011, pp. 5–6) explain with reference to the related approach of social order, it is based on the assumption of a certain permanence, i.e. a certain form of “structuredness”, within the framework of which change is possible. This basic assumption, which focuses not only on processes and practices but also on institutional structures, makes it compatible with the debate on fragile contexts or areas of limited statehood “in which central authorities (national governments) lack the ability to implement and enforce rules and decisions and/or in which they do not control the means of violence” (Börzel and Risse, 2018, p. 9).

Similar concepts are known as “twilight institutions” (Lund, 2006), “negotiated statehood” (Menkhaus, 2006) or “negotiating statehood” (Hagmann and Péclard, 2010). They assume that the state cannot be set as a stable, ontological entity, but that its essence is always contested. The concept of HPOs is also linked to approaches of “legal pluralism” (Griffiths, 1986; Reyntjens, 2015, p. 362). Boege et al. (2009b, p. 606) define HPOs as arrangements in regions of so-called “fragile statehood”:

in which diverse and competing claims to power and logics of order coexist, overlap and intertwine, namely the logic of “formal” state, of traditional “informal” societal order and of globalization and associated social fragmentation (which is present in ethnic, tribal, religious forms). The “state” does

not have a privileged position as the political framework that provides security, welfare and representation; it has to share authority, legitimacy and capacity with other structures.

Hybrid political orders have their roots in both non-state autochthonous social structures as well as internationally introduced formal state structures (Boege et al., 2009a, p. 17). The fluidity and adaptability of the customary and traditional leads to a lack of demarcation between non-state, traditional forms of political ordering and ideal-typical formal institutions in the sense of Weber's conception of the state (Boege et al., 2008, p. 7). In hybrid political orders, state authorities are only one of several possibilities to claim a monopoly on violence, have mechanisms for settling and regulating conflicts, and perform social functions within communities (Clements et al., 2007, p. 48; Boege et al., 2008, p. 6).

In areas with limited or fragile formal state institutions, customary law, traditional social structures and traditional authorities determine the social realities of the people (Boege et al., 2008, p. 7). For example, traditional authorities such as village chiefs or clan elders address disturbances and disruptions in local spaces by applying customary law rather than written state laws (Boege et al., 2009a, p. 17). As a result, people in these spaces see their affiliation primarily in terms of their social group. Belonging to a state is subordinated to this, or the state is even perceived as an external, non-legitimized power (Clements et al., 2007, p. 50).

With regard to the local, Boege et al. (2008, p. 9) do not only include traditional authorities such as village elders, clan chiefs, healers, or religious leaders but also warlords, leaders of militias, or gangs. The central argument for this is that these actors can hold a monopoly on the use of force in geographical areas with weak state structures (Boege et al., 2008, p. 9). However, according to Boege et al. (2008), it is not possible to make a clear distinction between the formal or informal sources of their authority. Rather, actors may claim overlapping sources for their authority or occupy multiple roles in formal as well as informal institutions (Boege et al., 2008, p. 9). Relatively similar to the concept of HPOs is the approach of "institutional multiplicity" used by the Crisis States Research Centre of the London School of Economics, which Di John (2008, pp. 33–34) defines as follows:

Institutional multiplicity is a situation in which different sets of rules of the game, often contradictory, coexist in the same territory, putting citizens and economic agents in complex, often unsolvable, situations, but at the same time offering them the possibility of switching strategically from one institutional universe to another.

However, while the concept of hybridity focuses on the intertwining of formal and informal institutions, the approach of institutional multiplicity emphasizes that the structures are not integrated but stand side by side competing with their own norms and incentive structures (Goodfellow and Lindemann, 2013, p. 7). Finally, hybridity in the sense of HPOs should not be conflated with anocracy or dysfunctional political organization that emerges under conditions of backsliding and weak state authority. On the contrary, HPOs in many cases mirror a genuine model of political organization in postcolonial countries that have only partly undergone the process of state formation. Accordingly, we demarcate HPOs from "hybrid regimes" that often are deliberately designed to maintain the appearance of democracy without exposing themselves to the political risks that free competition entails. While hybrid regimes are often characterized by the absence of a "principled" commitment to the rules of democracy, HPOs are shaped by the plurality of rules, norms and institutions that are interweaved in

multiple ways and thus have the potential of drawing on and gathering in different sources of commitment and legitimacy.

A CRITICAL ASSESSMENT OF HYBRID POLITICAL ORDERS

HPOs enhance our understanding of fragile contexts by overcoming the state bias and opening up perspectives on the intermingling of institutions and actors. The concept, however, also has several flaws. We underline five problems: (a) methodological reductionism, limited empirical validation; (b) romanticizing traditional and local authorities; (c) ignoring the political economy, neglecting rent-seeking state elites; (d) instability through lack of dominant political coalitions; (e) undermining state-making through institutional pluralism.

Methodological Reductionism, Limited Empirical Validation

While “state fragility” and liberal peacebuilding approaches are entrapped by “methodological nationalism” (Wimmer and Glick Schiller, 2002), the post-liberal school as well as proponents of the HPO concept risk falling into the trap of another variant of “methodological reductionism”, upholding a dualism between the naturalized “liberal international” and the “local-local” and implying blind spots regarding the role of formal institutions and the state.

With regard to the HPO concept, this is partly due to the fact that it was primarily developed and empirically investigated for states with a rather small population size and with substantive rural regions. Here, the influence of customary non-state institutions is more prevalent than in urban spaces. The obvious reasons for this include spatial distances and lower settlement density, which increase the difficulty to monopolize the use of force as well as the expansion of formal state structures. The empirical validation of respective findings, however, has not been translated appropriately to countries with a larger population size and higher heterogeneity in institutions and identities.

Romanticizing Traditional and Local Authorities

Mallet (2010, p. 82) criticizes that scholars and practitioners who are inspired by hybridity thinking tend to neglect that local actors are not necessarily legitimate, but can be perceived as similarly discredited as state actors. In other words, the practices and interests of local actors are not inherently beneficial for the peace process (Bargués-Pedreny and Randazzo, 2018, p. 1546). The romanticizing of informal, local and traditional institutions ultimately justifies, among other things, neopatrimonial instability (Balthasar, 2015, p. 29).

Answering to charges of romanticizing the local, Mac Ginty and Richmond (2013, p. 770) point out that local actors and contexts can be partisan, discriminatory, exclusive and violent, and contain power relations and hierarchies. Furthermore, they admit that the local is often less local than imagined; it can be transnational, transversal and comprise a geographically dispersed network (Mac Ginty and Richmond, 2013, p. 770). Still, as Simons and Zanker (2014, p. 5) observe, “the impression remains that the ‘local’ in critical peacebuilding is a panacea of legitimacy, and is everything and anything, as long as it fits the image of being in opposition to liberal peacebuilding”.

Ignoring the Political Economy, Neglecting Rent-Seeking State Elites

The concept of hybrid political orders largely turns a blind eye to the political economy of statehood. This is in contrast to the theorems that follow from Tilly's (1985, 1990) research on state formation. Admittedly, HPOs do take into account some of the actors who have access to political and economic resources, such as warlords. But the question of the economic basis of legitimacy and power remains largely alien to this approach. And overall, the focus is more on local actors than on political elites at the national level. HPOs thus contrast markedly with the assumptions and findings of institutional economists. North et al. (2007), for example, have introduced the concept of Limited Access Orders (LAOs) for developing regions. They represent, so to speak, the normal case in developing regions. LAOs are controlled by rent-seeking elites and can be defined as follows:

In limited access orders, the state does not have a secure monopoly on violence, and society organizes itself to control violence among the elite factions. A common feature of limited access orders is that political elites divide up control of the economy, each getting some share of the rents. (North et al., 2007, p. 1)

They explain the question of war and peace from the logic of rent income. Peace can be maintained if elites perceive that violence could negatively affect their rent incomes. Of course, the concept of HPOs does not need to adopt this perspective, but it lacks an alternative framework for taking into account the political economy and the role of elites.

Instability Through Lack of Dominant Political Coalitions

The concept of HPOs avoids thinking in terms of rule and domination. Accordingly, it has difficulties to investigate when a balance of power between different actors exists. It overlooks that hybrid political orders in the absence of such a balance are susceptible to disruptions (Hoehne, 2013, pp. 212–213). Hoehne (2013), accordingly, suggests looking at hybrid political orders rather as a form of transition than as a stable status or order. An even more sceptical perspective maintains that hybrid institutions will not produce predictable outcomes due to local resistance and adaptation (Millar, 2014) and thus are even problematic as guideposts for transitional periods.

The background to this criticism is the question of violence control, which HPOs deal with rather casually. This is in tension with substantial parts of the literature. Hesselbein et al. (2006, p. 30), for example, state that political coalition building, the consolidation of coercive power and the inclusiveness of the political form of organization play a central role in state reconstruction. North et al. (2012, p. 11) argue similarly, focusing on political coalition building with the aim of controlling violence: "An LAO reduces violence by forming a dominant coalition containing all individuals and groups with sufficient access to violence that can, if they act unilaterally, create disorder".

Undermining State-Making through Institutional Pluralism

The last point of criticism is linked to the question of whether the concept of HPOs can actually contribute to state-making in the long term. Balthasar (2015, p. 26) is sceptical in this regard: "it yields to the fallacy that pluralism constitutes the birth certificate of statehood". Instead, he

assumes that the standardization of institutions and identities is crucial – thus a combination of state-building and nation-building (Balthasar, 2015, p. 26). He accuses HPOs and related concepts of not differentiating which orders or institutional arrangements favour or prevent state-making. In doing so, they ultimately fall prey to the neoliberal idea that diversity and social pluralism matter most (Balthasar, 2015, pp. 26–27).

How does Balthasar define his core concepts? Following North (1990), institutional standardization means that “a single set of ‘rules of the game’” is imposed by a dominant organization and enables state-building (Balthasar, 2015, p. 27). This is intended to overcome the multiplicity of contradictory claims to authority and legitimacy under conditions of institutional hybridity (Wenner, 2020, p. 228). Identity standardization, in turn, aims at the predominance of a “common set of ‘rules of the mind’”, namely “language, social values or mental maps” (Balthasar, 2015, p. 27) – an idea that is close to Denzau and North’s (1993, 1994) concept of Shared Mental Models (SMM). The fact that these considerations remain rather alien to the concept of HPOs, which is based on institutional pluralism, may also be due to the fact that the corresponding empirical work has so far concentrated on countries with a rather small population size, which show a comparatively high homogeneity in institutions and identities.

SUCCESSSES AND FAILURES OF HPOs: ILLUSTRATIVE CASE STUDIES

In the following, we want to illustratively explore two extreme case studies in order to identify preliminary conditions under which HPOs can achieve a minimum level of peace and stability or fail in this endeavour. We select Somaliland because it is generally regarded as a success story of domestic peacebuilding and from a regional perspective can be considered as “exceptional”. And we contrast it with Afghanistan in which externally shaped HPOs clearly failed; it thus stands for the “negative extreme”. In doing so, we refrain from ambitious definitions of a “positive peace” but focus pragmatically on the “resilience” of war-torn societies and crisis-prone countries.

Resilience as a Benchmark for HPOs

The resilience concept has travelled from the field of engineering to medicine, psychology, humanitarian assistance to peacebuilding. It focuses on peoples’ and communities’ existing capacities and abilities to maintain or build peace rather than the external provision of policies or programmes (Chandler, 2012, p. 217). The resilience approach thus focuses on existing local capacities for conflict transformation as opposed to imported institutions, policies and strategies.

The performance of HPOs can be measured by their resilience, i.e. their ability to maintain stability and peace under pressure and to preserve livelihoods (Börzel and Risse, 2018, p. 5). Following Keck and Sakdapolrak (2013, p. 5), we want to distinguish between three capacities that underlie resilience and which we discuss below for the case studies. By *coping capacities*, we mean the ability of societies to react to massive crises in such a way that survival is ensured and existing structures can be maintained or restored. *Adaptive capacities* go beyond this and permit societies to preventively adapt to present or future challenges in such a way

that existential threats can be avoided. *Transformative capacities* also enable societies to sustainably address the causes of their own vulnerability through a substantial transformation of institutions and conflict resolution processes.

Somaliland: Partial Success for HPOs

Somaliland is an area in north-eastern Somalia that built up a thoroughly robust hybrid political order after the fall of Siad Barre's regime in 1991 (Renders and Terlinden, 2010, pp. 725–726). This was decisively shaped by the interweaving of modern and traditional elements at the political level and in the legal system. In 1993, it was agreed in the provisional national charter that the *Guurti* ("Council of Elders") would become an integral part of the constitutional system as the House of Elders. This recognition of clan structures created stability and achieved legitimacy among the population. The 2001 constitution also succeeded in determining important political offices (local officials, president, lower house) through democratic elections. Secondly, the legal system is characterized by the intertwining of different normative frames of reference, such as codified modern law, the *shari'a* and finally customary law (*xeer*), whereby the role of the clans remained central in view of the weak formal institutions (Richards, 2020, pp. 1071–1072).

Political observers as well as scholars have different assessments of the success in Somaliland. At the same time, there is broad agreement that in the first years after the civil war (1988–91), a relatively balanced hybrid system characterized by bottom-up processes emerged. Moreover, in the first three decades of its existence, the country achieved a level of stability that is remarkable by regional standards and has consistently shown a high level of participation in elections. The country benefited from the fact that British colonial rule in north-eastern Somalia, unlike the Italian colonial government in the south, had aimed less at penetrating local structures (McPherson-Smith, 2021, p. 223). But beyond this historical explanation, what were the decisive factors for the (partial) success? Do the realities on the ground correspond to the ideal-typical concepts that, for example, Boege et al. (2009b) and Clements et al. (2007) have outlined of HPOs? We discuss this question on the basis of four dimensions: trust, political coalition building, support of formal institutions, identities and discourses.

First of all, it is striking that Somaliland was very much on its own when it came to establishing a de facto state and that, compared to southern Somalia, there was no far-reaching external influence on political will-forming and decision-making processes. This favoured negotiation processes within and between clans, through which *mutual trust* developed in important parts of the country. The balanced coexistence of the different groups and levels then gave way, and this is the second dimension, under President Egal to a policy of "rule standardization" (Balthasar, 2018) in favour of state-based actors. A central role was also played by businessmen who supported government policy with the aim of creating a reliable framework for action (see also Musa and Horst, 2019, p. 46). Thus, dominant and in parts inclusive *political coalitions* emerged, in which the military was marginalized. The elders were included, but at the same time gradually put in their place. This development is viewed ambivalently. Balthasar (2018, p. 11), for example, assumes that it was in this way that state formation was made possible and a questioning of the polity was counteracted. Others, however, emphasize that clientelism took the place of participation and democratization processes. For example, Elder (2021, pp. 1749–1750, 1754) argues that "cross-border, oligarchic-corporate networks"

that were significantly associated with Djibouti created an “oligopolistic state” or “peaceocracy” in which statehood was undermined and political elites gave little or half-hearted support to democratization. Hoehne (2013, p. 199) also emphasizes that Somaliland’s initially successful HPO has increasingly turned negative. The elders were gradually pushed back more and more and became dependent on the president (Hoehne, 2013, pp. 206–207; Hoehne, 2018, pp. 207–208), which led to the *Guurti*’s susceptibility to corruption (Hoehne, 2013, p. 213).

Thirdly, there was *support for the formal institutions* in the centre of Somaliland. At the same time, Somaliland is not a homogeneous entity. Accordingly, different types of HPOs have emerged (Hoehne, 2018; Renders and Terlinden, 2010). In the centre, i.e. in Hargeisa, the HPO is characterized by “high politics” and modern institutions. In the more peripheral regions, though, especially on the border with Puntland, traditional authorities dominate, which decide on appointments to lucrative positions, among other things. According to Hoehne, this coexistence does not succeed in overcoming “instabilities and political rifts” (Hoehne, 2018, p. 187). Women and marginalized groups on the periphery are also disadvantaged in the traditional legal systems (Hoehne, 2018, p. 208).

In view of the limitations mentioned, it cannot be state institutions alone or even primarily that ensure the prevention of violence and the stability of civil order. Thus, fourthly, questions of *identity and culture come to the fore*, i.e. the already mentioned SMM. In this sense, Phillips (2019) emphasizes the effectiveness of the political discourse that opposed the widespread use of violence. This was facilitated by the pursuit of state recognition, which represented an inwardly unifying narrative (Richards and Smith, 2015, pp. 1717–1718, 1731–1732) “that emphasises Somaliland’s ‘inherent’ capacity for order against the disorder supposedly endemic to the rest of Somalia” (Hastings and Phillips, 2018, pp. 5–6).

How can the experience in Somaliland be summarized? With Hoehne (2013, p. 213) we can state “that hybrid political orders may be effective in assisting the transition from a war-torn or very fragile context into a more stable form of political existence”. At the same time, they have immanent limits. They become unbalanced under the pressure of processes of rule standardization and suffer losses of legitimacy (Hoehne, 2013, pp. 213–214). To paraphrase Renders and Terlinden (2010, p. 742): “Buying peace” as a means of co-opting clan elders was replaced by “the narrower purpose of buying people’s political support”. Hybrid political orders in Somaliland could contribute to peaceful transformation under certain conditions. They increased the resilience of political systems, but nevertheless always contained the danger of tipping over into fragility. This may not correspond to Weber’s ideal and is probably not suitable as a blueprint for other African countries, but it is no small success for war-torn societies.

Afghanistan after 9/11: The Failure of HPOs in the Context of Counterinsurgency Strategies

Afghanistan after 9/11 is another extreme case for HPOs – but, in contrast to Somaliland, symbolizes a failure of this model of political organization. Hybridized structures shaped the field of security, where warlords, tribal groups, the Taliban, Afghan security forces and international troops had competing and partly irreconcilable claims (Mehran, 2018; Schetter et al., 2007; Schmeidl and Miszak, 2017; Terpstra, 2020). Accordingly, fragmentation led to “oligopolies of violence” (Mehler et al., 2010) rather than to a monopoly on the use of force. Furthermore, the officials of the formal state institutions received their authority from both

formal and informal sources (Bizhan, 2018; Mehran, 2018; Schetter et al., 2007). This was particularly evident in the case of Hamid Karzai, who deliberately privileged family and tribal members and thus strengthened traditional tribal institutions (Bizhan, 2018, pp. 1017–1018; Schetter et al., 2007). The latter, not least, also played a substantial role in local conflict resolution and the delivery of social services (Terpstra, 2020).

The Taliban's seizure of power in summer 2021 signified how weak the hybrid political order in Afghanistan was. International actors had not been able to build resilient political and security structures. Their counterinsurgency strategies blatantly failed (Schmeidl and Miszak, 2017) which undermined trust and legitimacy with regard to state structures, especially in rural areas. During the international state-building intervention, the United States and other participating countries primarily supported actors that backed their strategy to fight the Taliban, building formal state structures and achieving short-term security objectives. This led to the favouring of some clan structures, particularly those of the Pashtuns, and fostered the dependence on loyalty for gaining access to positions, especially in formal institutions (Mehran, 2018; Schetter et al., 2007). Thereby and firstly, the *establishment of trust* and interaction beyond the respective clan structure were impeded which prevented transformation and undermined the stabilization of the fragile order. The erosion of trust was additionally fostered by chronic electoral fraud, which led to the drop in voter turnout in the presidential elections from 83 per cent in 2004 to only 19 per cent in 2019 (Dodge, 2021, p. 52).

Secondly, the *formation of dominant and inclusive political coalitions* failed at the national level and was only temporarily successful in some provinces and districts (Dodge, 2021; Mehran, 2018). One major reason was the strict exclusion of the Taliban as a powerful and locally partly legitimized actor (Terpstra, 2020). Another reason was that many actors, especially the “warlords”, oriented themselves towards the interests of external actors in order to stabilize their own power and to secure their own interests (Dodge, 2021; Schetter et al., 2007).

Thirdly, formal *state institutions* were never widely supported, but rather eroded, instrumentalized and captured by particularistic groups. Neopatrimonial structures enabled rent-seeking by national elites, especially by the “warlords” (Bizhan, 2018, p. 1026). Many members of the national elites assumed that they had fought for many years for the state and accordingly did partially “own” these state structures (Mehran, 2018). Furthermore, due to high levels of corruption a substantial share of international aid bypassed the formal institutions as off-budget aid (Bizhan, 2018). This fostered the formation of parallel structures for social services and undermined state-building efforts (Bizhan, 2018). At the same time, the dependence on international actors hindered the development of long-term resilience of state institutions. Finally, ineffectiveness and widespread corruption impacted the legitimacy of state courts, especially at the local level. After 2001, the Taliban were able to build on this by offering parallel, informal, non-governmental institutions, which gave them greater legitimacy than formal local courts due to their higher accessibility and reliability (Terpstra, 2020).

Fourthly, the more modern attitudes in the major cities of Afghanistan differed greatly from rural customs which were shaped by traditional Islam and cultural traditions, for example, the Pashtunwali. The great differences between geographical areas made the creation of SMM on a national scale difficult. And respective efforts were undermined by “warlordism” or extreme ideological alternatives offered by the Taliban (Bizhan, 2018; Schetter et al., 2007). External support for selected actors widened these cleavages instead of promoting SMM beyond spatially limited areas.

Findings

We were able to show for both case studies that as a result of war and state failure, political orders emerged under conditions of hybridity. In Somaliland, four core factors contributed to the containment of local power holders and the provision of a minimum of public goods: the establishment of trust and respective interaction beyond clan structures, the forming of dominant and inclusive political coalitions, the support of formal state structures, and SMM. It became apparent that the social structures organized by an HPO were not only able to react to crises and shocks in the sense of coping capacities but could also deal with crises preventively through adaptive capacities. At the same time, there were limits to the ability to permanently change the basic vulnerability to crises through transformation.

In contrast, HPOs in Afghanistan largely failed. It is true that in the twenty years of external intervention there were areas in which the control of violence functioned – whether through the massive involvement of external actors or through the revitalization of traditional mechanisms of conflict management. However, these successes never went beyond the strengthening of coping capacities and were of a purely temporary nature. The political climate was characterized by mistrust and tribal compartmentalization, political coalitions were formed from outside and not within. Hybridity did not lead to complementary institutions and norms, but rather to rivalry and the erosion or capture of state structures. In extreme cases of tribal or clan spheres, the state was seen as a completely separate space. Not least, identity standardization through SMM did not take place.

CONCLUSION: TOWARDS PRAGMATIC PEACEBUILDING

Conventional notions of fragile statehood are increasingly being challenged by hybridity thinking. This tends to emphasize the importance of informal versus formal institutions, the relevance of the local versus the national and international level, and the legitimacy of traditional versus modern authorities. The concept of hybridity is initially attractive to those who are disillusioned with centrally controlled state-building projects in fragile contexts. At the same time, it also enjoys great popularity among neoliberal thinkers, insofar as they want to locate state tasks with private and civil society actors beyond the state (Luckham and Kirk, 2013, p. 9). As a descriptive-analytical diagnostic tool, the concept of hybridity has the advantage of analysing what actually exists – and not primarily what should possibly be there from a Western perspective. At the same time, we have warned against a normative-prescriptive understanding that believes hybridity can be created or even staged from the outside, so to speak.

With its focus on structures, the concept of HPOs is an important enrichment of the debate on fragile statehood or spaces of limited statehood. It is characterized by three features. Firstly, multiple actors contribute to the political orders which are shaped by the interplay of formal and informal institutions. Secondly, it overcomes the “methodological nationalism” of state-focused approaches by putting the international-local interphase into the spotlight. Thirdly, it assumes that legitimacy and authority of the state, in this context, are not an “ontological” given, but fluid and contested.

Despite its numerous advantages, the concept of HPOs also has notable weaknesses, which we have reconstructed in the following points: methodological reductionism, its romanticizing

of traditional and local authorities, its neglect of political economy and power relations as well as its exaggerated trust in institutional pluralism.

The two case studies on Somaliland and Afghanistan have given us initial indications of the conditions under which hybrid political orders can achieve a minimum of stability and peace. We could confirm various factors that Ken Menkhaus identified for a community's resilience, such as "dense patterns of trust networks, hybrid coalitions forged across a wide range of actors, shared narratives, common interests, multiple lines of communication, good leadership, and a commitment by local leaders to take risks for peace" (Menkhaus, 2013, pp. 2–3, 6). Hybridity, thus, can be viewed as a way in which societal functionality can persist even in the shadow of war and protracted conflict. It serves as a coping mechanism and can even help societies to preventively adapt to existential threats. Still, hybridity has only limited transformative potential in the process of state formation which comprises effective service delivery, functional taxation, etc.

What lessons can development and peace policy learn from these findings? We would like to conclude by highlighting two recommendations:

1. Development policy in fragile states often makes the mistake of trying to transfer the characteristics of advanced industrialized countries to developing regions. This may work in middle-income countries or emerging economies but is out of place in weakly consolidated or even fragile states (North et al., 2007, pp. 5, 11–14, 43). Here it is necessary to start with the existing, often hybrid structures. The guiding idea of "pragmatic peacebuilding" (Stepputat, 2018, p. 405) can serve as orientation. It can be defined operationally in terms of a "good enough" in the sense of moderate expectation management. It relies on a tentative approach under conditions of uncertainty (Stepputat, 2018, p. 405).
2. Development policy should not strive in social-technocratic hubris to create or even stage hybridity (Mac Ginty and Richmond, 2016; Millar, 2014). Rather, it is about selectively strengthening structures that are prerequisites for the success of HPOs, in particular, the establishment of trust and respective interaction, the forming of dominant and inclusive political coalitions, the acceptance of the state through output-legitimacy and the facilitation of SMM. On this basis, it is then possible to consider in a participatory process which sectoral foci and priorities should be set in specific countries and regions.

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10. Implications of fragility for growth, poverty, and inequality

Karla Cisneros Rosado and Yiagadeesen Samy

INTRODUCTION

One of the great achievements of the last three decades in international development, bolstered by the adoption of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), has been the dramatic reduction in global extreme poverty, currently measured as people living on less than \$2.15 a day. Driven largely by economic progress in China and India, the world's two most populous countries, the first MDG of halving the proportion of people living in extreme poverty was achieved ahead of the 2015 deadline. According to Asadullah and Savoia (2018), both poverty headcount and poverty gap measures¹ decreased faster after the year 2000, suggesting that MDGs adoption was a significant factor behind poverty reduction. These authors also argued that the variation in poverty reduction performance across countries is due to state capacity, namely the ability of states to administer their territory and resolve coordination failures, measured through constraints on the executive and the length of statehood. This variation is indeed confirmed by data from the World Bank.² For example, even if the proportion of extremely poor people has declined in sub-Saharan Africa, there are now more extremely poor people living in that region than in 1990. In fact, very few Fragile and Conflict Affected States/Situations (FCAS), many of which are also located in sub-Saharan Africa, met the first MDG goal of halving poverty (OECD, 2015). This stands in sharp contrast to what is observed globally and in other developing regions, such as Asia. We will examine the evolution of poverty in FCAS in more detail in this chapter, focusing on the first Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) of eradicating extreme poverty.

We recognize that there is no consensus about the meaning of state fragility or what a fragile state is. The term FCAS is commonly used by various international organizations, such as the World Bank and the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (IDPS). The latter brings together the 20 members of the G7+ and the OECD Development Assistance Committee's International Network on Conflict and Fragility (INCAF). The terminology adopted by the World Bank to identify fragile states has changed over time but its goal has remained the same, namely, to inform the strategic and operational decision-making of the international financial institution.³ In this chapter, the terms FCAS and fragile states will be used interchangeably. However, it should be noted that almost all conflict-affected states are fragile by definition but that not all fragile states are affected by conflict.⁴ We will also triangulate from various sources to identify a group of countries that are fragile and that we can then proceed to examine more carefully with respect to growth, poverty, and inequality.

According to the criteria used by the World Bank, FCAS includes countries where indicators measuring the quality of policy and institutions reflect high levels of institutional and social fragility, as well as countries affected by violent conflict. Such an approach, which was traditionally more development-oriented (as opposed to conflict- or stability-oriented), has evolved

over time and is captured by the broader definition of state fragility proposed by Carment et al. (2009).⁵ In their conceptualization, the state is the primary unit of analysis and needs to exhibit the three fundamental properties of authority, legitimacy and capacity (ALC) to function properly.⁶ Authority captures the extent to which a state possesses the ability to enact binding legislation over its population, exercise coercive force over its sovereign territory, provide core public goods, and maintain a stable and secure environment to its citizens and communities. Legitimacy describes the extent to which a particular government commands public loyalty to the governing regime, and generates domestic support for that government's legislation and policy. Such support must be created through a voluntary and reciprocal arrangement of effective governance and citizenship, founded upon broadly accepted principles of government selection and succession that are recognized both locally and internationally. Capacity refers to the potential for a state to mobilize and employ resources towards productive ends. States lacking in capacity are generally unable to provide services to their citizens and cannot respond effectively to sudden shocks such as natural disasters, epidemics, food shortages, or refugee flows. Hence, in the triangulation discussed above, we must pay attention to the multi-dimensional ways in which states are fragile, which is an approach that has also been adopted by the OECD (2016).

Global efforts to eradicate extreme poverty by 2030 – the first Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) – will largely depend on progress made in FCAS.⁷ To put it simply, the geography of poverty is shifting as countries continue to develop. China has almost eliminated absolute poverty and continued progress in India will mean that the extreme poor will be increasingly concentrated in fragile states. More than six years into Agenda 2030 and given the poor track record of fragile countries, now amplified by the global Covid-19 pandemic, this chapter examines the extent to which fragile countries may again be left behind. Specifically, and using both extant literature and recent data, this chapter critically evaluates the evidence to date and asks the following questions. Is it realistic to assume that poverty can be eradicated or reduced significantly in FCAS (and globally) by 2030? Are there significant differences within the group of FCAS itself? And, how are FCAS different from other developing countries when it comes to the relationship between growth, poverty, and inequality?

The rest of the chapter is organized as follows. In the next section, we identify a list of fragile states based on recently available rankings and classifications. The third section then considers the evolution of poverty for our sample of fragile states since 1990, comparing them with other developing regions. We chose the year 1990 as the starting point because it was the same baseline used for the first MDG of eradicating poverty by 2015. In the fourth section, we draw on Bourguignon's Poverty-Growth-Inequality triangle and stylized facts to examine the relationship between growth, poverty, and inequality in fragile states. We then consider the impact of recent global shocks on the economies of fragile states and conclude the chapter with a summary of our main findings and their policy implications.

A LIST OF FRAGILE STATES

Identifying a list of fragile states is not without its challenges. Conceptually, fragility is a matter of degree, not kind, and we should thus consider both extreme cases of failed and collapsed states and those that have the potential to fail. If we want to track how poverty is evolving in fragile states, we have to decide which countries to include. Over the years,

different organizations have been producing annual lists and rankings that rely on different methodologies. Although it is not too difficult to identify the worst performers, it has become more and more difficult to agree on which other countries should be included and how they rank against each other. We also know that fragility tends to be persistent and as such, many countries remain fragile over long periods of time; that is, they are trapped, while others tend to move in and out of fragility, instead of permanently exiting (Carment and Samy, 2019). For the purposes of this chapter, we considered four different lists of fragile states and the evolution of these countries over time. In other words, while relying on recent lists, we also wanted to have a sample of countries that have been fragile for a while.

First, the OECD has been publishing an annual States of Fragility report since 2005. Its approach and methodology to identify fragile states has evolved over time, both conceptually and in terms of the indicators that it uses to measure fragility. For example, in the past the OECD used to consider other lists and rankings (such as the World Bank and Fund for Peace) to come up with a list of fragile states. The latest version (OECD, 2022a), which recognizes that fragility is both multidimensional and complex, identifies 60 fragile contexts, 15 of which are “extremely fragile” and 45 that are “other fragile”. The “extremely fragile” countries include the likes of Afghanistan, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Haiti, Somalia, South Sudan, and Yemen. These extremely fragile countries also show up as the worst performers on all the various lists of fragile states consulted. Second, we considered the latest list of FCAS from the World Bank, which includes only 37 countries for fiscal year 2023. The World Bank groups them under different conflict intensities, and under high institutional and social fragility (in turn made up of non-small and small states). Its list is “not meant to be comprehensive – it does not include all countries affected, nor is it a ranking of countries”.⁸ The main objective of this list is to help the World Bank Group implement its policies in difficult and complex environments, therefore, even if it is not comprehensive, several of the countries also show up on other lists of fragile states.

A third list of fragile states is from the Fund for Peace, which started ranking countries in 2005. Its list, for 2022, includes 30 countries in the “alert” category (score between 90.0 and 120.0) and 84 countries in the “warning” category (score between 60.0 and 89.9). These are all countries that are deemed to be vulnerable to failure, though not to the same extent. The challenge is what to make of 2 countries that score, let us say, 59.9 (which would be in the “stable” category) and 60.0. Fund for Peace recommends that one should pay attention to sub-indicators and long-term trends to make such an assessment. Ultimately, once we combine countries in the “alert” and “warning” categories, we end up with a significant number of countries that could be considered fragile. The challenge here is to figure out where to draw the line, especially as we get past the first 40 or 50 countries.

Finally, we considered the state fragility ranking from the Country Indicators for Foreign Policy (CIFP)⁹ whose current data on fragility spans the 1980 to 2018 period. CIFP has typically used the top 40 or 50 countries from their annual ranking as their list of fragile countries to compare against other countries. After considering these four lists together, and prioritizing countries that have shown up among those deemed fragile over the last 30 years, we ended up with a list of 48 countries (see Appendix Table 10A.1). There are also 6 additional countries that were deemed borderline and that we will consider in order to check if our findings are significantly altered with their inclusion. In the end, with the exception of Malawi, Egypt, and Rwanda, all the countries in our list are currently included in the OECD list of fragile countries.

The World Bank currently classifies 28 countries as low-income economies, that is, those with an income per capita of \$1,085 or less. Twenty-five of those countries are among the 48 countries we listed as fragile (see Appendix Table 10A.1) and the remaining 3 (Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Rwanda and Zambia) are among the other 6 added to our list. Nineteen lower-middle income countries and 3 upper-middle income (Equatorial Guinea, Iraq, and Libya) are among the 48 countries selected.¹⁰ Overall, we have an almost equal split between low- and middle-income countries. Figure 10.1 shows the countries selected for this study. The full list is provided in Appendix Table 10A.1.



Figure 10.1 A map of fragile states

POVERTY IN FRAGILE STATES: TRENDS AND PROJECTIONS

Given the historical track record of fragile states and the negative effects of the ongoing pandemic on economic growth and poverty reduction, our analysis in this section focuses on the evolution of absolute poverty in these countries. In addition to global events such as the Covid-19 pandemic or the great financial crisis, fragile states are also affected by their own set of unique challenges – related to authority, legitimacy and capacity – that impede poverty reduction. Progress on poverty reduction in fragile states has a direct impact on the likelihood of eradicating extreme poverty and reaching the World Bank goal of less than 3% of the world’s population living in absolute poverty by 2030. In addition to considering fragile states as a group, we are also interested in identifying which countries among the group of fragile states will likely be successful in eradicating poverty by 2030. To conduct our analysis, we compiled population and headcount ratios for all the countries on our list over the period 1990–2030. The numbers from 2021 to 2030 are projections by the World Data Lab¹¹ based on their global poverty model outlined in Crespo Cuaresma et al. (2018). These projections have been updated to take into account the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Some data limitations in our analysis are typical of poverty studies about developing and fragile states (see Burt et al., 2014 and Gertz and Kharas, 2018). Specifically, data for some

countries are not available for some years. In our case, those include Afghanistan, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Iran, North Korea, Libya, Myanmar, Somalia, South Sudan, Syria, Tajikistan, and Palestine/West Bank and Gaza. In spite of this, our data collection was very comprehensive for the countries and time period under review. Enough observations were available to classify all countries as “on track” or “not on track” to meet Target 1.1 of the first SDG by 2030.

Out of the 48 fragile countries on our main list, only 9 are on track to meet the goal of eradicating absolute poverty by 2030 according to the World Data Lab. These are: Bangladesh, Gambia, Iraq, Libya, Mauritania, Myanmar, Pakistan, Sudan,¹² and Tajikistan. Another 3 countries (Egypt, Iran and Laos) from the 6 additional fragile states are also on track. At the same time, several fragile states have not seen their poverty numbers decrease during the period under review. In fact, poverty numbers have increased for half (24) of the countries on our main list. These are: Afghanistan, Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Congo Republic, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Eswatini, Guinea Bissau, Haiti, Madagascar, Malawi, Nigeria, Palestine/West Bank and Gaza, Papua New Guinea, Somalia, South Sudan, Syria, Venezuela, Yemen, and Zimbabwe.

Table 10.1 Percentage of world poverty in fragile states

Year	Main list (48)	Overall list (54)
1990	20.5	21.6
2000	27.6	28.6
2010	38.9	40.7
2020	67.7	72.7
2030	82.6	88.3

Source: Authors' calculations.

This rise in poverty numbers is reflected in Table 10.1, which shows how the percentage of world poverty in fragile states has evolved since 1990 and what the situation is expected to be in 2030. Our calculations show that poverty is concentrated in fragile states and will become increasingly more so over time. Our estimations show that if these countries remain fragile and their economic growth and poverty levels do not improve, more than 80% of the world's poor will live in fragile states by 2030. These estimates are higher than what others have reported and are a function of the countries included as fragile. For example, the World Bank reported that up to two-thirds of those in extreme poverty would be living in fragile, conflict and violent (FCV) settings by 2030. This concentration of poverty in fragile states is also the result of progress in other non-fragile contexts such as China and India. Second, the additional 6 countries considered do not contribute significantly to the share of the global poor. Furthermore, if we remove from the overall list of 54 countries the 12 countries identified above as “on track” to eradicate absolute poverty, the remaining 42 fragile states will represent 87.5% of world poverty in 2030. Of these, Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of Congo will represent 18.1% and 11.7% of world poverty respectively, illustrating the concentration of extreme poverty among fragile states. Other countries forecasted to have significant shares of global poverty in 2030 include Tanzania (4.4%), Madagascar (4.3%), Venezuela (3.9%), Angola (3.8%), Yemen (3.7%), and Afghanistan (3.3%). It is important to note that Afghanistan's projections from the World Data Lab do not reflect the recent takeover by the

Taliban. However, Afghanistan was already projected to be amongst the countries with the highest levels of poverty by 2030.

These are important findings as the policies implemented in those 42 countries, particularly in Nigeria, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Tanzania, Madagascar, Venezuela, Angola, Yemen, and Afghanistan, will be paramount to the future of world poverty. Progress in countries with significant numbers of people living in absolute poverty could make a big difference overall. Historically, even if fragile states have not had the highest total number of people living in poverty, a disproportionate number of poor people have been located in fragile states relative to their populations. Furthermore, while these countries share various elements of state fragility (such as low government effectiveness, conflict, and violence, among others) each state's economic and socio-political environment is vastly different. As poverty further concentrates in fragile states, governments, and international organizations will have to design poverty reduction policies that are specifically designed for the realities of those regions. These policies should consider that fragile states have historically made the least progress on poverty reduction and that development interventions have been more effective in non-fragile environments.

Based on our analysis, our conclusion is that most fragile states will not reach the 3% poverty target by 2030. Recent events in some of those countries have made reaching that target even less plausible. For example, Burt et al. (2014) concluded that Afghanistan might be able to reach the 3% poverty rate level under their "growth and shared prosperity scenario". Considering the recent events in Afghanistan (i.e., the 2021 Taliban takeover of the country) any scenario where the first SDG is achieved is extremely unlikely. However, Burt et al. (2014) did conclude that most fragile states reaching the 3% target by 2030 was very unlikely. The authors indicate that their most optimistic scenario would yield an average poverty rate of 20.1% for FCAS in 2030, which is far above the target of 3%. However, they note that some countries in their group may reach that level. Other studies like Crespo Cuaresma et al. (2018) and Gertz and Kharas (2018) also concluded that some but not all fragile states would reach the SDG target by 2030. Our calculations, based on 48 countries from the overall list of fragile states, yield an average poverty rate of 29.8% for FCAS in 2030, with only 8 countries achieving a poverty rate of less than 3%. In addition to the high concentration of poverty in FCAS, the global poverty rate is estimated to be around 6.6% by 2030. Hence, the eradication of poverty or the World Bank goal of less than 3% of people living in poverty will likely not be achieved. Several countries such as Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Central African Republic, and South Sudan are expected to have poverty rates of more than 50% in 2030.

Based on current country trajectories, Gertz and Kharas (2018) identified 31 countries that were "severely off-track" to meet the SDG by 2030. When comparing our list with Gertz and Kharas (2018), we find that we included all the countries in their study except for Benin, Lesotho, Swaziland, and Timor-Leste. Gertz and Kharas (2018) do note that their list is related but not congruent with existing lists of fragile states, such as those compiled by the World Bank and the Fund for Peace. Our conclusions resemble those of Gertz and Kharas (2018) in that we also observe that poverty will become increasingly concentrated in fragile states (or "Severely Off-Track Countries" or SOTCs in their case). Gertz and Kharas (2018) estimated that by 2030 four out of every five people living in poverty will live in one of their identified SOTCs, which is roughly similar to what we also find. With less than seven years left before

the 2030 target of eliminating absolute poverty, changing the development trajectories of fragile states where poverty is concentrated should be a critical priority.

The Covid-19 pandemic in particular has severely impacted global poverty, increasing the number of people living in extreme poverty by 97 million; this number has been revised down from an earlier estimate of 119–124 million by the World Bank (Mahler et al., 2021). Not only have the numbers of extreme poor increased, but also the number of those who could have exited poverty but will now not be able to do so as a result of the worsening economic conditions in many regions due to Covid-19. In addition, the governments of many developed nations around the world have substantially increased their spending to address challenges posed by the pandemic, thus affecting their financial capacity and/or willingness to assist fragile states in the immediate future. The uncertainty of the pandemic, emerging variants, and the economic impact of more lockdowns further complicates achieving the goal of eradicating extreme poverty by 2030.

GROWTH, POVERTY, AND INEQUALITY: HOW ARE FRAGILE STATES DIFFERENT?

While the previous section examined the evolution of poverty in fragile states over time, this section delves a bit further into the reasons behind the trends observed. In particular, it seeks to examine the roles that growth and inequality have played in the evolution of poverty across the fragile states selected for this study. Following Bourguignon (2004), there is a set of two-way relationships between growth, poverty, and inequality, characterized by the so-called Poverty-Growth-Inequality triangle. According to that framework, poverty is a function of growth, the distribution of income, and the change in that distribution. Hence, both changes in growth and inequality will influence changes in poverty, and their impacts will depend on the initial levels of income and inequality. As discussed in Ferreira and Ravallion (2008), three stylized facts have emerged from these relationships.

Growth and Inequality

The first stylized fact is the lack of a correlation between growth rates and changes in inequality across developing countries. Related to the latter is the fact that although there is a variation in inequality across countries, within-country inequality is relatively stable because structural characteristics that determine the distribution of income change very slowly. To consider the evolution of inequality for our sample of fragile states, we use data from the most recent version¹³ of the Standardized World Income Inequality Database (SWIID) from Frederick Solt (see Solt, 2016, 2020). The SWIID standardizes income inequality data to produce Gini coefficients from a range of sources (such as the Luxembourg Income Study Database, the OECD Income Distribution Database, the Socio-Economic Database for Latin America and the Caribbean, and the World Bank's PovcalNet) in order to maximize their comparability while also ensuring the most coverage across countries over time. However, even if the SWIID is the most comprehensive database for inequality, we do not have data for all fragile states and for all years from 1990 to 2018.

The data for our main group of 48 fragile states (see Appendix Table 10A.1) tends to confirm the first stylized fact. For these countries, within-country inequality does not change

much over time. Some countries such as Angola, the Central African Republic, Comoros, Eswatini, and Cote d'Ivoire have had high levels of inequality over the years, with Gini coefficients in the 0.50–0.60 range. At the other end, countries such as Bangladesh and Ethiopia have lower levels of inequality with Gini coefficients between 0.35 and 0.40. We have enough data on income inequality to look at trend lines for 44 of the 48 fragile states. Out of those, 23 have experienced increasing inequality over time, 19 declining inequality, and 2 with almost no change. When the 6 additional fragile states are considered, 4 have experienced increasing inequality, 1 declining inequality, while there is no data for the Democratic Republic of Korea. Since most fragile countries have grown over time with very few experiencing negative growth rates (see Table 10.2), there is no obvious correlation between growth rates and income inequality for our main sample of fragile states; inequality decreases almost as often as it increases when these countries are growing. The correlation coefficients between growth rates (in GDP and GDP per capita) on the one hand, and income inequality on the other, are very low at -0.11 each, even if they are both statistically significant at the 1% level. The results do not change when the 6 additional fragile states are added to the main sample.

Growth and Poverty

The second stylized fact is the strong positive correlation between growth rates and rates of poverty reduction observed across developing countries. Countries that grow faster experience rapid reductions in poverty. Using cross-country analysis, Dollar and Kraay (2002) and Dollar et al. (2016) have shown that growth is good for the poor: when average incomes rise, the average incomes of the poorest quintile and poorest two quintiles both increase proportionately. This implies that a central component of poverty reduction strategies should be policies that strive to improve growth. However, the responsiveness of poverty with respect to growth varies across countries and regions, which means that growth is a necessary but not sufficient condition for poverty reduction. Specifically, the character and distributional effects of growth also matter.

As Figure 10.2 shows, there is a clear negative correlation between incomes levels and the headcount index for our list of fragile states ($n=45$, see Appendix Table 10A.1).¹⁴ The correlation coefficient is -0.64 and significant at the 1% level, which shows that the relationship between the two variables is quite strong. Countries that grow faster and reach higher income levels have a lower headcount index. However, it is also clear from Figure 10.2, that given the wide distribution of countries around the line of best fit, fragile countries with similar levels of per capita income can have very different headcount indices. Consider for example the cases of Mozambique and Niger, which are at roughly the same level of per capita income. The headcount index is 62% in Mozambique compared to 39% in Niger, a difference of 23%. Nigeria, with a per capita income of more than \$5,000 has a headcount index of 39% whereas Bangladesh, with a per capita income of about \$4,750, does much better with a headcount index of less than 7%. Because of the large populations in these two countries, the difference is more than 65 million people living in absolute poverty in Nigeria compared to Bangladesh. These examples show that the impact of growth on poverty varies significantly even for our sample of fragile states. Part of the explanation has to do with inequality, which we examine further below.

It could also be the case that the depth of poverty is such that in some countries the poor are starting further below the poverty line, and therefore it takes longer for them to go above it

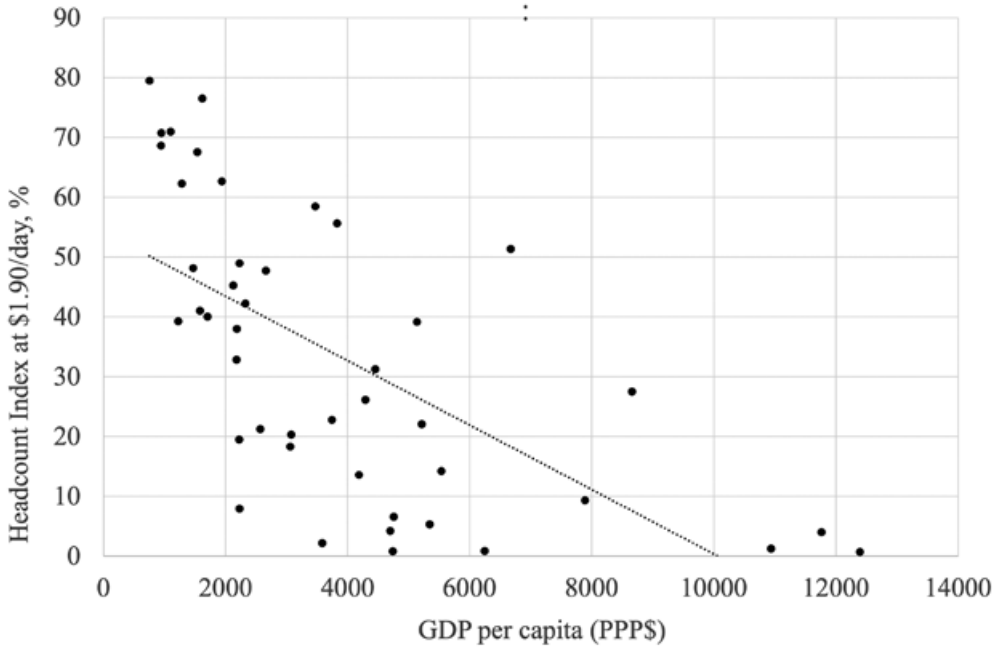


Figure 10.2 *Income levels and poverty in fragile states, 2019*

despite reasonable growth rates. Available data on the poverty gap bears this out for the above examples.¹⁵ Specifically, Mozambique’s (2014) poverty gap was 28.6% compared to 13.7% for Niger (2014). In the case of Bangladesh (2016) and Nigeria (2018), the numbers are 2.6% and 12.5% respectively. It also does not help that, as a group, fragile states have the fastest growing populations in the world; in fact, average population growth in 2020 for the 48 fragile countries was 2.3%, compared to 1.0% for the world. Interestingly, Niger’s average population growth rate over the last 5 years (2016–2020) has been higher than that of Mozambique by more than one percentage point while Nigeria’s population growth rate has been more than double that of Bangladesh over the same period. The high rates of population growth in fragile states have an impact on the differences in GDP growth and GDP per capita growth rates (see Table 10.2).

Poverty itself can also affect growth. Various models in the economics literature point to the existence of poverty traps (Kraay and McKenzie, 2014), whereby poverty interacts with growth in a vicious circle. An example of a poverty trap would be a savings-based poverty trap where those living in extreme poverty cannot save, invest and grow, thus remaining trapped in poverty. If poverty traps exist, policies should target the poor directly, instead of relying on growth to improve their conditions. This could, for example, include providing them access to credit at affordable rates, or investing in their health and education in order to improve their productive capacity. For example, advocates of a “big push” (such as Sachs, 2005) argue that large increases in foreign aid to poor countries could create a virtuous circle of savings, investment and growth.

Comparing per capita income levels over time, Kraay and McKenzie (2014) find that most countries, regardless of their income levels, have experienced positive growth over the long-term. Citing other studies, they also argue that this pattern repeats itself at the individual level and this leads them to conclude that poverty traps are a rare occurrence. Easterly (2006) interprets the poverty trap as growth in the poorest countries being lower than growth elsewhere, and as zero per capita growth in the poorest countries. Examining data for the 1950–2001 period, he does not find evidence for the poverty trap story across the poorest countries, even if there are individual countries that failed to grow over that period. As we have already noted earlier and in Appendix Table 10A.1, although not all fragile countries are currently among the poorest countries, many are. Whether some of them would fit the poverty trap is what we consider next.

Table 10.2 Growth in fragile states, 1990–2019

Average GDP growth	# of Countries, n=44
<0%	0
0–2%	6
2–4%	16
>4%	22
Average GDP per capita growth	# of Countries, n=44
<0%	9
0–2%	21
2–4%	10
>4%	4

Source: Authors’ calculations based on data from the World Development Indicators, World Bank (2022b).

The first thing to note about the sample of fragile states for which we have sufficient data is that there is a statistically significant difference between GDP growth and GDP per capita growth over the period 1990 to 2019.¹⁶ As Table 10.2 shows, all fragile states have experienced an average positive GDP growth over the period 1990 to 2019, with half of them experiencing average growth of more than 4%. Average GDP per capita growth over the same period, however, is quite different, with 9 countries experiencing negative growth and only 4 countries experiencing growth of more than 4%. Countries with negative GDP per capita growth include Burundi, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Haiti. The significant difference between GDP and GDP per capita growth is due to high population growth rates (see earlier discussion) across a number of fragile states. The growth performance in fragile countries is thus more modest when examined in per capita terms. This would also partly explain why as average incomes increase, the number of people living in absolute poverty in many fragile states is going up, even as the share of people living in poverty is declining. However, there are significantly more countries (35) with average positive per capita growth rates than negative ones (9).

Models of poverty traps also imply that income levels should be stagnant over time (Easterly, 2006). Figure 10.3 compares per capita income levels in 1990 vs. 2019 for 42 fragile countries for which data is available. Most of the countries that have experienced negative per capita growth in Table 10.2 are below the 45-degree line, and there are a few that are clustered around the latter; however, there are more countries above the 45-degree line than below. When those countries who have experienced negative growth and are below the 45-degree line

are further scrutinized with respect to their headcount ratios and the number of people living in absolute poverty, we observe that a few such as Gambia and Haiti have seen an improvement. In the end we are left with a few exceptions such as Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo, where a poverty population trap may be at work. This, however, does not mean that other mechanisms might not exist, such as the savings-based poverty trap, or threshold effects related to physical and human capital (Easterly, 2006). And if poor fragile countries are poor because of bad policies and institutions, the poverty trap story becomes even more problematic. As Kraay and McKenzie (2014, p. 145) have argued, “While the evidence indicates that poverty traps are rare, this does not mean they can never exist.” Indeed, what we can say from the data is that there are a few fragile states with deep and persistent poverty.

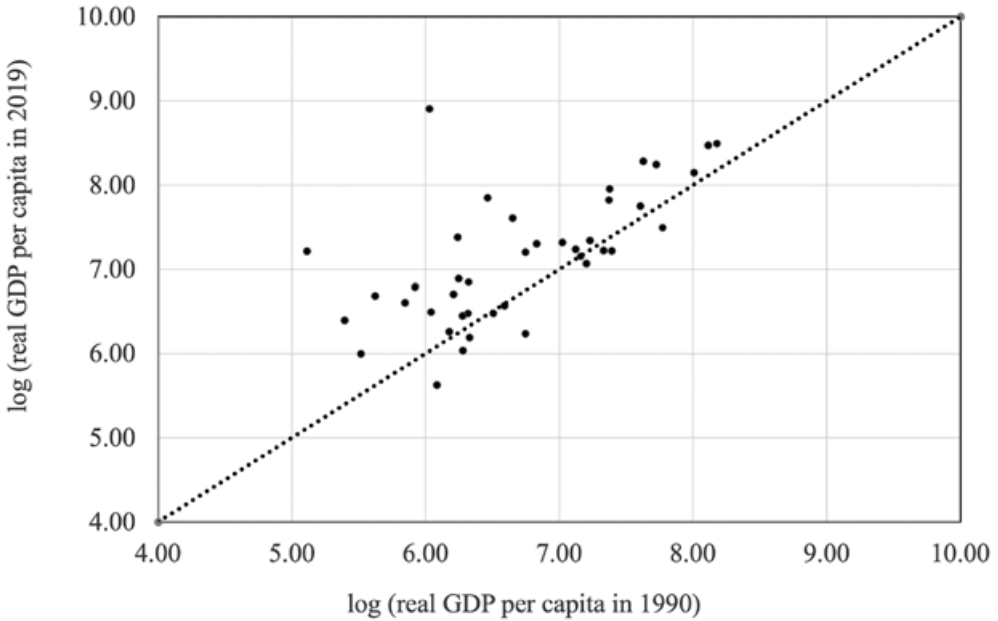


Figure 10.3 *Real GDP per capita in 1990 vs. 2019 for fragile states*

Growth and Poverty: the Role of Inequality

The third and final stylized fact is the mediating (and negative) impact of inequality on the relationship between growth and poverty reduction. Specifically, the responsiveness of poverty reduction to growth will be lower when inequality is higher. To the extent that several fragile countries are characterized by high levels of inequality, this would mean that a higher growth rate is needed to attain the same rate of poverty reduction in less unequal countries. From a policy perspective, it means that addressing inequality is important for achieving maximum poverty reduction at given growth rates. To examine the influence of inequality on the growth–poverty relationship, we divided our sample of fragile countries into two groups: more unequal (Gini coefficients of 0.45 and above) and less unequal (Gini coefficients less than 0.45) countries. The correlation coefficients between GDP per capita and the headcount

ratio for these two groups of countries is -0.49 and -0.71 respectively, and both are statistically significant at the 1% level. Concretely and as expected, this means that the impact of growth on poverty reduction is higher in less unequal fragile states, confirming the third stylized fact.

To further examine how variations in inequality correlate with differences in poverty after controlling for per capita income, we followed the approach taken by Besley and Burgess (2003) and estimated the following model for the period 1990–2019:

$$\ln HCR_{it} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \ln PCY_{it} + \beta_2 \ln INEQ_{it} + \mu_i + \varepsilon_{it}$$

where HCR refers to the headcount ratio for country i at time t , PCY is per capita income, $INEQ$ is the measure of inequality (the Gini coefficient), μ_i is the country fixed effect and ε_{it} is the error term. All the variables are in natural logs (ln) so that the estimated coefficients can be interpreted as elasticities. For example, β_1 is the elasticity (or responsiveness) of poverty with respect to income per capita. Our estimates, with and without inequality (see Appendix Table 10A.2) for both the main sample (columns (1) and (2)) of fragile states, and with the 6 additional countries (columns (3) and (4)) indicate that there is a significant negative correlation between per capita income and the headcount ratio. However, inequality is significantly positively correlated with the headcount ratio and it dampens (though only slightly) the effect of per capita income on poverty for the main group of fragile states.¹⁷ These results are consistent with those of Besley and Burgess (2003) even if their study does not focus on fragile states specifically. Furthermore, our estimate of the responsiveness of poverty to per capita income is larger than those that they obtained for various regions. In addition to the fact that we are considering fragile states in our analysis, this could also be because we are using more recent data that includes the growth turnaround experienced by many African countries since the late 1990s.

RECENT GLOBAL SHOCKS AND THEIR IMPACT ON THE ECONOMIES OF FRAGILE STATES

The severe economic impact from the Covid-19 pandemic has been heavily felt around the world. For example, global trade was estimated to have fallen 5.3% in 2020 and economic growth fell sharply in most countries in the second quarter of 2020, with some recovery observed since the third quarter of 2020 (Congressional Research Service, 2021). However, the countries that observed higher rebounds in their economies were the ones that implemented more aggressive fiscal and monetary policies as a response to the pandemic. This was generally not the case in fragile states, due to, among other things, their limited budgets and existing political, economic, and social challenges. Therefore, the economies of fragile states were highly impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic and this impact has persisted.

The pandemic also caused disruptions in global energy markets, which in turn impacted production, shipping, and transportation around the world. In addition to individual country responses to the pandemic, international organizations provided assistance to countries in need of support. For example, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), whose fundamental mission is to promote international monetary stability and does so by providing emergency loans to countries facing economic crises, received over 100 requests from its 189 member countries

due to the Covid-19 pandemic (IMF, 2022; Congressional Research Service, 2021). Forty-four countries from the list of fragile states included in this chapter received financial assistance and/or debt relief from the IMF in the past two years.¹⁸ The World Bank also provided financial assistance in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. By June of 2020 the World Bank had approved, or was in the process of approving, 150 Covid-19 projects in 99 countries totalling \$15 billion. As of April 2023, the World Bank had approved 776 Covid-19 projects in 130 countries totalling \$123.92 billion (World Bank, 2023).

The negative economic impact from the pandemic has been exacerbated by Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February of 2022. Global growth forecasts have been downgraded to be around 2–3% in 2023 due to high commodity prices and continued monetary tightening around the world, in addition to intensifying geopolitical tensions, growing stagflation, higher financial instability, continuing supply-chain strains, and worsening food insecurity (World Bank, 2022c; OECD, 2022b). The Russian invasion of Ukraine has also caused the world to face higher commodity prices, increased food insecurity, higher inflation, and is contributing to tighter global financial conditions. Trade in food and energy are feeling the most immediate impact of the war (World Bank, 2022d).

Russia and Ukraine rank among the top seven global producers of wheat, maize (corn), barley, sunflower seeds, and sunflower oil. In fact, Ukraine and Russia together represent approximately one quarter of global wheat exports (World Bank, 2022d). Since the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the price of wheat has increased by more than 40%, and futures prices have risen more than 60% (World Bank, 2022d). Russia is also a major supplier of fossil fuels such as natural gas and crude oil, in addition to fertilizer and agricultural commodities. Further, Russia is an important supplier of primary and intermediate goods and services used in the early stages of production in other countries for goods such as transport equipment, electronics, machinery, fertilizers, chemicals, and other commodities (World Bank, 2022d).

Given the level and importance of exports from Russia and Ukraine, the war in Ukraine and resulting international sanctions and bans on Russian goods (approximately 67 as of the writing of this chapter) are causing a substantial surge in prices with negative consequences to international trade and global welfare. Also, Ukraine's Black Sea ports have been blocked or occupied and Russia's access to European ports has been cut. All these elements together are causing the world supply of energy and primary goods to decrease, which impacts food security and adds pressure to global supply chains (World Bank, 2022d; Segal, 2022). Higher food costs are particularly impacting net importers, which are largely low- and middle-income countries in sub-Saharan Africa, such as Zimbabwe and Botswana, and in the Middle East, such as Algeria and Tunisia, which is deepening world poverty (World Bank, 2022d). Further, some countries in the Middle East and North Africa have been heavily impacted due to their strong trade relationships with Ukraine and Russia. For example, more than two-thirds of Egypt, Libya, and Lebanon's wheat imports came from Ukraine and Russia prior to the war (Our World in Data, 2022).

On the other hand, some emerging markets and developing economies (EMDEs) are experiencing industry-led economic boosts. For example, commodity exporters are benefiting from higher commodity prices and increased production and shipments (partly due to replacing some of the decrease in exports from Russia and Ukraine). However, importers are hurt because they consume commodities with higher prices and use them as inputs to produce other goods and services. Overall, the impact from the war in Ukraine appears to be negative, and

the economic growth in EMDEs has been downgraded to 3.4% due to the negative spillovers from the war (World Bank, 2022d).

A strong policy response, including targeted international assistance, is required to mitigate the impacts outlined above, particularly in parts of the world that are already afflicted by high poverty rates, low economic growth, food insecurity, and inequality. Higher inflation, tighter financial conditions, and elevated debt levels will limit the public spending available to respond to the negative economic impacts of the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the Covid-19 pandemic, therefore, spending should be prioritized toward targeted relief for the most vulnerable populations. Long-term policies will be needed to reverse the economic damage caused by the pandemic and the war in Ukraine (World Bank, 2022d).

CONCLUSION

Estimates by Lakner et al. (2020) suggest that an additional 60 million people were living in absolute poverty in 2020 as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, and that the number would be closer to 100 million people with a modest increase in inequality in developing countries. The authors also suggest that both the first SDG of eradicating poverty and the World Bank's goal of less than 3% extreme poverty by 2030 will be very difficult to attain by 2030. As we document in this chapter, fragile states have not been spared by the pandemic and the war in Ukraine. Absolute poverty increased in fragile states in 2020 and it is concentrated in a few countries such as Nigeria (15%), the Democratic Republic of Congo (11.90%), Tanzania (5.38%), Ethiopia (4.25%), and Madagascar (4.11%). Our chapter shows that poverty will continue to be concentrated in fragile states. Forecasts reviewed in our study show that by 2030 large portions of the global population living in extreme poverty will be concentrated in Nigeria, the Democratic Republic of Congo, at 18.1% and 11.7% respectively, as well as Tanzania (4.4%), Madagascar (4.3%), Venezuela (3.9%), Angola (3.8%), Yemen (3.7%), and Afghanistan (3.3%). These numbers will possibly increase due to recent destabilizing events in Afghanistan and Yemen; nor will they be helped by the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the slow march towards a post-Covid world. Based on calculations from 48 countries from our overall list of fragile states, by 2030 the average global poverty rate in FCAS will be 29.8%, with only 8 countries potentially achieving a poverty rate of less than 3%. Furthermore, the first SDG goal of eradicating poverty, or the World Bank goal of a global poverty rate less than 3%, will likely not be achieved.

Our analysis of growth, poverty, and inequality in fragile states uncovered a few interesting findings. For the group of fragile countries considered in this chapter, on average, faster growth appears to reduce absolute poverty, but the impact varies significantly at the individual country level. For instance, we found that only 8 fragile countries would achieve a poverty rate of less than 3% by 2030 while others such as Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and South Sudan would have poverty rates of more than 50%. While there is a lack of correlation between growth rates and income inequality, several fragile countries are characterized by high levels of inequality, which is a problem given the latter's impact on the responsiveness of poverty to changes in growth. This means that policymakers should focus on both inequality and growth while taking into account the specific nature of the country (or even subnational) context. In particular, it will be important to investigate more thoroughly how some countries (for example Bangladesh and Ethiopia) are able to grow rapidly without a significant deteri-

oration in their income distributions and thus achieve impressive rates of poverty reduction. Finally, while there has been much progress on better data collection for both growth and poverty in developing (and fragile) countries over time, the same cannot be said about data on income inequality; this is an area where further investments are needed.

NOTES

1. The poverty headcount counts the number of people below the poverty line; the poverty gap calculates how far people fall below the poverty line and is thus a measure of the depth of poverty.
2. See World Bank (2022a) PovcalNet at <http://iresearch.worldbank.org/PovcalNet/home.aspx> (accessed 6 October 2021).
3. The World Bank terminology has changed from Low Income Countries Under Stress or LICUS (2004–2008), to Fragile States (2009–2010), to Fragile Situations (2011–2020) and now Fragile and Conflict-Affected Situations or FCAS (2020–). See <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/fragilityconflictviolence/brief/harmonized-list-of-fragile-situations> (accessed 6 October 2021).
4. This should become clearer when one looks at the list of fragile states in the next section. Consider, for example, India, which is a country characterized by ongoing conflict in the Kashmir region and yet is not typically classified as a fragile country. On the other hand, countries such as Malawi and Togo are regularly classified among fragile states and yet are not affected by conflicts.
5. An example of the conflict-oriented approach is the Fragile States Index from the Fund for Peace. It was initially known as the Failed States Index and changed its name in 2014 after pushback from critiques who argued that the word “failed” created a false dichotomy between states that were beyond repair and those that could be saved.
6. For a more extensive discussion of various conceptualizations of fragility, see Chapters 3 and 4 in this volume.
7. Among its other targets, the first SDG also seeks to eradicate poverty in all its dimensions by at least 50%. However, our focus in this chapter is on the eradication of extreme poverty, currently measured as people living on less than \$2.15 a day (Target 1.1). For the World Bank, the goal is to have no more than 3% of the world’s population living on less than \$2.15 a day.
8. See <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/fragilityconflictviolence/brief/harmonized-list-of-fragile-situations> (accessed 9 October 2021).
9. See www.carleton.ca/cifp.
10. Venezuela is temporarily unclassified because its revised national accounts statistics are not yet available. It had been classified as an upper-middle income country for most years since 1990.
11. See <https://worlddata.io/>.
12. As of this writing, Sudan is experiencing a conflict that may affect its ability to eradicate absolute poverty.
13. Version 9.2, December 2021, available at: <https://fsolt.org/swiid/>.
14. The headcount index or headcount ratio is the percentage of the population that lives below the poverty line.
15. See also note 1. This refers to the mean shortfall in income or consumption from the \$2.15 a day poverty line as a percentage of the poverty line. It is a reflection of the depth and incidence of poverty.
16. We did not use 2020 data because of exceptionally negative growth rates due to the pandemic. However, the overall results did not change when we considered data for 2020.
17. While our focus in this chapter is on the implication of inequality for the growth–poverty relationship, inequality matters for several other reasons such as fairness or justice, inter-generational mobility, its impact on social outcomes, and its political consequences (see for example, Birdsall, 2001 and Milanovic, 2007).
18. Source: IMF Covid-19 Lending Tracker. Note: The countries from our list that did not receive financial assistance and/or debt relief include Libya, Eritrea, Iraq, North Korea, Palestine, Syria, Venezuela, Zimbabwe, Iran, and Zambia.

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APPENDIX

Table 10A.1 List of fragile countries

Main (48)			
Country	Classification	Country	Classification
Afghanistan	Low income	Libya	Upper-middle income
Angola	Lower-middle income	Madagascar	Low income
Bangladesh	Lower-middle income	Malawi	Low income
Burkina Faso	Low income	Mali	Low income
Burundi	Low income	Mauritania	Lower-middle income
Cameroon	Lower-middle income	Mozambique	Low income
Central African Rep.	Low income	Myanmar	Lower-middle income
Chad	Low income	Niger	Low income
Comoros	Lower-middle income	Nigeria	Lower-middle income
Congo, Dem. Rep. of	Low income	Pakistan	Lower-middle income
Congo, Republic of	Lower-middle income	Palestine/W.B. & Gaza	Lower-middle income
Cote d'Ivoire	Lower-middle income	Papua New Guinea	Lower-middle income
Djibouti	Lower-middle income	Sierra Leone	Low income
Equatorial Guinea	Upper-middle income	Somalia	Low income
Eritrea	Low income	South Sudan	Low income
Eswatini	Lower-middle income	Sudan	Low income
Ethiopia	Low income	Syria	Low income
Gambia	Low income	Tajikistan	Lower-middle income
Guinea	Low income	Tanzania	Lower-middle income
Guinea Bissau	Low income	Togo	Low income
Haiti	Lower-middle income	Uganda	Low income
Iraq	Upper-middle income	Venezuela	Temp. unclassified
Kenya	Lower-middle income	Yemen	Low income
Liberia	Low income	Zimbabwe	Lower-middle income
Additional (6)			
Egypt	Lower-middle income	Laos	Lower-middle income
Iran	Lower-middle income	Rwanda	Low income
Korea, Dem. People's Rep.	Low income	Zambia	Low income

Source: Classification from latest World Bank classification of countries.

Table 10A.2 Growth and poverty in fragile states, 1990–2019

	Main		All	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Number of observations	798	1177	935	1327
<i>Explanatory variables</i>				
<i>Estimated coefficients</i>				
ln PCY	-1.367**	-1.421**	-1.322*	-1.319**
ln INEQ	3.203**	-	5.057**	-
Number of observations	798	1177	935	1327

Note: (**) indicate significance at the 5(1) percent level; fixed effects estimation with panel corrected standard errors.

11. Just “add women and stir”? Bringing gender into fragility debates

Diana Koester

INTRODUCTION

While early discussions of fragility often remained silent on gender (Baranyi and Powell, 2005), interest in links between gender and fragility has grown over time. References to “women” and “gender” in policy reports and guidance on fragility have multiplied in recent years¹ and influential organizations have released dedicated policy research (e.g., Goemans et al., 2021; Koester et al., 2016; OECD, 2013a, 2017). This chapter suggests that increased attention to gender can make a significant contribution to our understanding of fragility. It argues that beyond adding individual issues (or “variables”) to the analysis, focusing on gender affects our overall perspective on fragility. In particular, considering gender draws attention to at least seven wider observations: the public–private divide inherent in common perspectives on fragility and its effects on our definition of the problem; the role of social norms and interconnections between all levels of society in shaping fragility; the multiple dimensions of fragility and gender inequality; the nature of fragility risks as both threats and opportunities; the “politics” of fragility debates and lived experiences; and, finally, methodological implications of these insights. Taken together, these considerations ultimately point to limitations of the particular state-centred paradigm commonly at the heart of fragility discussions. By contributing to a more comprehensive perspective on fragility, they may help identify a greater diversity of entry points for practical efforts to address fragility and gender inequality.

Following a brief review of relevant gender-related terms and policies, the chapter discusses each of these reflections in turn, before concluding with thoughts on a number of practical implications. It illustrates these observations by drawing on qualitative and quantitative evidence primarily from countries considered “extremely fragile” in the OECD’s 2020 fragility framework² (Afghanistan, Burundi, Central African Republic, Chad, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Congo, Haiti, Iraq, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria and Yemen) as there is wide consensus on the “fragile” nature of these settings; and uses OECD (2020) classifications when referring to these “extremely” fragile, as well as “other” fragile and “other developing” settings as a group. The chapter also points to how considerations highlighted throughout are reflected in prominent concepts, measurements and “rankings” of fragility developed by organizations such as the Brookings Institution, Carleton University, the Fund for Peace, the g7+, the OECD and the World Bank.

GENDER RELATIONS AND INEQUALITIES: KEY TERMS AND POLICIES

While work on “gender” in conflict and fragility has often focused narrowly on women and girls (Myrntinen et al., 2014; OECD, 2017; Sikoska and Solomon, 2004), gender refers, more broadly, to the socially-constructed roles and expectations associated with being male and female. These are learned and change over time and across different contexts. They shape people’s behaviour and circumstances in interaction with other characteristics and facets of identity, such as age, socio-economic status, cultural and religious beliefs, or sexual orientation, for instance. This “intersectionality” means that experiences, including of fragility, differ not only between men and women but also between different groups of people of all genders. The different roles and expectations societies assign to men and women often contribute to gender inequality, that is, women, men, boys and girls facing unequal conditions, treatment or opportunities for realizing their full potential, human rights and dignity and for contributing to – and benefiting from – economic, social, cultural and political development (UNICEF, 2017). In October 2000, the UN Security Council recognized the significance of gender inequalities and women’s distinct experiences in conflict contexts with Resolution 1325, calling for steps to address these challenges in efforts to maintain and promote peace and security. From 2009 onwards it reinforced and elaborated this “women, peace and security” agenda with a series of further resolutions.³ Reflecting this focus, numerous studies have highlighted particular effects of conflict on women and girls. However, research – and practice – have devoted less attention to wider connections between gender and fragility (Koester et al., 2016; OECD, 2017). The following sections suggest that considering these links can highlight distinct perspectives on fragility, including on how the problem is defined.

THE PUBLIC–PRIVATE DIVIDE AND PROBLEM DEFINITION

While definitions of fragility – and indices and rankings developed on this basis – are diverse and contested, many converge in primarily focusing on the state (see also Chapters 3 and 6 in this volume). In particular, fragility concepts have often started from (a reading of) the Weberian ideal-typical state (Lottholz and Lemay-Hébert, 2016; Nay, 2014; Saeed, 2020). From this perspective, the state is primarily defined by its ability to successfully claim the monopoly on the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory (Weber, 1948). It can be clearly distinguished from society and understood through its apparatus, that is, its government and institutions. Early debates of fragility in particular predominantly centred on this notion of the state, generally defining “fragile states” as states unwilling or unable to perform their “basic functions”. The Brookings Institution thus based its “Index of State Weakness in the Developing World” on a concept of “fragile” or “weak” states as countries that lack the essential capacity and/or will to fulfil “critical government responsibilities” or “core functions of statehood” (Rice and Stewart, 2008, pp. 3, 5). The OECD in turn suggested that “States are fragile when governments and state structures lack capacity – or in some cases, political will – to deliver public safety and security, good governance and poverty reduction to their citizens” (OECD, 2007). Over time, the organization added focus on the reciprocal relationships between state and society, noting that “A fragile region or state has weak capacity to carry out basic governance functions, and lacks the ability to develop mutually constructive relations

with society” (OECD, 2013b, p. 11). The Fund for Peace continues to conceptualize fragility as a set of attributes of the state, prime among them a “loss of physical control of its territory or monopoly on the legitimate use of force” (Fund for Peace, 2021a). Given that this “monopoly” tends to be considered the *defining* function of the state, the referent category of this notion of security is arguably the state itself, rather than primarily (the different groups of) individuals living in its territory.

From such state-centred perspectives, women’s specific experiences do not tend to lie at the heart of the analysis. This is because women often have distinct relationships with the state. While these vary across contexts, over time and depending on other facets of identity, a common trend is for women’s specific concerns to be traditionally constructed as lying beyond the legitimate “public” concerns of the state. They have tended to be understood as belonging to a “private” sphere where rules are determined not by the state but by heads of household, ethnic or religious and other cultural or societal groups. From this perspective, a state can effectively perform its “basic” functions without addressing some of women’s basic needs. This public–private division is inherent in theories and models of the state which provide a common basis for discussions of state “fragility”. It is therefore often reflected in what we tend to consider “basic state functions” – and hence priorities for action – in this context. In the area of security, for example, the focus on the “monopoly on the legitimate use of force” prioritizes “public” forms of insecurity that can ultimately pose a threat to the security of the state itself, including armed conflict. The security dimension of the Brookings Index accordingly included indicators of threats such as armed conflict, political violence and incidence of coups (Rice and Stewart, 2008). The OECD’s initial (2007) fragility concept in turn focused on “public safety and security”. However, this focus on “public” security bypasses the most common threats against women’s physical integrity: intimate partner violence (Koester, 2019). Globally, one in three women who have been in a relationship have experienced physical or sexual violence from a partner (WHO, 2013; Devries et al., 2013). Even in fragile settings affected by high levels of public violence, the most dangerous place for women is often the home. In a survey in the DRC, for example, more than one in two women (52 per cent) reported having experienced physical violence since age 15. Out of these women, 82 per cent said that this violence had been committed by current or former partners, with less than 1 per cent (0.8 per cent) reporting police or military as perpetrators (Ministère du Plan et al., 2014). In other “extremely fragile” contexts for which this data is available, on average, 85 per cent of (ever) partnered women who had experienced physical violence said that this violence was perpetrated by an intimate partner, compared to 0.4 per cent reportedly committed by police or armed forces.⁴ An exclusive focus on “public” security makes these challenges invisible.

Given that these and other concerns disproportionately affecting women’s lives have often been constructed as outside of the concerns of the state, non-state institutions tend to play a particularly central role in addressing them. Due to the “private” nature of partner violence, affected women predominantly do not seek support from the state, for example. In DRC, for instance, while the majority of women never sought help to stop physical and sexual violence they experienced – and often never told anyone about it – those who did look for support primarily turned to the family (93 per cent), friends and neighbours (45 per cent) and/or religious officials (10 per cent), with only 1 per cent reporting to police (Ministère du Plan et al., 2014). Areas of the law which have a major impact on women’s ability to leave violent relationships and on other areas of their lives – such as family and inheritance laws – are also most likely to be subject to legal plurality, that is, to be governed by non-state customary institutions (see

e.g., UN Women, 2011, 2015). A primary focus on the state’s apparatus thus bypasses a range of (informal) institutions shaping responses to women’s basic needs.

To the extent that state-centred perspectives highlight distinct experiences of women, they often lead to an analysis of these concerns based – and depending – on the extent to which they may partially result from or contribute to the “core problem”, rather than as *constituting* fragility. These perspectives help explain, for example, why in discussions of fragility analysts have at times referred to gender-based violence as having “a statistical relationship with [rather than constituting] security” (OECD, 2016, pp. 98, 25) or being “early warnings of [rather than constituting] social and political insecurity” (United Nations and World Bank, 2018, p. xxiii). Analysis of such *correlations* between gender inequality and fragility has tended to prioritize developments in the public sphere, such as “public” sexual and gender-based violence, committed by parties to armed conflict as part of wider “political” violence, for example.

Efforts to reduce the focus on the state and define fragility from the perspective of affected people can dissolve the public–private divide and diminish its role in defining priorities. They can therefore transform the place of women’s distinct experiences in the debate. The OECD for instance revised its definition of fragility in 2015/2016 and considerably relaxed the focus on the state. Accordingly, the title of its fragility publication series changed from *Fragile States* to *States of Fragility*. The organization currently understands fragility as “the combination of exposure to risk and insufficient coping capacity of the state, systems and/or communities to manage, absorb or mitigate those risks” (OECD, 2016, p. 16). This conceptual shift helps explain why references to gender multiplied in *States of Fragility* compared to earlier *Fragile States* reports (OECD, 2016, 2018, 2020).⁵ From the more “people-centred” perspective in *States of Fragility*, it becomes difficult to argue that gender inequality is not a *constituent feature* of fragility. For example, as gender norms lie at the root of the most common forms of violence against women (sexual and gender-based violence, and especially intimate partner violence), threats to the physical integrity of half of the population cannot be understood without factoring these into the analysis. These norms also shape the extent to which states or communities manage or mitigate these and other risks faced by women. In many contexts, the primary reason for limited responses to women’s specific concerns, including forms of violence that disproportionately affect them, is not a general lack of capacity but gender inequality: the fact that many concerns that especially touch women’s lives are not considered public priorities in the first place. Statistical research has, accordingly, confirmed that levels of resources available to the state (GDP per capita) do not reliably predict the level of state responses to domestic and sexual violence. Instead, these are most strongly associated with the strength of women’s autonomous civil society mobilization, which can play a central role in redefining violence against women from a “private” concern into an area where women have rights that the state must uphold (Htun and Weldon, 2012, 2018). By pointing to these challenges, a more people-centred perspective highlights the public–private divide itself – and concepts that normalize and perpetuate this division – as a source of fragility or “dysfunctionality” from the perspective of many women.

The fragility concept and assessment methodology developed by the g7+ can also establish gender inequalities at all levels of society as more central, defining features of fragility by providing room for a more people-centred approach. Criticizing attempts to define and measure state fragility from the “outside” with universal standards based on a Western model of governance, the g7+ proposed a methodology to understand fragility “from the perspectives of the country’s citizens themselves” (International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding

(IDPS), 2015, p. 1; g7+, 2013). Piloted in DRC, Liberia, Sierra Leone, South-Sudan and Timor-Leste, g7+ fragility assessments were accordingly designed to enable people in affected countries to establish context-specific definitions and measurements of fragility through inclusive consultations. While the extent to which women's distinct experiences are reflected in this process will depend on the participation of different societal groups (Barnes Robinson and Suralaga, 2012), a number of fragility assessments did highlight gender inequalities at different levels as defining, constituent features of fragility. In South Sudan, for example, the assessment noted that "domestic violence continues to impinge on security within the home", identifying this as part and parcel of the country's security "fragility" (Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, 2012, p. 5). Assessment of "fragility" in justice conditions in turn included consideration of (a lack of) responsiveness of non-state institutions to women's rights, highlighting that "Customary law is sustaining inequalities, in particular with regard to gender, due to the prevailing practice of bride price, women's limited ability to inherit and other infringements on women's rights" (Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, 2012, p. 7). In separate women-only consultations, participants established an even wider set of fragility concerns, such as "the entrenched culture of militarism, which makes it difficult for women to have a level playing [field] with men in society" (Barnes Robinson and Suralaga, 2012, p. 24).

FRAGILITY AND SOCIAL NORMS

As this view shared by South Sudanese women begins to highlight, a focus on women's distinct experiences draws increased attention to the role of social norms in shaping fragility, with societal norms often at the heart of specific challenges faced by women. Norms condoning male violence against women are thus a root cause of the most common threats against women's physical integrity – domestic and sexual violence (e.g., Abramsky et al., 2011; Murphy et al., 2019; WHO, 2021). Accordingly, research finds that discriminatory norms around male control and attitudes condoning domestic violence are highly predictive of the prevalence of such violence (see e.g., Heise and Kotsadam, 2015; Sardinha and Catalán, 2018). They also reduce the likelihood that survivors will seek and receive help. From this perspective, a key risk for women in "extremely" fragile contexts is that, on average, almost two thirds (65 per cent) of women in these settings reportedly consider a husband to be justified in hitting or beating his wife for at least one of several specific reasons, including if his wife burns the food, argues with him, goes out without telling him, neglects the children or refuses sexual relations (see also Goemans et al., 2021). As many as 80 per cent of women accept such violence in individual "extremely fragile" settings such as Afghanistan (80.2 per cent), Central African Republic (79.6 per cent), South Sudan (78.5 per cent) and Somalia (75.7 per cent). In other fragile contexts, on average, less than half (44 per cent) of women aged 15–49 reported partner violence to be justified for at least one of these reasons, compared to less than one in four women (24 per cent) in other developing contexts.⁶

Norms condoning or idealizing male dominance and aggression can also encourage wider societal violence. In South Sudan and Somalia, for example, research has found that such norms for male behaviour have incentivized men to participate in violence – and women to encourage them to do so (Kircher, 2013; Wright, 2014). Armed groups – and militaries – have actively used such "militarized" notions of manhood to accelerate recruitment and to generate

support for conflict (e.g., Wright, 2014). While analysis of fragility tends to focus on these and other highly male-dominated groups and arenas (such as security forces or political elites, for example), the expectations for male behaviour shaping these have often remained unquestioned. The World Bank’s highly influential *World Development Report 2011: Conflict, Security and Development*, for instance, noted that search for “status” can motivate people to participate in armed violence. In this context, it cited FARC *guerrilleros* who observe that access to weapons provides a key incentive for men to join armed groups, explaining that “women love arms: the police, the army, the guerrilla” (World Bank, 2011, p. 79). The context-specific ideals for male behaviour underlying this connection between “status” and recruitment are not explicitly addressed, however. In recent years, research has begun to bring these norms into focus. This is reflected in subsequent flagship publications on fragility, with the UN/World Bank’s later *Pathways for Peace* report (2018) as well as OECD States of Fragility Reports (2016, 2018, 2020), for instance, referring directly to “masculinities” (see also OECD, 2019).

While societal expectations for male violence have served as a primary focus of research, a wider set of ideals for male behaviour impact fragility challenges. In a range of contexts marked by high levels of unemployment, norms expecting men to perform as breadwinners, for instance, have been found to increase pressure on men to generate income – or achieve societal respect – through alternative means, including organized crime (Mannell et al., 2021), irregular migration (IIDA, 2021) as well as joining armed groups (Wright, 2014). These norms may also affect overall experiences and effects of economic shocks and unemployment. In survey research in Goma, DRC, for example, men frequently reported shame and depression associated with being unable to sustain their families. Three out of four (75 per cent) felt ashamed to face their families because they were unable to provide basic needs. Reflecting norms stigmatizing male vulnerability and help-seeking, men interviewed tended to cope with extreme stress and trauma through strategies that sought to avoid and reduce feelings of vulnerability, such as alcohol and substance abuse, while women were more likely to seek help or turn to religion (Sonke Gender Justice Network and Promundo, 2013). In addition to the role as breadwinner, male status in the community is also closely tied to marriage in fragile contexts such as South Sudan and Somalia. Unable to pay the necessary bride price, some men in South Sudan have met these expectations by raiding cattle, fuelling cycles of violence between communities (Wright, 2014). In Somalia young men in turn reported an inability to pay for costly wedding ceremonies and processes as a significant motivation for irregular migration (IIDA, 2021).

Gender norms not only shape the behaviours of individuals, communities and societies but also the way state institutions operate. Militaries (and other armed groups), for example, draw on notions of masculinity not only during recruitment but also during training, often cultivating characteristics required for being a soldier (such as courage and control of emotions) by associating these with being a “real man” (Goldstein, 2001). This can contribute to institutional cultures that discriminate both against women and against groups of men not living up to these ideals. Such organizational cultures shape short- and long-term effects of these institutions, including by contributing to high rates of violence against women perpetrated by members of security forces in different settings (see for example Koester, 2020). As highlighted by women in South Sudan, where societies value military and conflict experience and/or associated “masculine” behaviour – as may be the case in conflict-affected settings in particular – such traits can influence who is selected for public office and whose voices are heard in decision-making,

with significant implications for the decisions being taken (see e.g., Bjarnegård and Murray, 2018; Oliver and Conroy, 2017; Parpart, 2015; Starck and Luyt, 2018). In the aftermath of the Comprehensive Peace Agreements in South Sudan, such “cultures of militarism” contributed to the marginalization of both women and “non-violent” civilian men in political leadership (Brown, 2017).

These and other social norms tend to impact both the nature of formal rules of state institutions and the ways in which these operate in practice. Gender norms often serve as mechanisms of resistance to formal institutional change. Even where official laws and policies on domestic violence are in place, for example, women are often unlikely to report and institutions to respond because they continue to perceive domestic violence as a “private”, “family” issue. Not least in view of the high levels of societal acceptance of domestic violence discussed above, this is likely to pose a particular challenge in fragile settings. In Afghanistan, for example, research conducted before the Taliban takeover undermined existing progress⁷ found that more than ten years after its passage, “full implementation of the EVAW [Elimination of Violence Against Women] law remains elusive, with all actors involved – including police, prosecutors, and judges – often deterring women from filing complaints and pressing them to seek mediation within their family instead” (Human Rights Watch, 2021, p. 2; Mannell et al., 2021). While the EVAW law barred the use of informal dispute resolution mechanisms in cases of violence against women, *shuras* and *jirgas* continued to routinely mediate such offences, often leading to further abuses of women’s rights. In addition to general limitations of the formal justice system, this was, again, due to persistent social and cultural norms constructing these crimes as “private” family matters (Hakimi, 2020). Without considering such (gender-related) social norms, “de facto” effects of state institutions on people’s lives cannot be explained. As fragile states are, by definition, marked by weaker formal institutions, informal rules may often play a particularly significant role in shaping outcomes in these environments (Helmke and Levitsky, 2004). To the extent that social norms (associating women with the “private sphere”) are embedded in theories and models of the state which we tend to apply to fragile contexts, they also affect the way we think about state institutions in the first place.

Yet state-centred fragility concepts do not tend to direct focus to social norms, to the “social” nature of state institutions and of our thinking on the state. The Weberian understanding at the heart of these discussions tends to consider the state as distinct from society, rather than as part and parcel of the same overarching social structure (Lottholz and Lemay-Hébert, 2016; Nay, 2014). The relative positivism of the policy-oriented literature and widespread focus on quantitative methods in fragility “assessments” may also lend itself less to analysis of social norms, including to critical investigation of those informing starting assumptions of the debate. Accordingly, indices developed to measure fragility do not tend to place social norms at the centre of analysis. Considering links between gender and fragility has often added focus on these issues, including in the context of the g7+ fragility assessments. Similarly, the OECD integrated increased consideration of social norms into its fragility framework in an effort to capture risks to women’s physical integrity. To reflect associated issues, it included a sub-index of the OECD’s Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI), which measures not only prevalence of and legal protections from different forms of violence against women, but also relevant societal *attitudes*.

CONNECTIONS BETWEEN ALL LEVELS OF SOCIETY

While more state-centred fragility concepts tend to focus on the public sphere, attention to (gendered) social norms and “private” spheres in turn highlights connections between all levels of society in shaping fragility. As indicated above, “public” and “private” challenges can be manifestations of connected underlying social norms, with societal expectations for male dominance and aggression propelling violence against women in the household and recruitment into “public” armed groups. Public armed violence and other forms of “public” crises, such as economic shocks or natural disasters, in turn tend to further increase domestic violence (True, 2012). In Liberia, for example, Kelly et al. (2018) find that women living in districts with reported deaths from violent conflict were 50 per cent more likely to experience intimate partner violence than women in districts without such fatalities. Women living in a district that experienced four to five cumulative years of conflict were almost 90 per cent more likely to experience intimate partner violence than a woman living in a district with no conflict. These trends have been linked to conflict-related trauma and interactions with gender norms discussed above: a further normalization of (male) violence during years of armed conflict, frustration over an inability to perform “masculine” roles as breadwinner and protector of the family and associated substance abuse. Adding weight to these interconnections, recent statistical research finds that attitudes condoning intimate partner violence and conservative gender roles are closely associated with general acceptance of violence as a means of conflict resolution and with political conflict (Herrero et al., 2017; Sardinha and Catalán, 2018). An increased availability of small arms during and after conflict means that domestic violence is not only more common but also more likely to be lethal in these settings (Cockburn, 2012). Such insecurity in the home can fuel cycles of violence across generations, with children exposed to violence in the household significantly more likely to experience or perpetrate such violence themselves in the future (Roberts et al., 2010). This “private” violence in turn poses enormous burdens at all levels of society, not least through lost economic activity. Due to its extremely high prevalence Hoeffler and Fearon (2014) estimated physical intimate partner violence alone to have a cost corresponding to 5.2 per cent of global GDP – more than political violence (0.19 per cent of global GDP) and interpersonal violence (homicides, 1.44 per cent) combined.

While data is limited, available surveys suggest that many fragile contexts are not only marked by particularly permissive attitudes towards such violence but also by especially high levels of exclusion of women from decision-making in the “private” sphere (see also Koester, 2021). Out of the ten developing countries globally where women are least likely to participate in decisions about their own healthcare, major household purchases and visiting family, nine are fragile.⁸ In two thirds of the “extremely fragile” countries for which this data is available, only one in three women or less partake in these three decisions (Chad 17.4 per cent, Congo 28.4 per cent, Afghanistan 32.6 per cent and DRC 33.5 per cent). Such levels of disempowerment at the household level⁹ are documented in a quarter of “other fragile” and only 5 per cent of other developing contexts where these surveys were conducted. Without taking this additional, distinct layer of exclusion in the household into consideration, it is difficult to account for women’s experiences of fragility and the ways in which – and extent to which – commonly used indicators of “public” fragility affect their lives. For example, availability of health services may not translate into access for women if heads of household can and do prevent them from seeking support. Similarly, labour force participation – and even high-quality jobs – may

not spell empowerment for women if they do not control the income that they earn. Increased participation in the labour force itself does not necessarily enhance women's bargaining power in the household (Calderón et al., 2011) and may even have opposite effects in the short-term by leading to backlash.

Such (dis)empowerment in the private sphere not only shapes people's experiences of fragility but also contributes to "public" fragility challenges, including through demographic pressures. Both permissive attitudes towards violence against women and women's exclusion from household decisions are often associated with higher fertility preferences (Haque et al., 2021; see also Atake and Gnakou Ali, 2019). Available surveys also suggest that women in many fragile contexts are especially disempowered in decisions about reproductive health: out of the ten developing countries where women are documented to be least likely to make their own informed decisions regarding sexual relations, contraceptive use and reproductive health-care, nine are fragile.¹⁰ The ten countries with the highest rates of marriage under the ages of 15 and 18 are also all fragile.¹¹ Child marriages are a violation of human rights and associated with a wide range of negative outcomes for women and girls as well as their children. They also often lead to early pregnancies, which tend to mean that women will have more children over the course of their lives (Yaya et al., 2019). In combination with other factors and connected aspects of women's disempowerment – such as low and unequal levels of education (Koester, 2021) – these inequalities in the private sphere contribute to high fertility rates seen in many fragile contexts: on average, each woman in "extremely fragile" contexts gives birth to 4.5 children, compared to 3.9 in other fragile and 2.5 in "non-fragile" developing contexts.¹² As highlighted in the Fragile States Index, and discussed by Rotberg in Chapter 16 in this volume, these trends can lead to demographic pressures with significant social, economic and political effects. In Somalia, for example, an extremely young population adds to the challenge of reducing youth unemployment, contributing to a fertile recruitment ground for al-Shabaab and irregular migration (Avis and Herbert, 2016). In Burundi, continued population growth, extreme population density and a youthful age structure aggravate environmental degradation, economic fragility and security challenges, creating conditions for conflicts over access to land to escalate (World Bank, 2018).

Women's roles in reproduction and unpaid care also shape fragility and resilience in the economic sphere more broadly. The McKinsey Global Institute (2015) estimated that women's equal participation in the economy could add up to USD 28 trillion, or 26 per cent, to global GDP by 2025. Research in a range of conflict-affected contexts confirmed that women's increased labour market participation contributed significantly to economic recovery (Justino et al., 2012a, 2012b). These effects depend not only on the quantity but also on the quality of women's employment. Women's disproportionate responsibilities for household labour pose a constraint on both – and therefore on economic growth and recovery (FAO et al., 2010; Jayachandran, 2021; McKinsey, 2015). At the same time, women's roles in reproduction mean that their empowerment in household decisions, health and educational status are closely associated with health and educational outcomes of children (Carneiro and Heckman, 2003; Cunha and Heckman, 2007; Rangel, 2006; Thomas, 1990, 1997; WHO, 2019). Therefore, the disproportionately low and unequal position of women in these areas in many fragile contexts, and extremely fragile contexts in particular (Koester, 2021), poses significant barriers for human capital and economic development both in themselves and through their effects on all future generations. Measures of gender inequalities in education integrated into several fragility measurements and indices (including those developed by Carleton University, the Fund for

Peace and the World Bank) are then both significant in assessing women’s experiences of fragility and a distinct factor in accounting for challenges, across generations, for all of society.

While women’s work in unpaid care impacts fragility challenges, “public” crises in turn shape these “private” activities, generally increasing women’s unpaid care burdens further. As demonstrated globally during the Covid-19 pandemic, women and their unpaid care responsibilities often step in when the state is unable to provide services such as education. When governments respond to economic downturns by limiting spending on care services, women tend to bear the heavier loads of unpaid care and household work (ILO, 2022). During and after conflict and disasters, women often contribute to societal resilience by caring for the injured and vulnerable. In Sudan, for example, women displaced by conflict reported that their care burdens had multiplied as they tended to the sick, wounded, disabled and orphaned children. They stepped in for healthcare providers unable to access conflict-affected areas, acting as midwives and substituting medicinal drugs with natural remedies (Ibnouf, 2016, 2020). In Syria, women similarly stood in where health and education institutions were closed or destroyed (Buecher and Aniyamuzaala, 2016). In these and other countries, daughters would often support their mothers in this work, widening gender gaps in school enrolment (INEE, 2021). Extending their “private” responsibilities women’s groups can play a central role in substituting lacking state capacity in a more organized fashion. In Uganda, for example, in-depth research documented how women’s groups helped provide services no longer available from the state following economic crisis, contributing to a proliferation of women’s groups (Tripp, 2000).

MULTI-DIMENSIONAL CHALLENGES

While many fragile settings are marked by these and other common trends, a focus on gender also further highlights the diversity of contexts classified as “fragile”. The state-centred fragility paradigm – and efforts to measure such fragility through a single index on this basis – have been criticized for applying a singular “fragility” label to distinct challenges and producing single rankings in a way that suggests these countries are directly comparable. After all, as critics have argued echoing Tolstoy, “unhappy countries are unhappy in different ways” (Leigh, 2012). Differently put, fragility may not be one issue, but many issues, which may or may not go together. In response, the g7+ fragility assessment sought to enable countries to develop their own context-specific definitions of “fragility” and to compare their current and past performance, rather than attempting comparisons across countries (IDPS, 2015; g7+, 2013).

The OECD in turn decided to adopt a “multi-dimensional” fragility framework that would highlight challenges in distinct dimensions, instead of aggregating these in a single “list” (2015, 2016). While Carleton University continues to produce an explicit overall ranking, it additionally presents disaggregated results, differentiating challenges to “authority”, “legitimacy” and “capacity”. It also presents regional and country-level analysis of sectoral challenges in the areas of “governance”, “economics”, “security and crime”, “human development”, “demography”, “environment” and “gender” (see for example Carment et al., 2020). While Carleton has integrated gender-related indicators across different sectoral areas from the start of the project, it additionally presents them separately in this “gender” category to provide further visibility to gender-related challenges (Carment et al., 2006). All of these

disaggregations help highlight empirically that the “fragility” category contains many diverse and diverging, if often interlinked, challenges.

A parallel – and connected – observation can be made about gender inequalities in fragile contexts, or, to the extent that these are understood to *constitute* fragility, about the “gender dimensions” of fragility. The way “gender inequality” in fragile contexts is discussed and analysed can at times create the impression that this is a single issue. Analyses often report averages across the group of fragile contexts and aggregate gender inequalities in diverse areas. The Gender Inequality Index (UNDP) used in several fragility frameworks, for example, combines a wide range of challenges such as women’s participation in the labour force, representation in parliaments and maternal mortality. The SIGI sub-index drawn upon in the OECD fragility framework in turn aggregates prevalence of, attitudes towards and responses to diverse threats against women’s physical integrity, including domestic violence, female genital mutilation and restrictions of their reproductive autonomy.

These aggregations and averaging across “fragile contexts” tend to lead to the conclusion that fragile contexts are doing “worse” on gender equality than other developing settings. This may not be wrong – but it is a simplification, in two ways. First, gender inequality challenges vary tremendously *between* different fragile contexts. This becomes apparent when examining (sub-indicators of) gender inequality indices integrated into the OECD fragility framework (2020), for instance. Regarding women’s representation in parliament, for example, the group of thirteen “extremely fragile” settings includes Burundi with one of the highest rates in the world (38.8 per cent) and Yemen, with the lowest (0.33 per cent).¹³ Similarly, within this small group of countries, maternal mortality rates range from 1,150 deaths per 100,000 live births in South Sudan to 30 in Syria.¹⁴ While the “extremely fragile” Burundi reports a higher labour force participation rate for women than men (with a female to male ratio of 103 per cent), the ratio drops to only 8 per cent in Yemen.¹⁵ In addition, and second, gender inequalities vary considerably from one area to the next *within* a single “fragile” context. While in Burundi, for example, women are strongly represented in parliament and in the labour force, they also face one of the highest maternal mortality rates in the world (548). While legal protections from violence against women are more advanced in Burundi than in the average developing country, legislation on women’s reproductive autonomy is considerably more discriminatory.¹⁶

This variation suggests that – much like fragility – gender inequality is perhaps best thought of as not one issue but many, potentially connected issues.¹⁷ While generally sharing a common root cause (gender norms), gender inequalities in different areas can additionally be driven by distinct factors and logics. Some gender inequality issues are more sensitive to income than others, for example. In order to address maternal mortality, for instance, a certain level of resources is needed. In order to introduce quotas for women in parliament, less so. Similarly, households often require a certain level of resources to be in a position to afford to keep women out of the labour force. Amidst high levels of poverty, this may be less of an option. Therefore, women’s labour force participation is often high in the poorest countries. Some gender equality issues are more intertwined with religious, ethnic and other traditional rules than others. For example, sexual and reproductive health and rights are closely tied to religious doctrine and the relationship of religious institutions with the state. Responses to certain forms of domestic violence are less so (Htun and Weldon, 2018). However, even within the broad category of responses to violence against women, there is variation. Domestic violence, and spousal rape in particular, tends to relate to rules of marriage and divorce – and therefore to be more strongly shaped by the nature of religious and other traditional norms and

institutions governing these (Koester, 2019). Given the diverse nature of fragile settings, these and other background characteristics differ significantly from one “fragile” context to the next – and may or may not be present simultaneously within a single “fragile” setting. Gender inequality challenges accordingly also vary considerably within and between these countries. In combination, the multi-dimensional nature of fragility and gender equality means that there is not one link between gender inequality and fragility – there are many different links.

RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES

By drawing attention to social norms, the political definition of “public” state priorities and the distinct relationships of different societal groups with the state, considering gender highlights that, in certain cases, risks characterizing fragile contexts can also offer – or represent – distinct opportunities for change. While, from more state-centred perspectives, the “fragile” nature of state institutions tends to emerge only as a risk, a focus on marginalized groups highlights that, under some circumstances, precisely the “unstable” nature of state institutions can also offer particular openings to redefine the public–private divide – what the state does and for whom – and to establish their needs as areas of public concern (Koester, 2019). The development of peace agreements, constitutions, electoral laws or (re)construction of state institutions as part of political transitions or post-conflict processes, for instance, can provide unique windows of opportunity to integrate women’s rights into the foundations of the state as part of existing reform processes – opportunities that may not arise in more stable environments. The introduction of parliamentary quotas in this context, for example, helps explain why a number of fragile contexts are marked by extremely high levels of women in parliament. In Burundi, for instance, a 30 per cent quota was agreed as part of the new constitution, which was adopted in 2005 following – and inspired by – the Arusha Peace Accord ending a decade of civil war and instability. Such openings can help explain why statistical research generally finds positive correlations between the number of female representatives in parliaments and the ending of “intense” civil wars. This association can be observed after the year 2000, reflecting the rise of global norms on women, peace and security and women’s inclusion in governance and related, increased measures to seize opportunities to enhance women’s representation (Hughes and Tripp, 2015).

Focusing on social norms highlights further change processes that can alter women’s status. During and after conflict and other crises, women are often forced to assume new roles in society. They may mobilize in unprecedented ways to call for peace (Cardona et al., 2012) or to provide services no longer available from the state. Others take up arms, at times in significant numbers (see for example Wood and Thomas, 2017). When men leave to fight, permanently disappear or return injured, women are also often forced to take on responsibilities previously performed by men, including as heads of households and main providers. Historically, this could be observed during the two World Wars, for example. Providing more contemporary evidence, micro-level research in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Colombia, Kosovo, Nepal, Tajikistan and Timor-Leste, for instance, confirmed that women participated more actively in labour markets during and immediately after conflict (Justino et al., 2012a, 2012b). In Syria, where women’s economic participation was relatively low before the crisis, conflict similarly forced women to increasingly serve as main providers for their families, often at enormous risk to their lives (Buecher and Aniyamuzaala, 2016). Work available to women in these contexts is

often low-paid and low-skilled in the form of self-employment in the informal sector or unpaid family labour (Calderón et al., 2011; Justino et al., 2012a, 2012b). Women tend to take on these additional responsibilities without a reduction in their existing obligations or, indeed, in parallel to performing increased care and humanitarian activities (see above and Buecher and Aniyamuzaala, 2016; Ibnouf, 2016; Justino et al., 2012a). Their new roles also often lead to power struggles and backlash, contributing to the rise in domestic violence reported in many crisis settings (see above). Therefore new responsibilities, in and of themselves, do not necessarily spell empowerment. However, they can offer opportunities to build on existing changes in gender roles to promote longer-term shifts in societal norms and advance gender equality in the recovery period.

THE “POLITICS” OF FRAGILITY

While a predominant focus on state institutions and capacity – and the development of indices, indicators and rating systems – can lead to a sense of fragility as a technical concern, these and other gender-related dynamics serve as a reminder of the highly political nature of associated challenges. They highlight the significance of power relations at all levels of society in shaping fragility: from decision-making power in the household to the high-level bargains involved in negotiating state priorities.

Ultimately, focusing on gender directs further attention to the political nature and implications of the fragility concept itself, which scholars have noted on different grounds (Grimm et al., 2014). State-centred definitions – and measurements – of fragility do not tend to discuss explicitly which (and whose) needs are more and less addressed through the performance of the “public” “basic” state functions which are the main focus of analysis. In such discussions, what the state does and for whom can appear self-evident, rather than highly political and historically contingent. This carries the risk of normalizing – and thereby replicating – the construction of women’s “private” needs as non-priorities. To the extent that what is considered “fragility” affects the focus of researchers, donors and affected governments, excluding key areas of women’s experiences from the definition of the problem can have considerable “real world” effects on their lives. In these ways, gender inequality can be inherent to the fragility concept.

As highlighted throughout, this often appears to be a by-product of the particular state-centrism of the debate, rather than primarily a consequence of any direct views on the significance of gender (inequalities) as such (Koester, 2019). This state-centrism in turn partly results from the wider political roots of the debate. These include, first, the origins of discussions of fragility, partly propelled by 9/11 and associated concerns about public security and potential externalities of fragile contexts. Such “dangerous exports” (Amburn, 2005) served as a starting point and one – more or less explicit – rationale for the development of a number of fragility “indices”. The Fund for Peace, for instance, introduced its measure by referring to the well-known observation of the 2002 US National Security Strategy that “America is now threatened less by conquering states than we are by failing ones” (Amburn, 2005). The Brookings Institution elaborated on this idea when it announced its index, noting that “such countries can fall prey to and spawn a host of transnational security threats, including terrorism, weapons proliferation, organized crime, infectious disease, environmental degradation, and civil conflicts that spill over borders” (Rice and Stewart, 2008, p. 3). A strong state is

considered key to addressing these priority concerns, contributing to a primary focus on its “core” apparatus. Academic and policy research often continues to be primarily directed at international scholars and policymakers interested in how the “international community” can contribute to addressing fragility, a second feature contributing to the focus on the state. Given this primary audience, the literature has a tendency to define the problem – and “success” – from the outside, rather than based on the experiences of (diverse groups of) local populations. This “outside-in” perspective perpetuates a focus on externalities that are priority concerns for international actors and the strong state considered vital to addressing these. It also contributes to focus on variables that international actors are more confident they can, do and “should” influence: formal institutions and elites, rather than norms and practices tied to cultural, ethnic or religious characteristics. Third, and not surprisingly given that a predominantly Western “international” community has driven the debate, scholars (and practitioners) of fragility have often drawn on theories developed on the basis of the historical European experience. This leads to statist and institutionalist perspectives. It also means that scholarship and practice is grounded in accounts that normalize women’s exclusion from the state. As a result, there is a risk that some scholarship and practice may replicate a European history of state creation marked by women’s marginalization, regarding this as a “natural” stage on the path towards successful “Stateness”. The dominance of quantitative methods further holds this focus on the state in place.

IMPLICATIONS FOR METHODS

Many of the observations in this chapter have implications for methodologies and underlying assumptions of analyses and assessments of fragility. In particular, they call attention to limitations of quantitative methods and the significance of complementing these with qualitative insights. The prevalence of quantitative methods further strengthens the focus on the (Weberian) state because it leads to an emphasis on variables that can be measured. These are most likely to cover the national level and tend to provide less information on informal institutions, social and cultural norms, and historical legacies. As a result, even where fragility is conceptualized more broadly in theory, indicator frameworks tend to centre on the state in practice. While the g7+ fragility assessments, for example, generated a range of (gender-related) insights beyond the state, some of these were dropped during efforts to translate results into quantitative indicators. Similarly, while the OECD currently conceptualizes fragility more broadly, its indicator framework continues, by necessity, to suggest a primary focus on the state. To date, quantitative indicators are also often unavailable in gender-disaggregated form and reliable data on gender-specific challenges tends to be particularly lacking. While there has been important progress in recognizing and measuring women’s economic contributions (see e.g. UN Women Training Centre, 2016), statistics do not tend to reflect the scope of (women’s) informal and unpaid work, both outside and inside the home. These gaps make some of women’s active roles in resilience and recovery invisible (see Buecher and Aniyamuzaala, 2016; Hudock, 2016; Nikolko et al., 2021) and perpetuate blind spots of the Weberian paradigm. While the launch of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) was accompanied by an initial spike in financing for gender statistics (PARIS2021, 2021) and likely contributed to increased awareness of gender data gaps, the SDGs’ effects on data availability in this area are less clear-cut. Recent research suggests that data on SDG

5 (gender equality) were not only particularly scarce to start with but have also become even more limited over the course of the SDGs thus far, including in fragile contexts¹⁸ (Kitzmueller et al., 2021). Even high-income countries report a mere 25 per cent of SDG 5 indicators, suggesting that gaps are not only a function of (limited) statistical capacity but also of political will, that is, the extent to which distinct challenges faced by women are (not) viewed as public priorities. Beyond such practical barriers, some “variables” that are critical to women’s lives and gender analysis, such as social norms, may also lend themselves less to straightforward quantification than other factors. These practical and inherent limitations in our ability to “count” gender-related concerns, mean that assessments relying exclusively on quantitative analysis are necessarily constrained in how far they can reflect these dynamics.

Capturing the social, historical, cultural and political factors affecting connections between gender and fragility at all levels of society may also require a greater focus on cross-disciplinary research. In addition, it may further caution against universal comparisons of “fragile” settings marked by widely diverging characteristics in these areas. As these factors vary considerably between regions, a focus on gender may provide further rationale for regional comparisons such as those proposed by Carleton University (2021). Given that social, cultural and historical dynamics tied to gender relations and inequalities also often diverge considerably within countries, analysis of gender and fragility may further add weight to calls for subnational research. As long as this cannot be achieved with quantitative methods due to data limitations, an increasing emphasis on complementing with qualitative analysis may also be significant in this regard.

The positivist assumptions underlying much of the literature pose further challenges in grasping “variables” such as social norms and the power relations marking all levels of society. More broadly, such positivism has meant that analyses of fragility that have been particularly influential in policy circles – and measurement efforts developed on this basis – have often been “problem-solving”: they do not tend to investigate their starting assumptions, including the implications of a predominant focus on the state and the extent to which this “works” for different groups of individuals. Capturing gender relations may require a greater social constructivism that recognizes the role of power, social norms and historical legacies in shaping realities at all levels of society. Importantly, this would also allow for more critical, explicit reflection on whom and what analysis of fragility is designed to serve.

CONCLUSION

Taken together, the reflections developed in this chapter suggest that fully accounting for the role of gender relations and inequalities would require more than efforts to “add women and stir”, that is, to add further, individual factors to our pre-existing analysis of fragility. It would call for adjustments in common, overall perspectives on fragility. In particular, considering gender highlights limitations of the state-centred paradigm at the heart of many prominent discussions of fragility. In doing so, as noted throughout, it adds to observations and critiques of the fragility debate developed on different grounds. Perspectives highlighted in this chapter may have considerable practical implications. Overall, what is and what is not defined as “fragility” can strongly influence priorities of research and practical assistance. The extent to which gender inequalities are understood as part of the central “problem” of fragility can therefore impact the quantity of efforts to advance women’s empowerment.

Insights in this chapter may also contribute to the quality of work on fragility and gender inequalities by enhancing our overall understanding of complex fragile settings and, potentially, suggesting further entry points in addressing associated challenges. In 2017, the OECD reviewed the quality of donor programming on gender equality in a range of fragile contexts (Koester et al., 2016; OECD, 2017). It identified a number of missed opportunities. These included limited attention to social norms as root causes of gender inequalities and elements of wider fragility challenges. Donor analyses and programmes reviewed for instance largely failed to ask how gender norms shape conflict and violence and could be part of the solution. The study also highlighted limitations resulting from a neglect of the full range of connections between gender inequalities and wider fragility challenges, including links between “public” fragility concerns and power relations in the “private” sphere. Reviewing work in the DRC, for example, the study suggested that more could be done to understand relationships between conflict and violence at the household, community and national levels and how programming on one level may contribute to (positive or negative) change on others.

Increased recognition of the connections between women’s activities in households and communities and overall fragility challenges may also help counteract a further trend observed in the OECD assessment: a tendency to regard women primarily as passive victims of crisis, overlooking their myriad active contributions to recovery and resilience. An exception to these trends was a programme in Bangladesh, which understood and supported women’s economic empowerment and decision-making power in the household as a critical lever for both gender equality and household resilience. The research concluded that “serious weaknesses” in donors’ understanding of how power relations shape conflict, fragility and gender inequalities contributed to many of the gaps identified. As a result of this “technical” view of activities, theories of change were often not well grounded in political realities. Across all case study countries, for example, programmes often made insufficient efforts to link activities to broader political and social change dynamics. Importantly, the research also found little evidence that donor programmes systematically recognized and responded to the high risks of harm associated with activities and their sensitive roles as external actors in these politically charged, rapidly changing environments. By further considering concerns highlighted in this chapter, efforts to analyse and “measure” fragility may help provide a stronger basis for practical efforts to address these gaps. Increased, more comprehensive consideration of gender as part of fragility debates may also offer a starting point to mend gaps in donors’ organizational structures and practices, which contributed to limitations in the programmes reviewed: disconnects between policies, networks and analytical tools on fragility, on the one hand, and gender, on the other.

NOTES

1. For example, while the OECD’s earliest *Fragile States* reports did not tend to mention “gender” or “women”, discussions of gender increased over time, with the past three *States of Fragility* reports including an average of 147 references to these terms (OECD, 2016, 2018, 2020). While such references remain less common in the Fund for Peace Fragile States Index Annual Reports overall, they also increased in recent years (Fund for Peace, 2020, 2021b).
2. At the time this chapter was submitted, this was the most recent iteration of the OECD’s fragility framework.
3. To date these include UNSCR 1820 (2009), 1888 (2009), 1889 (2010), 1960 (2011), 2106 (2013), 2122 (2013), 2242 (2015), 2467 (2019), 2493 (2019).

4. Among women aged 15–49 having experienced physical violence since age 15. In addition to DRC, “extremely fragile” contexts for which this data is available include Afghanistan (97.1%), Burundi (94.6%), Chad (93.8%), Haiti (76.9%) and Somalia (61.8%). In Somalia and Afghanistan this percentage refers to ever-married women, in Burundi to ever-partnered women, in Chad, and Haiti to currently-married/partnered women. The DRC survey does not distinguish these categories. Sources: Central Statistics Organization et al. (2017); MPBGP et al. (2017); INSEED et al. (2014–2015); Directorate of National Statistics, Federal Government of Somalia (2020).
5. While the OECD’s earliest *Fragile States* reports did not tend to mention “gender” or “women”, discussion of gender increased over time, with the past three *States of Fragility* reports containing an average of 147 references to these terms. Growing global awareness of gender in conflict and fragility, propelled by and reflected in the increasing normative framework on “women, peace and security”, provides another explanation.
6. Data source: OECD Gender, Institutions and Development Database (2019). Country classifications based on OECD (2020). Statistics are for women aged 15–49.
7. At the time of writing, with the Taliban takeover, the available system of protective services for survivors of gender-based violence had collapsed. Special courts and prosecution units responsible for enforcing the EAW law as well as the Ministry of Women had been dismantled. With shelters often forced to send survivors back to their families and reports of convicted perpetrators released from prison, survivors who went through the system were at acute risk of further violence and backlash, as were staff involved in response mechanisms. Increasing restrictions on women’s ability to leave the house without a male guardian undermined survivors’ ability to seek any form of help (Amnesty International, 2021; Human Rights Watch, 2022; UNHCR, 2022; Saboor et al., 2022).
8. These nine countries are Mali (10.4% of women aged 15–49 participating in the three decisions), Niger (12.3%), Chad (17.4%), Cote d’Ivoire (23.6%), Congo (28.4%), Togo (29.4%), Guinea (30.4%), Afghanistan (32.6%) and Tajikistan (33.1%). Data source: World Bank, based on Demographic and Health Surveys. With years of surveys varying, calculations are based on most recent estimates available since 2011. Country classifications based on OECD (2020).
9. A third of women or less participating in the three decisions.
10. These nine countries are Niger (7.3% of women aged 15–49 making their own informed decisions regarding sexual relations, contraceptive use and reproductive healthcare), Mali (7.7%), Burkina Faso (20.3%), Comoros (20.8%), Cote d’Ivoire (25.2%), Congo (26.8%), Chad (27.1%), Guinea (28.9%) and Togo (29.6%). Data source: World Bank, based on Demographic and Health Surveys compiled by United Nations Population Fund. With years of surveys varying, calculations are based on most recent estimates available since 2011. Country classifications based on OECD (2020).
11. These countries are, regarding percentages of females married by age 18, Niger (76%), Central African Republic (61%), Chad (61%), Mali (54%), Mozambique (53%), Burkina Faso (52%), South Sudan (52%), Bangladesh (51%), Guinea (47%), Nigeria (43%). Regarding percentage of females married by 15, they include Niger (28%), Central African Republic (26%), Chad (24%), Mauritania (18%), Guinea (17%), Somalia (17%), Mozambique (17%), Mali (16%), Nigeria (16%), Bangladesh (16%). Data source: UNICEF (2021). Percentages refer to women aged 20–24 who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18. Data refers to the most recent year available in the period 2014–2020. Country classifications based on OECD (2020).
12. Data source: World Bank. Country classifications based on OECD (2020).
13. Figures from 2020, the year of the OECD’s latest States of Fragility Report. Source: World Bank.
14. Modelled estimate per 100,000 live births (2017).
15. Modelled ILO estimate (2020).
16. Data source: OECD Gender, Institutions and Development Database (2019). Country classifications based on OECD (2020).
17. Htun and Weldon have made this observation in relation to the emergence of gender equality policy in all countries and provided quantitative evidence (Htun and Weldon, 2012, 2018). Replication of the analysis conducted by Kitzmueller et al. (2021) for fragile contexts conducted/shared by Harsh Desai of the OECD’s Development Co-operation Directorate.

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12. The relationship between state fragility and refugees

Charles Martin-Shields

INTRODUCTION

Changing conceptions of refugeehood and refugee policy will be a defining feature of international affairs as we move deeper into the twenty-first century. This is reflected in new agreements such as the Global Compacts on Migration and Refugees and the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework. The increasing complexity and internationalization of forced displacement and asylum seeking means that policy makers and researchers will need to look to the attributes of both sending and receiving states to properly understand why people are on the move. At the same time, the politics of granting asylum and hosting refugees have become deeply reactionary and idiosyncratic; while the EU violently blocked the entry of refugees into Poland after they were forced there by the Belarussian government, it moved quickly to grant asylum to Ukrainian refugees fleeing the Russian invasion. The interwoven issues of xenophobia, racism, and reactive politics in host countries makes creating progressive, humane refugee and displacement policies difficult. This is compounded by the guiding agreement on global refugee policy, the 1951 Refugee Convention, being over 70 years old in a world that has changed radically since the end of the Second World War. State fragility, a relatively recent concept, offers a new basis for understanding why people are displaced and seek asylum or safety in host countries. The influence of state fragility on patterns of forced displacement is thus an important and growing research area for international studies scholars to build theory and contribute to refugee and displacement policy solutions.

In this chapter I will use the terms “forced displacement” and “forcibly displaced people” instead of refugees. “Forced displacement” and “forcibly displaced people” includes people who are formally counted as refugees under the terms of the 1951 Refugee Convention, but also provides scope to discuss people who would reasonably be considered “refugees” in the common sense, but are not recognized as such by either a host country or the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR). Since this chapter is concerned with the conditions of fragility in countries of origin, this wider definition means there is more scope for using different data sources in identifying patterns of displacement and fragility that researchers can focus on for both basic and policy-oriented research. Something I will also highlight in the data analysis section of the chapter is the problem of finding reliable, cross-nationally comparable data on displacement. UNHCR produces annual data on refugee stocks, and where they are hosted, but this data is based on national reporting of how many people the host country has granted asylum to. It does not tell us about the conditions they fled, or the grounds for receiving asylum. What we want to know is how many people are leaving countries experiencing different types of state fragility, so in the analysis section of this chapter I use a dataset that estimates all human movement between countries. I will explain the reasons for this decision, and the limitations that come with using that data, in the analysis section.

Forced displacement can be a function of political, geographic, economic, or social drivers. Drawing on the existing literature and an empirical analysis, we see that displacement can be the outcome of a number of complex, overlapping factors. Someone may be forcibly displaced due to violence or threats to personal safety (Davenport et al., 2003; Moore and Shellman, 2004). People may also be forced to migrate in response to environmental changes (Black, 1994; Hugo, 1996; Tacoli, 2009). Finally, deteriorations in the local economic climate may force people to take flight (Betts, 2013a, 2013b; Ibanez and Velez, 2008; Kondylis, 2010; Ruiz and Vargas-Silva, 2013). These factors overlap in many ways; environmental or political changes could lead to untenable economic outcomes (e.g. Sen, 1981 on social and economic entitlements), economic instability could lead to political instability and violence, or movement away from physical threats could have socio-economic consequences in receiving communities leading to further migration.

One of the key future challenges facing policy makers and scholars is grappling with whether or not the spirit and statutory intent of international agreements like the 1951 Refugee Convention can be implemented in a world where twenty-first-century drivers of displacement and refugee flows will be empirically different than those of the mid-twentieth century. In many ways the 1951 Convention was narrowly conceived from a policy standpoint – it was meant to set rules for the protection and return of people displaced within Europe due to events prior to 1951 (UNHCR, 2010, p. 2). While the 1967 Protocol extended these rights beyond the original European geographic limits and removed the 1951 time limitation, the fundamental grounds for offering protection and refugee status remained a well-founded fear of persecution or physical insecurity in one's country of origin. This precludes offering refugee status to people fleeing, for example, climate change-driven environmental or economic collapse, or a fundamental inability for national authorities to provide for the public good. However, both of these scenarios would have significant deleterious effects on physical security, full citizenship, and quality of life. The only way to address this is to add a new protocol to the original Convention, as was done in 1967, and then encourage signatory states to update domestic laws to recognize new grounds for seeking asylum as a refugee. To start such a process, though, we need to define state fragility in a way that goes beyond the risk or breadth of violence, and then capture descriptive data on how many people move from states that fall into a wider range of fragility categories.

As a definition of state fragility, I use Grävingholt et al.'s (2019) empirical constellations of state authority, capacity and legitimacy. This modeling of fragility builds on earlier work on state fragility by Carment et al. (2006, 2015) and Call (2011), among others, that looks at fragility in terms of "stateness," as opposed to focusing on whether a state is experiencing a particular level of insecurity or violence. Seeing fragility as something that can affect different operations of the state, as opposed to just being the risk of violence, allows us to ask in descriptive terms: How many people are moving between different constellations of fragile statehood? A widely recognized driver of forced migration is weak state authority or complete state dysfunctionality; when a government cannot guarantee the safety of its citizens, people will take flight to avoid risks to their physical safety. A less "traditional" driver of forced displacement is weak state capacity in a country of origin. If the state cannot create a basis for providing public services and functioning economy, people would be forced to move to try to create livelihoods elsewhere. This type of displacement can fall into, for example, Betts's (2013a) concept of survival migration. State legitimacy is the third constellation I look at and is another example of a "traditional" driver of displacement and refugee status. When people

are politically persecuted or the state is curtailing their rights, these are grounds for claiming asylum as a refugee in another country.

As changes in the global economy, environment, and systems of governance take greater root, we will likely see more forced displacement driven by a mix of economic and safety/survival issues, which are not grounds for asylum using a twentieth-century interpretation of the 1951 Convention. If we want to understand what a twenty-first-century reimagining of the Convention looks like, data on how many people are moving from countries experiencing different manifestations of state fragility is a key starting point. Using data from UNHCR on refugees and asylum seekers as well as bilateral migration data (Abel and Sander, 2014) and Grävingsholt et al.'s dataset on state fragility (2019) I generate estimates of refugee outflows and total movement between different constellations of state fragility. This is not a causal analysis but serves as a descriptive empirical basis for shaping future research. The chapter closes with discussion of implications for practitioners and policy makers working in the fragile state/migration nexus as well as suggestions for future international studies research. Overall, the aim is to inform ongoing scientific work on fragility and forced displacement in a way that is relevant to academic researchers and policy makers alike.

FORCED DISPLACEMENT: GOING BEYOND REFUGEE LAW

The study of refugees and forced displacement cuts across multiple disciplines, including political science, sociology, economics, and geography, among others. In recent years this phenomenon increasingly gained importance due to the rising number of people on the move (Abel, 2015; Abel and Sander, 2014). As a consequence, the field comprises a variety of diverse sub-fields with often overlapping theoretical concepts. These concepts deal with multiple drivers of forced displacement, which in many cases influence and reinforce one another, but do so in ways in which causality can be difficult to assess. As a result, the comparability of research findings can at times feel limited (Jacobsen and Landau, 2003). This challenge of comparability is magnified by the fact that statistics regarding refugees and displaced people, with the exception of annual reporting by the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), are piecemeal and use a variety of different coding definitions that are often not interoperable (Ruhe et al., 2021).

While this chapter is focused on refugees and state fragility, as noted in the introduction I will use the terms forced displacement and forcibly displaced people throughout. This is partly to avoid having to constantly distinguish between refugees in the legal sense, which is what UNHCR's data counts, and refugees in the common sense; both groups reasonably fall within the category of forced displacement. There is also a conceptual reason for using the term forced displacement. State fragility has become a far more complex concept in recent years, with scholars recognizing that fragility can include deficits in public administration capacity and government legitimacy, along with more traditional factors like widespread violence or conflict. By using the terms forced displacement and forcibly displaced people, I can simultaneously talk about formally recognized refugees who are fleeing conflict while also expanding the discussion to include those who have fled fragile states where public administration and political legitimacy have collapsed. Many people from these countries would be unlikely to have asylum claims recognized, even though they fled situations of acute risk.

When we take the more complex view of fragility, one that includes not only violence but variation in the quality of how a state functions, we then see that there are several possible factors that can trigger forced displacement which can have further implications for the forcibly displaced people's legal status after they arrive in a new country (Castles, 2003; Betts, 2009, p. 4). Many of the asylum and refugee regimes focus on individuals fleeing from war, and persecution based on religious, ethnic, racial, political, or social reasons. According to the United Nations 1951 Refugee Convention and its later expansion the 1967 "Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees," migrants forced to move across international borders because of such reasons are ensured international protection and the right to asylum. While individuals granted asylum are defined as "refugees" in these agreements, people still on the move with pending status are generally considered as asylum seekers (Castles, 2003). The role that violence and demonstrable political persecution continue to have in asylum-granting decisions is a dynamic that has serious policy implications for people displaced from fragile non-conflict environments. In a global policy environment where acute economic, environmental, and governance fragility can lead to threats to physical safety and human rights, a process for granting refugee status that remains grounded in a 1950s–1960s' notion of what drives displacement is unlikely to be sufficient.

Cantor (2017) posits that while we are not at the "end" of international refugee law, we have reached a point where we need to reconsider the original intent of the 1951 Convention in order to create a new global vision of refugee and humanitarian law. This makes sense in a world where people are forcibly displaced and in need of protection, which is the intent of international refugee law, but the drivers of displacement do not align with the narrow description of why people should receive protection in the 1951 Convention. Later in the chapter we will see what this means in practice, and what the implications could be for rethinking refugee law and displacement policy. The following section defines how state fragility relates to forced displacement, and sets up an empirical descriptive analysis of where there are potentially new drivers of displacement that refugee law could count as grounds for asylum and refugee status in the twenty-first century.

FORCED DISPLACEMENT AS A FUNCTION OF STATE FRAGILITY

The nature of forced displacement, and the policy scopes within which nation states have responded to it, requires a measure or categorization of fragility based on the *nature of the state* as opposed to events taking place within it. Using this as the conceptual starting point, this section will unpack and analyze the literature on state fragility, specifically identifying different aspects of fragility that influence the lives of citizens negatively, and thus could lead to people being forcibly displaced. This exercise is important for two reasons. The first is that while there has been a long literature on the drivers and decisions around economic and labor migration, as well as refugee law and policy, the field of international studies is still in a relatively early stage of understanding the relationship between state fragility and forced displacement. There are the obvious drivers: war and violence drive people out (Davenport et al., 2003; Moore and Shellman, 2004), or disasters make a place unlivable (Black, 1994; Hugo, 1996; Tacoli, 2009). But much of the forced displacement that has been taking place

over the last 15–20 years is driven by a hybrid set of mechanisms, which are difficult to assess empirically and fall into gaps or grey areas of refugee law and policy (Betts, 2013b, p. 5).

Identifying Empirical Categories of Fragility

For our purposes we refer to fragility as a lack of different aspects of statehood, using an empirical framework developed by Grävingholt et al. (2015). One of the key problems with measuring and categorizing fragility is that it is easy to fall into a number of logical or analytic traps, either by omission or commission. At a topline level, fragile states are those with weak government structures, high poverty rates, and the actualization or risk of violence (e.g. BMZ, 2017). This captures a wide range of causes and effects, making it difficult to categorize types of fragility by types of forced migration.

Two starting points scholars have used are the World Bank's CPIA scores, and the OECD's fragility framework. The World Bank's CPIA categorization is based on a multidimensional measure of state capacity, primarily grounded in economic management and public administration processes (World Bank, 2010), while the OECD's current framework uses clusters of societal, economic, environmental, security, and political indicators to categorize countries as fragile (Desai and Marley, Chapter 6 in this volume; OECD, 2020). These two sets of indicators use a cut off for whether a country is fragile; this is useful for determining where aid and development assistance is directed but does not help guide us toward an understanding of what aspects of fragile statehood drive forced migration. Composite indexes such as the Fragile States Index (Fund for Peace, 2020) suffer from a different problem; they tend to focus on fragility as an outcome of conflict and violence risk. Thus, when we look at the volume of asylum seekers from each country, we see who fled potential or active violence, but we cannot see what other aspects of the state could have driven displacement. This is compounded by many indexes capturing refugees originating from a country as an indicator within the composite score itself.

An alternative way to understand fragility is as a function of statehood or “stateness.” The categories of a state in this frame include authority, capacity, and legitimacy. These three factors have been explored by multiple authors (e.g. Carment et al., 2006; Stewart and Brown, 2009; Guillaumont and Guillaumont Jeanneney, 2009), and are the basis for Call's (2010) framework of intersecting gaps of statehood. These three factors are also the basis for Grävingholt et al.'s (2015) argument for a multidimensional empirical typology, which groups countries into six categories of non-linear constellations based on their relative performance across the three dimensions of statehood. We use Grävingholt et al.'s (2019) empirical constellations of state fragility, based on the dimensions of authority, capacity, and legitimacy, as our empirical concept of fragile statehood to perform a descriptive empirical analysis. These constellations allow us to look at the relationship between displacement and state fragility in ways that go beyond whether a country is being affected by conflict and violence.

THE FORCED MIGRATION/STATE FRAGILITY NEXUS: AN EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS

In the previous sections we defined state fragility and forced displacement, and provided some basic observational connections between the two phenomena. In this section I go further,

laying out expectations of how different aspects of fragility affect variation in migration flows. However, I refrain from stating explicit hypotheses as I do not claim to establish causality. I start this section by outlining the measure of state fragility, the constellations developed using Grävingholt et al.'s (2019) method. The main thing to take away from this is the descriptive nature of the constellations, and the corresponding explanation for why people would be displaced from the countries in these constellations. Following this, I discuss the different data sources for refugees and displacement, and explain why I select the Abel and Sander (2014) data on country-to-country migration flows. Something that we see in the data on displacement and migration is that there are major gaps, as well as inconsistencies in coding and variation in definitions that make data from different sources non-comparable. This last point was a key reason for using the Abel and Sander data: while the results are imputed using an estimation method, the method is consistent across all countries and dyads. The problem of data consistency and comparability is not just a theoretical problem when talking about displacement and state fragility – it makes it difficult to generate public messages about refugees and displacement, in turn making it harder to develop cohesive, rights-based refugee policies.

Data: Constellations of State Fragility

Authority, capacity, and legitimacy in the function of a state can have significant effects on the micro-level dynamics that can lead to forced migration (Grävingholt et al., 2015). These three functions offer an interesting opportunity to structure the multitude of drivers of displacement raised in the literature. We use a novel dataset compiled by Grävingholt et al. (2019) that covers up to 171 countries in a period through 2015, and categorizes them into six fragility constellations: Dysfunctional, Low-Authority, Low-Capacity, Low-Legitimacy, Semi-Functional, and Functional. Each country is assigned one particular fragility constellation based on separate indicators across the three dimensions of statehood: Authority, Capacity, and Legitimacy.

I am particularly focused on discussing drivers of displacement and forced migration that go beyond conflict; it is self-evident that people flee war, but forced migration, “survival” migration, and similar types of displacement are increasingly taking place in countries not or only indirectly affected by conflict. Hence, we are interested in differences in movement from those constellation types that are driven by the dimensions of low-authority, low-capacity, or low-legitimacy. In the following, I shortly describe those and formulate hypotheses about the effect of the respective constellation type on migratory movements.

- **Dysfunctional:** These states lack any capacity, authority, or legitimacy; most were experiencing large-scale violence or civil war during the period they were coded. These are states that would be expected to produce large-scale forced displacement.
- **Low-Authority:** The ability of the state to maintain physical security within its borders is a core requisite of statehood. From a human perspective, a lack of security is one of the main reasons forcing people to flee from their homes. Davenport et al. (2003, p. 27) point out that “individuals will tend to flee when the integrity of their person is threatened.” Of the three fragility constellations, a lack of authority is the one that would most evidently lead to forced displacement.
- **Low-Capacity:** Low-capacity represents potential push factors including a lack of economic opportunity and a lack of public administration and public services, which can manifest without violence and have significant negative impacts on individuals’ quality of

life. Betts's concept of "survival" migration could find a home in this constellation; acute poverty can have serious physical effects, so migrating in response to such economic conditions can be considered as a form of forced displacement. Blattman and Annan (2016) showed the importance of predictable capital allocations and pay in helping former fighters in Liberia stay in formal labor settings instead of returning to black market industries. In a low-capacity setting where the government lacks the ability to manage a central bank, the risk is that these former fighters will not receive their capital allocations. Without the capital allocations, they move on to find work elsewhere.

- **Low-Legitimacy:** Legitimacy is perhaps the most difficult factor to pin down when trying to identify chains related to forced displacement. But legitimacy, whether it is the freedom to associate, or a government operating transparently, does appear to be salient in people's decisions to migrate. The Mixed Migration Monitoring Mechanism Initiative (4MI) has been collecting data from people in mixed migration pathways in East Africa and the Horn of Africa.¹ The sample size is small, approximately 500, and since we have no known population against which to analyze the sample, the 4MI data is not generalizable. But regardless, it does give a window into the experiences of individual migrants moving for a mix of reasons. The data on drivers is useful when thinking about the role of legitimacy in flight decisions. The most highly cited driver of migration in the 4MI dataset is "Lack of Rights." This is then broken down into subcategories, where the highest number of respondents reported that a lack of freedom of expression drove their decision to take flight (~81 percent). The most cited reason that people would be willing to stay in their home country was if there was less government intervention in their lives. It is important to note that this constellation includes refugees as part of a state's legitimacy measure.
- **Semi-Functional and Functional:** These are states that function across the domains of capacity, legitimacy, and authority. It would be unlikely to see large-scale forced displacement coming from a country in one of these constellations.

The attributes of the state or location that people live in should have a large influence on their decisions to stay where they are or take flight (often called push factors). A natural starting point is UNHCR's data on new asylum requests, and granted refugee status. The problem with these datasets is that they are biased toward people who have access to registration services and are thus counted in the UNHCR data. While it is important to understand how different attributes of state fragility affect these numbers, what we also aim to shed light on is how fragility relates to a wider range of forced displacement. In many circumstances the drivers of displacement may not be as acute as war or targeted political persecution, but people are still forced to seek safe livelihoods elsewhere. An opportunity to approach this are the numbers for migration flows that are collected by Abel and Sander (2014). These flows capture regular migrants, as well as displaced people. This is a general problem with data about human mobility; timeframes vary between datasets, and definitions can be quite narrow (e.g. official refugees) or very broad as we see in the Abel and Sander data. Given the mix of future drivers of displacement, it is possible that a large number of people captured in this dataset who would not traditionally be counted as refugees could indeed be counted as refugees if we reimagine the intent of the 1951 Convention in response to twenty-first-century drivers of displacement. Abel and Sander's data is unfortunately limited to the five-year releases of UN migrant stock data, so while it dyadically covers 179 countries worldwide it is only available for the years 2010 and 2015.

DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS

We use Grävingholt et al.’s (2019) constellations of state fragility from the previous section to organize countries empirically, comparing how different fragility attributes describe or correlate with official refugee counts, as well as migration flows as measured by Abel and Sander (2014). Part of the reason it is so important to capture more than just refugees and IDPs is highlighted in Figure 12.1 which shows a breakdown of the volume of refugees per 100,000 inhabitants based on country of origin. These numbers are then categorized into the six fragility constellations, by volume of departing refugees.

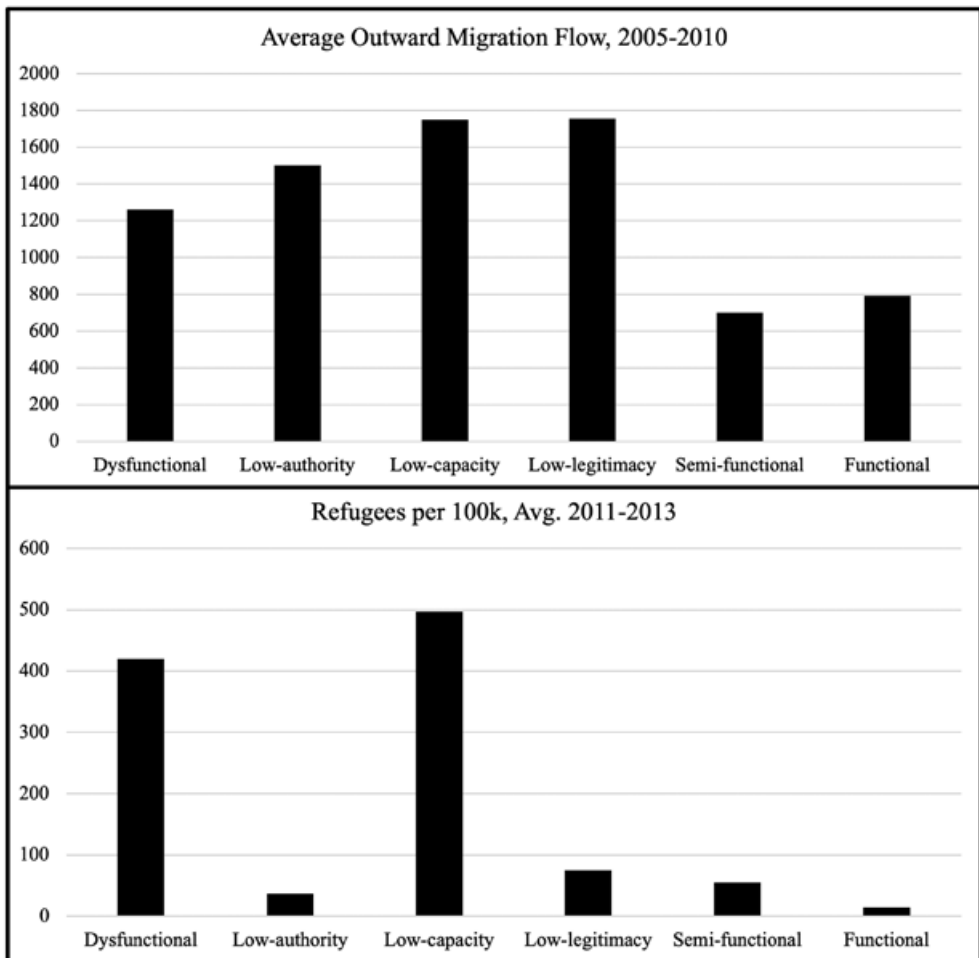


Figure 12.1 Comparison of aggregate migration flow with refugee outflows

There are a number of analytic problems that arise when we dig into the data in Figure 12.1, particularly in the lower graph that uses refugee numbers. Dysfunctional and low-capacity

states unsurprisingly have the highest outflows of refugees; what we cannot see is that nine states account for over 70 percent of all global refugee stocks during the 2011–2013 time period. This demonstrates a problem with the way that global refugee stocks are counted. The UNHCR refugee data focuses on those who have already been granted refugee status in countries of arrival, and in most cases this is granted to those fleeing violent conflict; nine countries representing 70 percent of the refugee flows are experiencing either civil war or large-scale violence and fall into the dysfunctional constellation. However, we want to understand state fragility as more than large-scale violence. Grävingholt et al. (2019) make this notion central to their empirical measure of fragility – state fragility is more than just civil war or large-scale violence. This means that there are a variety of administrative, economic, or security factors that could lead to forced displacement, but do not align with the traditional conditions that lead host countries to grant refugee status.

To expand the discussion away from highly defined categories like “refugee,” and even “forcibly displaced people,” we turn to the Abel and Sander (2014) data on country-to-country migration flows. Figure 12.1 provides some comparative descriptive statistics between fragility constellations and patterns in refugee outflow, and total migration outflow. The numbers are all averages, and we should be wary of making strong claims about the comparisons since the data collection processes are different between the two categories. That said, the patterns that emerge in the data point to a few general things to keep in mind as we dig deeper into the data. When we look at a running average of refugee numbers per 100,000 inhabitants we see that the bulk are coming from dysfunctional and low-capacity countries – which are countries that are likely to be affected, or have been recently affected, by violent conflict. When we capture general migration flows, the patterns look quite different. Dysfunctional countries are no longer the leaders in outflow, as refugee numbers are subsumed in general migration. Low-capacity and low-legitimacy countries become the categories with the highest aggregate outflow.

The thing that is important about these two categories is that unlike dysfunctional countries, many low-capacity, low-authority, and low-legitimacy countries are not affected by high-intensity violent conflict, even if violence is a prevalent part of citizens’ lived experience. The drivers of displacement and irregular migration in these cases are what often lead to mixed or to use Betts’s terminology “survival migration” (2013a, 2013b). People may be migrating from a low-capacity country for economic reasons, but these reasons do not mirror the standard economic migration patterns involving offers of work and visa regimes. Instead of seeking new formal work opportunities migrants may be fleeing absolute poverty; as Betts (2013b) notes, utter economic collapse that leads to people not being able to afford food is a type of forced displacement. A key problem is that we do not have a robust understanding of how these kinds of flows of displacement manifest between types of countries. Figure 12.1 provides an example of how much variation there is between total migration outflow, some of which could be forced, and the outflow of people categorized as refugees.

To explore the between-country patterns we use Abel and Sander’s (2014) estimates of country-to-country migration flows. The advantage this dataset affords is that it is dyadic, so all countries can be coded by fragility constellation and we can identify patterns from the dyad level all the way up to the cross-constellation average. In this analysis we focus on the inter-constellation averages to assess where we expect to see forced displacement due to non-conflict factors. Table 12.1 shows a matrix of average between-constellation movement. Rows represent constellation of origin and columns represent constellation of arrival. It is

unsurprising that the largest constellation of arrival is functional countries; the empirical literature on migration and economic development indicates that as people move from being poor to being middle-income, they become more likely to move to regions that offer greater economic opportunity.

Table 12.1 Average aggregate migration flow between fragility constellations, absolute numbers in 2010

Origin/Destination	Dysfunctional	Low-authority	Low-capacity	Low-legitimacy	Semi-functional	Well-functioning	Total average
Dysfunctional		127	1532	1792	526	1262	1048
Low-authority	2		23	314	7855	1595	1958
Low-capacity	975	1046		3852	2033	1697	1921
Low-legitimacy	14	1319	44		2013	3006	1279
Semi-functional	10	1568	54	573		2865	1014
Well-functioning	12	206	29	271	266		157

Note: Bold numbers represent the constellation which received the highest outflow from each constellation of origin.

Sources: Abel and Sander (2014), Grävingholt et al. (2019).

For our purposes the most notable part of the matrix is the cells that contain the average flow from low-capacity to low-legitimacy countries, and dysfunctional to low-legitimacy countries. There are regional and geographic dynamics baked into these numbers that I will address later, but first I will describe the main takeaways from this analysis. Some portion of these flows includes formally recognized refugees, but it is unclear how big this portion is. When we talk about low capacity, this includes the inability of government to provide public services and maintain a stable economy. While a low-legitimacy country may not be an optimal place to live, if there are basic services and a minimally functioning economy it could be an improvement on life in a completely dysfunctional country.

If we look for patterns of movement in the real world that map on to the abstract patterns shown in Table 12.1, we might think about what the flow of people from Somalia toward the Mediterranean looks like. Somalia is a dysfunctional country in the fragility coding – for people to move toward Europe they are passing through countries like Ethiopia that have serious deficits in government legitimacy, but have some state capacity and state authority. If someone is undertaking a process of survival migration, they are likely to leave places where there is no capacity to support basic livelihoods, and end up in the nearest countries that can provide minimal public service provision and physical security. From the perspective of state attributes that correlate with forced displacement, survival migration, and mixed migration, the matrix in Table 12.1 indicates that a focus on low-capacity countries could be useful both in terms of research and policy making.

So what does this mean in a practical sense? From a policy perspective there is the question of not only stabilizing conflict-affected countries that the majority of refugees are forced to flee, but to provide aid and political support to the countries that receive those refugees. This is where understanding the between-constellation flows of displaced people is critical. Low-legitimacy and low-capacity countries tend, on average, to be the main receivers of people coming from dysfunctional countries. Low-capacity countries are also the origin of many people moving to low-legitimacy countries. Since these numbers are from 2010, geography is the first starting point for analysis. Grävingholt et al.’s (2019) results for 2010

indicate that every dysfunctional country is one that is experiencing high-intensity conflict, and is bordered entirely by low-capacity countries. The exceptions are Iraq and Afghanistan, which are surrounded by low-legitimacy countries. Many of these low-capacity countries experienced civil wars and high-intensity violent conflict themselves in the 1990s and early 2000s. Examples include Angola, Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Sudan. By 2015, the last year of available data on the fragility constellations, a number of low-capacity countries in 2010 had downgraded to dysfunctional as civil wars started – examples include Libya, Yemen, and South Sudan. Geographies of conflict and conflict-induced underdevelopment are where we see a great deal of migration and displacement. This is unsurprising in and of itself, but presents a challenge when we include the lens of who is a refugee and who receives legal asylum status.

Low-capacity countries represent an interesting constellation to focus on from an empirical and policy perspective when thinking about what the future of refugee policy looks like. Due to geography they are often the first stop for people fleeing violence and war, and based on current global norms this means they should be the place that refugees lodge a request for asylum. However, in many cases these countries are not themselves able to provide durable solutions for refugees and indeed many of their own citizens are also on the move to other places. If we refer back to Betts's (2013a, 2013b) notion of "emergency migration," the people moving between and onward from low-capacity countries are likely to be moving away from any number of critical issues: a lack of jobs, state-level inability to adapt to climate change, the risk of descending back into violent conflict. Even if these forcibly displaced people have a practical need for protection or support, under the 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol they are not refugees in a statutory sense. If we think of state fragility as more than breadth and risk of violence and conflict, and view it as variation in different aspects of stateness, the Convention and Protocol quickly become too narrow in scope for guiding modern protection and asylum policy at the national level.

CONCLUSION: THE FUTURE OF FRAGILITY AND FORCED MIGRATION

Forced migration and state fragility will continue to present empirical challenges and opportunities to international studies researchers, and will remain a policy challenge for the foreseeable future. One of the key questions this chapter has addressed is the descriptive data on different aspects of state fragility on forced displacement. Understanding these relationships from a theoretical and empirical perspective is helpful in setting courses for further research and policy advice. On the research side of the equation is taking the step from description, which is what I have done here, and moving into deeper theorization and causal analysis. Much of the influential research on the relationship between violence and displacement took place in the early 2000s (e.g. Davenport et al., 2003; Moore and Shellman, 2004). The theoretical and empirical research on state fragility has become increasingly sophisticated in the last fifteen years, expanding from a focus on violence and conflict and moving to include variation in the quality of stateness. This opens avenues for testing different displacement data against different constellations of fragility, including not only global and cross-national analysis, but also for identifying case studies and doing regional comparative research on fragility and displacement.

The policy implications for addressing forced displacement through managing state fragility, and the potential for new data that can be used to develop fragile state-specific refugee policy, are significant. For researchers the nexus between fragility and forced migration, especially when viewed through a development lens, is exciting. Taken in combination, the interaction between variation in state capacity and forced migration offers a rich empirical space to do social, political, and economic research. A critical area in development research that impacts migration through channels of fragility is the ability for a government to maintain economic capacity. What this means can vary by case – in a state like Ethiopia it could mean the political will to develop and enforce labor laws (e.g. Blattman and Dercon, 2016), while in Liberia it could be basic management of payment systems and access to capital (e.g. Blattman and Annan, 2016). These examples represent the difficult grey area of forced migration, where people could be displaced for legitimate economic reasons, but the legal apparatus determining the status of migrants is not sufficient to recognize flight as a function of economic exclusion. Micro-level case studies, field experiments, and survey research could go a long way in building an empirical base of knowledge about the relationship between government capacity, labor and livelihoods, and forced migration.

The role of development aid in mitigating state fragility and forced displacement is an especially contested topic, as countries like Germany and Austria have developed a focus on reducing the drivers of forced displacement (Welt, 2017). Especially as international efforts like the Global Compacts are implemented, it will be crucial to have a theoretically and empirically grounded understanding of where development policy fits into the overall state fragility/forced displacement nexus. The quantitative literature on the impact of development on migration, while engaging, often takes a mechanical approach that assumes a linear relationship between development aid and changes in forced displacement patterns. While this research has helped keep the empirical discussion active, it also has distinct limits in terms of describing the channels through which aid influences displacement outcomes at the individual and subnational levels. As discussed earlier in the chapter, this is where using a more complex conceptualization of state fragility to understand patterns of forced displacement shows both research and policy promise.

However, to fully realize the policy and research opportunities that come with understanding the relationship between state fragility and forced displacement, processes like the Global Compact on Refugees will have to follow through on their data collection and standardization goals. Right now forced migration and migration data tend to be sparse, like the once-every-five-year data drops that Abel and Sander use to estimate country to country migration dyads, or highly context dependent, such as UNHCR's refugee and migration data. Improvements in global data standards for migration, that contain meta data on reasons for migration as well as demographic data, could be of significant use to policy makers as well as researchers. Governments and policy makers should take advantage of the Global Compact's stated aims of improving data collection and interoperability, though researchers and civil society organizations should play a role in making sure that these practices conform to privacy and ethical standards for data gathering and protection.

One of the major problems facing policy makers is navigating public opinion and domestic politics when it comes to providing asylum and protection for people displaced by state fragility. I mentioned at the start of the chapter that xenophobia, racism, and reactionary politics play a significant role in determining who is allowed to claim asylum, a dynamic that has been laid bare in the European Union by the comparative treatment of those fleeing Ukraine versus

those who fled the Syrian civil war. It would be naïve to claim that better, more consistent data is the key to breaking down the xenophobia and reactive politics facing refugees; however, data can be used to humanize and clarify why people would be seeking protection and asylum in other countries. Empirical conceptualizations of fragility as a lack of “stateness” help make the situations people face in low-capacity or low-legitimacy countries more tangible. This in turn can help make clear to a wider audience, both policy makers and the public, why people displaced from these countries likely meet a standard for seeking asylum in another country.

Fundamentally, people move to meet needs that can be met better elsewhere, or more critically to avoid political and social breakdowns and dangers where they are from. The stories and data from those who are displaced can provide important windows into how we understand the role of the state in people’s lives, and how variations in the different (dys)functions of the state influence people’s decisions to stay and build a life, or take flight for other locales. The relationship between state fragility and forced migration provides a theoretically compelling channel for understanding twenty-first-century development, governance and humanitarian challenges, and the empirical research that emerges from this space can inform solutions to policy questions that an increasingly interwoven global community will face for decades to come.

NOTE

1. More on 4MI, and associated data, can be found at: 4mi.regionalmms.org.

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13. Climate change and fragility: improving early warning and climate-proofing development and conflict interventions

Erin Sikorsky, Francesco Femia and Brigitte Hugh

INTRODUCTION

Fragile states are both the most vulnerable to, and the most ill-prepared for, the compounding effects of climate change. Many are already experiencing climate change-driven hazards on a regular basis, on top of myriad other risks to state stability. The 20 most fragile states according to the 2022 Fragile States Index all cluster at the bottom of the ND-GAIN index, which measures a country's vulnerability to climate change in combination with its readiness to improve resilience.

Moran et al. have termed this dynamic the “double burden” of state fragility and climate exposure (Moran et al., 2019). They argue that states facing such “double burdens” are poorly positioned to respond to climate shocks, and therefore are more vulnerable to humanitarian crises and instability than other parts of the world. Their work, which largely tracks the ND-GAIN data, found that the highest combined fragility and climate risks are concentrated in sub-Saharan Africa, with other areas of high risk sprinkled across the Middle East and North Africa, South and Southeast Asia, and parts of South America (Moran et al., 2018). East Africa is a prime example of the dynamics identified by the authors. The region began 2020 with 21 million people already food insecure (Goodman et al., 2020). As the year progressed, the region experienced climate change-related flooding, one of the worst locust plagues in 70 years, and the Covid-19 pandemic. In 2022, the region witnessed the worst drought in four decades, with millions of people experiencing acute food and water shortages. While climate change is responsible for the drought, the food security crisis is caused by the intersection of the drought with deteriorating political and military dynamics in the region, such as the conflict in Ethiopia and the role of extremist group al-Shabaab in Somalia.

At the same time, in many parts of the world climate change impacts are proving to be so intense and out of the norm that the effects expose or create new fragility in states traditionally considered more stable. There are a number of states with significant vulnerabilities related to climate change and other environmental security concerns that are likely to become much more fragile in the future – much as Syria had once been deemed stable relative to its neighbors experiencing the Arab Awakening (Mann, 2012 as cited in Werrell and Femia, 2015). Some states, such as pre-civil war Syria, have been dubbed “brittle states” or “Potemkin village states,” and in the future may include a number of nations generally deemed relatively stable by common measures, in North Africa and the Middle East (such as Saudi Arabia), in Asia and South America, and even in Europe (especially in the Mediterranean basin due to significant winter precipitation declines and migration dynamics) and in North America (Werrell and Femia, 2016; Guy et al., 2020). This is due to the speed at which climate change

is changing weather patterns, the unprecedented nature of the shocks, and higher expectations for the provision of plentiful and affordable food, water and energy amongst the publics of more developed nations. To avoid the selection bias that can derive from assessing climate change implications for only clearly (and currently) fragile states, casting a wider net may be well-advised. As noted by Werrell and Femia (2016, p. 226):

It is important to distinguish such brittle states from fragile states. In brittle states, the appearance of stability – due to either the imperviousness of such states to outside inquiry or ignorance of the role of natural resource vulnerabilities in contributing to political unrest – can lead analysts and policymakers alike to fail to anticipate fragilities and thus to make ill-informed political, economic, and natural resource management choices.

Further, most countries' infrastructure, governance, and societal systems were not designed to withstand the new climate humans have created, and this reality may significantly broaden the potential for state fragility across a wider geography. Floods in the summer of 2021 across the developed world are a case in point – in Germany, China and the United States people died because either the warning system (western Germany), the subway system (Henan Province, China), or the regulatory apparatus (Tennessee, United States) was not equal to the challenge posed by the extreme weather (Mathiesen et al., 2021; Gan and Wang, 2021; Flavelle, 2021). Even in states that have built up capacity to manage these shocks, crises of legitimacy can undermine the governments' ability to deploy these capacities. Take the example of Bangladesh. Moran, Busby, and Raleigh (2018) found that the country's climate-related fragility stems more from poor and dwindling state legitimacy than from poor state effectiveness. The key fragility risks in Bangladesh are consistently poor state legitimacy in the political and economic spheres and worsening state legitimacy in the security sphere over the 15-year study period – all of which indicate low public confidence in the government's ability to meet public needs in these areas. While Bangladesh has built state capacity to address key climate, social, and economic challenges, these gains are threatened by sustained political turmoil and increasing violence in the country.

A lack of legitimacy is not just a problem in developing or poor states, either. According to the Edelman Trust Barometer (2022), trust in government institutions is less than 50 percent in many democracies surveyed: 46 percent in Germany, 44 percent in the UK, and 43 percent in the United States. The survey also found that in all developed countries surveyed, less than 50 percent of the population believe their families and self will be better off in 5 years' time. As recent years have demonstrated, including in well-developed democracies such as the United States and Hungary, crises of legitimacy and tolerance for authoritarianism can grow quickly, and it stands to reason that rising climate risks, met by responses that are not commensurate to the risks, may accelerate such dynamics. The US National Intelligence Estimate on Climate Change (2021) underscores the threat to developed democracies:

The United States and others, however, are in a relatively better position than other countries to deal with the major costs and dislocation of forecasted change, in part because they have greater resources to adapt, but will nonetheless require difficult adjustments ... Adjusting to such changes will often be wrenching, and populations will feel negative effects in their daily lives that will become more difficult to reverse without successful efforts to reduce net emissions and cap warming temperatures.

The reality is that without a significant shift in allocation of resources and attention to resilience measures, few if any states across the globe have the capacity to fully manage the

types of climate shocks the world will face in coming years. There is no country that will be “safe” from climate change, and therefore few countries that will be immune to climate change-driven fragility.

In this context, this chapter first describes in detail the nature of climate hazards, and how they impact the social, political, economic and security systems that underpin state stability. This includes implications for food, water, and energy systems, the relationship of climate change to migration, and the level of preparedness of existing governance systems in the face of these changes. The chapter then offers recommendations for addressing these unprecedented changes, consistent with the Responsibility to Prepare and Prevent (R2P2) framework (Werrell et al., 2017). This includes an argument for an ambitious effort to improve early warning capabilities around climate security, and to climate-proof development and conflict interventions in order to lessen state fragility.

PHYSICAL CLIMATE HAZARDS

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) “Special Report on 1.5 Celsius” (2018) noted that even at 1.5 degrees of warming, “regions at disproportionately higher risk include Arctic ecosystems, dryland regions, small-island developing states, and least developed countries” and within these locations, impacts would be felt most by “disadvantaged and vulnerable populations, some indigenous peoples, and local communities dependent on agricultural or coastal livelihoods.” While 1.5 is already challenging for many of the world’s fragile states, the 2021 IPCC AR6 reports underscored that the world almost certainly should prepare for average warming above 1.5°C (IPCC, 2021). The report, *Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability*, released in February 2022 assesses that there is at least a greater than 50 percent likelihood that the world will reach or exceed 1.5°C in the near-term even under low-emissions scenarios (IPCC, 2022). Experts assess that a scenario in which the world warms by 2°C could happen as early as 2034 under continued high carbon emissions, while a moderate emissions projection puts crossing the 2° threshold as early as 2038 (Hausfather, 2020). Therefore, when assessing and planning for future fragility risks it is prudent to assume that the “best case” warming scenarios are increasingly unlikely. Examining the expected physical hazards climate change will bring at these temperature levels underscores the assessment that climate change is likely to create new fragilities in states currently considered resilient.

Physical climate hazards of concern include acute or rapid-onset shocks that are intense but temporally limited. Global warming is increasing the frequency and intensity while changing the timing and location of such events, leading to unprecedented extreme weather events (IPCC, 2012). Examples of acute shocks include monsoons, hurricanes, or other storms with record winds and rainfall, as well as heatwaves and wildfires. The primary impact of rapid-onset hazards is physical damage and temporary forced displacement, though repeated acute shocks can render geographies unlivable, leading to more permanent economic damage that can induce involuntary migration. Slow-onset climate hazards are those that develop over a longer period of time, years, or even decades. These include desertification, degradation of farmland or forests, salinization of freshwater river basins, sea level rise, and ocean acidification, all of which can compound one another or be mutually reinforcing (Schäfer et al., 2021).

These hazards present longer-term economic and socio-political risks to states, and can lead to both voluntary and forced migration.

The IPCC report on adaptation and vulnerability released in February 2022 notes that warming has already led to some irreversible impacts (IPCC, 2022). Therefore, significant increases in investments in, and deployments of, adaptation measures – actions taken to lessen the impact of climate impacts – in tandem with more aggressive mitigation measures are paramount. Increasing deployment of adaptation measures which are flexible, multi-sectoral, inclusive, and mindful of long-term impacts increases resilience of communities vulnerable to climate change and can shore up fragile governance. However, poorly-deployed adaptation measures, or maladaptation, can also add to long-term fragility. Some adaptation measures can be deployed in isolation or seek to solve problems in the short term with little regard for long-term fall-out (IPCC, 2022). In fragile states, deployment of adaptive measures cannot afford to be haphazard and ill-considered. This challenge is amplified by the fact that so little climate financing has traditionally flowed to fragile states, and challenges abound in implementing climate adaptation efforts in such states, including security, higher costs, variability, and limited state capacity (Reda and Wong, 2021). Without proper consideration of long-term impacts and the full situational context, adaptation measures in fragile states can easily become maladaptation and result in greater overall vulnerability to climate risks.

SYSTEMIC FRAGILITY RISKS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

The interplay between slow-onset hazards and more rapid shocks contributes to a vicious cycle that renders already fragile states more vulnerable and opens new vulnerabilities in seemingly stable states. Over time, slow-onset hazards undermine the resilience capacity of states so that when acute shocks occur, governments and communities cannot cope. Both types of hazards intersect with other drivers of fragility, as discussed elsewhere in this *Handbook* (see Chapters 2 and 7). To explore the systemic nature of these risks, we have identified three main pathways by which climate hazards exacerbate fragility, instability, and conflict risks: climate change and food security; climate change and water security; and climate change and migration. Each of these pathways is amplified by poor or unprepared governance in affected countries. Also, these pathways overlap, and the connections among them will be examined as well. Within each pathway, there are direct and indirect risks.

Climate Change and Food Security

At the United Nations World Food Summit of 1996, the body defined food security as existing “when all people at all times have access to sufficient, safe, nutritious food to maintain a healthy and active life” (World Food Summit Plan of Action, 1996). Most experts agree that food security is composed of the following dimensions: *Food availability* – sufficient quantities of food are available on a consistent basis; *food access* – sufficient resources are available to obtain appropriate foods for a nutritious diet; and *food use* – food is able to be utilized appropriately based on knowledge (Food Security: Policy Brief, 2006). As climate change is already negatively affecting all dimensions, overall insecurity will increase as temperatures rise. By nearly any measure, global food security has decreased in recent years, reversing decades of progress. The UN maintains it is the intersection of climate change and conflict

trends driving this reversal, amplified by Covid-19 since 2020. In 2020, the UN estimated the prevalence of global undernourishment jumped from around 8.4 percent to 9.9 percent, after having remained virtually unchanged from 2014 to 2019 (FAO et al., 2020).

Recent data also confirms significant increases in the number of people facing acute food insecurity, defined as the point when a person's life or livelihood is in immediate danger due to lack of food, in 2020–2021. According to Global Network Against Food Crises, an estimated 161 million people experienced “crisis” levels of acute food insecurity in 2021, a nearly 4 percent increase over 2020. An additional 227 million people were estimated to be in “stressed” acute food insecurity, one step away from crisis, almost 7 percent more than in 2020 (Food Security Update, 2022). Weather extremes were the main driver for 23.5 million people experiencing crisis levels of food insecurity (or worse) concentrated in eight African countries, an increase of 7.8 million from 2020 (Global Report on Food Crises, 2022). Analysis of global warming trajectories indicate food security risks will increase in years to come. A 2015 study from the US Global Change Research Program (USGCRP) found that over time, warming temperatures will “affect global, regional, and local food security by disrupting food availability, decreasing access to food, and making utilization more difficult.” Though the highest risks fall on poor populations and tropical regions, the USGCRP noted that damaging outcomes are likely in all geographies after 2050 in high emissions scenarios (Brown et al., 2015).

The 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine has showcased the inability of the already brittle global food system to absorb shocks as it has done in the past. The impact of decreased cereal, gas, and fertilizer exports from Ukraine, Russia, and Belarus has led to decreased supply and increased prices, all of which will be particularly challenging for fragile states (Hendrix, 2022). Of the 26 countries that receive over 50 percent of their imported wheat from Ukraine and Russia, 11 of them are in Africa and the remaining 15 are scattered across the Middle East and Eastern Europe. In the short term, maize and wheat prices were particularly affected, as prior to the conflict Ukraine and Russia account for nearly 30 percent of global wheat exports and nearly 15 percent of global maize exports (UNCTAD, 2022). In the long term, the reduction of fertilizer and gas exports from Russia will reduce the yields possible from other agriculturally producing countries (Polansek and Mano, 2022). Climate impacts are also affecting measures meant to fill the gaps left by the Ukraine crisis – for example, India initially stepped up to say it would sell wheat globally but as of May 2022 had halted all exports, given the reduced harvest due to the spring 2022 climate-driven heatwave which destroyed acres of crops (Shih and Masih, 2022).

Example from Ethiopia

One example of how climate change can contribute to food insecurity and drive instability is found in Ethiopia, which as of 2022 remained gripped in a civil war. The central government was in conflict with the Tigray region between November 2020 and November 2022, leaving thousands dead and millions displaced. Both sides have been accused of conflict-related atrocities. In June 2021, the UN declared a famine as southern and north-eastern Ethiopia were in the grip of a severe drought in addition to the civil war raging between Tigrayan rebel forces and government troops, the *Guardian* reported. UNICEF appealed for £23.7m for essential supplies, with more than 6.8 million people in need of humanitarian assistance, without which “ce sera la catastrophe [it will be a disaster].” According to its estimates, almost 850,000 children risked severe malnourishment “due to a combination of drought, conflict and economic

downturn”, the paper explained. The country has seen the failure of “three consecutive rainy seasons” and a locust invasion, leading to crop failures, livestock deaths and malnutrition.

In September 2021, at a UN Security Council meeting on climate change and security, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken included Ethiopia on a list of countries where “Climate change [is] making things less peaceful, less secure, and rendering response more challenging” (Lederer and Borenstein, 2021). Of course, the proximate drivers of the current conflict are socio-political, yet Secretary Blinken is right to point to climate change as a driver of instability, as it has undermined the country’s resilience and increased its citizens’ vulnerability to food crises, particularly given the country’s reliance on subsistence agriculture. A 2019 study found that eastern Tigray experienced a decrease in annual rainfall between 1983 and 2015 and increased mean annual temperatures in the same time period, and that these changes have negatively impacted farmers in the region (Kahsay et al., 2019). A separate study found that vulnerability to climate change and variability is negatively linked to social and economic developments, with the most exposed farming communities showing a relatively low capacity for adaptation (Gebrehiwot and van der Veen, 2013). On top of these slow-onset stressors, in 2020 the country faced the worst locust plague in 25 years, which destroyed 200,000 hectares of land (Negeri, 2020). Scientists argue climate change contributed to the plague, as warmer oceans and more rainfall allowed more generations of breeding in a short timespan (Khan, 2020).

Interestingly, in 2019 the Fragile States Index identified Ethiopia as “most improved,” cautiously optimistic that its rise demonstrated the success of political and social reforms towards building resilience (Blyth and Moges, 2019). Though myriad factors contributed to the ongoing conflict, the aforementioned underlying climate change-driven vulnerabilities are not always captured in such indices. However, a 2020 report on Ethiopian fragility from the Country Indicators for Foreign Policy project at Carleton University identified the nexus dynamics at play in the country, noting, “Environmental stressors, as a secondary driver of fragility, have multidimensional reach as they exacerbate fragility in other clusters. This is particularly true of the State’s poor management of the IDP crisis and climate-induced inter-communal conflict over scarce resources” (Rameshshanker et al., 2020).

Climate Change and Water Security

Numerous scientific studies conclude that global water stress is rising, owing to climate-induced supply reduction, rising demand, and decreased quality. Billions of people around the world are currently facing physical water scarcity for at least part of each year, with billions more to be added in the coming decades. The United Nations forecasts that 1.8 billion people will be living in areas of water scarcity by 2025. A full two-thirds of the world’s population could then be in a state of water *stress*, meaning that they will face not only a shortage of the total volume of available water but also inadequate water quality and accessibility (WWAP, 2012). Climate change affects water security in multiple ways – for example, sea level rise salinates groundwater, harming agriculture and drinking water; changes to rainfall patterns compromise the availability of freshwater resources inland; more frequent and more intense storms disrupt sanitation systems, particularly in urban settings; and changing weather patterns move water-, food-, and vector-borne diseases into new territories (IPCC, 2021; Ranasinghe et al., 2021). There are vast disparities in how these effects are felt both within and between states, and in

nearly all cases it is not climate change alone driving water insecurity but climate's exacerbating impact on existing governance and infrastructure weakness.

Given these stressors, it is not surprising that the Pacific Institute's Water Conflict Chronology finds that conflicts over water have increased in the past two decades. Scientist Peter Gleick notes that of the conflicts over access to water since 2000, one-fourth have occurred in the Middle East, South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa – all areas already facing severe climate change impacts (Sengupta, 2022). Additionally, the vast majority of these conflicts have occurred within, not between, states, underscoring the impact of water insecurity on state fragility (Schwartzstein, 2021). Violent extremist groups are also exploiting water strain; for example, experts assess that the recruitment campaigns of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria benefited from the pressure that droughts and poor water management placed on local populations (King, 2015).

Example from Iraq

Basra, Iraq illustrates the nexus of water insecurity, climate change, and fragility. This city of approximately 4 million people sits on the Shatt al-Arab River, created by the confluence of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers before emptying into the Persian Gulf. Due to a combination of climate change effects, upstream infrastructure development, and poor governance practices, the Iraqi government in 2018 estimated that the water flow in the Tigris and Euphrates had been reduced by 30 percent since the 1980s (Von Lossow, 2018). Meanwhile, due to the combination of diminished freshwater flow, sea level rise, and environmental degradation, saltwater intrusion into the region has increased, negatively impacting agriculture and fish farming (Ahmed and Al-Zewar, 2020; Abdullah et al., 2016). The lack of clean water in the city has led to periodic outbreaks of waterborne disease, as well as the eruption of anti-government protests. As of January 2019, an estimated 15,000 people had been displaced in the region due to water shortages (Guiu, 2020). Developments in Basra have contributed to broader instability and political challenges in an already fragile country, and climate change-induced sea level rise will only make water problems more acute in the coming years.

Climate Change and Migration

Climate change-driven acute shocks and slow-onset stressors are contributing to increased irregular migration across the globe – a trend that will only increase in years to come as temperatures warm. Acute, time-limited shocks such as typhoons and floods initially result in temporary displacement of large numbers of people, though as these hazards become more frequent and more intense, they may lead to more permanent migration. Slow-onset stressors, such as degradation of farmland, salinization of freshwater basins, sea level rise, and unlivable wet-bulb temperatures are more likely to lead to permanent displacement. Most climate-related migration initially occurs within states, from rural to urban areas, but can cross borders as well, particularly as cities become more stressed (Zaveri et al., 2021). Though migration can be a positive adaptation strategy, it can also precipitate instability and risk conflict when combined with other political, societal, and security challenges.

Data from the UN High Commission on Refugees shows that, over the last decade, weather-related crises have triggered more than twice as much displacement as conflict and violence (UNHCR, 2021). Since 2010, extreme weather has forced around 21.5 million people a year to move, on average. This is a drop in the bucket, however, compared to 216 million

people estimated to move within countries by 2050 under high-warming scenarios (Clement et al., 2021). Climate migration within states can further stress already fragile urban environments, particularly when it is irregular or comes in quick waves. Several cities in sub-Saharan Africa, for example, are already the fastest growing in the world. As of 2018, the UN estimated 238 million Africans lived in informal settlements or slums, representing 53.6 percent of the urban population (Jensen, 2019). Such rapid and intense growth stresses urban infrastructure, governance, and social services, while also increasing the vulnerability of migrants themselves to recruitment by criminal or extremist groups in addition to further climate impacts such as flooding and the urban heat island effect (Bustos et al., 2021; Rana and Ilina, 2021).

Climate Change, Governance, and a World with No Analogue

In all of these pathways, a key theme is the role of governance. As such, a singular focus on states that are deemed the most fragile by existing standards of fragility (i.e. often the poorest states) may miss vulnerabilities in middle or higher-income states where citizens have different expectations – such as an expectation of general safety from wildfires, or a consistent provision of fresh water resources. In this context, a wide body of academic and policy literature has demonstrated that many states are already strained and struggling to meet their citizens’ needs. The 2040 Global Trends Report (2021) from the US National Intelligence Council noted that there is a “growing mismatch” between what publics expect and what states are able or willing to deliver. Climate change contributes to that mismatch, creating an additional layer of stress on top of already strained states, and interfering with governments’ abilities to deliver goods and services to their populations.

This mismatch is central to understanding state fragility and how climate change interacts with it. In order to function, states need to be perceived by their publics as both representative and capable (i.e. capable of meeting fundamental expectations). As noted by Werrell and Femia (2016):

State sovereignty, in the modern sense, is built on both a state’s output and input legitimacy. A state’s output legitimacy involves its ability to meet its citizens’ demands for basic resources or prosperity (e.g., food, water, energy, employment), while a state’s input legitimacy involves its ability to offer citizens a say in how they are governed (e.g., voting and legal recourse). Climate change, by compromising a state’s ability to provide basic resources to its population, can significantly erode its output legitimacy. This erosion can contribute to state fragility and state failure, which in turn has implications for regional and international security.

When examining the nexus of climate change-induced water stress and conflict, Dr. Marcus King identified a governance feedback cycle that accelerates fragility, stating: “Policy becomes harder to implement as water crises worsen, a country becomes more unstable, and the national government loses effective control” (King, 2019). As this cycle continues, it becomes ever more difficult for governments to take the actions needed to allow communities to adapt to and manage climate hazards. Instead, the combination of government mismanagement with increasingly severe climate impacts increases fragility and risks of violence. A key challenge in analyzing and forecasting fragility going forward is the fact that climate change is eroding the baseline understanding of “normal” in many geographies around the world. As the US Department of Defense’s Climate Risk Analysis (2021) noted, “analyses based on his-

torical frameworks will not be sufficient to prepare for future risks complicated by a changing climate.”

Examples from the Middle East and North Africa

The strain of climate change on governance structures was on display across the Middle East and North Africa in the summer of 2021. Iraq, Lebanon and Iran – which all rank highly on the Fragile States Index – faced violent street protests after record temperatures and drought caused water and energy shortages. For these countries, it was the combination of climate stress with infrastructure mismanagement, poor governance, and water weaponization over many years that led to the demonstrations. In Iraq, failure to modernize the energy grid and reliance on energy imports from Iran, means that power cuts are experienced year round, worsening as temperatures rise and more energy is needed for air conditioning. More intense droughts, and new upstream dams in Turkey, and even some northern Iraqi provinces, are leading to water shortages throughout Iraq, though more seriously concentrated in the south. These climatic conditions only put pressure on the perceived, and actual, discrimination in resource governance which has been favoring the northern provinces, in part because some northern provinces have more independent regional governance (i.e. Kurdistan region), all of which has led to a geographic schism in Iraq which pits southern Iraqis against northern, and all against the central government. Hotter and drier conditions served as an ignition point for building discontent with the central government, all of which culminated in the July 2021 protests in Baghdad (Davison, 2021; Birkman et al., 2022; Cherry, 2021).

Meanwhile, governments in Algeria and Turkey – states considered less fragile but still at “elevated warning” by the Fragile States Index – tried to deflect responsibility for poor performance in fighting climate change-induced fires by blaming their opponents and already marginalized groups. In Turkey the government claimed the Kurds started the fires, while Algerian leaders circulated reports that the fires were started by Israeli and Moroccan-linked “terrorist” groups (Oshin, 2021; Ahmed and El Jechtimi, 2021). This behavior contributes to increasing risks of violence and conflict. Relatedly, Busby has noted that exclusionary political institutions are a key determining factor as to whether a physical climate hazard tips over into a climate security risk (Busby, 2022).

ADDRESSING THE FRAGILE STATES–CLIMATE CHANGE NEXUS

In recent years, security and development organizations at the state and international level have made greater efforts to more fully integrate climate change considerations into existing fragility and conflict prevention programs, such as the UN Climate Security Mechanism, the US Global Fragility Act, and others outlined below. However, there is still room for deepened integration in order to build resilience and adaptation going forward. These suggestions build on concepts first raised by the Center for Climate and Security in its Responsibility to Prepare and Prevent (R2P2) framework, including: data-driven early warning and rapid response capabilities and “climate proofing” development and conflict prevention interventions (Werrell et al., 2017).

Improving Early Warning Capabilities

The R2P2 framework noted that one of the most powerful tools available for preventing climate change-related instability and conflict is the unprecedented foresight available about climate hazards – particularly in comparison to other international security risks (Werrell et al., 2017). Predictive modeling of climate impacts at more precise, granular levels is improving all the time, thanks in large part to improvements in machine learning and artificial intelligence capabilities. For example, climate scientists are leveraging artificial intelligence capabilities to conduct “large ensemble assessments” – which are multiple runs of the same climate model using slightly different starting-point conditions. Using these ensembles, scientists can better depict the range of potential regional climate trends (Deser, 2020).

The challenge, however, is getting policymakers and practitioners to integrate such capabilities into their planning and strategies on a regular basis. More standardized hubs could help – at the UN for global assessments, at the African Union, the European Union, or NATO for regional assessments, and within individual countries for more tailored assessments. In March 2022, UN Secretary General António Guterres announced that he had tasked the World Meteorological Association to lead an effort so that everyone on Earth would be protected by an early warning system for climate change and extreme weather in the next five years (World Meteorological Organization, 2022). This would be a good step forward, but to truly warn about fragility or conflict risk, systems that warn about physical climate risks must be paired with quantitative and qualitative analysis about economic, political, and social change. The Fragile States Index does include some climate related data but is less anticipatory and forward looking than is needed.

Climate Proofing Development and Conflict Intervention

Developing better early warning systems is important but not sufficient for preparing fragile states to manage climate hazards. Donor countries and multilateral organizations have developed myriad approaches aimed at preventing conflict in at-risk states, and climate change must be integrated into these approaches in order to manage the risk. Integration must include bringing new climate related data and models into strategy development and decision-making, as well as better climate risk related training and education for personnel, and performance objectives and reporting requirements related to climate action.

The US Global Fragility Act

The updated US Global Fragility Strategy, released in April 2022, presents one opportunity to develop best practices for such integration. In 2019, the US Congress passed the “Global Fragility Act of 2019,” with the goal of creating a new approach to preventing conflict in fragile states by bringing a whole of government, silo-busting strategy to foreign assistance and diplomacy. This type of coordinated, multi-sectoral process is exactly what is needed to ensure climate considerations are well integrated into US foreign policy, and the prologue takes two important steps forward in this direction. First, the new prologue explicitly discusses the role of climate change in shaping state fragility and risks of conflict. The document states:

Climate and environmental crises or hazards are reshaping our world. The Earth’s climate is now changing faster than at any point in the history of modern civilization and will exacerbate most

physical, social, economic, and/or preexisting environmental vulnerabilities. Secondary effects of environmental degradation, vulnerabilities to natural weather and geologic disasters, and climate change include displacement, loss of livelihoods, weakened governments, and in some cases political instability and conflict. We will consider and address the risks posed by the impacts of climate change and other environmental security risks and test new ways of building climate resilience and deepen our understanding of the connections between fragility, peacebuilding and the environment. (Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations, 2022)

Second, the prologue's identification of four focus countries (Haiti, Mozambique, Libya, Papua New Guinea) and one focus region (Coastal West Africa) provides concrete opportunities to develop best practices for integrating climate change into US foreign policy. Over the next ten years – the time horizon indicated in the legislation – policymakers can identify the key climate-related data streams, predictive tools, and climate research that will contribute to a fuller understanding of fragility risks and opportunities for prevention in each locale (Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations, 2022).

Climate Security at the UN

Across the UN, there have been myriad initiatives to understand and address the nexus of climate change, fragility and conflict, yet large gaps remain. One of the most promising developments has been the creation of a Climate Security Mechanism (CSM), jointly established in 2018 by the UN Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA), the UN Development Programme (UNDP), and the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) to examine the connections between climate change and security and to integrate this lens into UN prevention, peacebuilding, and adaptation programming. Additionally, since 2017, the UN Security Council has more routinely addressed climate security concerns and successfully integrated climate change into specific country peacekeeping missions, primarily in Africa. For example, the Council has recognized the negative effects of climate change in the Sahel, West Africa, Somalia, Mali, Sudan, South Sudan, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Central Africa. It has successfully integrated climate change into renewed peacekeeping mandates in Cyprus and Iraq as well (United Nations Climate Security Mechanism Progress Report, 2021).

More can be done, however, to strengthen these initiatives – primarily in the form of resources. For example, member states could provide funding to the CSM to expand the deployment of climate security advisors – positions within peacekeeping missions aimed at enhancing coordination, collecting evidence, and advancing practice within these operations (Krampe and de Coning, 2021). As of June 2022, only the UN mission in Somalia has an embedded climate security advisor. As countries look for other ways to advance the integration of climate change and conflict prevention at the UN, they should focus on building sustainable infrastructure, such as the creation of an office for climate and security within the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs at the Assistant Secretary General level, a division for climate and security within the Department of Peace Operations, and a climate security unit within the Office of Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. Another approach would be the establishment of regional Climate Security Crisis Watch Centers which feed into a UN-wide Climate Security Crisis Watch Center. Such centers would have the triple benefits of: cultivating a shared data driven community; giving regional organizations a role in the success of a global climate security data network; and connecting these organizations through their common mission (Brock et al., 2021). These approaches, while still requiring significant

engagement across the institution to develop, would avoid the pitfalls of focusing too heavily on the UNSC, where continued skepticism about climate security and an obstructionist approach from China and Russia can stymie progress.

CONCLUSION

Climate change is already reshaping the landscape of fragile states around the globe – both by exacerbating existing fragilities and creating new ones. The seemingly stable political systems of the past are not necessarily the stable systems of the future, given unprecedented and rapid climatic changes, the pressures this places on land, food, water, and energy, and varied public expectations related to the availability of these basic resources. Understanding the pathways through which climate hazards affect such change is the first step toward building integrative solutions and approaches to preventing and managing these risks.

Given the unprecedented nature of these climatic changes, the solutions cannot be small. Without major increases in resources for climate resilience measures, as well as much higher levels of prioritization of these issues, few nations will be equipped to adequately manage increasingly severe and potentially catastrophic climate shocks. In this context, consistent with the R2P2 framework, the international community must make significant strides in improving early warning capabilities, and climate-proofing all development and conflict interventions across the globe. Anything less comprehensive in scope will leave too many people, and the international system, ill-equipped for the extreme changes to come, leading to rising state fragility, conflict, and unacceptable costs for human lives and livelihoods.

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14. Urban fragility

Robert Muggah

INTRODUCTION

Rapid urbanization and the rise of cities are routinely singled out as among the most consequential mega-trends of the twenty-first century. For most of human history, most people lived in small communities in rural areas. This changed in the wake of unprecedented urban growth since the beginning of the twentieth century. Today, over half of the world's population, more than 4.6 billion people, reside in cities and towns and the proportion of urban dwellers is expected to surge to at least three quarters of the total global population, or 7 billion people, by 2050 (UN, 2018). While cities offer multiple benefits over rural living, not all of them are prospering equally. Whereas cities such as Seoul and Stockholm have thrived in recent decades, Mosul and Mogadishu are languishing. To be sure, the fortunes of cities have ebbed and waned over the past few thousand years. But the speed and scale of urbanization over the past century are unlike anything that has come before. And with over 90 percent of all future urbanization for the next 50 years set to occur in Africa and Asia, the role of cities as foundations for stability and development is a growing concern. Discussion of so-called “feral”, “failed”, and “fragile” cities and slums that spread violence, displacement, and disease are now commonplace in national security strategies of Western countries (Norton, 2003).

While these anxieties are understandable, they are premised on a superficial binary reading of fragility in cities. Cities are never either entirely fragile or completely resilient. Rather, properties of fragility and resilience coexist in all cities. All cities, from Kabul to Canberra experience a dynamic continuum of fragilities that vary in their intensity, characteristics, and duration. What is more, these conditions typically vary over time and space. It is incorrect and ahistorical, then, to speak of “fragile cities” as if complex urban ecosystems exist in a steady state. Rather, it may be more useful to speak of a diverse array of fragilities that influence the capacity and willingness of municipal authorities, private enterprises, and civic entities to deliver basic services and maintain the quality of life of residents (Muggah, 2015a, 2015b). A starting point to anticipate, mitigate, adapt to, and manage these fragilities, then, is to define, categorize, and measure them, which is the focus of the present chapter.

Notwithstanding a rich literature on state fragility in recent decades, there is considerably less attention in the academic and policy communities to “cities” as a unit of analysis. Indeed, the consideration of the subnational and urban dimensions of fragility and resilience is a comparatively novel development and tentatively engaged by international institutions ranging from the OECD to the UN and World Bank (OECD, 2020; UNDP, 2016; and World Bank Fragility, Conflict and Violence program¹). Building on the seminal contributions of Carment et al. (2006), Carment and Samy (2017), Rotberg (2003), and Zartman (1995), among others, the author draws on Ziaja, Grävingsholt and Kreibaum (2019) who define fragility as the relative level of state authority (to exert force/violence); the capacity of public services (to administer and deliver services); and the extent of state legitimacy (to achieve the consent of the population). While originally intended to describe national fragility, the typology can be

exported to the municipal and metropolitan scale. The author tested out these concepts in the context of humanitarian operations (Muggah and Savage, 2012, where the term “fragile city” was used for the first time), poverty reduction (Muggah, 2012), and a wider public (Muggah, 2013a, 2013b, 2016a, 2016b, 2016c, 2017). Although a handful of researchers are developing frameworks that connect urban fragility to erosion of social compacts and degradation of city capacities (see, for example, Selby and DeSouza, 2019 and Muggah, 2014) or external pressures such as urbanization, migration, and climate change (see, for example, Schreiber et al., 2016 and Commins, 2018), scholarship is comparatively limited (see, for example, Eskandari et al., 2021 and Muggah, 2015a, 2015b). Policy makers share common preoccupations about so-called turbo-urbanization, the growing pressures in cities and their informal peripheries, including in parts of the world described by development banks as low-income and at risk of fragility. In fact, the urban population of the roughly 40-odd countries falling into these categories has risen by more than 325 percent since the 1970s (IDMC, 2014).

This chapter examines urban fragility across the three dimensions of state authority, capacity and legitimacy. This approach offers a novel theoretical contribution by helping identify and systematize actual and potential risks and protective factors that can and do affect cities. Despite their growing political and economic clout in global affairs and rising concern with urban warfare, cities are still largely neglected in international relations. The chapter also offers policy insights in helping multiple sectors advance thinking about the manifold dimensions of fragility and entry-points to bolstering resilience. The mapping of urban fragility also has practical value in that it provides insight into potential sites for intervention. Equipped with the proper foresight, municipal authorities may be in a better position to prepare for fragility and foster antifragility in an uncertain world. The next section provides a short overview of some of the underlying factors shaping fragility in cities. The third section traces out the evolving conceptualization of urban fragilities. The fourth section explores a number of metrics used to quantify fragilities in cities and the chapter concludes with a brief discussion of how urban fragility can be reversed.

THE URBANIZATION “THREAT”

The security and sustainable development of nations is strongly shaped by the progress or not of primary, secondary, and tertiary cities. Primary, or primate cities, are the largest cities by size and population in a given country, state, or region. Secondary and tertiary cities are likewise defined by population, size, and function, but are lower down on the urban hierarchy. The reason for the primacy of cities is straightforward: people, capital, and ideas are concentrated in the metropolis. It was not always this way. While people have been moving to cities for roughly 10,000 years, the pace of urbanization over the past century is unprecedented. The period from the late nineteenth century to the middle of the twentieth century witnessed a dramatic rural–urban transition in most parts of North America and Western Europe. The latter half of the twentieth century, in particular, registered a sharp increase in the pace and scale of rural–urban and inter-urban migration in many lower- and middle-income settings, notably in Latin America and parts of East Asia. Just 3 percent of the global population resided in a city in the early nineteenth century. Today, the proportion of people living in cities ranges from under 50 percent in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia to well over 80 percent throughout Europe and the Americas (Tables 14.1 and 14.2).

Table 14.1 Global urbanization trends by regions (percentage)

Region	1950	2021	2050	Growth (per year)
Asia	17.5	51.6	66.1	1.9
Africa	14.2	43.9	58.9	3.5
Europe	51.7	75.1	83.6	0.3
LAC	41.3	81.4	87.8	1.2
North America	63.9	82.7	88.9	0.9
Oceania	62.5	68.2	72.0	1.0

Source: UN 2018 (World Urbanization Prospects).

Table 14.2 Global rural and urban population growth and projections (in hundreds of millions)

Year	Urban	Rural	Percentage urban
1950	750	1785	29
1955	877	1895	31
1960	1023	2009	33
1965	1188	2151	35
1970	1354	2346	36
1975	1538	2540	37
1980	1754	2704	39
1985	2007	2865	41
1990	2290	3040	42
1995	2575	3175	44
2000	2868	3276	46
2005	3215	3326	49
2010	3594	3363	51
2015	3981	3401	53
2020	4378	3416	56
2025	4774	3410	58
2030	5167	3383	60
2035	5555	3336	62
2040	5938	3272	64
2045	6312	3191	66
2050	6679	3092	68

Source: UN 2018 (World Urbanization Prospects).

While urbanization has largely slowed in wealthier settings, it continues to set a blistering pace across sub-Saharan Africa and South and Southeast Asia, in particular. Another 2.5 billion people will be added to the estimated 4.6 billion already living in cities by 2050.² A handful of countries will be among the principal drivers of urbanization over the next three decades: Nigeria will add over 212 million new city residents, China will contribute 292 million, and India an additional 400 million urban inhabitants (Goldin and Muggah, 2020). And while tens of millions of people are migrating to megacities and large metropolises in lower and middle-income countries, the vast majority are migrating to intermediate secondary and tertiary cities with under a million inhabitants. The rapid population explosion of cities in lower and middle-income countries over the coming decades is in contrast to the comparatively slower and even negative growth of cities in North America and Western Europe.

The overall experience of urbanization has proven to be a relatively successful experiment for most, albeit not all, people. Statistically, city life confers many advantages over rural life, with residents typically living longer, healthier, more educated, and prosperous lives than their non-city counterparts. Smart, digital or intelligent cities, while raising vexing questions about surveillance, privacy, and equity, are also transforming urban living through digital connectivity and optimization of services. Yet while some global cities are thriving (and some are deeply unequal and inaccessible) many intermediate and smaller-sized cities are falling behind. Cities registering fragilities, where there is an inability and/or unwillingness of public authorities to deliver basic services to specific areas or groups, are particularly vulnerable. In Latin America, for example, as many as 160 million of the region's 558 million urban residents live in slums and favelas (Muggah, 2018). In Africa, 238 million of Africa's 567 million urbanites live in informal settlements and shantytowns (Muggah and Kilcullen, 2016). And in Asia, there are around 600 million slum dwellers out of a total estimated urban population of 2 billion.

Many rapidly urbanizing and underdeveloped cities are facing challenges governing, attracting talent and investment, and delivering rudimentary services. The combination of climate shocks and stresses, geopolitical volatility, irregular migration, and economic and market pressures can and often do disrupt their ability to cope and adapt. While inhabitants of lower-income and informal settlements in these urban centers exhibit tremendous innovation and experimentation, their neighborhoods may also be stigmatized, characterized as “no-go” areas and marginalized in city planning and provision of basic services. Cities and neighborhoods experiencing chronic fragilities can, in the words of Giorgio Agamben, become “states of exception,” alternately faced with under- and over-policing, limited, low-quality or untenured housing, low access to public utilities, and experience a combination of predation and neglect from public, private, and criminal actors. Entire sections of some cities may experience factors that inhibit upward and outward mobility, spatially and socio-economically constraining residents across generations.

CONCEPTUALIZING CITY FRAGILITIES

The association between fragility and cities emerged comparatively recently in the security and development landscape. One reason for this was the growing recognition among geographers and demographers of the unprecedented dimensions of urbanization and an acknowledgement of the pivotal, if neglected, role of cities in preventing, mitigating and responding to conflict, disaster and development (ICM and IPI, 2015). While the United Nations was traditionally less inclined to engage with subnational and local governments for diplomatic reasons, a United Nations High Level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda noted that “cities are where the battle for sustainable development would be won or lost” (United Nations, 2013). Indeed, issues of urban fragility are increasingly being taken up within the UN.³ These topics are also increasingly addressed across the wider development community (World Bank, 2011), alongside military and humanitarian sectors concerned with the growing risks of urban warfare (ICRC, 2017, 2020; Spencer, 2022; UNDP, 2016; US Army, 2014; World Bank, 2020).

More recently, international financial institutions, including the World Bank⁴ and its sister banks as well as intergovernmental bodies such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)⁵ and the Cities Alliance,⁶ among others, recognized

the importance not just of fragile states, but also fragile settings and situations and are actively promoting concepts such as urban upgrading, urban renewal, and urban resilience.

At the most general level, city fragility consists of “discrete metropolitan units whose governance arrangements exhibit a declining ability and/or willingness to deliver on the social contract” (Muggah, 2014, p. 1). This characterization encompasses not just shocks and stresses to political, economic, and social urban institutions but also profound and sustained disruptions to critical infrastructure and ecological systems. There are of course discrete spatial, temporal, and demographic dimensions to urban fragility since not all places and people are affected similarly at the same time. The uneven characteristics and dynamics of urban fragility, including the ways in which it is distributed and reinforces multiple categories of inequality, can also contribute to eroding and even undermining the social contract between public authorities and citizens, especially the most disadvantaged residents (DeBoer et al., 2016).

Seen this way, urban fragility is more widely distributed than is often assumed. It is not confined to low- or middle-income settings, much less “fragile countries” as defined by the World Bank (2021). Indeed, all cities can be said to experience and exhibit fragilities, albeit to varying degrees; the subnational variation and multidimensionality of fragility are discussed in OECD (2015) and Desai and Forsberg (2020). Nor is fragility confined to a particular regime type or even a particular country. Urban centers in democracies and autocracies alike can exhibit fragility, especially when it comes to delivering services – education, health, safety, water, food, electricity, waste management – to their most vulnerable populations, including informal settlements and slums. Moreover, experiences of urban fragility can vary dramatically within countries and inside cities themselves. Consider that over 40 of the most lethally violent cities in 2021 were located in South, Central, and North America. Fast-growing metropolises such as Acapulco, Caracas, Fortaleza, St Louis, and Memphis have routinely featured violent crime rates far higher than similarly sized cities elsewhere in the world and typically well above the national average (Muggah and Aguirre, 2022). Organized and interpersonal violence, of course, are not the sole or even necessarily the most important markers of state or city fragility. Indeed, there are many metropolises experiencing a spectrum of fragilities that register comparatively low homicide such as Bangui, Dili, and Niamey.

Inevitably, some cities are more at risk of experiencing fragilities than others. Cities battered by a legacy of political upheaval, social unrest, and chronic economic instability and affected by and emerging from armed conflict are typically more vulnerable than those that are not. Cities affected by sustained concentrated disadvantage and constrained social mobility are also more at risk than those where there is a commitment to inclusion, equity, and opportunity. But fragility is hardly confined to lower income countries. Cities in wealthier settings can and do register sharp inequalities, low economic growth, predatory policing, and high levels of victimization and vulnerability to climate risks that severely undermine trust in local government and the faith of residents in the social contract. Nor is fragility a permanent condition: city fragilities are not path dependent. There are countless examples of cities and neighborhoods experiencing chronic fragilities rebounding for the better.⁷ To be sure, the ways in which formal and informal urban systems reproduce governance, order, and services in highly unstable settings are under-examined.

Urban fragilities cannot and should not be reduced to a single monolithic cause or driver. To the contrary, a number of recurrent determinants, or risk factors, increase the susceptibility of fragilities (Ferreira, 2017; Hussain, 2018). To be sure, some cities are prisoners of their geographies and demographics, based in politically, socially, or seismically unstable conditions.

Extreme cases include ancient cities like Corinth, Helike, and Pompeii that were obliterated by earthquakes, volcanoes and floods. Even so, there are hyper modern cities in seismically active areas of Japan that are literally designed to survive and bounce back from frequent natural disasters, including tremors and tsunamis. More common are cities like Angkor Wat, Anuradhapura, and Tikal that ran out of resources owing to a combination of poor planning, repeated skirmishes with neighbors, and natural and human-made disasters that contributed to their untimely collapse.

Etiologically, the concept of fragility derives from theorizing among international relations and political science scholars on collapsed, failing, and failed states in the 1990s (Zartman, 1995; Esty et al., 1998). The focus was originally on how Weberian notions of statehood were giving way to clientelist, neo-patrimonial, and warlord proto states. The fragility concept was used to describe how certain governments were ceding their monopoly of legitimate use of force. In certain circumstances, notably civil war and unrest, some states were unable to maintain control over swathes of territory and the social contract unraveled. While criticized for being overly reductionist and simplistic (Melber, 2016; Beehner and Young, 2014), the idea of fragility caught on in a number of policy circles with a veritable cottage industry of ranking systems emerging to capture changes over time.⁸ The construct was, as noted above, eventually adopted by the World Bank albeit as a means of assuming more risk across its portfolio and fast-tracking loans and grants to highly indebted clients. While treated as pejorative by some states and analytically imprecise by scholars (ICG, 2010), it was eventually adopted by coalitions of self-identified “fragile countries,” including the so-called *g7+* (see also Chapter 22 in this volume) which includes 20 countries.⁹

The delayed extension of the idea of fragility to cities is worth underlining. Part of the reason is the inherent biases in the policy communities, notably international and national diplomats and the scholarly work on which they depended, that were principally concerned with the topic (Independent Commission on Multilateralism, 2015). Yet this blind spot is coming under scrutiny. After all, cities have long been sites of violent contestation and sources of instability. In pre-Westphalian Europe, for example, city states were drivers of expansionism and territorial control. Cities were not just key sites of state-building, including the mobilization of armies and taxation of citizens, but also targets of large-scale violence. As noted by Beall et al. (2013), cities were long plagued by gang and street violence, sectarian fighting, turf wars, and terrorism between urban landlords and other elites. The emergence of cities as relatively safe and secure areas for humans to thrive is a fairly recent innovation. Until the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, most cities were exposed to repeated outbreaks of disease, chronic food insecurity, highly erratic services, a lack of running water, and a host of other threats to societal wellbeing. To a large extent, the preoccupation of national fragility reflects post-Westphalian international political priorities of a handful of nation states and the interests of multilateral institutions (Muggah, 2013a, 2013b).

Animated by concerns with twentieth- and twenty-first-century urbanization alongside the challenges of armed conflict in urban settings, a cadre of scholars and practitioners are revisiting the causes and consequences of city fragilities (Eskandari et al., 2021); allusions to fragile cities were also included in Muggah (2012) and Muggah and Savage (2012). Among them are urbanists, geographers, criminologists, sociologists, and economists focusing on cities in upper, middle, and lower-income contexts. Major humanitarian organizations such as the International Committee of the Red Cross and World Vision, among others, have also expanded their focus on urban, and not just rural, fragilities (ICRC, 2020; World Vision

International, 2021, 2022). While their insights are wide-ranging, and a lively critical voice has likewise emerged underlying the dangers of “securitizing” of cities (Graham, 2009, 2010; Beall, 2007; Miklos and Paoliello, 2017; Hussain, 2018), they are also identifying recurring patterns of risk that animate fragilities that transcend national and socio-economic boundaries (Muggah, 2014). These include structural factors related to the wider historical, political, economic, demographic, and environmental contexts in which cities are formed and operate as well as proximate features of the physical and socio-economic urban environment and population such as income and social inequality, concentrated poverty, unemployment, real and perceived insecurity, and policing and justice deficits (DeBoer et al., 2016).

Notwithstanding the growing interest and investment in urban fragility and resilience, empirical studies of the underlying drivers from lower and middle-income settings are still emerging (Salahub et al., 2021). Research from Western Europe and North America has traditionally tended to focus on the ways in which different types of cities (Glaeser and Sacerdote, 1999) and even specific neighborhoods, city blocks, street corners, and building types (Lowman, 1986; Cohen, 2014) offer intrinsic opportunities for threats owing to political neglect and limited state presence. In other words, violence and victimization (and associated fragilities) are connected to specific places, people, and behaviors. Insights from social disorganization theory also connect higher rates of criminality with a higher density of offenders, percentage of rental housing, and single-headed households (Kubrin and Weitzer, 2003; Vilalta and Muggah, 2014). By way of comparison, scholars from Latin America, Africa, and Asia have highlighted demographic factors and socio-economic conditions such as rapid unregulated urbanization, high levels of impunity, sharp inequalities, and an abundance of young underemployed and unemployed males. Studies focusing on these regions highlight a range of political, social, and economic correlates, underlining their cumulative impact on urban stability (World Bank, 2015; ADB, 2016; Koonings and Kruijt, 2015).

As signaled above, preoccupation with fragilities in cities is rising up the agenda not just of the development community, but also of the military (Spencer and Geroux, 2022; Spencer, 2021a, 2021b; Rozman, 2019; US Army, 2014) and humanitarian sectors (Pavanello et al., 2012; Lucchi, 2010; Harroff-Tavel, 2008; Duijsens, 2010). Cities as diverse as Ciudad Juarez, Karachi, Goma, Johannesburg, Detroit, Medellin, Mogadishu and Rio de Janeiro have been described as “fragile” by a range of commentators and exposed to a host of responses to minimize fragility. Entities as diverse as the US military and the ICRC have signaled urban fragility as among their most urgent concerns, raising a host of legal and operational challenges related to war-fighting and the protection of civilians. Meanwhile, diplomats from Brazil, China, Mexico, Pakistan, and Russia have actively contested the label. They are concerned with how it may negatively affect their reputations for investment and tourism, but more fundamentally, with how the label could open opportunities for intervention and encroach on national sovereignty. Given these political sensitivities, it is hardly surprising that international organizations such as the UN are more reluctant to embrace the term than more narrowly defined membership entities such as the G7+ or OECD.

MEASURING URBAN FRAGILITIES

While clearly diverse in history, size, and organization, cities experiencing fragilities exhibit several shared characteristics. For one, fragilities are both a cause and a consequence of

ruptures of the social contract binding metropolitan authorities and city residents. In such situations urban elites – politically elected and appointed authorities in particular – may lose their ability to regulate and enforce a monopoly on violence. They may also resort to the instrumentalization of state security apparatus or the selective deployment of violence using military, police, or paramilitary proxies (Muggah and de Boer, 2019). In extreme cases, they may share or cede control entirely to militia, gangs, and vigilante groups. Thus, in cities experiencing acute fragilities, entire neighborhoods and slums are controlled by parallel modes of, potentially, criminal governance with norms and rules set by a myriad of armed groups and local authority structures (Lessing, 2021). The ability of urban institutions to coexist, much less resolve, cope, or adapt to these kinds of hybrid regimes, is limited. When municipal authority and service delivery cease to function, this can in exceptional cases give rise to “criminal insurgencies” (Bunker, 2013).

The scale, intensity, and duration of urban fragilities are often a consequence of a breakdown of city authority, capacity, and legitimacy (see Table 14.3). State authority can be both relational, to the international realm, and reflexive, to the domestic polity. The institution of authority streams from an explicit normative claim to the right to rule. When such a claim is considered justified and can be assured through a monopoly on legitimate force, it can contribute to accepted forms of coordination and compliance. State capacity, by contrast, refers to the ability of governments to accomplish discrete policy goals. This can refer to its ability to tax, provide public goods, enforce property rights, and gather information on the population. And state legitimacy comprises the extent to which public institutions are trusted by and resonate with societies. It can be measured by the extent to which residents take the presence of the state and its rules for granted, accept its right to rule, and its position as the highest political authority.

Like nation states, city governments can claim and express authority in a variety of ways. In a basic sense, they may be characterized as exerting high levels of authority when power is exercised, stability is maintained, and basic human rights and freedoms are preserved without the routine resort to coercive force. In such environments, the security apparatus, namely the police and public safety institutions, are functioning and positively regarded. A degree of city authority can also be maintained through the threat or use of brutal force and protection of a narrow elite, but this would forfeit the normative claim to the right to rule. City authority can be said to be declining where there is a political power that is not exerted, and where there is a reliance on paramilitary institutions. And authority erodes further still when mafia and gangs contest city institutions, control territory and populations, and apply a parallel rule of law.

While subject to definitional disputes, city capacity generally refers to the ability of municipal public and public–private institutions, actors, and activities to deliver quality services. As such, it is linked also to the extent of state penetration into society and its ability to deliver public goods. State capacity is typically interpreted in administrative-bureaucratic terms (e.g. water, health, education), but it also has coercive (e.g. law and order) and extractive (e.g. taxation) dimensions. The extent of state capacity is usually reduced to a series of outcome measures as well as procedural functions such as impartiality and efficiency. Where state capacity is weak, there may be underperforming, unevenly applied, or preferential distribution of services. When state capacity is severely eroded, as in the case of cities affected by armed conflict or natural disasters, it may result in the collapse of service delivery altogether.

The degree of city legitimacy relates to the representativeness and openness of government and the nature of its relationship with urban residents (Lamb, 2005; Gilley, 2006). The extent

of confidence of urbanites in municipal institutions and processes such as elections, and the extent to which citizens accept the right of government to rule, are key measures of legitimacy. Quantitative measures of legitimacy include perception surveys of the extent to which governments serve the interests of all, whether decisions reflect personal priorities, and wider conceptions of legality. The legitimacy of city governments weakens in situations where small elite coalitions maintain uncontested authority and where civil society is routinely excluded. It is significantly eroded in contexts where there is no predictable transfer of power and where authority is predatory and corrupt.

Table 14.3 Dimensions of city fragility

	High	Medium	Low
Authority	Stable exercise of power, assurance of stability, guarantee of human rights and non-resort to coercive force (e.g. Helsinki)	Unpredictable exertion of power, resort to formal and informal security institutions, excessive use of force (e.g. Rio de Janeiro)	Absence of clear power authority, non-state and criminal contestation of territory (e.g. Port Moresby)
Capacity	Effective and efficient administrative/bureaucratic, coercive and extractive delivery of services with impartial and evenly distributed outcomes (e.g. Singapore)	Partial and erratic delivery of administrative/bureaucratic, coercive and extractive service delivery with partial and skewed outcomes (e.g. Lagos)	Absent or predatory delivery of administrative/bureaucratic, coercive and extractive services with elite capture and declining outcomes (e.g. Port-au-Prince)
Legitimacy	Representative, transparent, and open government institutions and processes with opportunities for dialogue and redress (e.g. Toronto)	Elite captured government institutions and processes, few platforms for sharing of grievances by civil society and citizens (e.g. Minsk)	Dysfunctional, discredited, and degraded government institutions and processes with no entry-points for civil society engagement (e.g. Mogadishu)

Rather than conceiving of urban fragility as an either-or binary state it is more useful to categorize it as a spectrum of conditions. Indeed, some cities may score more highly in relation to authority but lower in terms of capacity and legitimacy (e.g. Asmara). More unusually, a handful of cities may exhibit a higher degree of legitimacy, but register lower levels of authority and capacity (e.g. São Tomé). While there will invariably be cities scoring high or low across all categories, the majority of cities will exhibit fluctuating shades of fragility. The measurement, monitoring, and analysis of these fragilities could help public, private, and civic authorities identify the most consequential risks and course-correct by investing in protective factors. One could, for example, operationalize Table 14.3 in a given city by quantifying various features of authority, capacity, and legitimacy on a radial diagram, literally mapping out the dimensions of urban fragility. Rather than rank order cities according to an imputed score, it would be possible to superimpose cities atop one another to highlight their relative strengths and weaknesses.

CONCLUSION: REVERSING URBAN FRAGILITY

Virtually every demographic forecast predicts rapid urbanization over the coming three decades. In some parts of the world, namely North America, Europe, and parts of East Asia, urban population growth will slow and city populations will become significantly older. In

others, including Africa and Asia, cities will swell with younger people making up the largest share of the population. In these latter cases in particular, the focus on cities and their fragilities is likely to grow ever more intense. A research agenda that tests the correlates of urban fragility and drivers of city resilience would be useful on both academic and policy fronts. An array of organizations are already designing and developing tools to empirically measure fragilities at the subnational scale. Development banks, banks, real estate and property development companies are also looking into urban fragilities and exploring ways to de-risk investments in emerging market cities.¹⁰

While outside the scope of this chapter, there are a range of strategies that can be considered in strengthening the authority, capacity, and legitimacy of cities. It follows that bold and sustained municipal leadership, robust strategic planning, and the setting of objectives with measurable and attainable targets are critical ingredients of building more resilient urban spaces. So too are enhanced contact, collaboration, and cooperation with civil society, including the co-design and implementation of solutions. Likewise, the effective, efficient, and inclusive delivery of services, including accountable, fair, and predictable policing and criminal justice, are critical for sustaining trust and credibility. Measures to bolster social cohesion and social efficacy at the neighborhood level, especially strategies that focus on at-risk places and people, are also strongly associated with positive returns. All of this should be accompanied with a focus on fostering income, social and racial equality, and the strengthening of dense social networks of reciprocity and support.

There are multiple successful instances of cities – from Medellin and Sao Paulo to Detroit and Newark – that reduced latent fragilities and enhanced resilience through a combination of enlightened leadership, public, private, and non-governmental partnerships, the mobilization of a clear vision focused on priority investments, targeted interventions, and a process of monitoring and evaluating outcomes (Muggah et al., 2016). Likewise, researchers are elaborating frameworks to help systematize factors that influence fragility and resilience and platforms exist to visualize the dynamics of city fragilities over time and space (Muggah, 2015a, 2015b).¹¹ One data visualization tool documenting fragility in over 2,100 cities around the world between 2000 and 2015 found that just 14 percent of the sample scored in the highly fragile range. The majority, some 66 percent, reported average levels of fragility, while 16 percent of all cities reported low fragility.

Although urban fragilities can be slowed and, in some cases, reversed, their consequences are far-reaching. In cities, the legacy of decaying authority, capacity, and legitimacy can intensify the segmentation of public and private urban space, erode social capital and cohesion between neighborhoods and neighbors, and intensify uncertainty, fear, and insecurity. Ultimately, city fragilities are a function of both external and internal factors. They are frequently intertwined with the structural dynamics of urban agglomeration and the competing interests of – and power relations between – groups. Yet, the experience of fragility need not imply that cities cannot rebound and ultimately transform for the better. To the contrary, it is the very resilience of cities that offers a pathway out of fragility and a wellspring of resistance and agency from which insights must be drawn (De Boer et al., 2016). For these reasons, a focus on cities, distinct from nation states, may offer a better approach to thinking about and acting on fragility and resilience.

NOTES

1. See <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/fragilityconflictviolence/overview>.
2. See UN statistical trends of population at <https://population.un.org/wpp/>.
3. The UN University has helped amplify the discussion of urban fragility over the past decade, including <https://cpr.unu.edu/news/impact/visualizing-urban-fragility.html>. UN-Habitat has also explored the concept through its city resilience profiling program. See, for example, <https://habnet.unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/documents/Urban%20Resilience%20and%20fragile%20cities%20Norway.pdf>.
4. See the World Bank's Urban Resilience Program (CRP) established in 2017 at <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/urbandevelopment/brief/resilient-cities-program>.
5. See the OECD's various programs on cities and urban development at <https://www.oecd.org/regional/urban-development.htm>.
6. See <https://www.citiesalliance.org/>.
7. To see a visualization of urban fragility dynamics between 2000 and 2015 in over 2,100 cities, see <https://igarape.org.br/en/apps/fragile-cities-data-visualization/>.
8. See, for example, the Country Indicators for Foreign Policy (CIFP) project at <https://carleton.ca/cifp/about-cifp/>, the Fragile States Index at <https://fragilestatesindex.org/>, the Global Peace Index at <https://www.visionofhumanity.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/GPI-2021-web-1.pdf>, and others.
9. See <https://www.g7plus.org/home/>. Countries include Afghanistan, Burundi, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Liberia, Papua New Guinea, São Tomé and Príncipe, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Solomon Islands, South Sudan, Timor-Leste, Togo, and Yemen.
10. See, for example, Maplecroft vulnerability indices at <https://www.maplecroft.com/risk-indices/environmental-risk/> or the Economist's Safe City index at <https://safecities.economist.com/>.
11. See also fragilecities.igarape.org.br for access to the data visualization.

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15. Understanding horizontal inequalities: the case of Palestinian refugees in Jordan

Zina Nimeh

INTRODUCTION

States can fail for a plethora of complex reasons. Labelling a state as “fragile” encompasses some notion or conceptualization of where a country is measured against a variety of standards, ranging from political to social to economic and beyond. These standards demonstrate the extent to which a state can or cannot provide the basic functions of governance to its population (Carment et al., 2006), and often include inequality measures, as can be found for example in the Fragile States Index Annual Report (Fund for Peace, 2021). However, despite being insightful on the aggregate, incorporating inequality as part of a comprehensive measure does not allow for a deeper understanding of the intricacies behind inequality and its potential sources. This chapter will focus specifically on the element of inequality by examining horizontal inequalities among Palestinian refugees in the context of Jordan.

There is a strong consensus in the literature that inequality contributes to state fragility, lack of social cohesion and instability (Browne, 2013; Anten, 2009). In particular, horizontal inequality as stipulated by Frances Stewart, who highlighted the importance of identifying inequalities between categorically defined groups, can become a deep-rooted catalyst for future conflict, underdevelopment and state failure (Stewart, 2005). Horizontal inequalities can take various economic, social or political forms, and in many instances are viewed as a contributory factor to state fragility (Stewart, 2008). This chapter aims to add empirical evidence to the discussion on the relationship between refugees and horizontal inequality. While the debate is still ongoing on whether the presence of refugees and displaced populations has the potential to increase the risk of subsequent conflict in host and origin countries (Salehyan and Gleditsch, 2006; Rügger, 2019), other arguments indicate that this does not necessarily have to be the case, and that there is still no concrete empirical evidence of a nexus between migration and conflict at an aggregate level (Wiederkehr et al., 2022). A case can be made that the political and social structures are a very important determinant of outcomes of fragility. Understanding those structures is essential in understanding how to overcome such outcomes, and how to craft the necessary policies and programmes to reduce their effect on overall state failure.

Structures of inequality are usually understood in the context of a particular society that evolves over a given period. The task becomes more complicated if during that period new groups enter into the society. The country case of Jordan over the last sixty years reflects such a situation. Jordan, which can be classified as a brittle state, arguably exhibits a case of decline in its legitimacy due to challenges of corruption, effects of climate change, and migration (Hindi et al., 2019).

This chapter examines horizontal inequality and in a multidimensional way. In particular it constructs an index of multidimensional well-being, and decomposes it based on three features of the Palestinian refugee population in Jordan. The first and most important feature is whether

as refugees they were granted nationality or not. The second is what type of refugee they self-ascribe themselves as, based on year and circumstances of entry. The third is whether they reside in a refugee camp. The sample used in this chapter is a cross pooling of two waves of the Jordan Living Conditions Survey (JLCS), 1996 and 2003 (see Appendix A), which constitute the only datasets that exist in Jordan to date that decompose the year of entry, type of refugees and camp residency, and are representative on a national level.

The chapter observes how a policy of granting nationality to some refugee groups versus others upon entry to the country, the placement of refugees in a camp or not, and variation in self-ascription of refugees can produce divergent outcomes for refugees in the long-term in the form of multidimensional outcomes. The next section of the chapter begins by discussing the multidimensional nature of horizontal inequality, followed by a description of the historical background of Palestinian refugee entry into the Jordanian country context, which is characterized by the inflow of refugees since its independence in numbers exceeding the population of the pre-immigration society (Nimeh, 2012), and is considered one of the longest instances of protracted refugees' situations to date (UNHCR, 2017). In the third section, a multidimensional index is created using the methodological underpinnings of the multidimensional well-being measures (Alkire and Foster, 2011; Alkire, 2007). The multidimensional nature of the index is simple and holistic, and it incorporates several dimensions into an aggregated weighted average. The chapter concludes by reflecting on the results, and how they can elucidate the role of horizontal inequality in state fragility, and why that is relevant for policy makers and development practitioners.

THE MULTIDIMENSIONALITY OF HORIZONTAL INEQUALITY

Multidimensionality is an essential feature of horizontal inequality, encompassing socio-economic, political and cultural recognition dimensions which can be proxied through an array of elements (Deere et al., 2018). Horizontal inequalities can potentially predispose countries to fragility and conflict as well as reducing individuals' well-being. Relevant horizontal inequalities include socio-economic, political and cultural status dimensions, and they are particularly damaging when they are consistent across dimensions (Stewart, 2008). The normative question that arises is how to determine what the minimum level of well-being is and how to measure it. In this case a multidimensional index can be created to measure the various outcomes of well-being. This measure can be examined against the different groups, and if the outcome of the index varies according to the different groups (controlling for all other factors), then that would give an indication of a form of horizontal inequality that should be further investigated. Given scarce data, there is often only information for one or two elements within selected dimensions. However, with the availability of data, it is helpful to have a single indicator for the various elements within each dimension, so as to be able to see whether one group is broadly better off in the dimension, for example in health or education (Stewart et al., 2010, p. 25). In the next section this particular case is presented, and the process of group formation is narrated, along with the policies that were implemented as those different groups entered the Jordanian society.

The Case of Palestinian Refugees in Jordan

The modern Jordanian society is very peculiar in that it is characterized by a massive inflow of refugees, and in the policies that were distinctive when dealing with newcomers compared to other host countries. Within its population, Jordan has followed different policies pertaining to different groups; for example, granting nationality with all its rights and entitlements to the majority of the refugees, and granting a less privileged status to a smaller group. Jordan started receiving refugee inflows shortly after its formation in 1946; it was established as a small nation of less than 400,000 people (Hindle, 1964). Table 15.1 gives an overview of the inflow of Palestinian refugees, and the circumstances around their entry into Jordan.

Table 15.1 Estimated inflow of Palestinian refugees into Jordan

Year of entry	Number of refugees	Circumstances
1948	750,000–900,000	Following the Arab–Israeli war
1967	245,000	Following the Six-Day War (60% of them were already displaced within the Palestinian territories from 1948, those groups are classified as 1948–1967 refugees), this group also include Gazan refugees
1991 (originally refugees from 1967)	250,000	Following the Iraqi Invasion of Kuwait and the 1st Gulf War. This resulted in another inflow of the so called “Gulf Returnees” to Jordan. Jordan allowed only Palestinians with Jordanian nationality to stay

Source: Nimeh (2012).

Official numbers of Palestinian refugees in Jordan are difficult to estimate, especially since many Palestinians who moved between the West and the East Bank of the Jordan River were not systematically registered (El Abed, 2004). Unofficial estimates range between 60 and 70 per cent of the total population (Chapin-Metz, 1989; South, 2007); this is arguably due to the classification system of who was considered a Palestinian refugee and who was not a refugee, since official government statistics at the beginning of the refugee inflow did not distinguish between East Bank and West Bank Jordanians. However, this number has never been proven or documented by actual data.

The only two instances on available record for estimating the number of those of Palestinian origin who reside in Jordan are the estimates derived from the JLCS that were collected in Jordan in 1996 and 2003, and used in this chapter. This is the central reason why this data is still valid today, as it uncovers a more nuanced feature of group divisions on a representative scale that more current datasets do not provide. The classification system which was adopted in the surveys was based on self-ascription, whereas the official system used for the official records of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees was devised based on refugee status registration (Arneberg, 1997, p. 13). In Table 15.2, the self-ascribed refugee classification systems are presented and defined.

Table 15.2 Refugee classification system and definitions used for the study

Used in the study (self-ascribed)	Official UN naming (registered)	Definition
1948 Refugee	Refugee	An individual whose place of permanent residence was Palestine in 1948; whose nationality was Palestinian at that time and who left Palestine during the Arab–Israeli war, or was deported from Palestine after the war, and took refuge in neighbouring or non-neighbouring countries, and declared him/herself a refugee. <i>All descendants of these individuals are also included.</i>
1967 Refugee	Displaced	An individual whose place of residence was the West Bank before 1967 and who departed during the 1967 war, or was deported after it. A Palestinian originating from the West Bank, but who resided outside of it during the 1967 war and was not able to return to the West Bank after the war, is also considered displaced. This applies to workers in the Gulf or other countries along with those who worked in Jordan and have not been able to return to their families in the West Bank as a result of the war. <i>All descendants of these individuals are also included.</i>
1948 then 1967	Both refugee and displaced	Those Palestinian refugees who left Palestine due to the 1948 war, who took up residence in the West Bank, and later were displaced to Jordan as a result of the 1967 war. <i>All descendants of these individuals are also included.</i>
Gaza	Gaza	An individual who left Gaza and went to Jordan as a result of the June 1967 war. <i>All descendants of this individual are also included.</i> (It is not taken into consideration whether the person came to Gaza as a refugee in 1948 or if he/she originates from Gaza.)

Sources: Fafo (1996, 2003).

As mentioned, the surveys which were the only ones to date to include specific group information, such as refugee origin, indicated that according to the collected sample it can be estimated that 44 per cent of the Jordanian population was made up of people who self-ascribed as Palestinians (Nimeh, 2012). It is worth mentioning that the Second Gulf War of 2004 saw another large influx of displacement of refugees, who were mainly Iraqis (Chatty and Mansour, 2011). And following the Syrian conflict of 2010, the country saw another large influx of Syrian refugees. According to the UNHCR, currently 760,000 refugees and asylum seekers are registered with UNHCR, and over 18,000 Palestinian refugees from Syria are also registered in Jordan (UNHCR, 2022). Due to data limitations and the scope of the chapter, the issue of Iraqi or Syrian refugees will not be discussed, but this should not imply an underestimation of the impact and the challenge that this situation could present to Jordan in the years to come.

Policies upon Refugee Entry

With the first wave of refugees, the government of Jordan pursued a two-sided policy with regard to the refugees' political status. It wanted to stimulate the political integration of the refugees, doing away with any notions of Palestinian separatism. The main instrument here was the granting of nationality and all its rights. On the other hand, in order to ensure the permanent economic and general responsibility of the international community for the refugees, it had to preserve the refugees' exclusive status in the eyes of the outside world (Plascov, 1981, p. 44).

The Jordanian Nationality Law of 1954 stipulated all Palestine refugees in Jordan were entitled to full Jordanian nationality (Qafisheh, 2007, p. 278). However, in 1988 with the renouncement of the East and West Bank union, the Jordanian sovereignty in the East Bank ended. While Jordan did not pass any law on the details of that disengagement, one consequence of this severing of ties with the West Bank was that Jordanians of Palestinian origin residing in the West Bank at that time lost their Jordanian nationality (Human Rights Watch, 2010).

While the specific political issues relating to nationality in the West Bank and its relation with Jordan are beyond the scope of this study, it is worth noting that by granting nationality the way it did to the refugees, Jordan sought to legitimize its claim to be the only viable country for Palestinians. Still, it ensured that the refugees retained their special status and continued to qualify for international aid. What has bearing, however, on examining the issue of horizontal inequality for this chapter is that the majority of persons of Palestinian origins, regardless of refugee status at the time the data was collected, had Jordanian nationalities except for the majority of persons from Gaza. The reason for that is that after the signing of the 1949 Rhodes Armistice Agreements (United Nations, 1950), the Gaza Strip was under the administrative rule of Egypt. Until 1967 Egypt issued Gazans travel documents so that they could travel to and from the Strip. Following the 1967 war, however, many Gazan refugees had to remain in Jordan, mainly because they could not return to Egypt due to Israeli attacks on the Sinai Peninsula (El Abed, 2004). Around the time of the data collection for the surveys used in this chapter, the guestimate on the number of Gazans (who are eligible for “permanent” residency permits without full citizenship rights) is between 120,000 and 150,000 (El Abed, 2006). While having those permits provides a legal basis of stay in addition to documents that entitle them to travel, they are void of the rights that a nationality would entail, such as the right to vote and public employment (Sabaghi, 2015). Table 15.3 shows nationality policy and rights granted to the different refugee groups.

Table 15.3 Nationality policy and rights

Group	Policy	Passport	Accessibility to public services	Exceptions
Pre-1948	Existing nationality	Yes	Full access	None
1948	Granted nationality	Yes	Full access	None
1967	Granted nationality	Yes	Full access	Following 1988, nationality could be revoked
1948–1967	Granted nationality	Yes	Full access	Following 1988, nationality could be revoked
Gaza	Granted permanent residency	Temporary (2 year)	Work needs a work permit, university education payment in foreign fees, ownership with the approval of a ministerial council	None

Source: Adapted from El Abed (2004).

Camp Residency

While most of the world's refugees are attended to by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCR), Palestine refugees are overseen by the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA). The UNRWA was established by United Nations General Assembly resolution 302 (IV) of 1949 to carry out direct relief and works programmes for Palestine refugees (United Nations, 1949). The Jordanian government allocated areas of land for use as refugee camps. Table 15.4 shows a descriptive account of the evolution of the status of those camps in Jordan.

Table 15.4 A descriptive account of the evolution of the status of Palestinians in Jordan

Camp residency	Year of refuge	General description
<i>None Camp</i>	1948	Considerable success commercially and professionally; some of its members are in bureaucratic positions, and a few have achieved positions of significant responsibility and authority.
	1967	Maintain a stronger loyalty to the West bank and to Palestine and may be characterized as somewhat more militant and closer to the refugees in the camps. Many have not yet achieved the economic success of the 1948 refugees.
<i>Camp</i>	Both 1948 & 1967	Disgruntled, unsettled, despondent, militant or potentially so. A long-term resident of the camps, in which a whole generation is born, brought up and is now starting to bring up a second generation. These are the people most dependent on UNRWA for housing, rations, schooling, health and welfare services.

Source: Adapted from Gubser (1983, pp. 16–17).

While the educated newcomers to Jordan found jobs or established themselves in the free professions of the private sectors (Harmesen, 2007), those who came from more humble backgrounds ended up residing in refugee camps (Arneberg, 1997). There are 10 official Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan. The latest numbers, in 2019, estimated that 412,054 refugees live in those camps (UNRWA, 2019), which is an increase from 337,000 refugees around the time of the data collection of this study (UNRWA, 2010). According to the literature, refugees who reside outside the camps live in conditions not very different from those of other households in Jordan; however, camp dwellers seem to be worse off with regard to almost all aspects of what constitutes a minimum well-being standard and with no opportunity to improve their lives (Sabaghi, 2015; Arneberg, 1997).

In the following section a further examination of different refugee group decompositions will be compared and contrasted against the host population and examined through the lens of horizontal inequality using survey data.

DATA AND METHODOLOGY

In general, the challenge of empirically examining inequality among salient groups is the availability of representative and relevant data. The nature of data found in the JLCS of 1996 and the subsequent multi-topic household survey carried out in late 2003 provide an opportunity to more meaningfully and deeply contrast the different refugee groups among themselves and with the overall population. For the purpose of this analysis, the data used underwent some

transformation in order to measure the different dimensions. The two waves were pooled in order to increase the sample size, which is possible as random samples are taken in each year (Nimeh, 2012). Both survey datasets are representative at the national level and at regional levels (see Appendix A).

The data is processed using the Alkire-Foster methodology (Alkire and Foster, 2011) which provides an approach for measuring horizontal inequalities (Stewart et al., 2010). The method essentially involves two steps. First defining a deprivation line for each indicator and dimension; and then defining the multidimensional incidence of deprivation as being the percentage of people who fall below the specified deprivation lines on some selected number of dimensions. Table 15.5 shows the various dimensions used to generate an index presented in this chapter, and indicators that were derived from the data using that methodology. The dimensions selected have been discussed in the literature extensively and have been used in numerous multidimensional analyses of micro level data. Four dimensions make up the index (namely, health, education, employment, and housing conditions and living standards), including 15 indicators which measure deprivation in a combination of a household and individual level. For a more detailed description of the indicators and deprivation cut-off points see Appendix B.

Table 15.5 Dimensions, indicators and weights

Dimension	Indicators	Dimension Weight	Indicator Weights
1. Health	Chronic Illness or Disability	.25	0.083
	Access to Health Facilities		0.083
	Health Insurance Coverage		0.083
2. Education	Above 16 Education Level	.25	0.083
	Household level of Education		0.083
	Child Schooling below 16		0.083
3. Employment	Incidence of Unemployment	.25	0.125
	Household Current Income		0.125
4. Housing Conditions & Living Standards	Ownership of Durables & Assets	.25	0.036
	Home ownership		0.036
	Pollution Problems		0.036
	Living Environment		0.036
	Sanitation & Access to Water		0.036
	Overcrowding		0.036
	Separate Kitchen		0.036

Source: Author's own calculation based on the JLCS.

To choose a deprivation threshold, following Alkire and Foster, a group would be defined as experiencing horizontal inequality only if it scores below the assigned threshold of the elements measured. The designated thresholds would then be an indication of the extent of the horizontal inequality across dimensions (Stewart et al., 2010). If we count everyone having one deprivation or more in our sample, then 75.6 per cent would be identified as multidimensionally deprived. This single deprivation might not be a deprivation as such, and it might be attributed to other reasons than well-being or deprivation per se. If on the other hand we count only persons deprived in all indicators as multidimensionally deprived then we exclude everyone in the sample, as it is extremely unlikely that someone experiences a deprivation

in all indicators collectively. A normative decision is thus made to use a cut-off point of 6 indicators, following various trials of giving the most realistic picture, and conducting the necessary robustness checks (Alkire and Foster, 2011). It is acknowledged that this is indeed a subjective decision. However, it seems to be the most sensible considering the numbers at hand as it neither exaggerates nor overly understates the percentages of those deprived. As for the weights, considering that the variation in the results is not radical if equal weights are used in the face of schematic propositions based on normative judgements, it would seem safer to stick to equal weights as a purely arbitrary normative choice (Atkinson, 2003). It is important to point out that the equality of the weights refers to equality on the dimensions and not the indicators.

Table 15.6 Profile of deprivation by background and urban/rural status, nationality and camp residency (cut-off=6)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Group	N	Population share	Income poverty headcount	Share of poverty	Multi-dimensional deprivation headcount	Share of multi-dimensional deprivation	Dimension adj. MD Deprivation HC
National Background							
None Refugee	16,713	67.3%	.14	56.15%	.17	56.8%	0.08
1948	4,933	19.8%	.21	26.93%	.25	25.6%	0.13
1967	2,092	8.4%	.17	8.62%	.24	10.2%	0.12
1948-67	752	3.0%	.28	5.83%	.33	5.2%	0.17
Gaza	309	1.2%	.29	2.47%	.35	2.2%	0.18
Total	24,799	100%	0.16	100%	.20	100%	0.10
Nationality							
Jordanian	23,872	97.8%	.16	91.7%	.19	92.9%	0.10
Permanent Res.	552	2.2%	.34	5.05%	.37	4.1%	0.19
Total	24,799	100%	.16	100%	.20	100%	0.10
Camp Resident							
No	8,059	93.4%	.15	82.3%	.16	86.9%	0.09
Yes	553	6.4%	.41	17.6%	.30	13.1%	0.17
Total	8,612	100%	.16	100%	.18	100%	0.10

Source: Author's own calculation based on the JLCS.

To examine the profile of multidimensional well-being among refugees in Jordan in more depth, the population is divided into the various subgroups with a focus on refugees. By identification, aggregation and decomposition, the results are explored in order to shed light on inequality as they relate to these groups. Table 15.6 presents different outcomes. For comparative purposes, the table includes the traditional income poverty headcount (measured as the share of the population below the established poverty line cut-off), and the multidimensional measures evaluated using a cut-off of 6 indicators and using the equal dimension weight scheme. The population is decomposed by Refugee self-ascribed status, Nationality, Camp Residency. Column 2 gives the sample size of the population sample, and Column 3 shows the population sample share of each group. Column 4 gives the share of the population sample below the income poverty line. Column 5 presents the share of groups in the income deprived criteria. Column 6 presents the percentage of the population sample that is considered multidimensionally deprived and column 7 gives the group distribution of all the multidimensionally deprived.

Column 8 gives the overall “dimension” adjusted headcount ratio, and is the product of the multidimensional headcount ratio times the average deprivation shares across the deprived, thus indicating the frequency and the breadth of deprivation (Alkire and Foster, 2011). The results confirm that there are clear variations in outcomes and the disproportional consequence of deprivation compared to each group’s population share. Specifically, the refugee groups on average all perform worse when compared to the host community. However, within the refugee groups, variation can also be observed. Groups that perform worse are those with no nationality upon entry, and those residing in camps.

For the groups decomposed by self-ascription into a refugee group, we find that in both poverty and multidimensional measures the groups’ share is larger than their population share. This is true among groups who came in 1948, as well as 1948–1967 and from Gaza, however the proportion of those measures for groups from 1967 is relatively similar to their population share, although a bit higher when it comes to multidimensional deprivation. This could be explained by the returning refugee wave from the Gulf in 1991, who may have even contributed to an economic recovery in Jordan at the time (Van Hear, 1995). However, if we look at the non-refugee group, we find that their share in the poverty and multidimensional level is smaller than their population share.

When considering decomposing by “nationality”, we find that the incidence of income poverty is disproportional for those with just the permanent residency; this is also true while slightly less for the multidimensional measure. Finally, we compare the two groups of refugee camp residents versus those who do not live in refugee camps, and there we find the stark disparity between the population share and the deprivations shares. Making up 6.5 per cent of the population share, camp residents account for 17.6 per cent of income poverty, and 13.1 per cent of multidimensional deprivation, illustrating an obvious disproportionate contribution.

Understanding what drives deprivation is also relevant. In Table 15.7, dimension-specific changes can be observed which drive the variations in outcomes.

What the table tells us is that when we look at the specific groups’ contributions of certain dimensions and compare that with the total population, we see that the highest contributor to multidimensional deprivation is employment, being the highest for the whole population, but has a larger impact for those without Jordanian nationality. Additionally, we notice that the health dimension affects Gazans more than any other subgroup, the education dimension affects those who do not live in camps more than of all other groups, and the housing dimension affects those who came in 1948 the most among the subgroups, with the exception for the dimension of health as it relates to the Gazans. This could be explained by the group’s restricted access to healthcare. The results indicate that that group inequality is not a feature of being a refugee versus non refugee only. It is also between those who live in camps and those who do not and those who have nationality and those who do not.

While this index is indeed revealing and showed us more clearly the demarcation of the specific groups, it is important to keep in mind that this method is based on cut-offs, and is sensitive to some changes and insensitive to others. For example, small changes in individual achievements around a cut-off can lead to a change in the status of an individual and can cause the deprivation level to vary discontinuously in achievements. Additionally, questions could arise about the applicability of using such indices to assess deprivation (Ravallion, 2011). With that said, the index still gives us an indication of the joint distribution of the multiple dimensions of inequality that are shared by similar groups in the society.

Table 15.7 Contributions of dimensions to the adjusted multidimensional headcount ratio, decomposition of refugee status, nationality and camp residency (dimension $k=6$) [equal dimension]

1	2	3	4	5	6
Group	Health	Education	Employment	Housing	Adjusted MD headcount ratio
National Background					
Prior 1948	0.0672	0.0928	0.1152	0.0448	0.08
% Contribution	21%	29%	36%	14%	100%
1948	0.1248	0.1352	0.182	0.078	.13
% Contribution	24%	26%	35%	15%	100%
1967	0.1296	0.1296	0.1536	0.0672	.12
% Contribution	27%	27%	32%	14%	100%
1948–67	0.1768	0.1632	0.2448	0.0952	.17
% Contribution	26%	24%	36%	14%	100%
Gaza	0.216	0.1584	0.252	0.0936	.18
% Contribution	30%	22%	35%	13%	100%
Nationality					
Jordanian	0.09	0.112	0.142	0.056	.10
% Contribution	22.5%	28%	35.5%	14%	100%
Permanent Resident	0.1976	0.1748	0.2812	0.1064	.19
% Contribution	26%	23%	37%	14%	100%
Camp Residency					
No	0.09	0.108	0.1116	0.0504	.09
% Contribution	25%	30%	31%	14%	100%
Yes	0.17	0.17	0.2448	0.0884	.17
% Contribution	25%	25%	36%	13%	100%
Total Population Contribution	23%	27.5%	35.5%	14%	100%

Source: Author's own calculation based on the JLCS.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Horizontal inequalities have increasingly been acknowledged as important deep-rooted causal factors of conflict and fragility (Anten, 2009). This is based on the notion that when cultural differences coincide with economic and political differences between groups, this can cause deep resentment that may lead to violent struggles (Stewart, 2008). Identifying inequalities between categorically defined groups is important because these inequalities can be an obstacle to the achievement of human development targets, and when it comes to individuals within those groups, it may not be possible to improve their position without tackling the position of the group (Stewart et al., 2010). Not to mention that conflict becomes more likely where there are significant political or economic horizontal inequalities, or both, and political mobilization is especially likely where those inequalities are consistent (Stewart et al., 2008a, 2008b).

In this chapter, horizontal inequality in reference to Palestinian refugees in Jordan was examined by looking at deprivation which was conceptualized multidimensionally. The political debate about the salient identity of Palestinians in Jordan and the question of how much they have been integrated into the Jordanian society continues to be a sensitive topic (El Abed, 2014). And while the data used in this chapter is not recent, it is the only source of existing data

that allows the decomposition of refugee groups according to year of entry, camp residency, and nationality and is nationally representative. Understanding horizontal inequalities should entail taking into consideration the origin of their formation, so as to know how to tackle them. For example, as shown in this chapter, in the case of some of the Palestinian refugees in Jordan, there was a policy to exclude a certain group of refugees from obtaining a nationality. Ultimately that can be seen in unequal outcomes in deprivation. On the other hand, giving other groups a nationality meant that they had more entitlements, and better outcomes.

According to a recent report examining state fragility in Jordan, the authors indicated that the most significant contribution to its fragility is its weak economy (Hindi et al., 2019). Indeed, if we compare data from the Fragile States Index on Jordan which deteriorated from a ranking of 74th in 2006 to 64th in 2021, we find that one of the drivers of fragility is economic inequality (Fund for Peace, 2006, 2021). So, it is obvious that a better understanding of the underpinnings of inequality based on empirical evidence can help address longstanding challenges. Consequently, when examining how inequality affects state fragility for a country such as Jordan, a thorough investigation of what this inequality entails should be undertaken, otherwise its interpretation remains shallow and on the aggregate. And this holds for other contexts as well.

The way horizontal inequality was examined in this chapter is not meant to be an exhaustive tool for assessment and evaluation. Instead, it should be used in addition to other pieces of information to inform future policies about addressing state fragility. A strong message from this chapter is that in Jordan, Palestinian refugee groups are not the same, and there are inequalities and variations among these groups. These disparities and divergent outcomes, particularly in terms of well-being, access to basic services, resources and employment reinforce prejudice, discrimination and social exclusion. And while these variations stem from a variety of reasons, those unequal outcomes undermine social cohesion and further exacerbate state fragility. It is therefore necessary when devising policies and programmes for human development and state building, that incorporate equality and social cohesion over time, that this evidence is taken into consideration.

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APPENDIX A: THE JORDAN LIVING CONDITIONS SURVEYS DATASETS

The Living Conditions surveys in Jordan (JLCS) were implemented jointly by the Jordanian Department of Statistics (DOS) and Fafo in 1996 and 2003. The design of the surveys was aimed to produce comparable datasets to allow analysis of trends. Both surveys are representative at the national level and at regional levels. The surveys allow different units of analysis (i.e., households, household members, women, children etc.).

Table 15A.1 Surveys response rate

	1996	2003
Completed household interviews	5,919	10,176
Number of individual observations	36,122	57,761
Response rate	94.7%	Comparable with 1996

Questionnaires' Description

Table 15A.2 The Jordanian Living Conditions Questionnaire (JLCS) 1996

Questionnaire	Respondent	Domains
1 – Household Questionnaire	One responsible adult (head of household, spouse of head of household, or other informed adult)	Housing, infrastructure, services, environment, plans for moving, household members, education, work and employment status, marital status, migration, health mortality, household network, economics, salt iodization
2 – Person Questionnaire	One randomly selected adult of age 15 and above	Working conditions and training, security, health, fertility and family planning, attitudes and public life, social network
3 – Woman Questionnaire	All ever married women of age 15 to 49 years	Fertility, births history, prenatal and postnatal care, child health, nutritional and vaccination status, child and infant mortality, child and youth welfare.

Table 15A.3 *The Jordan Living Conditions Survey (JLCS 2003)*

Questionnaire	Respondent	Domains
One questionnaire that encompassed the previous three [Household; Person, Woman & Child] questionnaires. In addition to a new section on Child Labour	For the first part of the questionnaire: One responsible adult (head of household, spouse of head of household, or other informed adult) Then for the remaining parts: The randomly selected person: One randomly selected adult of age 15 and above Birth history: All ever married women of age 15 to 49 years Children's labour: All children aged 10–17 and who are employed	Also included in the 1996 Survey Household: Characteristics of the housing unit and its environment; Characteristics of household members; Education [includes economic activities & employment]; Household Economy RSI section: Social Activities, Health, General Opinions, Opinions about Education, Security & Crime Woman & Child Section: Fertility & Birth History [& children education] Included in the 1996 survey but with much lesser indicators for the dimension: Infrastructure, household network, attitudes and public life, social network Wasn't included in 1996 but is included in 2003: Working children: Work history, working conditions, work and school. Dimensions that were included in the 1996 survey but not in 2003: plans for moving, migration, mortality, salt iodization, working conditions and training, fertility and family planning, prenatal and postnatal care, child health, nutritional and vaccination status, child and infant mortality.

Note: The data from the surveys has been pooled, to combines time series for the two cross-sections. Pooled data are characterized by having repeated observations on fixed units. This means that pooled arrays of data are one that combines cross-sectional data on N spatial units and T time periods to produce a dataset of N×T observations. The pool is conceptualized as a “cross-sectional dominant” (Stimson, 1985).

APPENDIX B

Table 15B.1 Dimensions, indicators and cut-offs

Dimension	Indicator	Description	Unit	Range	Cut Off Value (z)
Health	Health insurance Coverage	Covered by Health Insurance	Individual	0-1	0
	Access to Health Facilities	Public Hospital or Health center within 3 kilos	Household	0-1	0
	Illness & Disability	Self-reported chronic illness or disability	Individual	0-1	0
Education	Above 16 Attainment Rates	Educational Level of those aged 16 and above	Individual	Below Basic - PhD (1-6)	At least Formal Basic Education
	Household Education	If no person in the household completed 6 th grade	Household	Below 6 th grade - PhD (1-6)	At least 6 th grade
	Child Schooling below 16	If any school age child is out of school where school aged is 6-16	Household	0-1	0
Employment	Unemployment	Incidence of Unemployment according to the ILO Definition	Individual	0-1	0
	Household Current Income Quintile	5 income quintiles	Household	1-5	Bottom Q.
Housing Conditions and living standards	Ownership of Durables & Assets	A constructed Asset Index of 10 assets	Household	-4.5 to 4.4	Equal to or less than -1.627
	Home Ownership	Household Owns the house they live in	Household	0-1	0
	Pollution Problems	5 sources of pollution: Garbage, Animal, Sewage, Industrial, Cars	Household	0-5	2 or more
	Living Environment	Exposure to 4 conditions: Dampness/humidity, Poor ventilation, Extreme Heat, Extreme Cold	Household	0-4	2 or more
	Sanitation & Access to Water	Not connected to Public Sewage, Does not have Access to Water	Household	0-2	1
	Overcrowding	Persons Per Room (Adjusted by equivalence scales and economies of scales)	Household	0-5 rooms per person	Bot 25%: (.22 room/person) = (3 persons/room including bedrooms)
	Separate Kitchen	Kitchen is located in a separate room	Household	0-1	0

16. The African fragility problem

Robert I. Rotberg

INTRODUCTION

Fragility is akin to weakness, leading to failure. Fragile states exhibit several kinds of weakness: they do not supply sufficient quantities and qualities of essential political goods to their peoples. Therefore, they are considered lacking in good governance, with governance being defined as the performance of governments, and performance being specified as the delivery to citizens of the political goods of security, safety, rule of law, transparency and accountability, political participation, respect for human rights and civil liberties, the provision of sustainable economic opportunity, and human development possibilities such as schooling and medical care.

Because so few of the fifty-four nations of the African Union score highly for governance (according to a range of indexes), that result means that most of the nations of Africa are weak. Only Botswana, Mauritius, the Seychelles, Cape Verde, Namibia, Ghana, and Senegal may be considered “strong.” All the others, even South Africa, and particularly Nigeria, may be considered weak, with Nigeria (as we shall see below) considered failing. Somalia, the Central African Republic, Libya, and Ethiopia are failed states, and should even be thought of as “collapsed” (Rotberg, 2015).

Many years ago, when initially conceptualizing and defining governance, I argued that all of the world’s states fell in terms of their performance on a continuum that ranged from strong to weak to failed to collapsed (Rotberg, 2004). Obviously, there were various levels of weakness – the most populated category, and a few that were “collapsed.” The last had almost no well-functioning governments. Their inhabitants lacked security, stable currencies or banking systems, and had only limited access to food and shelter. Violence was common. Today (in mid-2023), Sri Lanka can be considered collapsed, Lebanon probably (despite a recent election), and Ukraine certainly (because it is being pounded by Russia and its people are palpably insecure). Lebanon was in the same place in the 1970s, along with Tajikistan. Somalia (long absent a government with control over its territory) has been a “collapsed” entity since 1991. Libya also exists in two unsafe and contending halves, and is thus “collapsed.”

In distinguishing those states that are weak, very weak, failed, or collapsing, the more objectively one can quantify differences the better. Likewise, impressionistic judgments about fragility are less determinative for policy and heuristic purposes than conclusions that are informed by objective measurements of the delivery of goods, that is, performance. There are thresholds above which strong, non-fragile, states function. Those thresholds can be established if we have sufficient quantitative measures and a clear theory about what those measures mean. Below such thresholds, of course, there are varieties of fragility – various kinds of nation-states that function poorly or function hardly at all.

Nation-states exist to serve their peoples; fragile ones serve their people less adequately than strong (non-fragile) states, notably in Africa. As we shall see, reasonably objective measures of maternal mortality, schooling persistence, GDP, paved roads per capita, death numbers per

capita in civil conflict, availability of potable water, etc. can help us identify those places that are more rather than less fragile. Objectivity drives out subjectivity. And states, let it be said, are useful units for these kinds of measures. They govern, and they deliver or do not deliver the political goods that the social contract says should come from the sovereign, now the state. The rest of this chapter examines what governance means, and hence fragility. It explains the fragile (or weak) nature of most African polities, and it shows how we may distinguish between varieties of fragility.

SECURITY

If states cannot secure their inhabitants from attack from without or from within, they cannot be considered strong. This is the most fundamental function of a nation-state. Without keeping its peoples free from harm, it forfeits its purpose and its legitimacy. So wherever there are cross-border or internal hostilities, fragility prevails and governance is lacking or at least enormously compromised.

Chad's integrity is menaced from Libya. Cyrenaica (the historic eastern half of modern Libya, once a separate kingdom) attacks Tripoli (the western half, within Libya). Ethiopia is convulsed with civil war, especially between the center and peripheral states such as Tigray. Egypt battles ISIS and al-Qaeda in the Sinai; Morocco and the Polisario Front compete for control over Western Sahara. Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso together cannot extirpate the marauding forces of the Islamic State of the Greater Sahara and al-Qaeda in the Maghreb. Mauritania also contends with the same Sahara-housed groups. Mozambique confronts an insurgency in its northern Cabo Delgado province. The Central African Republic remains afire with frequent hostilities between the Muslim Séléka Movement and the Christian anti-Balaka Movement. The Democratic Republic of Congo contains at least twenty dissident militias that harass civilians and undermine government authority from Kinshasa. Somalia really has no government. And Nigeria has at least five Islamist and separatist movements seeking to undermine its central government's hegemony.

Fragility clearly prevails – to greater and lesser degrees – in these states. Alternatively, they each exhibit “weakness” since none can secure its people robustly (or at all).

SAFETY

Internally, especially in the cities of Africa that are now expanding exponentially, the nation-states of Africa for the most part cannot keep their inhabitants safe. Crime rates are extraordinarily high by world standards with conditions in the cities of South Africa contributing (as they have for decades) little by way of protection for its denizens. Homicide and burglary rates measure this lack of safety. The inability to keep citizens safe is common to the continent, with the exception of Botswana, Rwanda, and the island states such as Mauritius and Cape Verde (but not Madagascar or the Comoros). For decades, South Africa rated as one of the world's most dangerous countries after the killing fields of Asia and Latin America. In 2021, annual gross raw homicide numbers show El Salvador (52 per 100,000 in 2018), Jamaica, Lesotho (43), Honduras, Belize, Venezuela, St. Vincent, and South Africa (36), in

that order, as the world's most deadly countries. Nigeria and the Central African Republic also report high homicide rates per capita (World Population Review, 2021).

Crime statistics more generally, especially for burglaries and other crimes against persons, are harder to compare across regions because of different methods of measurement. Nevertheless, the ten least safe countries in Africa, according to the Numbeo Crime Index for 2020, are South Africa (77 per 1000), Namibia 67, Angola 64, Nigeria 63, Libya 62, Kenya 61, Uganda and Tanzania 59, Somalia 58, and Zimbabwe 57. More safe, with what the Index calls "moderate" crime levels, are Botswana, Ghana, Ethiopia, and Mauritius. On the same scoring, the numbers for the United States are 47, the United Kingdom 43, Russia 41, Canada 39, Germany 34, and China 31 – all "moderate" according to the Index (Crime Index by Country, 2020).

Autocratic and tightly and well-governed Rwanda also keeps its people safe. The island nations, Madagascar and the Comoros again excepted, are also relatively safe (and not fragile). Fewer inhabitants of Kigali or Gaborone fear being mugged as they walk down the streets of their capital cities. But if you are a Ugandan, feeling safe in Kampala is rare. Or in central Nairobi or its slums, in coastal Mombasa, or even in sleepy capitals such as Lilongwe (Malawi). Good governance is almost unobtainable if crime is rampant, and it is certainly unsafe (as well as insecure) in the countries now experiencing civil disturbance. Quality of governance, not regime type, dictates who is safe and who is insecure.

RULE OF LAW

Independent judiciaries and punctilious adherence to fundamental rule of law principles are rare occurrences in Africa. Today, only South Africa, Botswana, Mauritius, and possibly Malawi, Zambia, and Kenya have effective justice systems. Mauritius' judicial quality is enhanced, uniquely, by it still permitting a final appeal of all court decisions to Her Majesty's Privy Council, in Britain. South Africa has layers of courts, with a supreme court and a final appeal to a so far strikingly independent Constitutional Court. The judges in Malawi, Zambia, and Kenya in recent years have demonstrated an unexpected freedom to dissent from decisions made by their respective executives, such as in 2019 in Malawi overturning the result of an election. Kenyan judges did the same in 2007 and, by rejecting President Uhuru Kenyatta's attempt in 2021 to amend the constitution in order to rejig electoral constituencies and create new executive positions, the Kenyan High Court demonstrated its judicial freedom to disagree with the executive (*Guardian*, 2021).

Elsewhere in Africa, judges and the decisions of judges are influenced by the blandishments of parties before the courts, and by the obvious fact that their appointments, promotions, and pay are all controlled by State House. Zimbabwe's President Robert Mugabe in 1999 told his judges that "the law is what I say it is," and made his word into fiat (Rotberg, 1999). President John Magufuli neutered his judges in Tanzania in much the same manner, and President Yoweri Museveni in Uganda has always treated his judiciary corps as part of the obedient apparatus of the ruling party.

The Francophone parts of Africa have a different jurisprudential system and culture, but the result is much the same. The judicial branch is subordinate to the executive and court decisions and, where judges are not already influenced by emoluments and preferments, they are controlled directly from the executive mansion. Good governance attainments are compromised

by deficient rule of law capabilities across much of the continent. That makes most of the nation-states of Africa inherently fragile, lowering their scores on the measurement indexes and giving citizens little opportunity to enjoy robust rule of law regimes.

TRANSPARENCY

A relatively large percentage of the total scores on my original Index of African Governance, 2007–2009, were devoted to the presence of corruption, a centrally important aspect of good governance because of the powerful association of high transparency and low kleptocracy with good governance, economic prosperity, freedom from conflict, and robust developmental outcomes (Rotberg and Gisselquist, 2007–2009).

Transparency is measurable both by the ratings of Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI), started in 1995, but methodologically refined in 2010, and the Hertie School's Index of Public Integrity (since 2017). Although these two ranking schemes use different metrics, their results were similar until recently. The high scoring African countries on the CPI in 2022 were the Seychelles (23rd), Botswana and Cape Verde (35th), Rwanda (54th), Mauritius (57th), and Namibia (59th).

South Africa has always ranked in the top ten African countries on my and the continuing Ibrahim Governance Index despite being subject to state capture and rampant corruption; its other categories of evaluation overcame its low attainments on transparency. The CPI in 2022 ranked South Africa 72nd, before Burkina Faso, Hungary, Kuwait, Timor-Leste and Vietnam. Yet the Index of Public Integrity in 2019 scored South Africa in first place among the African countries rated in 2019. It was ranked 38th of 122 global countries, ahead of Croatia and Bulgaria, but behind Greece and Hungary. Namibia was 49th and Ghana 62nd. Botswana inexplicably was 82nd, along with Senegal and Kenya. Rwanda was 98th. Mauritius, the Seychelles, and Cape Verde were not included in this Index in 2021 (Corruption Perceptions Index, 2021; Index of Public Integrity, 2021). Despite the disparities between these two indexes, we can still use them comparatively to sort which African countries are less or more corrupt, and hence likely (along with other analytical criteria) to be more or less fragile.

My Index of African Governance was intended to be diagnostic, and to show the areas of government where fragile states were strong and where they were weak. By pinpointing deficient areas, countries could more readily remedy their weaknesses and improve, year by year. Rwanda has done so overall, largely by steadily reducing corruption significantly, not by providing fuller political participation, nor by providing more press and speech freedom, nor more rule of law. The countries of Africa largely fall to the bottom of the CPI and the Integrity Index, along with Venezuela and Afghanistan. The bottom 25 or so (of 180 in total) are mostly African nations. Their numbers and identities have over three decades largely remained the same. That is a fair measure of how fragile (because how massively corrupt) Africa is as whole, and how limited the exceptions are.

The wildly corrupt in Africa – not because their legal systems are permissive nor because of their inherent fragility – include Nigeria (149th on the CPI, 101st on the IPI), South Sudan and Somalia (both 179th and last on the CPI; not rated by IPI), the Chads, the Congos, the Madagascars, and the Zimbabwes that slip between those two corrupt listings. All are led, and have long been led, by kleptocrats.

The zero-sum political cultures of much of Africa (and Asia), coupled with leaderships intent on maximizing rents for the politically privileged, has turned even some of the states that Freedom House rates as Free and Partly Free into charterhouses of speculation and fraud (Freedom House, 2021). Those tendencies have made fragile states more fragile, and once strong states (such as Kenya and Uganda) weak. They have brought even theoretically stronger states such as Nigeria and South Africa to the brink of failure (or extreme fragility). Somalia is a collapsed state for many reasons, one of which is its unmatched corruption (Rotberg, 2020, pp. 118–133).

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

This category of analysis is derived from Dahl's classical approach to the exercise of the franchise (Dahl, 1998, pp. 83–99). If citizens can voice their opinions about their rulers and their policy preferences, if candidates can campaign freely, and if the electoral process is fully free, then countries rank highly. The fragile countries of Africa might hold elections, and their electoral processes might be legitimate (with little ballot stuffing and the rigging of vote counts), but if opposition candidates are prevented from competing fully and across whole nations with incumbents and ruling political parties, they score less well on this and linked variables.

The lower a state's score on this category of analysis, the more fragile it is. Botswana, Mauritius, Cape Verde, Namibia, South Africa, Senegal, Ghana, and Tunisia pass the Dahl test in most respects. In 2020 and 2021, Zambia and Malawi overcame years of distortion to produce proper elections with open expressions of voice. Egypt, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, Zimbabwe, Angola, Gabon, Madagascar, and the two Congos (among others) hold elections, but mostly for show, with little openness, freedom of assembly or speech, and much manipulation of all aspects of the canvassing, voting, and counting processes. Eswatini, a despotic monarchy, permits no political participation, no political parties, no electoral processes – all to the consternation and provoked opposition of students, and even to public criticism from the US embassy in Mbabane (Dlamini, 2021). Likewise, Africa's most closed autocracy – Eritrea – authorizes no political participation whatsoever. Isaias Afwerki, its dictator since 1991, rules essentially by fiat.

A few of the military despotisms and political autocracies pretend to permit citizens to participate in the political process, but, as the 2021 coup in the Sudan demonstrated, soldiers prefer to repress voices of protest rather than to give their constituents any semblance of real say regarding outcomes. Political participation is widely compromised across Africa, with its absence a discouraging marker of fragility across the African political landscape.

RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

The nations of Africa honor human rights mostly in the breach, adding to their weak governance and thus fragility. Human rights encompass the absence of torture, extrajudicial killings, political imprisonments, and forced disappearances; human rights failures also include a lack of freedom of movement, freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of religion, and freedom of assembly for all citizens, especially workers. The raw material for these determinations comes from innovative datasets developed by David L. Cingranelli and

David L. Richards at Binghamton University, from the US State Department's annual Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, and from systematic examinations of developed world press accounts (Cingranelli and Richards, 2008–2009). Cingranelli and Richards also analyze respect separately for women's rights – economic, social, and political – and these measures are important when we associate the absence of rights with the extent of fragility.

Some African countries, such as Eritrea, Somalia, Chad, Djibouti, South Sudan, Egypt, Algeria, Libya, Burundi, the Central African Republic, the Comoros, Eswatini, Rwanda, Ethiopia, and the Sudan effectively deny the above human rights and civil liberty attributes to their citizens. A few countries do so systematically – Burundi, the Comoros, Eritrea, and Eswatini – but the others listed above do so in practice, by intimidation, by neglect, and occasionally by legislation. Some (such as Cameroon and Ethiopia) periodically cut off the internet and shut down all mobile telephone communication in order to control information, deny insurgents and others free expression, and keep their citizens in check. All are fragile states by many measures, especially by the repression of these enunciated standard rights and liberties.

A range of other African countries, such as Angola, Cameroon, both Congos, the Gambia, Gabon, Tanzania (until recently), Uganda, and Zimbabwe also infringe the rights and liberties of their citizens, but endeavor to do so under cover of legislative manipulation and denial. Contributing to their high rankings on governance, and their standing as the least fragile states of Africa, the island democracies of Mauritius, Cape Verde, São Tomé and Príncipe, and the Seychelles all respect the rights of their inhabitants, their ethnic and gender minorities, and so on. On the mainland, Botswana, Namibia, South Africa, Zambia, and Malawi all rank highly in their assurances of respect and liberty. Other African nations such as Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania in the east and Senegal, the Gambia, Liberia, and Ghana in the west, all do reasonably well in this area, especially as compared to most of the other polities on the African mainland.

The more respect states accord the rights and civil liberties of their citizens, the less fragile they are. A refusal to adhere to a rights and a liberty agenda correlates with internal conflict, insecurity, lack of safety, limited political participation, reduced prosperity, and poor human development outcomes – hence, accentuated fragility.

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

This encompassing category of evaluation includes twenty-two sub-categories of political goods that Africans, much the same as Asians or peoples of Europe and the Americas, desire their governments to provide: educational opportunity and access to medical treatment, physicians, clinics, medicines, and so on. Better schooling for new generations is what parents want; their children are uniformly anxious to gain the greater training and capacity building that they know are basic to their economic futures at home, and everywhere. To date, only the high performers on the good governance index, led by Mauritius, educate all of their young people (girls included) through high school and on to tertiary levels. Mauritius also is unique in Africa for its focus on STEM learning, enhancing the island state's technological accomplishments. Cape Verde and Botswana do well in this sphere, and South Africa and Nigeria have millions of university graduates, but their girls are still less well educated than their boys, especially in secondary school. Indeed, according to worldwide standard tests, a major state like South Africa is educating its young people less and less well than in earlier decades. And there are now many more of them, which has led to declining scores on the country's annual high school

graduation examinations, and more and more non-certificated youths exiting onto the difficult employment market with no official qualifications (Rotberg, 2020, pp. 194–208).

Elsewhere, in the parts of Africa that are undeniably fragile by any reckoning, girls do not persist in secondary school (if they begin at all), get pregnant young, and boost the swelling populations of surprising states such as Tanzania and the Democratic Republic of Congo – thus perpetuating poverty and developmental delays. Except for Senegal and Gabon, the Francophone states of Africa are providing schooling less well and for smaller percentages of their populations than in prior decades. As population numbers across sub-Saharan Africa double and treble in coming decades, the percentages of those who can obtain good school places, and good schooling results, will thin. Standard worldwide tests, when applied to Africa, do not give confidence that Africa can close the educational gap (thus forgoing a demographic dividend comparable to Southeast Asia's between 1970 and 1990).

One consequence of the immense population explosion that is predicted by the UN Population Division to hit Africa in this and four or five succeeding decades is an immense youth bulge (15–34) that will reduce the median age in sub-Saharan Africa for the next thirty to forty years to the high teens and the lower twenties. That means that there will be many millions of young under-educated people unable to find jobs in the formal wage sector. They will defect to informal pursuits and attempt (say) through crime or selling shoelaces along the street to make do. All of this activity will contribute to inherent instability in country after country, to youths joining up with gangs or (fundamentalist) insurgencies (as happens in Nigeria today), and with cities becoming more and more congested as sanitation wanes and rural areas become increasingly depopulated – all drivers of objective fragility (UN Population Division, 2021).

Only by educating girls robustly through the upper levels of secondary school, and sending a proportion of the whole on to university or technical/vocational training, will fertility rates and population growth rates slow. Costa Rica demonstrated this verity in the late 1940s and has led Central America and much of the Americas economically ever since. This model has performed in Kenya, once the country with the most rapid population growth on the continent, but it is working less well in other parts of the continent. In Nigeria's southern half, which is Christian and animist (and comparatively well educated) women each give birth to 2.1 children (the replacement rate). In the largely Muslim north, women still give birth to 7.2 children each – a recipe for poverty and for the kinds of system stresses that lead to the likes of Boko Haram, an Islamist insurgency in the northeast, to combat between Muslim herders and Christian farmers in the Middle Belt, and to attacks by mobilized young people on petroleum pumping facilities and oil transport pipelines in the southeast. Offshore, too, in the Gulf of Guinea, seizing tankers and taking their cargoes is a contemporary avocation of Nigerian sea-borne pirates.

THE MEDICAL SITUATION

As of this writing (mid-2023) 51 percent of Africa is fully vaccinated: 41 percent in South Africa, and 59 percent in Botswana, two outliers in Africa in the battle against the Covid-19 pandemic. New variants of the virus were continuing to cause alarm (Google, 2023). Africa's fragility has been nowhere more apparent than in its inability to obtain and purchase vaccines since the start of the coronavirus pandemic, in high caseloads where statistical services are

strong and death counts reliable, and in its complete dependence on external support to reduce the impact of Covid-19 on its populations.

But battling Covid-19 with depleted and insufficient resources is as much a product of decades of lax leadership, corruption, and bad governance as it is the failure of the developed world to flood Africa (as it should) with vaccines and remedial pills. Health services everywhere, aside from maybe Mauritius, have been starved of resources for decades, even in or particularly in South Africa. Skilled nurses have fled decaying Zimbabwe and poor Malawi for London. There are more Ethiopian-trained physicians in Chicago than in Addis Ababa (or in the rest of that country). Malawi in recent years had only 1 physician for every 57,000 inhabitants. The North American and European ratio is 3 physicians per 1,000 population. In Africa that ratio is 0.19 per 1,000. Some countries in Africa have hardly any X-ray or MRI machines. In the depth of Zimbabwe's political repression, high inflation, and foreign exchange shortages, its main hospitals ran out of bandages, sutures, and simple medicines like aspirin. Some Chinese-built hospitals in Angola collapsed, so even those externally provided improvements have helped little, overall.

What has boosted the health of Africans has been the arrival of retroviral medicines to transform HIV-AIDS into a chronic disease held in check by pills. A malaria vaccine has already been tested successfully in Africa, where insecticide treated bed nets have also been helpful. Ebola and other hemorrhagic diseases can now be treated with vaccines, to good effect. Many of the helminth (worm) diseases of middle Africa are now treatable, and few Africans are losing their eyesight from trachoma and river blindness. But the coronavirus has set these gains aside and again demonstrated Africa's inability to cure itself by itself.

Africa still exhibits the highest maternal mortality rates in the world (South Sudan, Chad, and Sierra Leone all experience more than 1,000 deaths per 100,000). Life expectancies are low by global standards: only 53 years in the very troubled Central African Republic, 54 in Chad, 55 in Nigeria, and 58 in South Sudan. Pneumonia, diarrheal diseases, and tuberculosis are prevalent almost everywhere (World Bank, 2020).

In terms of Africa's difficulty in delivering services in this sector, providing inadequately for its peoples demonstrates the weakness of most of the governments of the continent, and thus a perpetuation of a long sense of futility and fragility.

SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC ADVANCEMENT AND THE FATE OF PEOPLES

People everywhere want to enjoy enhanced standards of living, the better to look after their families; provide food, shelter, and consumer amenities; become full members of the global village; be enabled to entertain themselves and benefit from access to other leisure activities; and participate in athletic events. Rising incomes facilitate these endeavors. The more they rise above prior levels, as measured by average per capita gross domestic product (GDP) numbers, the less a state may be considered fragile – providing, of course, that Gini coefficient returns show that a nation's rich rewards are being shared more or less equally across citizens and classes.

In terms of fragility and prosperity, Africa, as compared to Asia, Oceania, Europe, and the Americas, is desperately poor and remarkably unequal despite its consuming poverty. The World Bank estimates that 475 million or so of sub-Saharan Africa's people earned no more

than US\$1.90 per day in 2021, forcing many who had managed to aspire to rising returns to scabble for food and the fundamental amenities of life (World Bank, 2020). Africa's population is growing faster in this and the next three decades than any other part of the planet. Soon Nigeria, at 200+ million, will double in size and then triple, by the end of the century becoming the third largest entity on earth, after India and China (in that order). The US will follow and then, eclipsing Brazil, Indonesia, and Pakistan, will come Tanzania, today impoverished and about 75 million in size and by 2050 about 200 million and an estimated size of 316 million in 2100. Following Indonesia and Pakistan, and just exceeding Brazil at the end of the 2000s will be the Democratic Republic of Congo, now 65 million and then predicted to be 215 million (UN Population Division, 2022).

These numbers comprise a recipe for deepening and corrosive fragility in this decade and every decade that follows. Because of an absence of manufacturing opportunity, insufficient educational attainments, and leadership that is so far lacking, the demographic dividend that benefited Southeast Asia in the 1970s and 1980s and now fuels Chinese growth is unlikely to save Africa from decades of difficulty and hardship. Employment opportunities are lacking everywhere, even in better educated places like Nigeria and South Africa. Zimbabwe's workers are 90 percent unemployed, South Africa's 40 percent unemployed, and sub-Saharan Africa's overall average formal sector unemployment is at least 35 percent.

Only the democratic, well governed, un-fragile island states of Mauritius, the Seychelles, and Cape Verde report high per capita incomes (for Africa); reasonably equal Gini coefficient numbers; mostly high levels of education, especially for women; good health returns (lower maternal mortality figures and higher life expectancies); robust political participation figures; respect for human rights; high transparency attainments; and relatively little unemployment.

On the mainland, Botswana approximates the island state results, having largely shared its comparative wealth (US\$6,700, in 2020) from gem diamonds, tourism, and cattle with its small population (2.5 million). Again, since Botswana has always ranked high with regard to good governance, it has long been a non-fragile model on the continent. Namibia, also small in population, shares many of its characteristics, as do the larger states of Tunisia, Senegal, Ghana, Rwanda, and Malawi (the last despite greater impoverishment). South Africa has innumerable problems, but ranks among the non-fragile African polities.

Nigeria, the continent's richest oil exporter, cannot join them because along with an accelerating growth of people, it has distorted Gini coefficient returns, enormous insecurity and lack of safety issues (with four or five irreconcilable internal conflicts disturbing the nation's peace), low scores on every aspect of good governance, deficient political leadership, and growing food insecurity. Ambassador John Campbell and I recently declared Nigeria a thoroughly failed state because of its internal conflicts, its growing violence against persons, its poor health outcomes, and its inability as a sprawling federation of thirty-six states to improve the lives of its citizens (Rotberg and Campbell, 2021a, 2021b).

Some may say that it is too harsh to consider Nigeria as a "failed" state, but its inability to stanch internal wars and keep its immense population safe and secure (especially throughout 2021 and well into 2022) confirms the Rotberg-Campbell judgment. Nigeria has cascaded from long-term weakness into failing and then over the cataract into full failure. The oil exporting states of Africa celebrate high returns, but those massive benefits (when petroleum prices are lofty) are hardly shared equally. A tiny (pop. 1.4 million) nasty despotism such as Equatorial Guinea, with a nominal GDP per capita in 2020 of US\$7,100, pumps proliferating

revenues straight into the coffers of a family dictatorship, distributing hardly anything by way of social benefits to the mass of its deprived people.

Much larger Angola, again thanks to oil, did the same under the long authoritarian rule of the José Eduardo dos Santos family. His daughter Isabel dos Santos, now on trial for corruption, reputedly became the wealthiest woman in Africa, with a fortune in the billions of dollars. But most of Angola's 33 million inhabitants have gained little over the decades since 1975 from the largesse that mostly flowed into the coffers of compradors (in 2020, Angola's GDP per capita was US\$1,740). Current President João Laurenço has somewhat relaxed the tight hold on the country that dos Santos imposed, but without many ameliorations of the plight of ordinary citizens.

Algeria exhibits nearly all of the disparities of Angola, with a government that is equally autocratic, equally disdainful of the rights of its majority, and with even higher Gini coefficient inequalities (derived from natural gas incomes, and rampant corruption) than Angola or Nigeria. Egypt, one of the cradles of civilization, does no better, especially since the 2011 Arab Spring uprisings have been replaced by autocracy of the most repressive kind. Egypt's low scores on all aspects of the governance index, despite a higher than average for Africa GDP per capita (US\$3,000 in 2020), relegate that dictatorship to the ranks of the fragile. Respect for human rights, transparency, safety, and even security all score low. Even such strong appearing states (to their oppressed citizens) are fundamentally weak.

The Moroccan monarchy performs better than most of the other states of Maghreb, and much of the rest of Africa, despite its inherent authoritarian nature, its conquest of Western Sahara, its relatively constrained political participation, and its weaknesses in terms of respect for human rights and transparency. But it is secure and safe, and its GDP per capita is respectable at US\$3,000. Moreover, its Gini coefficient numbers show that despite being a monarchy, incomes are much more equal than most of the other Maghrebi or sub-Saharan African polities. Morocco is a non-fragile outlier.

THE CIFP FRAGILITY INDEX

The CIPF Fragility Index (www.carleton.ca/cifp) posits that states which are weak along one or more specified dimensions (authority, legitimacy, and capacity, ALC) are inherently fragile. Those categories of analysis within the CIPF start with "authority" – a state's ability to ensure stability and provide its citizens with a "safe" environment, i.e. what this chapter earlier labeled "security and safety." Second is "legitimacy," or a state's ability to "command public loyalty" and "generate domestic support" for its policies. This is not how "legitimacy" is usually employed in social science; legitimacy is conveyed to a ruler or an overarching organizing body by a population when a ruler or body earns the trust and willing backing of constituents by meeting their spiritual and material needs, demonstrating integrity, and establishing a connectedness with followers and voters. In terms of the scheme sketched earlier in this chapter, CIPF "legitimacy" is enhanced in practice in Africa when political participation is widely enjoyed and the content of the social contract between citizen and state becomes largely fulfilled.

Third is "capacity," especially the capacity of a state to "mobilize public resources for productive use." The category advanced earlier in this chapter of "sustainable economic development," combined with "human development" encompasses "capacity" in the sense that a state

in Africa or elsewhere is using the power of the government writ large to enable individuals to use their personal talents to the full, particularly economically where standard of living upward adjustments can be approximated by increases in per capita GDP.

Within the rubric of “sustainable economic development” is a need for satisfactory states to establish secure and helpful money and banking systems and stable currencies that do not lose their value, and to establish or advance the kinds of national infrastructures that enable individuals to prosper and to use their “productive capacities” to the full. Hence, strong states construct and maintain the roads, rails, bridges, and communication networks that permit their inhabitants to strengthen their individual productivities. Thus, those states in Africa that have boosted their mobile telephone sending and receiving capabilities, made broadband more available, and welcomed the arrival of fiber-optic telecommunications cables from Asia, the Americas, and Europe are demonstrating “capacity,” as well as delivering the “performance” of good governance that so separates the African leadership and policy sheep from their less forward goats.

Some nation-states in Africa are able to achieve well according to the benchmarks of the CIFP. But most are not, at least from a subjective perspective. Fragility is widespread if analysts try strictly to apply the CIFP’s perspective to what African nation-states since independence have and have not produced for their peoples. Only the island states minus Madagascar; plus Botswana, Namibia, South Africa, Ghana, Senegal, and a few others have emerged out of weakness and may be considered non-fragile (at least for now). The others are all demonstrably fragile because of internal combats, high crime rates, and their patent inability to deliver the educational uplifts and standards of medical care that their constituents demand – and expect – of a modern state.

REDUCING FRAGILITY/DECREASING OUT-MIGRATION AND MIGRANCY

A broad gauged alleviation of African nation-state fragility begins with strengthened indigenous political leadership. Because only a small handful of the polities of Africa have become full nations (most are embryonic, still-to-be constructed nations), and because individual leaders are largely responsible for imbuing and gestating the political cultures that establish “legitimate” and fully functional states (as in Botswana), devoting external funding and internal efforts to inculcating new kinds of leadership expectations and leadership capabilities should be high on reforming agendas everywhere. So should the support from inside and outside of projects that will hasten the establishment and expectation of an ethos of institution building and institutional sharing: doing so may mean reducing powers of executives, strengthening legislative prerogatives, attempting to establish the independence of judiciaries, and prioritizing civilian over military rule. Donors need to fund leadership education. Minimizing the baleful costs of kleptocracy is also necessary, since almost nothing else except civil conflict so deepens a state’s fundamental weakness.

President Paul Kagame of Rwanda is an autocrat and a consummate micromanager. Because of that latter characteristic, and because of his personal determination to uplift his people and reduce corruption, his country is secure and safe, and his citizens share the economic benefits of policies pursued by Kagame to enrich his nation. So Rwanda is less fragile than its small physical (and hence congested) size in Africa would suggest. The difference between Kagame

and other authoritarian leaders in Africa is that Kagame is public interested, others of his ilk are not. This hardly excuses his assassination and imprisonment of opponents, his imperious style, his intolerance of dissidence, or his abolition of essential freedoms (of expression, press, and assembly). But if Rwandans conform and obey, they can anticipate gradually rising standards of living.

Corrupt states are consumed by rent-seeking and the impaired equal distribution of resource wealth to the detriment of productivity and the lifting of all manner of boats on a rising tide. Widespread disaffection follows. Corruption often also encourages the privileging of cliques and boosts ethnic favoritism. That frequently stimulates movements of secession, religiously inspired jihadism, and the kinds of anomic warfare that are so prevalent in today's Africa, and so intrinsic to fragility.

The strong states of Africa are typified by high good governance scores across most if not all categories: security, safety, reasonable levels of transparency, high GDPs per capita relative to other African states, and the attempted delivery of good social services. Weak states, a broad category that includes the fragile entities, perform less well than the strong states in all respects. Those with military rulers or civilian dictatorships (Eritrea) may appear strong but perform so insufficiently for their citizens that they are truly weak, and thus fragile. A few African states either have no government to speak of (Somalia), or rate so low on the good governance scale and are consumed daily by so much violence (the Central African Republic or the Democratic Republic of Congo) that they may as well be considered "collapsed."

Fragility is, alas, the story of most of today's Africa. Even the largest and the most advanced of the nations of contemporary Africa harbor sectors of weakness and flirt frequently with failure and fragility. Others are fundamentally badly run, and thus weak or fragile. Responsible leadership that focuses on performance for citizens, rather than on aggrandizement for a ruling family and cliques will improve Africa's chances of reducing the spread of fragility.

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17. State fragility and sustainable development in the Middle East and North Africa

Hamid E. Ali, Mahmoud Elmakkawe and Nesreen Nasser Alanbar

INTRODUCTION

The taxonomy of a state's effective governance capacity has been evolving around state fragility, which is a problem that has to do with both governance and development. It has multiple facets but is mostly related to a state's capacity to deliver basic goods and social services to the public (Besley and Pearson, 2011; Cojanu and Popescu, 2007). Ali (2018) argues that about one third of Middle East and North Africa (MENA) countries are either fragile or failed states. An important aspect of fragile states is the absence of an adequately functioning state apparatus that can perform its delegated tasks in an efficient manner (LSE-Oxford Commission, 2018). Lack of legitimacy, where overnments do not enjoy the necessary recognition and trust of their citizens, is another feature of fragile states. The LSE-Oxford Commission, therefore, considers fragile states as a primary source of all ills, which typically include poverty, terrorism, and migration, to name just a few. Consequently, states while failing are perceived not just to pose a danger to their local citizens, but also to represent a great source of instability and risk to the entire international community (Reilly, 2008). Tackling the structural problems and institutional challenges of the states in their weakness phase, before they reach final and irreversible collapse, is therefore of paramount importance to global security (Rotberg, 2002, 2003).

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the dynamics that impact the interplay between state fragility, as a complex of governance-related functions, and sustainable development in MENA from 2006 to 2020, by closely examining the region's political economy indicators in line with its fragility trends to achieve a better understanding of the relationship between the two variables. While fragility, as a concept, is still far from reaching a global scholarly consensus (Landry, 2019), its relationship with the notion of governance is quite evident. According to Peters (2019), understanding fragility as the ability (or lack thereof) to achieve socioeconomic goals is why it is related to governance. It is therefore quite valid to assume that tackling state fragility has to do with reforming governance patterns. Peters (2019) further argues that due to the central role of governance in shaping the state, governance-related changes should be carried out slowly and gradually, especially in developing contexts with structural political problems.

Similarly, governance is viewed as an expression of the contradictions within a ruling regime and an indication of its well-being (Marshall and Cole, 2011). Managing the anti-state trends in torn-apart societies and polarized zones, where ruling authorities are either unwilling or incapable of containing public discontent and mistrust through public measures of accountability, is therefore central to the core of good governance (Marshall and Cole, 2014). Since both governance and state fragility have to do with the overall governmental effectiveness

in delivering services, or the state's capacity to perform its core functions – whatever those functions are – it might be useful to view good governance as contrary to state fragility. While Roy and Tisdell (1998) argue that to attain good governance, institutional structures and economic resources are needed as prerequisites, Grindle (2007) contends that governance might improve or deteriorate in isolation from socioeconomic welfare. On a different note, Jordan (2008) views governance as the process of changing the role of the state with respect to the hierarchical systems of ruling in modern societies. Hawkins and Wang (2012), on the other hand, argue that governance is usually used to refer to the overall relations among the state, private and public entities, and individuals.

There is no agreed-upon definition of governance or how we can empirically measure the quality of a government, argues Fukuyama (2013, 2016). He refers, in this regard, to the usual conceptual confusion that takes place among scholars who tend to view good governance as equivalent to democracy; he also points out that the expression was previously used to describe effective public administration, as in much of the World Bank literature during the 1990s.

On the relationship between governance and sustainable development, Jordan (2008) asserts that, so far, no concrete theory on sustainable development governance has been produced by scholars. To the contrary, Meadowcroft (2007) argues that governance for sustainable development is about the sociopolitical processes that take place while attaining developmental goals; he also highlights the role of the society in directing public entities towards achieving those ends, placing the focus on community engagement as a vital component of this developmental governance framework. Dernbach (1998) argues that the concept of sustainable development has impacted governance systems in that it pushed governments to pay attention to the environmental impact of their policies on natural resources instead of focusing only on security and order as their traditional main tasks. Cojanu and Popescu (2007) contend that ever since the 1990s, researchers have considered good governance as only a means to achieve development. In the same line of thought, Kardos (2012) contends that good governance is a prerequisite for sustainable development, especially when it comes to public participation and engaging social actors in the process of developmental planning. Reinforcing the same idea, Roy and Tisdell (1998) believe that for sustainable development to take place, a certain level of good governance is needed which can be attained through several institutional structures, alongside the presence of adequate economic resources; they also argue that the lack of good governance, in the form of corruption, undermines countries' attempts to achieve sustainable development. In the same context, Ali and Bhuiyan (2022b) present public service delivery as a dynamic process; however, the quality of delivery is contingent on the interactions between governance quality, institutional discourse, and public policy. Public policies influence citizens' lives and fates and reflect on quality of governance.

In MENA, the debate on good governance has riddled the political process through the years. Half of the 18 MENA countries are republics; the other half are monarchies. The autocracies among them have been firmly under the control of the ruler, whether that ruler was a monarch or a military man. Studies have shown that monarchs are more resilient and robust in standing against public uprisings. Due to weaker civil society and rentier economies that provide a social safety net, these states are less prone to existential political crisis. The indicators for sustainable development, thus, perform better in monarchical systems. Indeed, their fragility scores are lower, as shown in Figure 17.1. For example, UAE, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Oman, and Morocco have all shown a decline in their fragility index. Among the republics, only Iraq and Iran have seen a decline of fragility. However, it might be useful in

this regard to recognize that both republics and monarchs in MENA face existential pressures, especially after the Arab Spring, that make dependence on rents as means to achieve stability quite unsustainable (Abulof, 2017).

On the other hand, Grindle (2007) criticizes the idea that good governance necessarily fosters development, arguing that this leads to the neglect of other important causal relations. On a different note, it is also argued that bureaucracies and governmental structures can sometimes be a hindrance to development – let alone sustainable development – as in the case of MENA countries (Ali, 2018). In the same context, it is argued that democratic reform and changing governance patterns sometimes erode the administrative capacity of the state apparatus and, therefore, weaken the state's institutional frameworks resulting in more fragility and disturbance in the short/medium term, especially during phases of turbulent political transition (Calleja et al., 2017).

Whether sustainable development is needed to promote governance or vice versa, it can be assumed, with a certain degree of certainty, that there is a mutual relation between the two variables. For sustainable development to be implemented, a set of principles that guide governmental actors and institutions should be in place (Dernbach, 1998). These principles or guidelines should be politically utilized to make the development process truly sustainable and socially driven (Meadowcroft, 2007); Meadowcroft (2007) also argues that sustainable development, with all the multistakeholder consultations, societal preparations, and community-based engagement it entails, is therefore more of a complex political approach than just a simple technocratic intervention. In the same vein, Kardos (2012) contends that sustainable development mainly depends on public awareness and engaging citizens at the grassroots level to ensure its proper implementation on the ground. The idea of public participation and the importance of compromise among conflicting interests is, therefore, vital to the success of sustainable development and highly relevant to the overall notion of good governance (Zeijl-Rozema et al., 2008). In the case of MENA, most countries are rentier economies, where citizens do not pay taxes, as oil and natural gas rents sustain government expenditure without resorting to taxation; hence the government is less accountable to its citizens.

FRAGILITY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN MENA

While most of the MENA countries are deemed structurally weak or fragile, the reasons for this weakness might differ according to each country's historical context and developmental trajectory. In Egypt, for example, sociopolitical grievances and corruption played a vital role in deepening the country's fragility throughout the years that preceded the 2011 uprising that ended the 30-year long rule of late President Mubarak (Barakat and Fakhri, 2021). Even though many economic slogans were raised during Egypt's revolution, data from the Arab Transformation Survey (2015) shows that political reasons and popular perception of corruption were impactful in terms of pushing people to take to the streets. According to the same source, Egypt, Libya and Tunisia witnessed a lack of trust in government and public institutions. Paradoxically, it is argued that citizens who were economically better off were found to have a greater tendency to protest. Jawadi (2015) argues that Egypt's chronic fragility has far more deeply historical reasons related to the country's geography, socioeconomics and values. However, he stresses the role of legitimacy lacking in all of these factors as a main driver of fragility. Legitimacy, in this context, is understood as people's recognition of the ruling regime

and the relevance of its policies. On a related note, Bubalo (2020) justifies external actors' tolerance towards MENA autocracies for pragmatic reasons (including arms and surveillance systems sales), and how that added to the region's fragility and led to the failure of its attempts to democratize. He further argues that this tolerance is not limited to China or Russia but also extends to the West namely, the US, France and Germany who, according to the author, would prefer to deal with MENA's authoritarian regimes for regional stability, mutual security coordination and combating terrorism at the expense of promoting democratic reform and good governance.

Unlike Yemen, where external interventions have always played a remarkable part in the country's fragility, in Libya, Kamrava et al. (2014) suggest that tribal conflicts together with historically suppressed ethnic grievances, inter alia, are amongst the key elements behind the country's current prolonged internal defragmentation and political divide, which adds insult to injury in terms of its institutional fragility. In North Africa, namely Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco, Merouani et al. (2021) place the emphasis on the role of socioeconomic factors in explaining the rationale behind the region's social fragility. They further argue that lack of good social governance combined with governmental failure to provide social protection can be seen as an indicator of fragility in Maghreb countries, not to mention the negative relationship this fragility has with respect to achieving sustainable development, especially SDG8 concerned with ensuring decent jobs and economic growth. On a different note, Saba and Ngepah (2019) contend that military spending, estimated in 2017 to be 105 percent higher than in 2008, is a major driver of fragility in the region's countries.

In both Syria and Egypt, Werrell et al. (2015) suggest that climate change might have an understudied role to play in the two countries' perceived fragility and political turmoil. In Syria, farmers fled the countryside to cities, in the thousands, due to crop failure causing much disturbance and pressure (Erian et al., 2010) – not to mention the impact of the already existing flow of Iraqi refugees on Syrian cities combined with poor governance and mismanagement before the 2011 Arab Spring (UNHCR, 2010). In the same context, it is also noted that the Greater Fertile Crescent region witnessed a severe drought just before the Arab Spring, one that is thought to have had a butterfly effect leading to the political disruption in the country, of course alongside the already existing failed environmental policies (Kelley et al., 2015). As for the case of Egypt, Werrell et al. (2015) contend that the drastic increase of the price of wheat from \$157 in 2010 to \$326 per metric ton in 2011 due to climate change has exacerbated the country's economic problems which deepened its group grievances – known as an indicator of fragility.

In a study by Ali (2020), the author argues that despite waves of revolutions and uprisings in MENA, the political outcomes were no different in style from their predecessors. Ali (2020) shows that in some cases it was simply a reproduction of autocracies and cronyism through the revolving door of power and wealth. The common denominator among elites is how to capture the state's rents in order to maximize their own self-interest (Ali, 2020). After the Arab Spring in 2010–2011, several states – Egypt, Yemen, Sudan, Tunisia, Algeria, Syria, and Libya – experienced social and political turmoil in varying degrees. Egypt and Tunisia overcame the crisis with caution, but Syria, Yemen, and Libya were destroyed. More recently, Sudan and Tunisia have been hovering on the brink of implosion. Governments have clearly failed to deliver public services in Syria, Libya, Yemen, and Sudan, at least, if “governance” is defined as the capacity of the state's political authority and institutions to manage the soci-

ety's resources and deliver public goods (World Bank, 1991). Figure 17.1 shows fragility and economic growth trends in MENA countries.

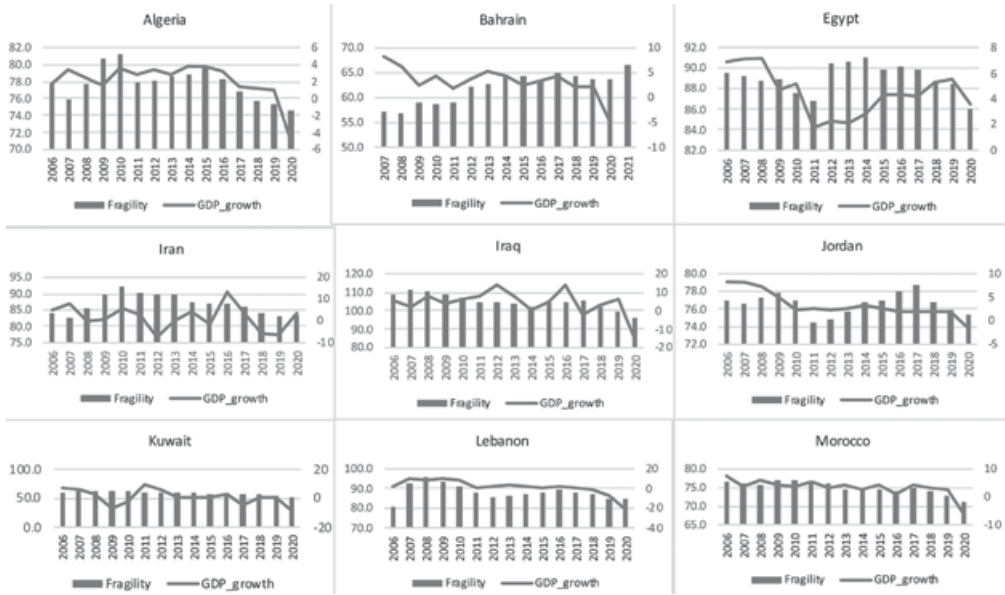


Figure 17.1a State fragility index and economic growth

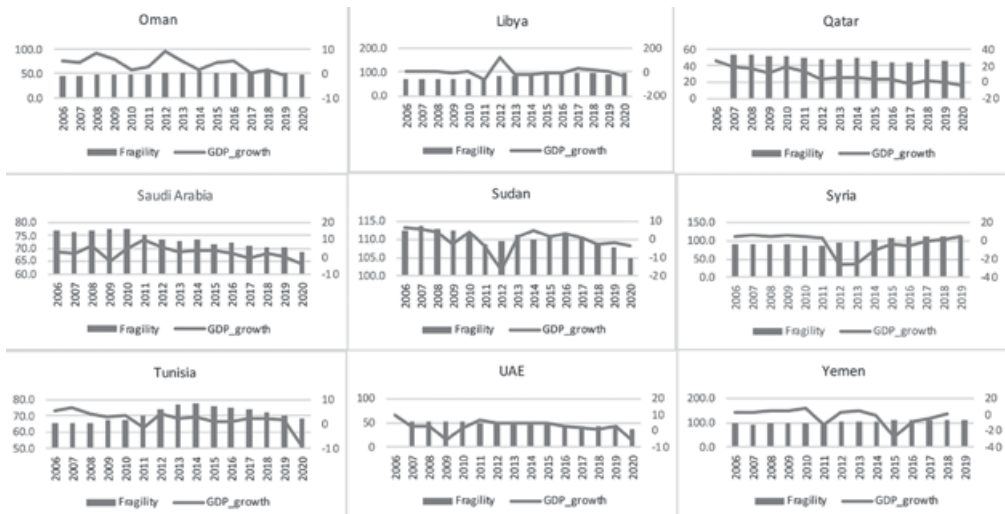


Figure 17.1b State fragility index and economic growth

As Figure 17.1 shows, when the fragility index is perturbed, so is GDP growth. This is quite clear in Syria, Tunisia, Yemen, Lebanon, Iran, and Iraq. Countries like Jordan, Morocco, and

Algeria showed steady levels of both fragility and GDP growth. Countries that lived through the Arab Spring are now experiencing higher levels of fragility, including Yemen, Tunisia, Libya, and Egypt. The Gulf countries are less fragile, and fragility is on the decline in all of them except Bahrain.

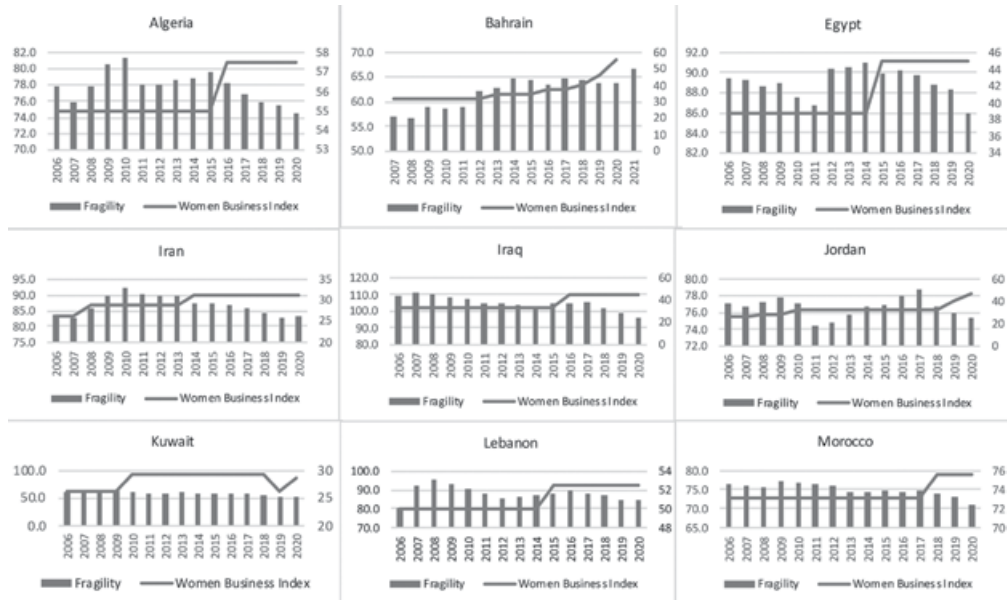


Figure 17.2a Fragility and Women, Business and Law Index (WBLI)

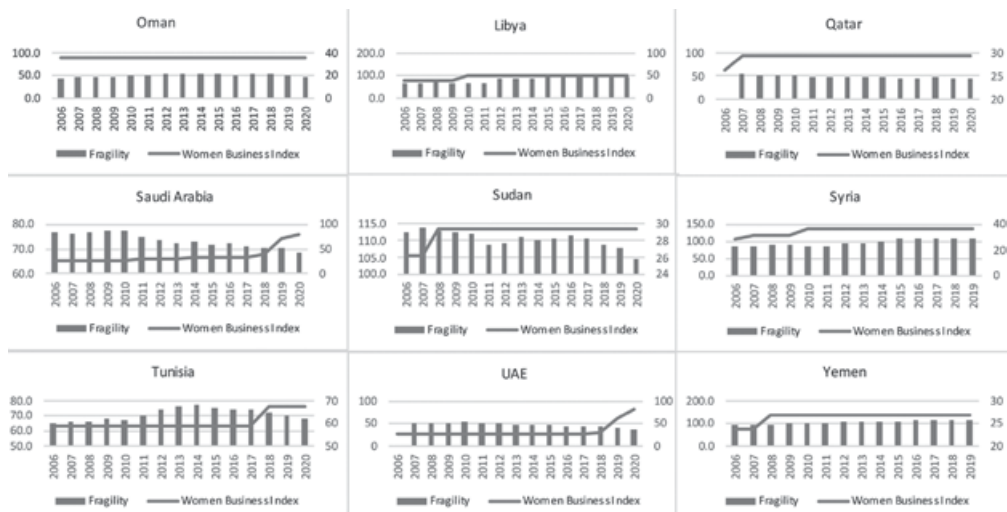


Figure 17.2b Fragility and Women, Business and Law Index (WBLI)

The empowerment of women (using the Women, Business and Law Index – WBLI) is one of the indicators for sustainable development (Figure 17.2). The MENA region has traditionally experienced a gender deficit compared to the Global North and other developing regions, that is, the extent to which women actively engage in the economy and business life and participate in labor force is limited. Our departing premise is that women’s empowerment is a cornerstone of a viable and productive society. Bahrain, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, and UAE have shown improvement on WBLI as fragility declined. It should be noted that Jordan has shown progress in WBLI since 2018.

In a study by Ali and Bhuiyan (2022a), they demonstrate that improving the quality of governance leads to a significant positive effect on physical infrastructure development in the MENA region. Ali and Bhuiyan’s study departs from the traditional natural resource curse arguments and moves toward natural resources rent and good governance indicators for infrastructure development. The findings show that natural resources rent and governance do matter for infrastructure development (Ali and Bhuiyan, 2022a).

The remainder of the chapter is organized as follows. The following section reviews the existing literature about the nature/aspects of fragility, focusing in particular on the MENA region and emphasizing the role of governance. The next section presents the data used to empirically examine the relationship between fragility and sustainable development, followed by sections presenting the empirical model and discussing the empirical results. The final section provides concluding remarks.

LITERATURE REVIEW

It has been claimed that all countries can be seen as fragile in some way (Moreno Torres and Anderson, 2004; Carment et al., 2014). The MENA region is no exception; many of its countries have fallen into crisis due to political and social mobilization. Others are teetering on the brink of brutal civil war, while others, such as Libya, Yemen, and Syria, are already in the midst of bloody conflict. The MENA countries suffering from weak institutions and lack of public trust in government can be considered fragile states.

Despite the scholarly debate over the definition of fragility, the level of danger posed by the countries deemed “fragile,” not only to their own citizens but also to the peace and security of the entire international community, is very clear (Mcloughlin, 2012; Reilly, 2008). According to the OECD (2020), fragility causes a major threat to the Sustainable Development Goals. Moreover, the spread of the coronavirus has contributed to unemployment, poverty, inequalities, political unrest and rising gender-based violence in fragile contexts (OECD, 2020). There is, consequently, an increasingly persuasive argument that the current mechanisms of international intervention should be strengthened to address the security repercussions posed by fragile states to their regional and global settings, known as the spillover effect (Chauvet et al., 2007). Previous studies have argued that it is the responsibility of the international community to intervene in fragile states to protect local citizens from perceived dangers, and to safeguard and maintain the international security framework as a whole (Andersen, 2008). Starting in the 2000s, international institutions, including the World Bank, have come to the belief that weak states are strong catalysts for the spreading of crime, disease, and smuggling, not to mention their contribution to environmental destabilization (Carment et al., 2014).

Aspects of fragile states may include – to varying degrees – a failure of legitimacy, services, and authority (Stewart and Brown, 2010). Since they fail to fulfill the conventional expectations of the Weberian concept of statehood because of their potential vulnerability to collapse (Stepputat and Engberg-Pedersen, 2008), fragile states suffer from a relatively elevated institutional vulnerability to shocks, alongside an inability to address internal and external challenges (Di John, 2008). They also suffer from structural problems in terms of their authority, legitimacy, and capacity (Carment et al., 2011). In discussing the indicative features of fragile states, it might be useful to differentiate between fragility caused by the lack of administrative and managerial capacity and that resulting from lack of political will and willingness to reform (Department for International Development, 2005). Fragility, in this context, can be understood as a set of dysfunctions that include failure to provide basic social services, bad governance, and persistence of poverty, but also may extend to lack of territorial control and civil war (Bertocchi and Guerzoni, 2011; Besley and Pearson, 2011; Cojanu and Popescu, 2007). It is not low growth rates but a chronic malfunction in the process of growth itself that makes development impossible and poverty persistent (Zoellick, 2008).

Lack of socioeconomic stability, high rates of corruption, and violations of property rights all constitute aspects of fragility as well; countries suffering from those symptoms fall into a trap of chronic decline, because donors refuse to provide aid in view of the perceived high economic and security risks (Andrimihaja et al., 2011). A fragile state, in sum, is characterized by the absence of an adequately functioning state apparatus that can perform its delegated tasks in an efficient manner (LSE-Oxford Commission, 2018). Although much of the literature presents poverty as a characteristic of states that are failing (Collier, 2007), some fragile states, paradoxically, might enjoy an abundance of natural resources, despite the deterioration of their overall political and economic capacity (Di John, 2008). It is worth noting that terms like “fragile,” “failed,” or “collapsed” are often used to describe countries suffering from a set of similar structural problems. However, there is a conceptual difference between fragility and failure in that the latter includes a severely violent nationwide conflict accompanied by complete or partial loss of territorial control.

Speaking of the factors making a state weak or vulnerable, a lack of sufficiently good governance to sustain basic governmental services, including the primary state functions of security and the economy, is considered one of the reasons behind state fragility (Department for International Development, 2005). Tackling state fragility, therefore, entails reforming governance patterns (Peters, 2019). While bad governance, among other factors, is seen by some scholars and research entities, including the World Bank, as the chief reason behind fragility, Khan (2006) disagrees with that view. He suggests that it is an old concept that is no longer valid or even historically reliable, considering many of the state-building experiences that prioritized development over governance and political reform. Another explanation for the phenomenon of state fragility is the idea, adopted by some scholars, of a broken social contract, where citizens demand their legitimate rights while those in power fail or refuse to deliver them (Andersen, 2008).

The combined force of stagnant income growth, slow development, rising poverty, and unemployment creates an environment where turmoil is a possibility – especially in wealthy countries where people theoretically have something to fight for (Zoellick, 2008). Likewise, suffering from a legitimacy deficit or lack of effectiveness increases a country’s vulnerability and makes it more prone to destabilize, whereas the loss of both factors leads to state collapse. These disastrous scenarios can take place where there is, among other difficulties, a problem

of state predation or political succession in an authoritarian setting, tension among community groups over resources, or failure of democratic government due to either mass uprisings or internal power contestation among state institutions, such as a coup d'état (Goldstone, 2008). A different explanation of fragility is related to institutions: common patterns of thought that shape the sociopolitical behavior of actors inside government impact the society, for better or for worse, through the systems of incentives and punishments they provide. Dealing with fragility, therefore, depends heavily on changing established institutional arrangements (Goldstone, 2008).

On the conditions for fragility and its ramifications for development in the Middle East, Kivimäki (2021) argues that the region's characteristics need to be qualitatively and accurately examined in comparison to other global contexts to spot similarities and differences. He adds that fragility in the MENA has serious development consequences in terms of the region's course of growth, especially since its countries have long suffered from political factionalism, lack of political legitimacy, and repeated foreign intervention, factors that exacerbated the region's overall vulnerability and weakness. In line with the idea of social contract and how relevant it is to state fragility, Loewe and Zintl (2021) argue that the Middle East suffers from various types of fragility, which differ according to each country's sociopolitical and historical context; however, they are all related to breaking the social contract between rulers and the ruled due to the governments' failure to provide services to citizens – social protection in particular – and meet their commitments, which has negatively impacted state–society relations over decades. In the same regard, Ali (2018) refers to the idea that fragility in the MENA region has much to do with the state of institutional decay that characterizes the region's governments; he also emphasizes that closing off civil society and mainstreaming autocratic rule deepen fragility in the region and make the process of meeting the ever-increasing demands of the new generations even more difficult.

It is no wonder that the region – despite its huge potential – still lacks much sustainability in terms of its developmental plans, owing to many of the political hindrances it faces (Issa and Al Abbar, 2015). Likewise, Göll et al. (2019) state that the MENA region still has multiple structural challenges to face as a result of conflict-related factors that make progress on sustainable development goals in most of the region quite limited. It is argued that a great deal of attention should be paid to the pillars of democratic governance – public participation in particular – and political institutions for MENA countries to be able to tackle the causes of these destabilizing internal and external conflicts and achieve their plans for sustainable development (Saab and Sadik, 2016). Reforming governance is, consequently, believed to bring about positive results for institutionally attaining and mainstreaming sustainable development (Ramzy et al., 2019).

It is important, therefore, in this context, to understand governance as a set of sociopolitical processes that take place while seeking development (in which community engagement plays a vital part) (Meadowcroft, 2007). Cojanu and Popescu (2007) state that ever since the 1990s, researchers have considered good governance as only a means to achieve development. In the same line of thought, Kardos (2012) argues that good governance is a prerequisite for sustainable development, especially when it comes to public participation and engagement of social actors in the process of developmental planning. Reinforcing the same idea, Roy and Tisdell (1998) assert that for sustainable development to take place, a certain level of good governance is needed, which can be attained through several institutional structures, alongside the

presence of adequate economic resources; they also argue that the lack of good governance, in the form of corruption, undermines countries' attempts to achieve sustainable development.

DATA

To examine the relationship between state fragility and sustainable development, data was collected from the Fragile States Index as well as the Women, Business and Law Index (WBLI). In order to study the interplay between the aforementioned two variables throughout the period 2006 to 2020, specific indicators were selected from both indices and analyzed through an empirical model to test our hypothesis in which state fragility acts as the independent variable while sustainable development is the dependent variable. As described below, additional data for a few other variables were also used.

Countries' total fragility ranks are categorized by score quartiles: alert (90–120), warning (60–90), stable (30–60), and sustainable (0–30), using a Conflict Assessment System Tool (CAST), where for each sub-indicator a myriad of search keywords is incorporated into media data to specify the saliency degree of these sub-indicators in regard to each state listed (Fund for Peace, 2017). The fragile states index works as follows: the higher the score, the worse the country's performance. It includes four sets of indicators – Cohesion, Political, Economic, and Social – each of which measures three specific aspects. For each indicator, the ratings are on a scale of 0 to 10, with 0 being the lowest intensity (most stable) and 10 being the highest intensity (least stable). The total fragility score is the sum of the 12 indicators and is on a scale of 0–120 (Fund for Peace, 2017).

Part of the cohesion indicators, the *Group Grievances* indicator measures the sociopolitical tensions within a society. It reflects the historical injustices experienced by communities by focusing on the themes of post-conflict response, equality, divisions, and communal violence (Fund for Peace, 2017). These indicators are designed to address perceived crimes and atrocities against social groups, as well as these groups' degree of fair access to (and equal distribution of) resources and power, and political independence/self-determination. It also reports on the fairness of reconciliation and reconstruction processes, religious intolerance, and the prosecution of war criminals (Fund for Peace, 2017). With a few exceptions such as Qatar, Oman and Kuwait, countries in MENA suffer from high levels of group grievances.

Measured by the uneven economic development Indicator, *economic equality* is defined as the presence and protection of equal rights in a society; the perception of hiring practices as legally fair; the level of economic justice; and the size of the economic gap within the society (Fund for Peace, 2017). Part of the human rights and rule of law indicator, *human rights violations* are defined as the presence of historically systematic offenses by the government against social groups, state-sponsored torture, forced and child labor, and forced relocation of groups without fair compensation (Fund for Peace, 2017). All MENA countries perform poorly on human rights, except that Tunisia, Morocco, and Algeria have shown declines in abuses since 2011.

The *state legitimacy* indicator includes the representativeness and openness of government and its relationship with its citizenry (Fund for Peace 2017). The indicator reflects the population's level of confidence in state institutions and processes, and assesses the effects where that confidence is absent, manifested through mass public demonstrations, sustained civil disobedience, or the rise of armed insurgencies (Fund for Peace 2017). The *Women, Business and*

Law Index (WBLI) measures how laws and regulations affect women's economic opportunity. Overall scores are calculated by taking the average score of each of the eight areas (Going Places, Starting a Job, Getting Paid, Getting Married, Having Children, Running a Business, Managing Assets, and Getting a Pension), with 100 representing the highest possible score, on a scale of 1–100.

Military expenditure (as a % of GDP) data from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) are derived from the NATO definition, which includes all current and capital expenditures on the armed forces, including peacekeeping forces; defense ministries and other government agencies engaged in defense projects; paramilitary forces, if these are judged to be trained and equipped for military operations; and military space activities. Such expenditures include military and civil personnel, including retirement pensions of military personnel and social services for personnel; operation and maintenance; procurement; military research and development; and military aid (in the military expenditures of the donor country). Excluded are civil defense and current expenditures for previous military activities, such as for veterans' benefits, demobilization, conversion, and destruction of weapons. This definition cannot be applied for all countries, however, since that would require much more detailed information than is available about what is included in military budgets and off-budget military expenditure items. For example, military budgets might or might not cover civil defense, reserves and auxiliary forces, police and paramilitary forces, dual-purpose forces such as military and civilian police, military grants in kind, pensions for military personnel, and social security contributions paid by one part of government to another.

Estimates of current *health expenditures (as a % of GDP)* include healthcare goods and services consumed during each year. This indicator does not include capital health expenditures such as buildings, machinery, IT, and stocks of vaccines for emergencies or outbreaks. Annual *population growth rate* for year t is the exponential rate of growth of midyear population from year $t-1$ to t , expressed as a percentage. Population is based on the de facto definition of population, which counts all residents regardless of legal status or citizenship.

EMPIRICAL MODEL

This section uses panel data from 2006–2020 to examine the impact of state fragility on sustainable development in MENA. Our hypothesis is that fragility negatively impacts sustainable development, which is in turn reflective of a country's capacity (or lack thereof) to perform its most basic social functions and governance tasks. Table 17A.1 in the Appendix presents descriptive statistics for key variables. Before conducting model estimations, non-stationarity was identified to avoid spurious results.

All variables are stationary of order one.¹ Hence, first difference equations (see Appendix) are used to estimate the model, using sustainability development measures – GDP growth (*gdp_growth*), women business and law index (*women_busindex*), and current health expenditure (*chealth_gdp*) – as dependent variables. The fragility index as an independent variable is composed of social, economic, and political indices. It includes the aggregate fragility index (Total), group grievances (*gro grievance*), human rights violation index (*humanr*), and state legitimacy (*statelegit*). The model controls for population growth (*population_growth*), economic inequality (*E_inequality*), and military expenditure as percentage of GDP (*miley_gdp*) to reflect the level of peace and security.

To address endogeneity issues, we used lagged instruments. Several of the variables including GDP growth and the fragility index are endogenous by nature, so lagging the variables is essential.² In examining the causal mechanisms between fragility and growth, fragility is an erosion for having a conducive environment for healthy economic growth. Moreover, initial condition for growth matters for subsequent growth, so using lagged GDP growth can predict current economic growth. The trend in the inequality variable in MENA demonstrates that unequal societies do have higher economic growth. Most countries across the region have shown that higher inequality is associated with higher economic growth as countries embrace the idea of neo-liberalism.

RESULTS

Fragility and Economic Growth

Table 17.1 Panel data fixed effect model. Dependent variable is GDP growth

Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
D(gdp_growth)	0.27 (8.57)***	0.22 (6.55)***	0.22 (7.48)***	0.23 (7.11)***
D(population_growth)	1.28 (2.83)***	1.18 (2.41)**	1.16 (2.59)***	1.07 (2.20)**
D(E_inequality)	1.05 (0.78)	1.58 (1.12)	2.20 (1.67)*	1.89 (1.34)
D(milex_gdp)	0.30 (0.82)	-0.69 (-2.10)**	-0.61 (-1.98)**	-0.89 (-2.54)**
D(total)	0.41 (2.38)**	—	—	—
D(grogrievance)	—	1.66 (1.63)*	—	—
D(humanr)	—	—	3.07 (3.03)***	—
D(statelegit)	—	—	—	0.36 (0.38)
tot_melix	-0.88 (-5.33)***	—	—	—
milex_grievance	—	-0.01 (-0.01)	—	—
milex_HumanR	—	—	4.78 (4.49)***	—
Milex_stateleg	—	—	—	2.50 (1.87)*
Constant	3.43 (10.27)***	3.22 (8.92)***	3.30 (9.92)***	3.35 (9.39)***
R-squared	0.31	0.25	0.32	0.26
F-value	3.81	3.02	3.72	2.77
Number of Observations	206	206	206	206

Note: Robust t-statistics in parentheses *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

Table 17.1 shows that a lag in GDP growth affects any increase in the current level of growth. An increase in fragility is associated with higher growth in the MENA region and this could be attributed to the different kinds of regimes in the region. The liberal autocrats have experienced economic growth while other forms of government have not. Specifically, autocratic regimes have reduced the society's safety net and changed their social contracts through austerity measures to promote economic growth. Breaking down fragility into different components, group grievances and human rights violations are correlated with growth. The egregious human rights violations, grievances, and social mobilization in countries that were already suffering these things reached their climax during the Arab Spring. The inequality in economic growth across the region has resulted in social and political stratification between haves and have-nots. Calling for social justice was a core mantra of the revolutions in MENA. Despite human rights violations and other grievances, the economies of these autocratic regimes have continued to grow.

Conversely, the state legitimacy variable as a fragility measure did not impact growth. Out of 18 countries, only 4 countries (Lebanon, Libya, Sudan and Syria) saw their legitimacy being questioned in recent years. For example, in the case of Lebanon, legitimacy was challenged by the armed groups that were using force against the central government or civil society demonstrations. The presence of armed groups that challenged the central authority on its right to use force after the Arab Spring has eroded state legitimacy. In this case, armed groups and kleptocrats are plundering the resources and halting growth. In Table 17.1, military expenditure (except for model 1) appears to be acting as an instrument for lowering economic growth and presumably it is crowding out investment in private capital. Using the interaction term of military expenditures with fragility to measure the net gains from military spending on a fragile society shows a negative impact on economic growth. One possible interpretation is that fragile societies tend to overspend on military to a degree that is harmful for economic growth. In contrast, as shown in Table 17.1 model 3, the interaction of military expenditure with human rights violations is positively correlated with economic growth. Our explanation is that oppressive governments are using "law and order" to justify military expenditure and violate human rights while they witnessed economic growth. For example, countries like Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and UAE spend significantly on the military, while at the same time witnessing an increase in human rights violations and higher economic growth. Human rights violations and coercion might be the cheapest way to subdue a revolutionary society; this would decrease military spending and thus spur growth. A liberal autocratic regime may be characterized by economic growth on the one hand; on the other, it damages the society by a level of repression that cannot be sustained in the long run. At a time when state legitimacy is being challenged, its association with higher military spending stimulates economic growth. However, in a society that experiences group grievances, higher military spending cannot be translated into any tangible economic growth gains.

Fragility and Women, Business and Law Index (WBLI)

One of the sustainability measures is WBLI. As discussed earlier, this index measures how laws and regulations affect women's economic opportunity. The higher the score, the better the opportunity for women to hold jobs, get paid fairly, manage assets, and run businesses. Table 17.2 shows that economic growth in MENA is not inclusive of women. Economic growth is accompanied by a fall in the WBLI between .08 and .09 percent. The economic

growth variable is significant across the four models. The total fragility index is significant: it lowers WBLI by 0.3 percent. In addition, human rights violations mostly affected women, depriving them of economic mobility. However, the state legitimacy and group grievances variables do not have an impact on WBLI.

Table 17.2 Panel data fixed effect model. Dependent variable is Women, Business and Law Index (WBLI)

Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
D(women_busindex)	1.48 (18.21)***	1.48 (18.09)***	1.44 (17.75)***	1.49 (18.35)***
D(gdp_growth)	-0.09 (-2.57)**	-0.10 (-2.91)***	-0.08 (-2.71)***	-0.09 (-2.87)***
D(population_growth)	-0.50 (-1.04)	-0.47 (-0.96)	0.37 (-0.90)	-0.40 (-0.82)
D(E_inequality)	-0.99 (-0.69)	-1.44 (-1.02)	-1.73 (-1.25)	-1.68 (-1.19)
D(milex_gdp)	0.48 (1.25)	0.55 (1.66)*	0.52 (1.61)*	0.65 (1.84)*
D(total)	-0.31 (-1.68)*	—	—	—
D(grogrievance)	—	-0.66 (-0.65)	—	—
D(humanr)	—	—	-2.80 (-2.61)***	—
D(statelegit)	—	—	—	-0.37 (-0.39)
tot_melix	0.09 (0.53)	—	—	—
milex_grievance	—	-1.08 (-0.75)	—	—
milex_HumanR	—	—	-1.73 (-1.52)	—
Milex_stateleg	—	—	—	-1.18 (-0.88)
Constant	39.24 (105.92)	39.29 (104.65)	39.33 (107.87)	39.20 (105.15)
R-squared	0.07	0.07	0.09	0.07
F-value	125.19	123.84	122.24	123.77
Number of Observations	206	206	206	206

Note: Robust t-statistics in parentheses *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

Fragility and Current Health Expenditure

For our final measure of sustainable development, we used an estimate of current health expenditure, which includes healthcare goods and services consumed during each year, as a measure of human development. Table 17.3 shows that past health expenditure has an impact on current health expenditure. As shown across the models in Table 17.3, MENA countries do not spend more on health as their economies grow. In contrast, the variable for economic

inequality is negative and significant across the models in Table 17.3. The total fragility index is negatively correlated with health expenditure but is not significant. When we consider different aspects of fragility, group grievance, state legitimacy and human rights violations do not significantly impact health expenditure either. Nor is there a direct link in MENA countries between military expenditure and health expenditure. Given that most of these countries are rentier economies, they rely on oil and natural resources rent to pay for both health and military expenditures. The current level of health expenditure is independent of the fragility index and this may be because governments are likely to spend more on the military than on social sectors. Our results in fact show that when military expenditure interacts with state legitimacy, it does negatively affect health expenditure.

Table 17.3 Panel data fixed effect model. Dependent variable is current health expenditure

Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
D(chealth_gdp)	0.62 (4.97)***	0.57 (4.50)***	0.63 (5.15)***	0.56 (4.64)***
D(gdp_growth)	0.01 (0.52)	0.00 (0.35)	0.00 (0.39)	0.01 (0.71)
D(population_growth)	-0.14 (-1.73)*	-0.13 (-1.57)	-0.13 (-1.60)*	-0.12 (-1.44)
D(E_inequality)	-0.55 (-2.17)**	-0.66 (-2.68)**	-0.61 (-2.51)**	0.69 (-2.82)***
D(milex_gdp)	-0.06 (-0.83)	-0.06 (-0.76)	-0.10 (-1.34)	-0.02 (-0.21)
D(total)	-0.05 (-1.56)	—	—	—
D(grogrievance)	—	-0.15 (-0.88)	—	—
D(humanr)	—	—	-0.30 (-1.53)	—
D(statelegit)	—	—	—	-0.01 (-0.04)
tot_melix	-0.01 (-0.19)	—	—	—
milex_grievance	—	0.19 (0.68)	—	—
milex_HumanR	—	—	0.35 (1.36)	—
Milex_stateleg	—	—	—	-0.50 (-2.11)***
Constant	4.94 (79.56)	4.93 (78.64)	4.94 (79.57)	4.92 (80.63)
R-squared	0.01	0.01	0.02	0.04
F-value	57.97	55.98	59.23	57.06
Number of Observations	177	177	177	177

Note: Robust t-statistics in parentheses *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

CONCLUSION

The definition of state fragility is problematic in many ways, not only for an amorphous definition that eluded the researchers, but also for its multidimensionality and the interlinks with other sociopolitical and economic issues, especially in a historically turbulent region like MENA. The analysis undertaken in this chapter demonstrated to what extent fragility has impacted sustainable development by focusing on GDP growth, women's economic opportunities, and health expenditure as dependent variables in separate empirical models. It can be argued with some degree of validity that fragility is an expression of a country's (in)ability to perform its developmental tasks and its social functions. The empirical results show that fragility has an impact on sustainable development, though not always in a clear and expected way in the MENA region. Fragility in MENA countries seems to have strong links with the notion of social justice and the attainment of social services; it reflects states' failure to empower their own citizens through development.

Broadly speaking, factors like group grievances and military expenditure appeared to be significantly impactful in terms of the region's overall fragility record since they affect countries' GDP and spending on public services considered key to the concept of fragility. However, the interaction of military expenditure and fragility to capture the level of security in the country offered mixed results. While many of the MENA countries, whether republics or monarchies, are not typically democratic, the impact of human rights violations has deepened their fragility. However, the impact of human rights violations was varying; some rulers manage and maneuver the corridor of public discontent, whereas others with less economic capacity have failed to meet the demands on freedom, equality and social justice, thus resorting to more repression and authoritarian tactics towards their societies. According to our analysis, the mostly impacted by the forces of repression were women, and that ultimately increased the overall regional fragility.

Since increased military expenditure has been found to negatively impact spending on social services and rights (women empowerment and health, for instance), it may be relatively valid to assume that fragility in MENA is more associated with the social aspects of services rather than political aspects of democratic governance, a dilemma that needs more attention from policymakers in the context of designing socioeconomic and developmental interventions across the region.

NOTES

1. For an AR(1) model, $Y_{it} = \delta Y_{it-1} + \epsilon_{it}$. In the case $\delta < 1$ the series will be stationary; however, in the case $\delta > 1$ the series is explosive (non-stationary). In the case $\delta = 1$ the series contains a unit root and is non-stationary. A series Y_{it} is integrated of order 1 ($Y_{it} \sim I(1)$) and contains a unit root if Y_{it} is non-stationary but ΔY_{it} is stationary (Asteriou and Hall, 2011). The order of an integrated series is equal to the number of times the series needs to be differenced to become stationary (Asteriou and Hall, 2011).
2. Given that the cross-sectional component of our data is greater than the time series component, it limits the degrees of freedom to use many instruments.

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APPENDIX

Table 17A.1 *Summary statistics*

Variables	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev	Min	Max
TOTAL	266	78.08	19.55	38.1	113.7
E_INEQUALITY	266	6.30	1.53	2.0	9.60
GDP_GROWTH	265	2.44	10.85	-62.07	39.50
STATELEGIT	266	7.77	1.19	5.70	10.00
MILEX_GDP	229	4.37	2.48	0.94	15.47
WOMEN_BUSINDEX	267	39.91	14.00	23.75	82.50
CHEALTH_GDP	217	4.88	1.83	1.59	9.50
GRO_GRIEVANCE	266	7.22	2.05	2.00	10.00

The panel data will be estimated using the following regression equation:

$$y_{it} = \beta_i + \sum_j^k \beta_{ij} \Delta y_{it-j} + \delta_{ij}^{\wedge} \Delta X_{it-j} + \gamma_{ij} \Delta W_{it} + \varnothing_i + \tau_{it} + \mu_{it}$$

where ΔX_{it-j} represents the difference of variables `gdp_growth`, `women_busindex`, and `chealth_gdp`; Δy_{it-j} denotes a vector of fragility variables: `total`, `grogrievance`, `humanr` and `statelegit`; and ΔW_{it} denotes the difference for the control variables.

18. State fragility trap and conflict in Afghanistan (2001–2021)

Said Yaqub Ibrahimi

INTRODUCTION

Afghanistan has always been one of the top fragile states in the world. State fragility has provided a favorable condition for at least four phases of conflict including the anti-Soviet war (1979–1992), the civil war (1992–1996), the Taliban insurgency against the former mujahidin groups (1996–2001), and the Taliban insurgency against the US-backed government (2001–2021).

The military domination of the Taliban in August 2021, which terminated the two-decade-long attempt at state-building and democratization, was the conclusion of the fourth phase of the war. Since the violent resurgence of the Taliban in 2003, there were several efforts by domestic and international players to settle the conflict by establishing a power-sharing governance system. However, due to the rigid positions of the Taliban and the Afghan government, and the international players' lack of a long-term vision of peace and stability in the country, all efforts failed. The failure of efforts to settle the conflict politically led to the continuation and escalation of the war, state erosion, and the military domination of the insurgency.

The failure of the Afghan state in promoting statehood and deterring the insurgency was related to the two decades of internationally funded political intervention and its anomalies. The intervention, in general, led to 240,000 lives lost and trillions of dollars spent (Carment and Belo, 2021). From 2001 to 2021, the US alone spent \$2.26 trillion to end terrorism and war and build a friendly state in Afghanistan (SIGAR, 2021). Nevertheless, the actual amount spent on state-building, particularly through intelligence and informal channels, is not declassified yet. US allies also spent hundreds of billions of dollars in the same period. Some 2,000 US soldiers and hundreds of the allied forces, besides 70,000 Afghan forces, were killed in the same period (SIGAR, 2021). These efforts, investments, and sacrifices failed to produce a stable state in Afghanistan and deter the insurgency mainly because of the incapability of the Afghan government and its international allies in managing and directing resources for building a legitimate, effective, and stable state system.

Before the fall of Kabul to the Taliban, many scholars and policymakers assumed that with the continuation of international support the state would exit the fragility trap by improving its authority, legitimacy, and capacity. However, evidence, data, and the outcome refuted the assumption. The Afghan state collapsed due to the lack of legitimacy, the lack of state authority, the lack of sufficient human resources, the lack of a broad-based government, and most importantly the increasing and systematic corruption on all levels of governance. Hence, the Afghan state internally collapsed way before August 15, 2021 when the Taliban occupied the palace. Therefore, the study of state collapse and the military domination of the Taliban with a focus on state fragility will help articulate elements and aspects of increasing conflict, state collapse, the insurgency's success, and the consequences on international peace and security.

Drawing on empirical evidence and qualitative analysis, this chapter explains how state fragility provided the necessary condition for the extension and escalation of war and how the war led to further state fragility and the military domination of the insurgency. State fragility, in this chapter, is approached as an anomaly of the modern sovereign state. The sovereign state consists of several institutional and functional elements which are measured by three variables of legitimacy, authority, and capacity (Carment and Samy, 2019; Tikuisis and Carment, 2017). A fragile state refers to any sovereign state that suffers from a lack of legitimacy, authority, and capacity or falls short of the three measures of statehood. This chapter uses the three variables to examine state collapse and its consequences in Afghanistan from 2001 to 2021. The chapter contributes to this volume with a special concentration on the security and governance aspects of external state-building in Afghanistan, which was heavily funded by the US and its allies following the October 2001 “operation enduring freedom.”

LACK OF LEGITIMACY

Legitimacy refers to the extent to which a state respects the social contract and enjoys popular and international support (Carment et al., 2010). The lack of or a lower level of state legitimacy could lead to conflict, corruption, state collapse, and many other domestic and international security problems. The lack of state legitimacy was a critical source of state failure in Afghanistan. Historically, the Afghan state was built as a centralist system over a largely centrifugal society. The centralist state-building strategies functioned against the decentralized society’s conventional norms and interactions, resulting in a troubled state–society relationship and repeated state failures since the creation of modern Afghanistan. The absence of an institutionalized connection between the state and the society was mainly manifested in weak state institutions, on the one hand, and a marginalized and reactive society, on the other (Ibrahimi, 2019a; Kohli, 2002; Migdal, 2001, 2004).

Since its creation, the centralist state has attempted to extend its sovereign rule within the society through both conservative and revolutionary strategies and practices. Although different in nature, the two strategies were designed by the state for the same purpose: controlling the periphery from the center. The contradiction between the state’s centralist approach and the society’s centrifugal behavior consistently deteriorated state legitimacy. As a result, the state used coercive and corrupt methods to control social forces rather than developing legitimate mechanisms to govern it by consent. Social forces rebelled in response and destroyed the state institutions repeatedly. The state–society relationship became a key problem of state-building and political development in the aftermath of the US invasion in 2001 when former mujahidin groups and rebel forces started undermining the state’s centralist agenda by creating power centers throughout the country. The traditional centralist politicians, which were now seriously challenged by powerful centrifugal forces, relied on such extreme methods of governance as ethnocentrism, political bribes, and intimidation to divide and rule.

As a result, following the US invasion, centralization of power, ethnocentrism, intimidation, and corruption became key pillars of politics and state-building. As a response to the centralist state’s agenda, the mujahidin and rebel commanders used their resources and influence to secure assets in the immediate post-Taliban order and prepare for control of coercion, capital, and political connections (Mukhopadhyay, 2014; Shahrani, 2015; Wilde and Mielke, 2013). They gradually became the so-called “new power holders” both in the capital and the country-

side. In addition to their influence through patron–client networks in provinces and villages, the emerging players increased coercive strength and access to capital through the new channels that they developed on all levels of power and politics. With the lack of a meaningful institutional link between Kabul and the provinces, the government’s key policy of maintaining authority in the countryside became limited to negotiations with local players through personal channels, patron–client networks, tribal and ethnic connections, personal loyalties, and most importantly, bribery and corruption.

The new powerholders’ legitimacy rested on their former career as mujahidin and rebel commanders/elites, active employment of arms, ability to lead a group of followers, and access to material and financial resources (Wilde and Mielke, 2013). In this process, the state was losing its historical formal role of being the sole authority. Unlike the pre-war periods of the 1930s to the 1970s when the state designed top-down policies for dealing with local sources of authority, in the post-2001 era the new powerholders were actively involved in deciding the type and degree of their relationship with and reliance on the central government. They become pro-state when in governmental positions and turn against it when dismissed. As a result, political chaos, ethnocentrism, patrimonialism, and corruption became the norm of politics, leading to the gradual erosion and corruption of newly established state institutions from inside.

Hamid Karzai, who ruled Afghanistan from 2002 to 2014, tried to keep and popularize his tenure as the president by reinventing the local tribal and ethnic leaders and reinforcing their role in national and local politics. His approach is known as a form of “neopatrimonialism” in which politics is based on alliances, networking, and patron–client relationships (Maley, 2013). Karzai’s policy had two symmetrical objectives: First, to consolidate power by using traditional mechanisms of intermediation in local, tribal, ethnic, and national frameworks, which simply required bribing politicians and local elders to intermediate between the central government and societal forces. Second, to marginalize the former mujahidin and rebel commanders through the restoration of the traditional sociopolitical networks. The policy disregarded the transformation of rural Afghanistan in which the conventional rulers were marginalized because of their lack of enforcement capacities, on the one hand, and the amplification of new challengers, on the other (Wilde and Mielke, 2013). As a result, Karzai’s policy met with almost no success (Jones, 2008; Shankar, 2008). Therefore, during his second term in office (2009–2014), Karzai tried to change his centralist agenda to a *new conservative* vision and work with the emerging centrifugal powerholders. The new policy functioned more against the centralist state than helping it grow by paving the way for the re-emergence of local powerholders as official actors on all levels of governance from national to local (Katzman, 2015).

Ashraf Ghani transformed Karzai’s neopatrimonialism into an ethnic-based strategy of centralization and personalization of power. Ghani came to power in 2014 through an agreement brokered by the US Secretary of State, John Kerry, between him and his electoral rival, Abdullah Abdullah, a former jihadi figure coming from the Tajik-dominated Northern Alliance. Kerry intervened in the 2014 presidential election when the election led to a political deadlock because Abdullah rejected the results, accusing Ghani of widespread fraud. Kerry’s brokerage satisfied Ghani and Abdullah, leading to the formation of a National Unity Government with Ghani becoming the president and Abdullah the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the state. According to the agreement, the CEO was supposed to work as a *de facto* prime minister, pending a subsequent national deliberation over changing the constitution

to create a formal prime ministerial post (Katzman, 2015). However, the two leaders hardly cooperated, with Ghani constantly limiting Abdullah's role in the government and Abdullah increasingly protesting against Ghani for violating the agreement. Following the 2019 election which also resulted in the formation of a power-sharing government between the two contenders as a result of the US pressures, Ghani continued the personalization of power politics and Abdullah the blame game.

During both his terms in office, Ghani's main approach to governance and power was personalization of power by using micromanagement, patron–client relations, ethnocentrism, and the creation of an Arg-based vision for the country. To implement this agenda and challenge Abdullah's appointed ministers and administrators, Ghani created multiple high commissions and high councils in the palace that had a full mandate to intervene in governmental procedures. The president's *brigades of advisors and commissioners* acted parallel to regular government institutions and functions which subverted the government and its arrangements way before the fall of Kabul to the Taliban.

Overall, Karzai's neopatrimonialism and Ghani's personalization of power followed one single agenda: further centralization and monopolization of power in the palace by coercion, corruption, intimidation, political bribery, and ethnocentrism. The two approaches to power and politics prevented the development of a long-term and broad-based agenda for political development and increasingly damaged the state's legitimacy.

A significant indicator of the erosion of state legitimacy is the four presidential elections in the two decades of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. The presidential elections and their results in this period reflect the Afghan politicians' traditional tendency and desire to take power by using undemocratic methods and measures. While the 2004 and 2009 presidential elections were not broadly disputed, still ethnocentrism and foreign influence played key roles in the electoral processes and their results. Compared to the two early elections, the 2014 and 2019 presidential elections became more ethnocentric, fraudulent, limited, and influenced by domestic politics and foreign players.

The 2014 election was extremely ethnocentric and systematically fraudulent (Johnson, 2019). In the first round of the election, the two main competitors, Abdullah Abdullah and Ashraf Ghani, won 45 percent and 31.5 percent of the vote, respectively. In the runoff, Ghani won with more than the 56 percent. The media discovered systematic fraud by Ghani's team and by the operational officers of the Independent Election Commission (IEC) and government officials in favor of Ghani in his stronghold in the Pashtun-dominated provinces mainly in the south and east (Gall, 2014). A report by the European Union election observers in December 2014 suggested that 2.06 million votes, or about a quarter of the total, "came from polling stations with voting irregularities" in the runoff (Goldstein, 2014). Those votes mostly "came from polling stations in which turnout was reported to have reached or exceeded 99 percent of the predicted turnout of 600 voters per polling station" mostly from provinces threatened by the Taliban where actual turnout was predicted to be sparse (Goldstein, 2014). The result was rejected by Abdullah and his supporters who threatened to establish a parallel government unless the election process was abandoned (Afghanistan Election Observation Mission, 2015). To settle the dispute between the two candidates and avoid a new stage of political crisis and factional violence, the US Secretary of State, John Kerry, traveled to Kabul and brokered a deal between the two candidates on the formation of a National Unity government in which all government offices were supposed to be equally divided between Ghani and Abdullah. However, the new government became more a source of competition than cooperation

between the two ruling parties, which severely undermined the legitimacy of the state institutions and functions.

State legitimacy was challenged again by the 2019 presidential election between the incumbent Ghani and his second-time rival Abdullah. The election was more fraudulent and ethnocentric than the previous elections, leading to further division of the country between Pashtuns and non-Pashtuns. Data suggest that Ghani's campaign systematically used the IEC, government officials, and state resources to announce his victory in the first round. Ghani's team claimed re-election with over 50 percent of the vote in the first round which was immediately rejected by Abdullah who claimed systematic fraud by the president's team and announced victory.

Data and observation show that like in the previous election, some places of sparse voting reported turnout rates as high as 90 percent, mostly in Ghani's stronghold in the south and east of the country (Mashal et al., 2019). Media and independent observations suggest that on the election day, fraud was systematic as ballot boxes were stuffed by the election administrators and political actors mostly in south and east Afghanistan. Ghani received most of the votes from Pashtun majority areas while Abdullah was dominant in the non-Pashtun areas, resulting in a clear division of the country based on ethnicity and factional politics (Johnson, 2020, p. 51).

The 2019 election led to severe political tension between the two candidates which the US Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo, initially failed to settle. As a result, both candidates claimed to win the election and self-declared as president at two different inauguration ceremonies on the same day, March 9. All high-ranking American officials and foreign diplomats in Afghanistan attended Ghani's inauguration in the Arg, while most jihadi figures attended Abdullah's ceremony next door (Mashal et al., 2020). It was an unprecedented event in the political history of modern Afghanistan and could become a source of factional violence and social division.

The US government, again, intervened in the process to prevent the expansion of the crisis. In addition to extensive diplomatic interactions, the US government pressured the two parties by announcing a reduction of aid to Afghanistan by one billion dollars if the candidates refused to reach an agreement (Pamuk et al., 2020). The pressure forced Ghani and Abdullah to sign a power-sharing agreement on May 17, which guaranteed Ghani the presidency and Abdullah the Chief of the High Commission for Peace position, giving each of them 50 percent share of the cabinet and its subsets (Afghanistan, 2020).

Although the US pressure led to the creation of a power-sharing government, the electoral fraud, low turnout, ethnocentrism, and the lack of popular trust in elections severely undermined the legitimacy of the state. In this period, Ghani tried to further centralize power in the palace by creating advisory posts parallel to the regular government system to challenge Abdullah's ministers and governors. As a result, the president tried to govern by relying on councilors, advisors, and ethnic politicians mostly centered in the palace. Ghani's micromanagement, ethnocentrism, personalization of power, and politics of intimidation deteriorated the government's legitimacy basis in the capital and provinces. The lack of state legitimacy led to damaging state institutions, the erosion of political trust, corruption and nepotism, and further centralization of power in a small circle around the president in the Arg. As a result, the connection between the palace, government bodies, and the armed forces was gradually weakened. In this context, the fall of Kabul to the Taliban was more the outcome of a weakening state that was increasingly losing both its *input* and its *output* legitimacy (Strebel et al.,

2018). This means that while the state was gradually losing its democratic basis because of fraudulent elections, it was also failing to make justifiable decisions to maintain public trust in governance and its procedures.

LACK OF AUTHORITY

Authority refers to the state's level of ability in exercising what Weber calls the "monopoly over the use of legitimate violence." It is about the ability of a state's defense, security, and law enforcement institutions in providing and maintaining security and stability in its territory. The lack of authority, in this context, was a critical aspect of state fragility in Afghanistan which led to state collapse and the military domination of the insurgency in August 2021.

When the US and its allies invaded Afghanistan, the Afghan state entirely collapsed with no regular armed and law enforcement forces in place to fill the security gap. The country was severely suffering from the consequences of civil war and the main force in the country included the Taliban and its militia rival from the Northern Alliance. The US-led international force tried to fill the security gap by direct military operations and funding the establishment of the army, police, and other law enforcement institutions. From 2001 to 2021, the US spent an estimated \$83 billion on building Afghanistan's armed forces and \$36 billion to support the Afghan government (Kessler, 2021). As a result, the army, police, intelligence, air force, and an elite special force were created as key pillars of the newly established Afghan government.

In the 2010s, the Afghan government claimed to have over 300,000 officers and soldiers that were organized in the military and police corps and institutions alongside the intelligence and bureaucratic forces to deter the insurgency (Whitlock, 2019a). In addition to the numbers being disputed by observation and data (AAN, 2021), other key factors – including the quality of forces, the way they were trained, their acute reliance on international force and aid, the chronic corruption in the ranks of the army and police, and most importantly the political failure of the Afghan government and its international allies in landing a political settlement – were never part of the evaluation of the military defeat of the government to the Taliban. Overall, four factors can explain the defeat: the US–Taliban deal in Doha, the reduction of international aid to the Afghan armed forces, corruption, and the lack of a long-term Afghan and international vision about the stability of the country and the region.

First, the US–Taliban negotiation which started in September 2018 and resulted in a bilateral agreement in February 2020 was a turning point in increasing the insurgency's political legitimacy and military momentum which led to the weakening of the government's authority and its military morale. Before the agreement, the Afghan armed forces were dominant on almost all battlegrounds (Sadat, 2021). The deal increased the insurgency's military morale and led to the Afghan armed and political forces' skepticism about the war and negotiations. As a result, Afghan politicians and citizens became increasingly disillusioned about the political settlement of the conflict while the Taliban was accelerating its occupation of the countryside. At the same time, many regional and Western powers continued negotiating with the insurgent group as a political reality in Afghanistan. Therefore, the negotiation process not only helped the group to increase its military momentum but also its international and political legitimacy.

Second, the reduction in international aid to the Afghan armed forces, particularly the reduction of the US logistical and air support, was a key factor in the deterioration of the army's effectiveness. Following the commencement of the US–Taliban negotiation in Doha, the US

gradually decreased its funding and direct military support to the Afghan armed forces as part of its policy of facilitating and accelerating military withdrawal from Afghanistan. The change had a significant impact not only on the quality of Afghan operations but also on the morale of soldiers. As Sami Sadat, a three-star General in the former Afghan army puts it: “The Afghan forces were trained by the Americans using the US military model based on highly technical special reconnaissance units, helicopters, and airstrikes. We lost our superiority to the Taliban when our air support dried up and our ammunition ran out” (Sadat, 2021).

Third, corruption and political interference in the defense and security system were other critical factors in eroding the effectiveness of the army and police. In the last three years of Ghani’s government, generals and officers were installed and changed around for personal and ethnic ties rather than their credentials (Sadat, 2021). Even as districts were falling to the Taliban very quickly in early 2021, commanders and generals were changed and moved around abruptly by the circle of rulers in the palace that were mostly Afghan returnees from the west with very low or no experience in Afghanistan’s security sector and its complexities (Labott, 2021). Young officers with no regular credentials, and on the basis of their personal or ethnic ties to those that formed circles of power in the palace, were promoted beyond the standards and abruptly installed as high-ranking commanders and administrators in the army and police. At the same time over 2,000 experienced generals and colonels of the army and police were forced to retire from their ranks to create space for the newborn generals (Ghubar, 2017). The alternative young officers and military administrators, before being installed in the army and police, mostly served as translators, contractors, fixers, and advisors to the coalition forces and NGOs. They lacked the experience and knowledge of Afghanistan’s rough military operations and complexities and the armed force’s historical vision and long-term objective in the region.

At the same time, the young officers were highly corrupt and oriented more toward personal and tribal gains than following a national vision. Therefore, troops simply stopped fighting for a corrupt military system and its inexperienced and unfaithful commanders (Sadat, 2021). Corruption in the army and police also created the so-called system of *ghost soldiers* that never existed but the young commanders received the quota and salaries. In 2019, the number of Afghan security forces on paper was 352,000 soldiers and police officers (Whitlock, 2019a). However, new data and observations show that this number was almost six times higher than the real figures, as there were only 40,000 to 50,000 actual soldiers and police in the country. The remaining were “ghosts” (SIGAR, 2021, p. 100). The high-ranking officers and commanders inflated the number of serving soldiers and police “to receive the full allocated funding for salaries and meals” (SIGAR, 2021, p. 100). Moreover, funds, ammunition, and food deliveries were stolen by administrators and high-ranking officials before reaching the battlegrounds (Basit, 2021). Therefore, corruption and political interference in the army and police led to a disqualified force that failed to stand on its own and affected the morale of soldiers (Basit, 2021).

Finally, the Afghan state’s authority was undermined and gradually collapsed by the melancholic post-9/11 international politics which was shaped by daily meetings and interactions between Americans, Europeans, Afghans, and Pakistanis in the absence of a cohesive and uniform vision for the security and stability of the country and the region (Coll, 2018; Ibrahimi, 2021). From the beginning of the war on terrorism in 2001 until the collapse of the Afghan state in 2021, the CIA elements and American diplomats were aimlessly swinging between Kabul, Islamabad, and many regional countries to shape daily politics without having

a long-term security and military plan (Coll, 2018; Ibrahimi, 2021). Neither American staff in Afghanistan nor the Afghan government provided a clear vision for ending the war and post-war political development. In this unhappy environment, American generals, administrators, and spies consistently wrote fake reports to Washington DC about military successes on the ground and progress in counterinsurgency and political development in Afghanistan (Whitlock, 2019b). Therefore, the resurgence and expansion of the insurgency, the escalation of the war, and the fall of Kabul to the Taliban were not only the outcome of failing state authority in Kabul but also the Americans' ignorance of the fact and their incapability in tackling the problem effectively and comprehensively.

The regional aspect of the conflict was also a key element that the Afghan government could not balance, nor did the United States and its allies try to address it. First of all, the conflict in Afghanistan was affected by two regional powers, India and Pakistan, that have been trapped in long-term hostile circumstances in South Asia (Heine and Gosh, 2011; Miton, 2017). In this circumstance, India supported the government while Pakistan was generously supporting and funding the insurgency. Another regional element of the war was Saudi Arabia and Iran's competition which also complicated the war of Afghanistan, warring positions, and efforts for conflict resolution. The regional complexity of the war also forced Western players to ignore talking about the complex dimensions of their mission in Afghanistan (Nossal, 2011). The regional dimension of the conflict and conflict resolution polarized external players over war and peace in the country (Ibrahimi, 2018). The lack of consensus on a political settlement in Afghanistan among the regional and international players gave rise to a competition that led to the failure of Afghanistan's peace process. The government of Afghanistan, due to the lack of effective authority and an increasing internal fragmentation, failed to overcome problems and contradictions posed by regional and international players. The negotiation process failed and the Taliban returned to power, as a result.

LACK OF CAPACITY

State capacity refers to the size of the economy and the human and financial resources that a state has at its disposal and its capability of managing them (Carment et al., 2010). From 2001 to 2021, the Afghan government and its international donors intensively invested in capacity-building as a source of state legitimacy and effectiveness. However, state capacity in this period consistently suffered from political corruption, the lack of administrative capacity, and ethnocentrism in bureaucracy. These three anomalies severely affected the government's capacity and its reputation.

First, corruption played a crucial role in the deterioration and collapse of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. Corruption became the norm of governance in the two decades of the Islamic Republic. Every ruler and administrator extracted illegal funds from the government budget, international contracts, drug dealers, and even ordinary citizens. At the same time, they bribed their clients and supporters to maintain official positions. Corruption, in this sense, became a regular business in the hierarchy of the state ranging from the palace and its subsets to the military and police, education, courts, and customs among other public services institutions. SIGAR reported in 2015 that corruption in the Afghan government was "mindboggling; almost everyone was corrupt" (SIGAR, 2021, p. 101). In addition to creating ghost soldiers, police, teachers, schools, and judges, corruption was apparent in all other public sectors

including the key revenue agencies like the customs. According to US officials, “up to half of Afghanistan’s customs revenue was lost to corruption” because all directors were corrupt and they broadly bribed police, government officials, members of the parliament, and even the Taliban to keep the business as usual and escape legal procedures (AAN, 2021; SIGAR, 2015, 2021). In 2015, US officials highlighted that up to half of Afghanistan’s customs revenue was lost to corruption (SIGAR, 2015, p. 1; SIGAR, 2021, p. 102) and the trend continued until the last day of the Islamic Republic in August 2021.

Preventing or decreasing corruption in the public sector, according to SIGAR, required special attention at least in six areas where the Afghan government failed to focus: (1) creating and implementing benchmarks that were specific, verifiable, time-bound, and achieved the desired outcome; (2) amending Article 102 of the Constitution and enforcing procedures for the arrest and prosecution of members of parliament; (3) creating and maintaining a single, comprehensive list of warrants for individuals accused of corruption crimes; (4) providing additional resources to support the declaration and verification of assets by public officials; (5) increasing formal and informal cooperation with other international law-enforcement organizations; and (6) providing resources to Financial Transactions and Reports Analysis Center of Afghanistan and other relevant bodies to enable them to conduct regular inspections of *hawaladars* (informal networks for transferring money) and better monitor illicit financial flows (SIGAR, 2021, p. 103). The government’s failure in decreasing corruption in the public sector deteriorated state capacity in extracting legal revenue, managing the economy, distributing wealth, and providing public services.

The lack of capacity, in this sense, damaged the state’s reputation in the eyes of both the public and international donors. In the last few years of the Islamic Republic, no citizen trusted the officials and the state institutions in providing transparent services, because everyone from the president to ordinary bureaucrats constantly failed to show an honest and accountable face of government. Indeed, officials repeatedly lied to the public about state affairs from very small administrative issues to the country’s national and strategic trajectories.

The Taliban broadly invested in the state capacity gap by propagating an “Islamic solution” to the ills of a corrupt system based in Kabul. In some key areas of governance such as justice, the Taliban took practical measures to challenge the government’s corrupt, hardly accessible, and time-consuming court system and legal procedures. In most areas of its control, the Taliban installed its judicial institutions that were “more accessible and easier to navigate than state courts, as well as quicker, fairer and less corrupt” (Jackson and Weigand, 2020). The Taliban used this method to delegitimize the government’s justice system, replace customary systems of dispute resolution with an Islamic one, and, in a broader context, present the insurgency as an alternative state system (Jackson and Weigand, 2020). According to observations, even citizens from the government areas went to the Taliban courts to settle their disputes because the alternative route in government courts involved paying high amounts to police, attorneys, and judges. The lack of state capacity, in this sense, not only accelerated the erosion of state institutions from inside but also helped the insurgency to build its reputation in the capacity gap. The government’s support of girls’ education, civil society, media, communication, and rural development was remarkable during the two decades. However, systematic corruption and the lack of capacity to manage development in favor of state-building undermined the formation of a meaningful relationship between the state and society.

CONCLUSION

State fragility in Afghanistan led to the escalation of the war, the expansion of the insurgency, and the failure of efforts for a political settlement. The Taliban dominated militarily, as a result. With the fall of Kabul to the Taliban, the two decades of external state-building stalled and the country returned to a situation similar to the pre-US invasion in October 2001. The Taliban restored its Islamic Emirate on political and economic infrastructures created and funded by the US and its allies. The return of the Taliban was an outcome of the failure of the Afghan government and its allies to establish a state system that was able to have a monopoly over the use of legitimate violence, secure the country, and provide good governance and public services. This means that the Afghan state fell short of authority, capacity, and legitimacy.

The lack of legitimacy was the most significant factor, in this context. While highly funded by the international community to create a democratic system of legitimation, the government and the ruling elite failed to develop a free and fair system of power transition. Elections were fraudulent and ethnic-based, and the government that came out of the elections failed to make decisions acceptable to society. As a result, the government mostly relied on populism, bribing influential figures and groups, and ethnocentric decisions. The lack of legitimacy also undermined the formation of a national and apolitical armed force which significantly affected state authority and its counterinsurgency campaign. A divided and ethnic-based government system also failed to develop the capacity of distributing wealth and services fairly and sufficiently.

Moreover, the lack of authority created a security gap in which the Taliban resurged and gradually expanded. Afghanistan's corrupt leadership failed to create effective armed and police forces that could provide security, protect the territory, and prevent the infiltration and expansion of the insurgency. As a result, the Taliban expanded its control of the ungoverned areas of the countryside and gradually increased attacks on large cities including the capital Kabul. The Taliban's expansion was not the outcome of its military effectiveness on the battleground but the government's failure in developing sufficient military and security measures.

Finally, the lack of capacity created large governance gaps, particularly in the countryside. The Taliban exploited these gaps, particularly in areas of security, justice, and education, to not only challenge the state but also to propagate its "Islamic solution" to the ills of the Afghan government and its Western allies. Therefore, the lack of capacity played a crucial role in the expansion of the insurgency and the failure of the Afghan government to counter it.

Overall, the most significant element of state fragility that led to the destruction of state institutions and the sense of statehood was the lack of legitimacy. Consistent fraud during the presidential and parliamentary elections, ethnocentrism in politics and governance, corruption, and domination of a political elite with no meaningful connection to the society were more destructive to the state and its philosophy of existence than the insurgency. The state's failure in developing a legitimate mechanism of power transition, its incapability in holding free and fair elections, and its politicians' tendency to take power by any means possible severely undermined the process of building a state system that, in theory, was supposed to be democratic.

State fragility, in terms of lack of authority, lack of legitimacy, and lack of capacity, also contributed to the failure of efforts for a political settlement. Since the resurgence of the Taliban in 2003, the Afghan government failed to design and implement a comprehensive

agenda for settling the conflict. The political settlement efforts in this period included four phases:

1. A domestic phase from the resurgence of the Taliban in 2003 until President Hamid Karzai's re-election in 2009, which included government efforts to negotiate with the Taliban by using domestic and tribal intermediaries, while the US and Afghan forces were simultaneously conducting counterterrorism operations on the ground.
2. A fight-and-talk phase from 2009 to February 2018 which included parallel efforts by Afghan and international players to negotiate with the Taliban both inside and outside Afghanistan. The creation of the High Peace Council of Afghanistan in 2010 and the opening of the Taliban's political office in Doha in June 2013 were two major outcomes.
3. A phase of emphasis on intra-Afghan negotiations as a priority by the Afghan government. This phase started with Ghani's "Kabul Process II Conference" in February 2018 and ended with the Trump administration's direct negotiation with the Taliban in September 2018 (Ibrahimi, 2019b; Qazi, 2019).
4. A phase of direct negotiations between Americans and the Taliban and its subsequent intra-Afghan talks that failed in the very early stages.

In the fourth phase, the US administration launched a direct negotiation with the Taliban in Doha in September 2018. The Taliban joined the negotiation under significant international pressures, particularly from Pakistan which, in turn, was pressured by the Trump administration to bring the insurgent group to the negotiation table. The US–Taliban negotiation in Doha reached a bilateral agreement on February 29, 2020. The agreement defined a timeline for US troop withdrawal from Afghanistan, counterterrorism guarantees by the Taliban, a path to a ceasefire between the Taliban and the Afghan government, and eventually an intra-Afghan negotiation to bring peace to the war-torn country (Agreement, 2020).

After the agreement was signed by the head of the Taliban political office, Mullah Baradar, and the US representative for the peace of Afghanistan, Zalmay Khalilzad, the Taliban did not conduct a single attack against US forces in Afghanistan. However, the group did not respect other elements of the agreement, particularly its disconnection from terrorist organizations and a ceasefire with the Afghan government. The US government reports show that the Taliban continued its interaction with al-Qaeda during the year 2020 which meant a violation of the agreement (US Department of the Treasury, 2021). The intra-Afghan negotiation which was designed by the Trump administration to make peace between the Taliban and the Afghan government was commenced in Doha but did not produce a successful political settlement.

The US-led Doha negotiations greatly benefited the Taliban. Under the shadow of the US–Taliban negotiations, the insurgent group successfully managed to establish its political legitimacy, increase its military confidence, and decrease Afghan soldiers' morale and their desire to fight for an unclear cause. In this situation, the Taliban gained significant political legitimacy, expanded diplomatic relations, and managed to improve its status from an insurgency to a political reality of the country and a potential counterterrorism ally to the US. Therefore, the Doha negotiations had a dual outcome. First, it led to the US reduction of support to the Afghan government which had destructive consequences on the armed forces, and, second, it increased the Taliban's military confidence, multiplied their regional support, and expanded local loyalties to the group. The fall of Kabul was an outcome of this complex and multilayered process.

State-building through intervention in Afghanistan was the costliest project of Western democracies to socially engineer a Third World country. The failure of this project – which led to the domination of an insurgent group that facilitated the establishment of al-Qaeda in Afghanistan in 1998 and continuously provided sanctuaries to several terrorist organizations – calls into question the Western state-building philosophy through military intervention. After spending trillions of dollars, sacrificing thousands of lives, and wasting two decades, the US and its allies left Afghanistan in a pre-2002 situation where the state is entirely collapsed, there is no regular economy, and the country is internationally isolated. This result challenges external state-building and its neo-institutionalist philosophy. American officials, diplomats, and generals have repeatedly interpreted this result as the US failure in state-building in Afghanistan (Whitlock, 2019b).

For example, James Dobbins, the first US ambassador to Afghanistan after the fall of the Taliban's Islamic Emirate in 2001 and the US Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan from 2013 to 2014 emphasizes that: “We don't invade poor countries to make them rich. We don't invade authoritarian countries to make them democratic. We invade violent countries to make them peaceful and we clearly failed in Afghanistan” (Whitlock, 2019b). More research is required to explain to what extent the state-building experience and its result in Afghanistan is generalizable and applicable to other places. The case study of Afghanistan provides broad and detailed data for thinking and rethinking state-building through military intervention.

The failed international efforts at state-building and conflict resolution and the US and NATO's hectic withdrawal from Afghanistan also have clear consequences on domestic, regional, and international politics. While the country is suffering from extreme poverty and economic decline, sectarian and ethnic resistance to the Taliban's totalitarian regime has increased the chance of another civil war. Moreover, the withdrawal has also created the image of a weakening, if not a declining, US influence in the region. As a result, China has started revising its regional policies, Iran has increased its influence in Shia-majority regions, and more obviously Russia invaded Ukraine to materialize its Eurasian policy in a world system that is transforming from unipolarity to multipolarity. The US failed mission and its hectic withdrawal from Afghanistan have eased the conditions for all regional players to act more openly.

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19. Fragility of small island developing states

Michaël Goujon and Laurent Wagner¹

INTRODUCTION

Following the establishment in 1990 of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), an ad hoc negotiating body gathering a group of small island states for climate change advocacies, Small Island Developing States (SIDS) were recognized as a distinct group at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, also known as the Earth Summit, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in June 1992. The current list of SIDS includes 38 independent African, Caribbean and Pacific states, to which 14 affiliated territories could be added, but our analysis will only cover the former.²

While the SIDS category is highly heterogeneous in terms of geography and income levels, the common point that allows gathering them into one group is vulnerability, a feature that they, however, share with the Least Developed Countries (LDCs). Indeed, according to the United Nations and notably the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and the Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS),³ small states and SIDS in particular are among the most structurally vulnerable countries in the world. Within the group of small states, smallness being a very well-known factor of vulnerability, the SIDS' additional characteristics of being islands, or low-lying coastal states, and for most of them highly remote and fragmented, exacerbate vulnerability. Vulnerability includes economic vulnerability to external and natural shocks (e.g. volatile trade flows and prices, limited diversification capabilities and damages caused by natural disasters) and vulnerability to climate change (sea-level rise). While a majority of SIDS are upper middle-income countries, they are more vulnerable than other upper middle-income countries: as SIDS grow richer, they retain acute vulnerability to global economic shocks and to the impacts of climate change and natural disasters (OECD, 2018). In other words, overall, SIDS are far more vulnerable than their income levels would imply.

The 38 SIDS are also, or usually, considered as fragile states as a whole but the group shows, again, heterogeneity. In fact, according to the usual definitions and published lists, and except for a handful of members (like Haiti, Guinea-Bissau, Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste), SIDS have usually shown good levels of governance and absence of large-scale conflict in the contemporaneous period. This is reflected for instance by the World Bank's CPIA or WGI indicators.

This raises a number of questions about the definition of fragility in the context of SIDS. First, this *prima facie* diagnostic does not match the observation of some cases of social instability characterized by high levels of criminality that can be observed in a number of SIDS, particularly in the Caribbean (mainly due to drug trafficking). Indeed, most indicators of fragility do not usually consider criminality as a dimension of fragility. Moreover, criminality would be less correlated with the level of income, compared to the usual measure of fragility. Criminality may show remarkable regional spillover effects and could be considered as (mostly) exogenous and an important contributor of fragility (given the lack of capacity of

SIDS to fight against these phenomena). Second, fragility in SIDS appears disconnected from usual suspects such as income and human development. The literature on SIDS focuses on vulnerability (high exposure to, and lack of capacity to respond to, exogenous shocks), which is a well-known (and considered as a somewhat shared) characteristic of SIDS. Fragility of SIDS should then probably be analyzed through other specific vulnerabilities that harm sustainable development such as structural economic vulnerability (smallness and remoteness, subject to volatile inflows of foreign trade, remittances or aid) and vulnerability to climate change (sea-level rise and cyclone activity). Situational factors would include traffic-related crime and violence, and vulnerability to the pandemic.

What is the vulnerability–fragility nexus in the SIDS context? In this chapter, we first make a diagnosis about the past and current state of SIDS’ fragility using a number of well-known and more original indicators. We find that the group is heterogeneous, and SIDS usually show good levels of governance and absence of large-scale conflict in the contemporaneous period. However, high level of criminality is observed in a number of SIDS, particularly in the Caribbean (mainly due to drug trafficking as noted above). Second, while fragility in SIDS appears disconnected from usual structural drivers of fragility such as income and human development, we propose that fragility of SIDS should be analyzed through their somewhat common but group-specific vulnerabilities that harm sustainable development such as structural economic vulnerability (smallness and remoteness, dependency on volatile inflows of foreign trade, remittances or aid) and vulnerability to climate change (sea-level rise and cyclone activity).

CURRENT STATEMENT ON SIDS’ FRAGILITY

Although the concept of state fragility has been widely used in recent years in the social science literature, as shown by the large number of research and publications on the subject, it has proved difficult to reach a consensus on its definition. Originally, the notion of political fragility was used to refer to a lack of capacity (or will), a lack of legitimacy of states to implement policies in favor of the majority of the population, or simply a lack of authority to exercise their sovereign power. Lack of state capacity is often cited as a cause of fragility and is most often seen today as a combination of three main factors. First, it is expressed in the inability of the government and the central administration (the state) to deliver basic services (Carment et al., 2009, define this first factor as capacity itself). Second, it is influenced by the lack of legitimacy of the state throughout its territory, in particular because of its inability to include the entire population in the public decision-making process. Finally, it is reflected in the state’s inability to ensure the security of its citizens and to have a “monopoly on violence.” In its three dimensions, fragility can be temporary as well as structural, localized in a part of the territory or general. Overall, fragility is a measure of the extent to which the actual practices and capacities of states – their functions, political processes and institutions – differ from the idealized image of sovereign states (Carment et al., 2009; Carment and Samy, 2019).⁴ In the end, however, each international institution or development actor tends to establish its own terminology and definition according to its own beliefs and objectives.

At first sight, the 38 SIDS are over-represented among countries classified as fragile states by international institutions and many have experienced several instances of severe political instability in the past. As already noted by McGillivray et al. (2010, p. 815), “the

quality of governance varies tremendously among SIDS, they are over-represented among countries classified as fragile states and many are prone to state failure.” According to the last harmonized list of fragile and conflict-affected situations of the World Bank,⁵ African Development Bank and Asian Development Bank (WB-AfDB-ADB), 10 SIDS are fragile states (representing one quarter of all fragile states): Comoros, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia Fed. States, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste and Tuvalu. However, while none are classified as high or medium intensity *conflict*-affected countries, they are rather characterized by institutional and social fragility, signaled by low values of their Country Policy and Institutional Assessment (CPIA). One can already note here the significant heterogeneity between SIDS that are covered by the CPIA in 2020 (Figure 19.1).

Table 19.1 provides an overview of fragility in SIDS according to three specific indicators reflecting different aspects of fragility. According to the first one – the World Bank’s CPIA based on the view that fragility is reflected primarily by low institutional capacities and policy performance – SIDS are *on average* among the *most fragile* nations in the world. The average score for low and low-middle income SIDS is similar to that of non-SIDS LDCs.

Table 19.1 The extent of SIDS’ fragility in numbers

Country groupings	CPIA			WGI – PSAV			FSI		
	Obs	Mean 2020	Change over 2010–20 (in %)	Obs	Mean 2020	Change over 2010–20 (in %)	Obs	Mean 2021	Change Over 2010–21 (in %)
SIDS	22	3.17	–5	43	0.64	30	25	64.60	–11
> SIDS – LIC & LMIC only	13	3.04	–4	13	0.28	75	9	79.43	–7
> SIDS – UMIC & HIC only	9	3.35	–9	30	0.80	27	16	56.26	–13
Non SIDS – LDCs	37	3.08	–5	38	–0.89	15	38	89.82	–3
Non SIDS Non LDCs, Other DCs LIC & LMIC	13	3.35	–4	32	–0.67	–7	30	79.21	–8
Non SIDS Non LDCs, Other DCs UMIC & HIC	0	NA	NA	84	0.23	–23	76	51.16	–8

Source: World Bank Group and Fund for Peace. Authors’ calculations. The aggregate CPIA index ranges on a 1–6 scale (1=lowest quality, 6=highest quality of policies and institutions). The PSAV index ranges from –2.5 (less stable and most violent) to 2.5 (more stable and less violent). The FSI index ranges from 0 (less fragile) to 100 (most fragile).

The second indicator is taken from the well-known World Governance Indicators (WGI) (Kaufmann et al., 2010). The WGI reports on six broad dimensions of governance for over 200 countries and territories over the period 1996–2020. One of the six is Political Stability and Absence of Violence/Terrorism (PSAV) that measures the perceptions of the likelihood of political instability and/or politically motivated violence, including terrorism. It thus covers the other side of fragility, through the lens of conflict and violence. According to this index, Comoros, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, and Papua New Guinea show negative scores, but

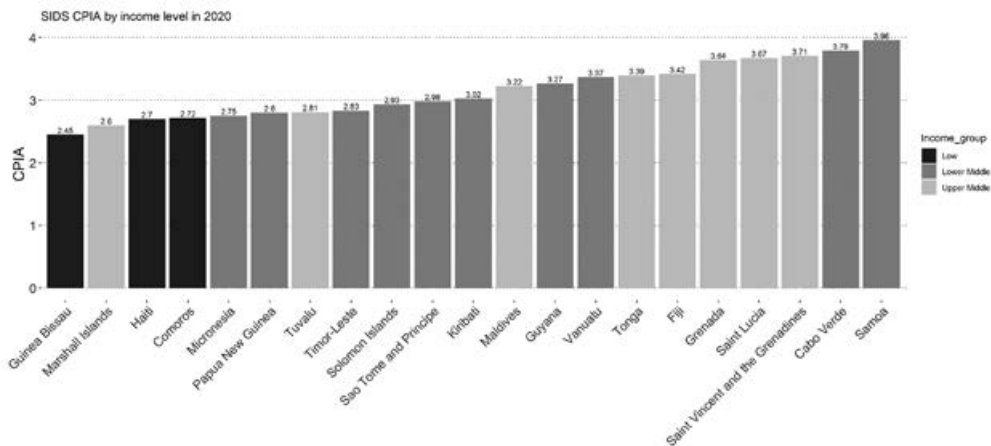


Figure 19.1 SIDS World Bank Country Policy and Institutional Assessment

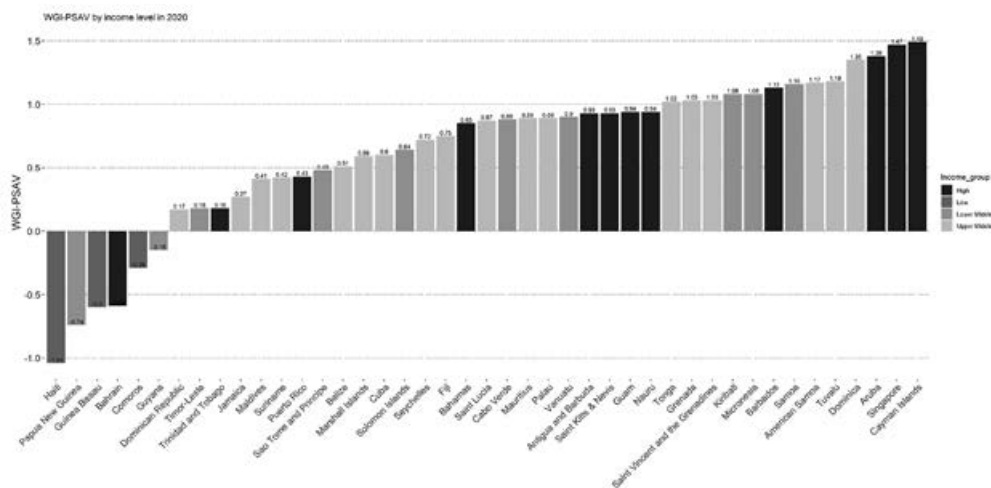


Figure 19.2 SIDS World Bank Political Stability and Absence of Violence/Terrorism

SIDS, as a group, are among the *less fragile* countries in the world or among the countries least likely to experience widespread violence (Figure 19.2).

The third indicator is the Fragile States Index (FSI) of the Fund for Peace, which is arguably one of the most recognized indicators in the field. It is a multidimensional indicator representing the middle ground between the two previous approaches, also including more structural factors susceptible to consider the deep-rooted causes of fragility and not only its manifestations.⁶ According to the FSI, SIDS are *very heterogenous*, presenting similar fragility levels as non-SIDS once income levels are considered. SIDS that show a very high score (above 90/100) are Guinea-Bissau and Haiti, and high scores (80–90/100) are Comoros and Papua New Guinea (Solomon Islands is at 79/100).

Then, as a whole, SIDS show similar fragility levels compared to other developing countries, but the SIDS group is very heterogeneous. SIDS are overrepresented in the group of fragile states (10 SIDS among 40 fragile states according to the WB-AfDB-ADB list), with Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Comoros, Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands showing worst scores of the FSI. However, SIDS are mostly characterized by institutional and social fragility (as measured by the CPIA, with worst scores in Guinea-Bissau, Marshall Islands, Haiti, Comoros, Micronesia Fed. States, Papua New Guinea), but not by conflict (as measured by the WGI PSAV, but with worst scores in Haiti, Papua New Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Bahrain, Comoros, Guyana).

BEYOND THE USUAL ATTRIBUTES OF FRAGILITY: FOCUS ON CRIMINALITY

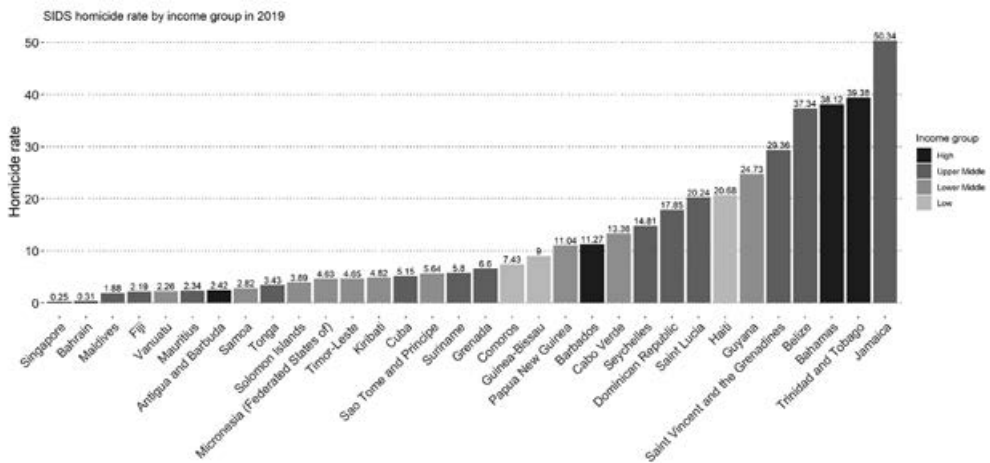


Figure 19.3 SIDS level of homicide rates (per 100,000 inhabitants)

While large scale conflicts do not usually affect SIDS, deep-rooted social vulnerabilities and (endemic) violence can play a significant role. This is particularly the case in the Caribbean where countries such as Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago or the Bahamas present very high homicide rates (Figure 19.3). According to both the UNODC and the WHO, the SIDS as a group display a high mean rate of homicide of 13 per 100,000 inhabitants and 10 of the top 30 most violent countries are SIDS. Out of the 10, Haiti is usually considered as a fragile country, but the other 9 are not (Jamaica, with the highest rate in the world at 50 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants, but also Trinidad and Tobago, Bahamas, Belize, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saint Lucia, Dominican Republic, Seychelles, Cabo Verde), and some of them have high levels of income per capita. Recent developments tend to show that violence is widespread and increasing in SIDS, while this worrying trend is not seen for other developing countries groups such as LDCs (Figure 19.4).

Even in SIDS that do not appear on the lists of fragile states, criminality, especially transnational crime, is a major stress factor that exacerbates the fragility of states. Although organized crime has long existed (and in the case of islands, has taken the form of smuggling and piracy),

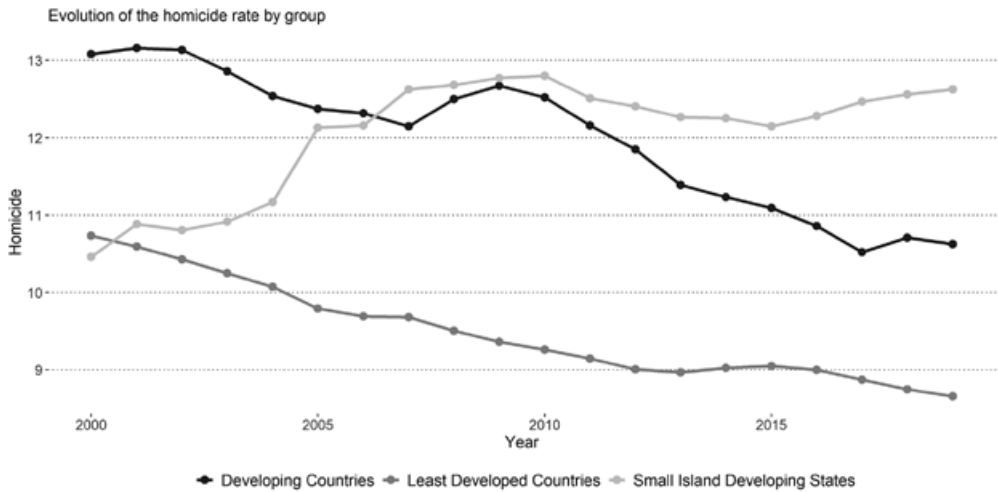


Figure 19.4 Evolution of homicide rates in DC, LDC and SIDS

its corrosive impact on the legitimacy of states is exacerbated by the proliferation of new transnational “criminal markets” and illicit flows. The growth of illicit markets has lowered the barriers to entry for organized violence to which many SIDS are particularly vulnerable. Territorial organized crime groups, including street gangs, can then become embroiled in the political process. Because of their influential role in the territories they control, they are able to deliver votes for political patrons and intimidate the opposition. In return, the elected officials they support provide access to state resources, such as housing and jobs, and some degree of protection from prosecution for a wide range of criminal activities. The case of Jamaica in particular clearly highlights the link between the early rise of gun and gang violence and the establishment of political partisan violence. Those mechanisms that help translate violence into political fragility include ineffective public institutions that are seen as illegitimate by citizens and an ineffective rule of law, and control of corruption as well as underinvestments in health and education (UNODC, 2019). Similarly, in Trinidad and Tobago, the widespread prevalence of high levels of crime and violence has been linked to the ethnic diversity and weaknesses in the nation-building agenda, the growing use of firearms, a lack of consistent access to social goods and services such as security and basic infrastructure, and the fight for control of public works projects, amongst other drivers. As the national government is unable to provide consistent access to education, security, and basic infrastructure, it represents an opportunity for gangs, notably in Port of Spain, to fill some of those roles, with gang leaders becoming important intermediaries between the government and the community (Adams et al., 2021).

Not only does organized crime undermine the strength of the state, it further affects the critical and often contested relationship between the state and society. In fragile and conflict-affected states it is precisely the degraded nature of this relationship that often prevents progress toward greater peace and prosperity. Social violence undermines democratic consolidation as it has a strong negative effect on democracy satisfaction and motivates support for human rights violations and authoritarian regimes (Bateson, 2012). While there is now an established correlation between conflict and state fragility, much less is understood about the

relationship between transnational organized crime, conflict, and fragility (Locke, 2012). This gap in knowledge is particularly important for the understanding of fragility factors in SIDS. As discussed above, fragile states tend to exhibit a lack of authority, legitimacy and capacity. These conditions not only create ideal environments for criminal activity, but the presence of international traffickers and street gangs also threatens the very process of statebuilding and peacebuilding needed to address conflict and fragility. This also suggests that several factors affecting the onset of civil wars likewise influence other forms of non-political violence. It is then particularly important to consider the extent of social vulnerability reflected by high homicide rates in the analysis of fragility notably in SIDS.

The relationship between organized crime and fragility also helps explain to some extent the apparent disconnect between fragility measures based on institutional performance (CPIA) and indicators of conflict and violence. Indeed, the usual indices, i.e. the PSAV, do not consider organized crime or more broadly criminality as a dimension of fragility, which is a critical aspect of fragility in many SIDS. Another key aspect of organized crime is worth mentioning. Many criminal organizations operate inside a wider network of transnational criminal enterprises, either by belonging to a supply chain (drug, firearms, human trafficking) or by operating directly across borders (i.e. piracy). The integrated nature of those networks implies that there are spillover effects from one country to the other even if they do not share a physical border. Instability of internal violence can often be traced back to changes in the size of illicit markets, or the death or incarceration of high-profile leaders, and law enforcement action that weakens one group relative to another. According to UNODC (2019), illicit drug flows are a source of substantial income for those who control them and shifts in drug trafficking dynamics can be highly destabilizing.

FROM FRAGILITY TO VULNERABILITY

The particular case of SIDS highlights the clear parallels that can be drawn between the fragility and vulnerability literature, notably its most recent advances (Kattumuri and Mitchell, 2021; UN-OHRLS, 2021). Going beyond the idea that the origin of vulnerabilities is external and mostly determined by economic considerations, vulnerability is seen more and more as a multidimensional phenomenon that covers economic, environmental and social factors as well as factors reflecting resilience. While violent conflicts are concentrated in poor countries, poverty alone does not cause conflict. In most cases, violent conflict is a symptom of multifaceted malfunctions, and the conflict reinforces these malfunctions. Consistent with the figures above, as noted in Chauvet et al. (2010) and Carment and Samy (2019), the challenges faced by SIDS tend not to be related to large-scale conflict, but rather to economic and political vulnerability.

Indeed, other approaches to fragility are based on the analysis of the roots of violence, one of which is economic vulnerability. For instance, the OECD characterizes fragility as the combination of exposure to risk and insufficient coping capacities of the state, system and/or communities to manage, absorb or mitigate those risks. In recognition of fragility's inherent complexity, the OECD introduced its multidimensional fragility framework in 2016. This framework captures the diversity of those contexts affected by fragility, measuring it on a spectrum of intensity across five dimensions: economic, environmental, political, security and societal. Solomon Islands, Comoros, Papua New Guinea and Haiti are the only SIDS

classified as fragile contexts, with Haiti being one of the extremely fragile contexts. Beside Papua New Guinea, the three others also belong to the LDC category. A clear parallel can also be drawn with earlier works of the Country Indicators for Foreign Policy (CIFP) project on fragile states of Carleton University (Carment et al., 2009). The CIFP methodology is based on nine issue areas: history of armed conflict, governance and political instability, militarization, population heterogeneity, demographic stress, economic performance, human development, environmental stress and international linkages. Five SIDS (Haiti, Guinea-Bissau, São Tomé and Príncipe, Comoros and Timor-Leste) were among the top 50 most fragile states in 2019, according to the CIFP (2020).⁷

The multiple dimensions of fragility indicators tend to reflect the fact that theory suggests a number of causes of conflict, violence and civil war. However, the econometric models used to test those theories are often ad hoc and their results, which are difficult to interpret, do not help much in discriminating between the different theories (Collier and Hoeffler, 2007; Blattman and Miguel, 2010). Many explanatory variables are endogenous, and it is probably more appropriate to refer to correlates of conflict rather than causes, or subject to several interpretations, or highly correlated. This makes it difficult to disentangle the transmission mechanisms.

It is also important to note that most of the factors are invariant or change little over time. They are also mostly exogenous to countries' current economic policies. Thus, the risk of conflict associated with these factors is more a structural risk that evolves slowly over time and seems unlikely to predict the imminence of a new conflict (Feindouno and Wagner, 2020). The triggering factors that generally precipitate the onset of civil war are difficult to list exhaustively, as their specific nature to the situation of each country or region is difficult to grasp through cross-cutting macroeconomic analyses.

Nevertheless, the role of shocks, whether economic (price shocks, drop in income), climatic (rainfall and temperature shocks) or societal (regime change, terrorism), seems fundamental to understanding the risk of conflict. Shocks are a major source of macroeconomic instability in most countries, and notably the SIDS, and along specific factors favoring exposure to them, are among the fundamental reasons why countries are lagging behind in their development. The identification of such shocks and the extent to which countries are exposed to them is at the core of the vulnerability literature. Although each shock is unique, it is easy to classify them into two broad categories: exogenous shocks, whether economic (a fall in the price of imported commodities), climatic (a hurricane or drought), or social (transnational terrorism, pandemic) and endogenous shocks (political crises, consequence of bad policies), even if endogenous shocks are often triggered by structural or exogenous factors themselves. According to Chauvet et al. (2010), policies and governance are themselves the consequence of other factors such as particular configurations of interest groups. These deeper factors may reduce growth directly as well as via policies and governance by lowering institutional performance as reflected, and as discussed above, by low CPIA levels.

The expected impact of each type of shock is variable. Indeed, various characteristics, both structural and non-structural, tend to influence the stages and propagation path of the shock on the economy. This is particularly the case for those relating to the general vulnerability of countries. General vulnerability, at the macroeconomic level, represents the likelihood of being impacted by exogenous shocks (Guillaumont, 2009, 2019). Structural vulnerability includes only factors that are not dependent on a country's existing policies and are entirely determined by exogenous and persistent factors, while general vulnerability also includes the

effect of current and future policies, and therefore evolves more rapidly. In order to understand the economic impact of a shock and thus determine the overall vulnerability of countries, it is important to distinguish between *structural vulnerability* and *lack of resilience*.

Resilience refers to the capacity to cope with exogenous shocks by implementing appropriate policies. Structural vulnerability is a function of the size of the shocks and the country’s exposure to them. Overall vulnerability, as described in Figure 19.5, also depends on the country’s resilience to the shock; this resilience is more related to current policy and less to structural factors and reflects the capacity of the economic system to recover and rebuild. The less structural aspect of resilience implies that it is itself influenced over the long run by structural vulnerability. However, there are also structural factors in a country’s resilience, such as the level of human capital that strongly influences the capacity to react to shocks. Moreover, vulnerability and weak human capital can reinforce each other (Guillaumont, 2009), supporting the rationale of the LDCs category and explaining that they are likely to be locked in a poverty trap. The quality of physical capital is also critical for the resilience of SIDS to natural shocks, and in many SIDS, lack of adherence to building codes and the use of sub-standard materials for informal construction exacerbate vulnerability to natural hazards (Haiti is an obvious example).

Several structural demographic aspects can also reinforce the impact of exogenous shocks on sustainable development. In SIDS particularly, humanitarian support and recovery are being challenged at an alarming scale by recurring natural and environmental shocks within extremely short and limited “recuperation” phases. Both increased frequency and magnitude of hazards pose major concerns for the leaving no one behind principle, not only after a shock but in the long run, with the pillars of social cohesion being weakened each time a bit more, without enough time and resources to rebuild them. Countries with large shares of population

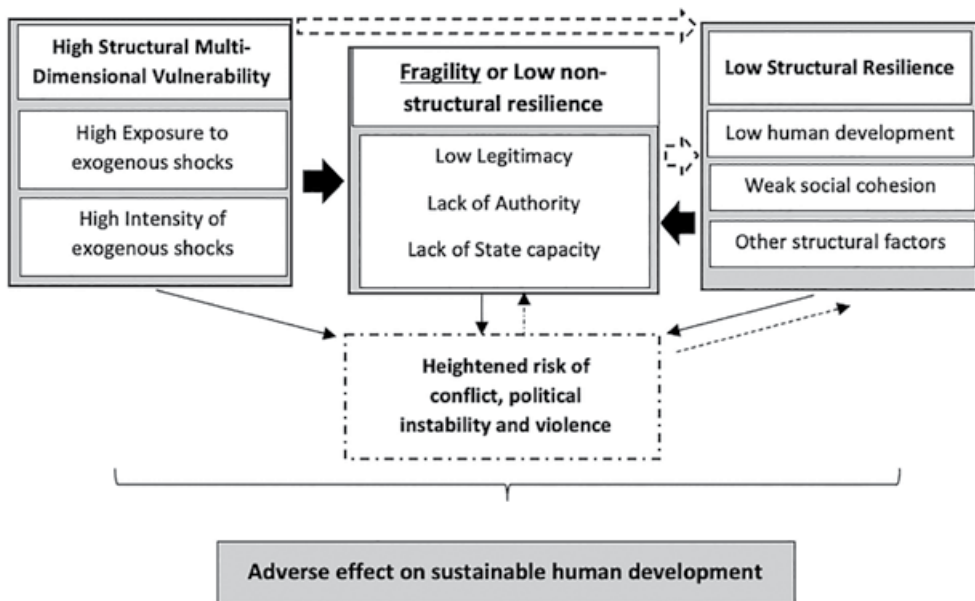


Figure 19.5 The vulnerability–fragility nexus

too young or too old to work means a less flexible workforce to adapt in the aftermath of an exogenous shock. This effect is even stronger in many SIDS suffering from structural brain drain and outward migration due to smallness, more than development level or geography, according to Croix et al. (2014), who observe very large brain drain in Guyana, Jamaica, Grenada, Saint Vincent and Grenadines, Haiti, Tonga and Samoa).

Failure to take explicit account of these different structural vulnerabilities, as summarized in Figure 19.5, would lead to a truncated picture of the challenges faced by SIDS and of the drivers of their fragility. Indeed, this sum of structural vulnerabilities directly influences the risk of conflict and state failure. This is consistent with earlier work of Carment et al. (2006) who calculated risk scores for SIDS and found that unlike bigger countries where challenges tend to be related to large-scale conflict, SIDS face unique challenges related to economic and political vulnerability.

SPECIFIC VULNERABILITIES OF SIDS AND HOW THEY INFLUENCE THEIR FRAGILITY

Smallness and Remoteness

By definition, SIDS are considered as sharing the common feature of being small in terms of geographic territories, population size or GDP.⁸ Smallness is an important structural factor explaining a greater exposure to exogenous shocks and the inability to cope with a lower state capacity and eventually lower legitimacy and authority.

The smaller the (population or GDP) size, the higher is the trade to GDP ratio and the specialization, and the more “dependent” the economy. The diseconomies of scale associated with smallness result in greater difficulties to diversify at low cost and consequently SIDS’ exports are often concentrated, for a number of them, in service exports such as tourism. Indeed, tourism revenues are heavily dependent on external shocks such as global recessions or pandemics, climate and environmental hazards and violence and social unrest.⁹ Smallness, often combined with remoteness, is also often reflected by an overreliance on imported strategic commodities with volatile prices but also on external financial flows (FDI or remittances, aid for the poorest) susceptible to sudden stops.

Smallness, and other factors of vulnerability, and subsequent instability, are determinants for public finance (and then, financing of the capacity of states to implement policies in favor of the majority of the population or simply to exercise their sovereign power). Smallness induces greater needs of state activities (and then funding needs), but also greater constraints on financing, and a greater vulnerability of financing to exogenous shocks. Smallness is associated with diseconomies of scale due to the impossibility to spread the fixed costs of government or business over a large number of people, leading to high unit costs in both the public and private sectors. Therefore, SIDS tend to also have a relatively larger size of public administration. Moreover, a large share of expenditures can be relatively incompressible, such as the public wage bill but also when considering the needs to respond to shocks, such as natural hazards.

Smallness would also impose higher constraints or higher unit cost to mobilize internal finance that coupled with the high level of expenditure as expressed above would then explain directly high levels of (external) debt. Over-reliance on a few economic sectors implied by

specialization, combined with recurrent shocks causing instability on both internal and external finance, may lead to larger budget imbalances even after having reached high per capita income level and graduated out of concessional finance. Many SIDS dedicate significant amounts of their public revenues to debt repayments, rather than infrastructure or public services, and as public debt rises it becomes increasingly difficult to mobilize finance to cope with the next shock. An accumulation of short-term shocks (high structural vulnerability) can then have long-term effects (by amplifying fragility and lowering structural resilience).

Prior to the Covid-19 crisis, many SIDS were already showing signs of increased debt distress (Bouhria and Wilkinson, 2021). According to the OECD (2018), on average the debt over GNI of SIDS (57 percent) was already significantly higher than for other developing countries (47 percent), particularly for non-HIPC SIDS that was more than double that of the other SIDS (62 percent vs 35 percent). While SIDS’ quick responses have so far been able to contain the health consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic, they are among the worst hit developing economies in economic and fiscal terms. This is mainly due to global contractions in two key ocean economy sectors, coastal tourism and fisheries (Piemonte, 2021). As a result, among the 73 countries eligible to the G20 Debt Service Suspension Initiative (DSSI), 20 are SIDS,¹⁰ two being in debt distress (Grenada and São Tomé & Príncipe) and 12 are at high risk. According to Piemonte (2021), Belize, Cabo Verde, Dominica, Jamaica and the Maldives could experience significant difficulties to service debt obligations in the short-term and Jamaica, Mauritius and Papua New Guinea have shown very high debt servicing-over-export ratios in the recent past (Figure 19.6).

As the Covid-19 crisis has shown, most SIDS are heavily constrained by the amount of external finance they can access considering their debt levels on the one hand and also the high levels of risk their ratings reflect. Assa and Meddeb (2021) show that the non-LDC SIDS have much higher average borrowing costs. Limited fiscal space and limited access to international finance hinder governments’ responses to shocks, and eventually their authority and legitimacy, further exacerbating the social and economic consequences of these shocks.

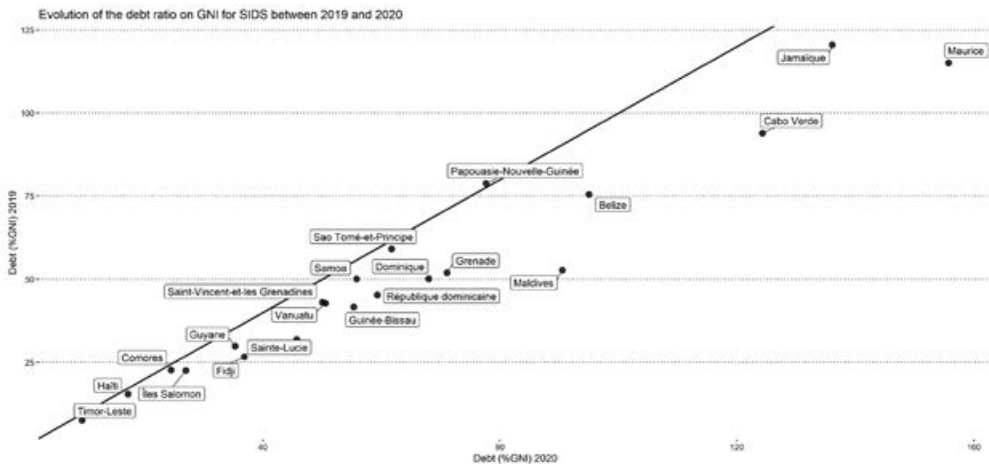


Figure 19.6 Level of debt (percentage of GNI) in SIDS in 2019 and 2020 for 20 SIDS

Regarding social context, which is so important for state legitimacy and authority, smallness may have the advantage of allowing greater social cohesion, that is, less ethnic, linguistic or religious fragmentation. Greater social cohesion favoring growth and lowering vulnerability would then make smallness an advantage, not a handicap. However, if smallness produces intimacy between inhabitants that would favor political stability, small population size might also favor nepotism (Carment et al., 2021; Lowenthal, 1987). Moreover, not all SIDS are characterized by low fragmentation. For instance, Papua New Guinea, with 8 million inhabitants, is one of the most diverse countries in the world, with over 800 different languages and is considered as a fragile state by both the World Bank and the OECD and one of the most violent countries in the Pacific according to UNODC (2019).

Climate Change and Natural Disasters

Small states and SIDS in particular are also particularly exposed to natural hazards and to climate change. UNCTAD (2021) estimates that SIDS faced on average annual damage of 2.1 percent of GDP over the period 1970 to 2018. Furthermore, while SIDS are responsible for only 1 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions, they are struggling, and will struggle, disproportionately with issues such as severe biodiversity loss, rising sea-levels,¹¹ and increasing severity of extreme weather events (Assa and Meddeb, 2021).

An obvious fact is that the smaller the economy, the larger the share of the territory and then the share of the population or economic activities hurt by an adverse consequence of climate change and/or natural disasters. Islandness also amplifies specific risk such as sea-level rise. Moreover, about 90 percent of SIDS are located in the tropics – areas naturally prone to suffer more frequently from severe weather events ranging from rapid-onset and temporary events, such as storms and flooding, to slow-onset processes including land erosion and changes in the global water cycle. Climatic conditions in combination with socio-economic vulnerabilities ensure that SIDS are amongst the most vulnerable countries to climate change (UN-OHRLLS, 2017). According to the Physical Vulnerability to Climate Change Index (PVCCI), out of the ten countries most vulnerable to climate change, six are SIDS (Feindouno et al., 2020).¹² Incurred (current and future) damages and costs of adaptation to climate change are then disproportionately high for SIDS, but it would also be amplified by the (constrained) choice of development model. The tourism-dependent SIDS are arguably the most affected ones as they are more affected by climate change, given their localization in tropical areas, and because tourism is one of the most climate-affected activities (Goujon and Hoarau, 2020). Other physical hazards such as volcano, earthquake and tsunami hazards also occur regularly in a number of small islands, specifically in those located on the Pacific Ring of Fire. Volcanic SIDS with one or more active volcanoes comprise today about half of all SIDS.

In the group of SIDS, Haiti is an illustrative but extreme case, where poverty, weak governance and recurrence of natural disasters seem to put the country into a trap. Haiti is one of the most exposed countries to climatic hazards such as hurricanes and floods, but also physical hazards such as earthquakes or volcanic eruptions.¹³ These events are of low probability but of high human and economic impact, particularly in a context of poverty associated with a low quality of infrastructure and buildings, and incapacity to prevent, adapt and respond to urgent needs when a natural disaster occurs. Haiti's growth performance in the last four decades has been disappointing and poverty remains endemic. A history of vested interests, political instability, and natural disasters keep it as one of the poorest and most unequal countries in

the world. In this context, the social contract between the state and its citizens keeps eroding. Works from the World Bank (2007, 2016) note that Haiti has never had a tradition of providing services to the population or creating an environment conducive to sustainable growth. In part because of recurrent shocks, Haiti's tax system generates limited resources for the government and tends to be regressive. Furthermore, public spending in health, education and social protection remains limited, constraining the government's ability to provide services and offer equal opportunities to its citizens. Basic services such as health and education are then mainly provided by non-government actors, placing a substantial financial burden on households and delivering achievements closely linked with household income. This poor governance and the state's inability to provide public goods in turn undermine development and poverty reduction fueling Haiti's poverty-conflict trap. Applying the ALC framework from Carment et al. (2009), it would seem that the fragility problem in Haiti is related to legitimacy and capacity as opposed to authority. Haiti is not an exception, as demonstrated by cyclone Kenneth causing USD 188 million of damages in Comoros in April 2019, and the last example of the devastating volcanic eruption that affected more than 80 percent of the population of Tonga in January 2022. Overall, SIDS lack the institutions and systems needed to anticipate and cope with hazards, including effective early warning and emergency systems. High vulnerability to natural hazards is then often combined with low educational achievement, limited employment opportunities, difficult market conditions and restricted disaster recovery options.

Climate change and natural disasters can have more direct consequences on fragility, through conflict. The results of a growing multidisciplinary quantitative research suggest that past climate events have had a significant influence on conflict throughout history (Hsiang et al., 2013). Existing research has succeeded in establishing a causal relationship between climate and conflict but has not yet been able to fully elucidate the mechanisms. However, it seems likely that climate change influences conflict through multiple channels, that may themselves differ according to the economic, institutional and social context. Thus, in regions heavily dependent on agriculture with a low level of economic development and strong ethnic polarization, climatic shocks (of rainfall and temperature) increase the risk of conflict. Future research should be able to shed light on the causal mechanisms linking climate, socio-economic and political characteristics, and conflict.

CONCLUSION: IMPROVING RESILIENCE TO FIGHT THE STRUCTURAL DRIVERS OF FRAGILITY IN SIDS

A number of SIDS are fragile, according to common definitions but also when we include other attributes to the concept, and when we combine fragility with vulnerability, a more common feature of SIDS.

The consensus view (among SIDS and the international community) is that vulnerable countries can only achieve sustainable development if they build their resilience to environmental and economic shocks. The mounting severity of these shocks amplifies the urgency of their calls for action (UNCTAD, 2022). Resilience, the capacity to cope with exogenous shocks by implementing appropriate policies, encompasses the measures taken to improve the country's mitigation capacity in the event of a shock.¹⁴ The resilience of the full system includes the territory's overall society and human activities, at the community level as well

as public policies. It can have a structural component (constraints due to vulnerability) and a more conjunctural, autonomous component (willingness).

Ensuring the supply of public goods and services, including infrastructure, questions the authorities' capacity and willingness to do so. Development, poverty reduction and conflict prevention will not be possible unless attention is paid to strengthening the state's capacity to provide basic public goods, including security and the rule of law. However, the quality of public policy and the capacities of states are themselves weakened by external shocks and structural vulnerability: overall instability of income transmitted to public revenue is a factor of public deficit and indebtedness, of instability and low productivity of public investment, of real exchange rate instability, and so on. Guillaumont et al. (2017) and Goujon and Wagner (2019) show that the quality of policy and institutions, measured by the CPIA or the WGI, is weakened by structural vulnerability.

In that context, fragility prevention involves combining both institutional reforms and development plans aiming at reducing general vulnerability, addressing the root causes of fragility and violence. It requires a combination of long-term, structuring actions, combining security objectives with those of inclusive development, allowing countries to escape from fragility traps. Indeed, the most structuring actions in favor of development have little effect in the very short term. The institutional reforms necessary to restore the role of the state and to ease tensions must then consist of restoring or strengthening the social contract by helping the authorities to fulfill their basic functions, following a case-specific diagnostic. The confidence in the role of the state lies in the implementation of actions with a focus on education (those that put people back to work), mobility of persons or food safety.

Indeed, employment, particularly youth employment, should be a priority for development and stability in many fragile SIDS. Employment plays a very important role in fragile environments, given its contribution to poverty reduction and productivity growth, but also its effect on social cohesion and on reducing the risk of violence. This relationship is well documented for example for Pacific islands by Ware (2005). Notably, for Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands, rapid population growth causing a lack of employment opportunities for youths, and considerable intercommunal tension, have resulted in several episodes of political instability, with young people making up the majority of participants in civil unrest and conflicts.

NOTES

1. The authors thank Alban Cornier (Ferdinand) for excellent research assistance.
2. The 38 SIDS are: Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Bahrain, Barbados, Belize, Cabo Verde, Comoros*, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Fiji, Grenada, Guinea-Bissau*, Guyana, Haiti*, Jamaica, Kiribati*, Maldives, Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Mauritius, Nauru, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, São Tomé and Príncipe*, Singapore, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Seychelles, Solomon Islands*, Suriname, Timor-Leste*, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tuvalu*, Vanuatu; *also Least Developed Country.
3. UN-OHRLS was established by the United Nations General Assembly in 2001.
4. Carment et al. (2009) propose a fragile states framework that consists of an overall fragility index and three different dimensions of stateness – authority (A), legitimacy (L) and capacity (C) – which they refer to as the ALC framework. Authority refers to the legislative power of the state, its ability to control its territory, and to provide core public goods, stability and security to its people; legitimacy refers to how much a state views the government as reliable, and how much it is willing to support the government's legislation and policy; capacity refers to the power of the state to mobilize and employ resources towards productive ends.

5. The list includes three types of situations: high intensity conflict, medium intensity conflict, and institutional and social fragility. High intensity conflict and medium intensity conflict are now based on the number of deaths due to armed conflict. Institutional and social fragility, besides the Country Policy and Institutional Assessment (CPIA) for which the threshold is set at 3.0, is based also on the number of refugees coming from neighboring countries (or the presence of UN forces). In addition, the lowest score among the CPIAs of the World Bank, the African Development Bank, and the Asian Development Bank is now used instead of the average of the three.
6. The Fragile States Index (FSI) of the Fund for Peace was created with the aim of identifying not only the tensions and constraints in the life of each country, but also at what moment the tensions and constraints risk leading the country to the edge of the precipice. The FSI is built from 12 principal indicators and more than 100 sub-indicators concerning politics, economic, military, and social which might capture factors likely to lead to the onset of conflicts. The countries are classified into four categories, according to a growing level of threat – Sustainable, Stable, Warning, and Alert.
7. A real world evidence driven case study application of the CIFP SIDS framework to a SIDS state can be found here: <https://carleton.ca/cifp/2022/marshall-islands-fragility-brief/>.
8. Many SIDS are in fact large ocean states. Their vast ocean spaces comprise a significant portion of the world's ocean – on average 28 times more than their actual land space. For example, the Republic of Kiribati has the 13th largest exclusive economic zone on Earth.
9. On average, the 38 countries in this group derive 42% of all their export revenues from inbound tourism, compared with 11% for all other developing countries (Assa and Meddeb, 2021).
10. The DSSI is helping countries concentrate their resources on fighting the pandemic and safeguarding the lives and livelihoods of millions of the most vulnerable people. Since it took effect on May 1, 2020, the initiative has delivered more than \$10.3 billion in relief.
11. In SIDS 29% of population live within 5m above sea-level (100% in Maldives and Tuvalu and >95% in Marshall Islands and Kiribati).
12. The PVCCI is a composite indicator aggregating (1) Risks associated with gradual shocks, such as risk of flooding due to sea-level rise, or risk of desertification, (2) Risks associated with the intensification of recurrent shocks, whether rainfall and temperature shock, or cyclones.
13. The recent earthquake of August 14, 2021 had devastating consequences with more than 2,000 people killed and several hundred thousand people in need of assistance, and an estimated economic loss of more than 1.5 billion USD, 10% of GDP (UNOCHA, 2021). It was the worst disaster that hurt Haiti since the January 12, 2010 earthquake (more than 100,000 killed, economic loss of about 8 billion USD), while Hurricane Matthew on October 5–6, 2016 caused 546 deaths and economic loss of about 2.8 billion USD.
14. Savage et al. (2021) argue for the integration of climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction in development planning to reduce vulnerability and explore the challenges of doing so in Vanuatu.

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20. Securitization, divergent agendas and the sectoral allocation of development aid within Afghanistan

Mark McGillivray and Safiullah Taye

INTRODUCTION

Afghanistan's struggle to build a functioning state has historically been tied to its complex domestic dynamics and its state's relations to foreign powers and their financial and military influences. The modern state of Afghanistan is generally considered to have first emerged in the 1880s when its rulers reaffirmed the 1879 Treaty of Gandamak with British India, defining the country's existing borders (Taye, 2021). Arguably the most dominant feature of its history has been conflict, particularly during the last 100 years. With the election of President Ghani in September 2014 and the enormous military and civilian support his government received from Western countries, there was hope that widespread conflict would be eliminated, with a more stable and credible democratic state being built. Yet these hopes were crushed with the rapid demise of the Ghani government and the return to central power of the Taliban in the second half of 2021.

Since 2002 the international community has invested very heavily in Afghanistan, not only in seeking to prevent state collapse, but also to promote economic reconstruction and poverty reduction. It provided close to US\$80 billion in official development assistance (ODA) to Afghanistan between 2002 and 2019, making it the second most heavily supported country in this regard since 2002 (OECD, 2021). Despite this support, nearly two decades later, and despite some noticeable development improvements prior to the return of the Taliban to national power, Afghanistan remained one of the poorest countries in the world with very low levels of human security, high levels of poverty, persistent corruption and, most notably, a government highly dependent on foreign aid to support its most basic functions. As Carment and Belo (2021) note, Afghanistan is "one of the costliest and most unsuccessful campaigns undertaken by Washington and its allies".

Afghanistan also remained among the most highly fragile nations in the world. It was among these nations when empirical ratings of state fragility first became widely used in the early 2000s (Balioune-Lutz and McGillivray, 2011; Carment et al., 2011). Twenty years later, and prior to the fall of the Ghani administration, the Fund for Peace Fragile States Index rated Afghanistan as the ninth most fragile among 178 countries rated (Fund for Peace, 2021). Building on the approach of Naudé et al. (2011), Carment and Samy (2017) further characterize Afghanistan as a trapped state. Such a nation is one that faces challenges in trying to escape fragility. These ratings, and the development challenges noted above, do not necessarily suggest that development assistance failed Afghanistan between 2002 and 2021, as the situation could conceivably have been worse in its absence, but they certainly point to the challenges that this fragile state and its donor partners faced.

This chapter looks at the sectoral allocation of official development assistance within Afghanistan, focusing primarily on assistance from Germany during the period 2002 to 2018. Germany has been the second largest official development assistance donor, in terms of the volume of this assistance, to Afghanistan since 2002, disbursing USD 5.7 billion in ODA (OECD, 2021). Germany is an interesting case study not just because of the volume of its support to Afghanistan but owing to what is viewed by observers as its particularly participatory approach in its provision, engaging with a wide range of stakeholders. The chapter has two objectives. The first is to provide insight into those factors that have shaped the sectoral allocation of German development aid in Afghanistan. The second is to ascertain the extent to which the Afghan government was able to influence this allocation. Of particular interest to the chapter is the extent to which donor perceptions of their comparative advantages, with respect to other donors, as opposed to the preferences of Afghan stakeholders, influenced the sectoral allocation of aid within Afghanistan.

This chapter investigates these questions through the lens of aid politicization, evaluating Germany's political structure, as the second largest donor in Afghanistan between 2002 and 2018, in decisions that led to sectoral aid allocation in Afghanistan. This chapter shows that, while the delivery of aid in Afghanistan has been highly securitized, the selection of economic development interventions was highly politicized. This integrated approach, however, remained subordinated to security objectives (Brown et al., 2015). In other words, the economic development agenda in Afghanistan remained supportive of donors' security agenda and the amalgamation of the two further limited the scope of negotiations over subnational aid allocation between donors and the Afghan government.¹

SECTORAL ALLOCATION DRIVERS

In addition to analysing donor geographical aid allocation and how open donors are to negotiations, it is important to examine factors that influence donor portfolio, or sectoral development interventions. The negotiability of policies can be best described by the term "genuine outcome" coined by Poppe et al. (2019, p. 759), which can be understood "as including a substantial exchange on diverging values and interests". This means that donors would be willing to make substantial changes to their level of commitment, or the modality of delivery, as a result of deep and authentic dialogue with recipients. The existing scholarship looks at aid allocation motives, interests, or needs (Alesina and Dollar, 2000; Bermeo, 2010; Desai and Greenhill, 2017; McGillivray, 2003), and aid negotiations are also influenced by these concepts. For example, when allocating aid based on needs, evidence, derived from needs, is vital and more important than interests, which overlooks the outcome or effectiveness of aid in poverty reduction. Darcy and Hofmann (2003) believe that in the context of humanitarian response, donors' decision-making is not purely based on the evidence or the assessment of needs, instead decisions are influenced by various other factors.

Such diversity of inputs is even more pronounced in broader developmental aid since priorities differ between donors and recipient governments. In a World Bank assessment on priority alignment in Afghanistan, Sud and Rankin (2013, p. 3) state that:

all donor evaluations consider their respective activities to have been relevant or highly relevant based on their alignment with the government's plans and priorities. The government and civil society, on

the other hand, give low to moderate scores to alignment based on the view that the development plan is by its nature all-encompassing and thus any donor initiative can be considered aligned to it.

Subsequently, despite the continuation of aid flow there is an underlying clash between who sets the policies and priorities in sectoral aid allocation in the state-building or reconstruction efforts. Overall, several criticisms reflect the fact that there have been major disconnections between policy and reality in Afghanistan (Blankenship, 2014).

While some studies, such as Gibson et al. (2005), identify more actors, this chapter focuses on five key stakeholder groups in influencing economic development policies within Afghanistan. These five stakeholder groups can be amalgamated into three larger groups consisting of the donors, the recipients and the intermediaries – intermediaries referring to those agencies that act as catalysts between the two other stakeholder groups. On the side of donor countries, this chapter identifies the diversity of inputs that shaped donors' sectoral intervention in Afghanistan under the whole of government approach. Even though a ministry or a subsidiary of a ministry in donor countries takes the responsibility for overseeing their foreign aid, the inputs, under this comprehensive approach, come from various public and private actors. Afghan governance, as well, consists of various entities, including the government, civil society, private sector, and local communities. While donor agencies must ensure that the objectives of their headquarters are met, Afghanistan continued to increase its leverage and pushed its agenda, which increased tensions over where aid should be allocated. Under such settings, agencies and NGOs on the ground played an intermediary role and sought to work in the interests of both parties.

Identifying and explaining these factors help navigate the power-play between the Afghan government and the German government – and presumably other donors too. Firstly, Germany adopted the whole of government approach to craft its policies in response to the needs of the Afghan government and its people. This means there were interagency collaborations and negotiations to create appropriate interventions. Secondly, Germany had at least one focal province in Afghanistan, which received a substantial portion of its foreign aid under the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) model. Thirdly, the German sectoral portfolios were considerably diverse or fragmented in Afghanistan. The fragmentation of aid made negotiations more challenging, since every sector or project included its own sets of risks and benefits. This argument is illustrated by data that highlights the Afghan government's difficulty in negotiating when there were many projects and many actors in charge of the delivery. Ultimately, donors' diversified portfolios led to uncoordinated project implementations with little room for negotiations.

First and foremost, donors claimed to allocate their assistance to Afghanistan based on their comparative advantage. "Comparative advantage" is a term often expressed by donors when responding to what drives their sectoral aid allocation. Conceptually, the term is widely used in economic theories to explain how certain manufacturing units, companies, or even countries, allocate significant portions of their resources to one or a few sectors that increases their productivity and position in the market as opposed to scattering resources across many sectors (Costinot, 2009). In international development aid, the basis for these advantages is built on donors' knowledge and experience from working within other contexts, including within their own countries. Germany is a global leader in renewable energy and its experience of working in several African countries motivated Germany to assist Afghanistan in this sector, amongst various others. Such specialization potentially improves efficiency and effectiveness

of bilateral aid (Dewald and Weder, 1996). It has been further argued that the Millennium Development Goals had a strong influence on fostering countries' specific sectoral aid allocation (Pöntinen, 2014). In regard to Germany's preferred sectors, a senior German official mentions that, "there is no sector that didn't need support, [but] we were looking at our own comparative strength and advantages when drafting our sectoral intervention objectives" (Informant 7, 2018). An older, yet still relevant study by Dewald and Weder (1996), demonstrates that 24 per cent of German aid worldwide in 1991–1992 was directed to social and administrative infrastructure, just 6 per cent higher than its second category, economic infrastructure, while industry and other production ranked third with 7 per cent. Germany has continued to dominate these sectors in Afghanistan alongside substantive contributions to the security sector. It has diversified its sectoral support with economic infrastructure (18.4 per cent), other social infrastructure (15.1 per cent) and education and health (11.8 per cent) ranking as the top three sectors where Germany allocates aid (OECD, 2017).

Germany's overseas development assistance is managed by its Ministry of Economics and Development. Even at the ministerial level, the establishment of the whole of government approach includes an inter-institutional model that, though it varies from donor to donor, plays an important role in deciding sectoral aid allocation. Various other factors influence German ministerial decisions, including donors' implementing agencies, private sectors, and civil societies. A similar observation can be made in other countries with institutions such as JICA (Japan), USAID (United States), and DFID (United Kingdom). The duet of ministries and implementing agencies is incomplete without their affiliated NGOs and private sector partners. But what is the role of the Afghan government, its institutions, and people? While it might not be a symmetric power-play, the Afghan government had developed different frameworks and channels for donors' participation in Afghanistan. The development of the Afghan National Development Strategy is a prime example of how a partner country can signal its sectoral priorities to donors. Additionally, because of the security conditions, local communities also shaped sectoral aid allocation at the micro-level, especially when donors bypassed local institutions.

The second factor, or stakeholder group, that contributes to sectoral aid allocation decisions in Afghanistan are donor countries' implementing agencies. While comparative advantage encompasses wider economic justifications, donors also claim the important contribution of their implementing agencies in selecting and strengthening their sectoral interventions. However, implementing agencies provide consultations to their funding institutions on where to allocate their funds and to which sectors. With their vast network and resources, implementing agencies play a significant role as intermediaries in subnational aid allocation (Swedlund, 2017). The German Development Bank (KfW), as an example of a German implementing agency, does not operate by merely following direct orders from the German Ministry of Development (BMZ); instead, information and ideas reciprocate between the two parties. German aid officials, including one senior personnel at an implementing agency, highlight the essential role of implementing agencies in policy planning and implementation within Afghanistan.

Intermediaries can play liminal roles between their funding agencies and the recipient bodies. The interchangeable position of intermediaries helps balance power relations between donors and the Afghan government in subnational aid allocation. Donors' projects are delivered through their implementing agencies, who can exert noticeable influence in the direction of subnational aid allocation. Martens (2005, p. 644) states that "though donors remain the

main decision-makers in foreign aid, mediation is necessary because virtually all aid programmes require some agreement from the recipients as well, if only to authorize that the programme be implemented on their sovereign territory”.

German aid agencies were extensively engaged and networked in Afghanistan, working with several ministries, civil society organizations and local councils. While the overall policy of the German government was to focus on the north of Afghanistan, its implementing agencies pushed their government to expand its operation to other areas, which aligned with what the Afghan government had been asking of the Germans since the establishment of the German PRTs. A senior German official at a German agency said that, “there is, if you will, somehow a coalition between the implementing agencies and the Afghan government regarding German expansion to other areas, especially the safer provinces such as Herat or Bamiyan” (Informant 9, 2019). He continued by saying that “such coalition work[ed] in favour of the Afghan government and because we are on the ground, the German government listens to us, hence you see your projects are increasing at [the] national level”. The same informant also underscored that it is not easy to convince funding bodies in Germany to “go around” the mandate since “security is the deciding factor at the end of the day”.

Despite positives, there were some challenges with utilizing implementing agencies. Critics pointed to the shortcomings of implementing agencies, especially on the issue of their transparency. Another concern was donor administrative costs (Easterly and Pfütze, 2008). Implementing aid projects in Afghanistan, as a fragile state, required high security apparatus and to attain that resulted in incremental administrative costs. In one example, looking through German aid data between 2010 and 2016, the OECD dataset records over USD 69 million allocated to the safety and security of GIZ and KfW staff in Afghanistan (OECD, 2020). When the German officials were asked about this figure, informants referred to the insecurity data and claimed that “what else can one expect” from working in such a hostile environment (Informant 18, 2020).

The third group of stakeholders in the dynamics of sectoral aid allocation within Afghanistan are private companies, contractors mainly from donor countries or their trusted firms from other countries. Use of these actors was, arguably, one of the most contested issues in the evolving politicization, or even commercialization, of aid in Afghanistan. Public–private partnership (PPP) has been on the agenda of most donor countries and organizations for a long time (Wulf, 2003), and certainly reinforced under the implementation of the SDGs. As stated above, donors and recipient governments have shifted policies to designate specific ministries or offices responsible for the allocation and disbursement of foreign aid, whilst also working with implementing agencies. However, the PPP in post-conflict settings has proven to be challenging when the governments of donors and recipients are involved (Kreutzmann and Schütte, 2010). In the changing landscape of aid delivery, private companies offer a range of activities including security, technical consultation, construction, and delivery of humanitarian assistance. In one case, for the convenience of donors, and due to the lack of capacity in line-ministries, almost all documents for drafting the Afghan government’s programme budgeting had to be translated into Dari and English; almost all of this translation work was done by foreign or local consultants (Venner, 2019).

The German government had been active in contracting development projects to its national companies and listening to their proposals and strategies in planning and implementing aid projects in Afghanistan. As an historical example, the German government funded the development of a sugar company in Baghlan province in the Northern part of Afghanistan in

the 1930s. After several years of initial investment, and deployment of German and Czech engineers, the company was established in 1940. After Germany's "return" to the north of Afghanistan under the PRT, the German government opened up inquiries about the continuation of the long-established sugar company. This gained interest from the private sector in Germany and Afghanistan. On the German side, KSW, a family-owned private company, proposed to invest EU 1 million while the Deutsche Investitions und Entwicklungsgesellschaft pledged EU 2 million.² Afghan private entrepreneurs committed to invest EU 8 million, while Afghanistan's Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock invested EU 4.6 million toward property value, machinery and building (Kreutzmann and Schütte, 2010). OECD data shows that the German government invested nearly USD 2 million in the re-development of the Baghlan Sugar Company (OECD, 2020).

Though their involvement was sporadic, private companies of donor countries were also included in aid packages. There was disagreement as to whether private companies from donor countries were in project proposals, or if companies "won the bids" to lead the implementation of projects within Afghanistan. For instance, Siemens, a German-based international company, had been extensively active in developing the energy sector in Afghanistan. It was suggested by one Afghan official that in several projects, Siemens was strongly suggested to be the company in charge of implementing that specific energy project (Informant 5, 2019). In fact, representatives of the company and the Afghan Ministry of Finance signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in 2019 to advance their development cooperation. An Afghan aid official highlighted the rarity of this agreement as the Afghan Ministry of Finance (MoF) had been unable to sign MOUs with NGOs that work off-budget (Informant 4, 2019).

Negotiating the involvement of foreign companies in humanitarian and development projects in Afghanistan was another issue for the Afghan government, albeit not a significant one. Based on the information provided by donors, specifically in the case of German aid, donors see the necessity of including their local companies in projects for various reasons. Firstly, similar to working with their implementing agencies, donors have built partnerships based on trust and efficiency with certain companies. Hence, the objectives for awarding projects to their partner companies is to "get the job done". Even though Afghan aid officials acknowledged the efficiency and effectiveness of donors' private companies, they raised concerns too. One of their many concerns was that foreign companies had exceedingly high overrun costs, and that meant a higher rate of aid would be diverted away from the Afghan government and economy.

Donors were also pressured by other counterparts in their headquarters to include national private sectors in the implementation of their projects. According to a senior German aid official, "the ministry in charge of aid policy is not the only decision-maker when it comes to aid allocation", referring once again to the whole of government approach (Informant 7, 2018). According to the same informant, whilst it may not be the case with all donors, in Germany, when overseas budgets are presented to parliament, there is an expectation to see more German companies participate in aid delivery or the implementation of development projects. As such, in one form or another, donors are expected to bring some economic return to their taxpayers to ensure "altruistic donation" is a "win-win" situation. These two factors further illustrate that there are multiple elements included in the negotiations. Nevertheless, those negotiating on behalf of German aid and the Afghan government were both restricted by macro aid policies set by donors, and negotiations could not attain the desired changes. Certainly, the Afghan government saw these strict conditions as an imposition of donor influence. A senior Afghan

official expressed that, “the German aid [did] not come with no strings attached to it and working with German private companies [was] the strongest factor in all bilateral relations. We were pushed to work with them, because the German government awarded contracts to its companies first, then others” (Informant 1, 2018). A different informant adds that, “we [were] unsure who sets the sectoral agenda for Afghanistan, the German Ministry of Development BMZ, GIZ, or Siemens. To me, they all have the same power I think” (Informant 4, 2019).

Outside of donor countries, the fourth factor and the stakeholder group in sectoral aid allocation is the Afghan government itself. In response to donors’ multilayered decision-making inputs, the Afghan government had also contributed to these decisions either through direct intervention or through negotiating with donors. Indeed, there was a subtle complexity in donors’ relations with Kabul because donors claim that their sectoral interventions were fully aligned with the Afghans. From the Afghans’ perspective, while the donors’ premise was correct, they had issues with donors regarding the reallocation of resources, prioritizations, or the reduction in aid because the Afghan government failed to meet certain conditions.

Through the development of the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS), the Afghan government had indicated its major priorities to donors. ANDS was called “an Afghan-owned blueprint” and a “living document” in “all spheres of human endeavours” (ANDS, 2008, p. 5). The document contains well defined priorities that reflect the relative contribution of policies, programmes and projects towards the Sustainable Development Goals. A “bottom-up” approach, as suggested by the document, was used in the development of the ANDS that reflects all aspects of the Afghan government and considers the diversity of its people and their needs across the country. The ANDS consists of eight pillars: security, good governance, infrastructure/natural resources, education and culture, health and nutrition, agriculture/rural development, social protection and economic/governance/private sector development (PSD) (ANDS, 2008, p. 18). Therefore, as an Afghan aid official stated, donors’ activities were always “aligned” with Afghan priorities, but donors had their ways of choosing their preferences too, often leaving some sectors behind, while focusing on those that interested them (Informant 4, 2019).

To ensure that there were sufficient funds for implementing its National Development Strategy, the Afghan government had relied largely on donor on-budget assistance. This is a type of assistance that is allocated through the Afghan government budget. As such it augments other (non-aid) government revenues and can facilitate coordination in the allocation of revenue between expenditure categories. Given the nature of the Afghan government systems, which had grown increasingly centralized (Ruhani and Khan, 2019), the rise in on-budget assistance had been of utmost importance in an outward approach to sectoral development. As a result of that, the Afghan government had pushed to increase funding to its budget in pursuit of leading sectoral aid allocation. The Afghan government strived to sit in the driver’s seat for subnational aid allocation and an important step in that path was to attract more aid. Rather than project aid, which essentially facilitates greater donor intervention in a sector, the Afghan government had worked to push donors to increase on-budget support so that the government, outwardly, invests in what it conjectures as priorities. That on-budget aid over which recipient governments have greatest allocative control is general budget support (GBS). Germany provided GBS to Afghanistan in one year only. That was in 2006 and constituted only 0.3 per cent of German development aid to Afghanistan between 2002 and 2020. All other donors allocated only 2 per cent of their total development aid to Afghanistan as GBS during this period (OECD, 2021).

Within the on-budget aid, however, there were various challenges regarding where the aid should go, even though the budget was at the discretion of the Afghan government. Some donors continued to put further conditions on their on-budget allocations. There were at least two major challenges that the Afghan government faced, and each of these, ultimately, limited the government's ability to direct aid to its line-ministries and directorates. The first issue was convincing donors to increase funding to the on-budget stream. The issue of on-budget aid allocation is one of cross-thematic issues, which had been contested and negotiated since the early years following the 2001 intervention. During the 2010 Kabul Conference, the Afghan government and the international community agreed on allocating 50 per cent of donors' aid to the on-budget stream. As previously mentioned, in spite of the political statement in 2010, most donors, especially major ones, have not fulfilled their commitment (MOF, 2018). A small measure of success was achieved by the Afghan government when some donors sporadically reached the agreed 50 per cent of on-budget support, largely as the insecurity increased in the last few years.

Ultimately such shortcomings impacted negotiations for the on-budget aid and the ability of the Afghan government to fully and authoritatively allocate aid to its sectoral preferences. A senior German aid official who worked in Afghanistan points to the Afghan government's inability to finish its budget on time, arguing that donors see that the government struggles to finish its budget. Between 2002 and 2018, it is argued that the Afghan sectorial ministries never utilized over 50 per cent of their budget (Ruhani and Khan, 2019), largely due to the fragmentation of Afghan politics. Consequently, donors continued to communicate with local communities in their sectoral aid allocation. As a senior donor official states, "going off-budget sometimes ensures that we reach those that the government cannot reach, and because we see that it is unlikely that the needs of the Afghan government and its people are the same" (Informant 7, 2018).

The final group of stakeholders is the Afghan community. In fact, donors do disburse more aid off-budget, so presumably they negotiate their developmental projects and their position within these communities. Some evidence in this research illustrates that, though the Afghan government claimed that its priorities were aligned with its communities, there were major mismatches as well, especially when government was absent from several communities. There are also historical patterns of clashes between the Afghan government and its rural areas. As Ruhani and Khan (2019, p. 37) describe, Afghanistan was a "fragmented and a decentralized traditional society but with a centralized government structure".

To further elaborate on the juxtaposed nature of needs between the Afghan government and its communities, scholars and policy makers have suggested different approaches to capture and address the needs of the community. Coburn (2011), for example, uses "formal" and "informal systems", in reference to the state and the community, arguing that the informal systems have shown more resilience in Afghanistan as a way to form their own networks in dealing with the international community. This approach to aid delivery is recognized as the "bottom-up" strategy, which holds that "the local residents have a better understanding of their environment and needs than state planners" (Bhatia et al., 2018, p. 1045). Most members of the international community working in Afghanistan have resorted to the "Shura strategy", which utilizes traditional councils to deliver foreign assistance in the country (Coburn and Miakhel, 2010).

For German aid, consultation with the *Shuras* was an essential part of their off-budget aid allocation. The term *Shura* "is used for a village council that consists of male landowners

and assumes certain competencies of self-government in rural communities” (Koehler and Zürcher, 2007, p. 67). These communities, or *Shuras*, have been traditionally involved in major local and national decision-making, often through the *Jirga* (the Council) or *Loya Jirga* (the council of the elders). Donors, including Germany, quickly learnt that working through *Shuras* could help disburse aid faster, and often, more safely.

Perhaps the best example to illustrate the position of community development aid in the sectoral aid allocation model is the National Solidarity Program (NSP). The program was funded by the World Bank and some leading donors. It began in 2003 and targeted all 34 provinces of Afghanistan (Noelle-Karimi, 2006). Prior to becoming President, Ghani called the NSP “an innovative national initiative ... which blocks grants for village-run development projects ... designed to meet the needs of ordinary Afghans” (Ghani, 2010, p. 41). These block grants were valued at USD 200 per household, and up to USD 60,000 per village (Noelle-Karimi, 2006). The NSP’s structure was largely a bottom-up approach, where villagers decided on their priorities, which could include roads, schools, clinics, access to drinking water, public baths and so on. Certainly there were challenges with the NSP and similar projects; for example, in a patriarchal society like Afghanistan, the voice of women is largely ignored (Noelle-Karimi, 2006). Yet the findings of the same research also suggest that, to work with communities, understanding the values and the norm of the communities is important. In the case of Germany, the *Shuras* are the primary point of contact with the German implementing agencies. As was suggested by both German and Afghan officials, donors’ consultants reach those at the district level and by listening to the people, they design specific projects tailored for that community.

The criticisms, however, entertain the idea that through bypassing, donors establish their own system parallel to the Afghan government, which as Bizhan (2017) underscores, undermined the legitimacy of the Afghan government. This is particularly problematic in countries like Afghanistan, where there are historical tensions between the state and society due to ethnic diversity. Critics have also pointed to the structural issues surrounding the establishment of several community-based aid delivery schemes (Coburn and Miakhel, 2010). There is a particular reference here to the lack of coordination, which has resulted in a complex state–society relationship. The issue of coordination was one of the main criticisms raised by the Afghan government against its donors who insisted on off-budget aid delivery. Even within the *Shura* system, different factors of fragility, insecurity, and weak institutions have eroded the effectiveness of the model and added to the destabilization of many communities within Afghanistan.

GERMAN SECTORAL DEVELOPMENT AID ALLOCATION WITH AFGHANISTAN

Germany’s sectoral development aid allocation within Afghanistan was multi-faceted and required constant negotiations and repositioning within Afghanistan. As a major donor, the role of Germany’s development aid to and within Afghanistan has been critical. As mentioned above, between 2002 and 2018 Germany disbursed USD 5.7 billion in development aid to Afghanistan through a diverse portfolio. Its breakdown among sectors is shown in Table 20.1. The German government used a participatory approach within Afghanistan to shape this portfolio. The German government not only used its diplomatic mission, but also its implementing

agencies to negotiate aid with different stakeholders in Afghanistan. Germany's foreign assistance to Afghanistan was not just about pouring funds, but a total control and hands-on investment management.

One of the main features of German subnational aid allocation in Afghanistan was its diverse portfolio. According to a senior German official, Germany's sectoral aid allocation in Afghanistan reflected the "changing needs of the Afghans" (Informant 7, 2018). This shift can be viewed in various donors in Afghanistan. In the case of Japan, for instance, after 9/11 Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi passed the Anti-Terrorism Special Measures Law that enabled deployment of Japan's Maritime Self Defence Force (MSDF) vessels to the Indian Ocean to contribute to refuelling operations supporting US-led operations in Afghanistan. In 2009 when the Democratic Party of Japan came to power, within two weeks the refuelling operations were terminated, and Japan offered instead USD 5 billion in economic development aid over the next five years (Tuke, 2013). While Germany's earlier contributions focused on the humanitarian sector, the rapid changes on the ground required donor contributions to all sectors and areas of the country. This required a whole of government approach from the Germans. In terms of implementing agencies, however, Germany worked through several local and international agencies, mainly the Germany Development Agency (GIZ) and the German Development Bank (KfW).

Germany's attention to the reconstruction of the energy sector in Afghanistan was fraught with queries and contentions. It is estimated that over 70 per cent of the population had no access to electricity, including 90 per cent of people living in rural areas (Amin and Bernell, 2018). At the national level, the German government spent over USD 250 million in this sector (see Table 20.1). The allocation of funds to the energy sector was an interesting case, because other major donors, such as Japan and the United States, invested in this sector as well. As an Afghan official states, the "energy sector is an expensive sector, and not many donors are patient to work there" (Informant 5, 2019). As mentioned previously, Germany's interest in the energy sector was linked to the country's "comparative advantage", as suggested by a senior German aid official (Informant 9, 2019). However, it faced accusations of a lack of coordination between donors and agencies working in the sector, since donors are spread across the country with Germany focusing on the north, the US on the south, India on the middle north and the World Bank on Kabul (Amin and Bernell, 2018, p. 77; Fahimi and Upham, 2018). It is worth mentioning that decades of conflict decimated the energy infrastructure in Afghanistan, including the destruction of dams, power stations and oil and gas refineries. While lack of infrastructure has been a challenge, donors and the Afghan government constantly discussed management of the energy sector.

Besides coordination issues between donors, there were structural challenges within the energy sector. For example, in 2008, De Afghanistan Breshna Shirkat (DABS), which is an independent state-owned monopoly power utility, was established. The utility company had overlapping duties with the Afghan Ministry of Energy and Water (MEW) (Ershad, 2017). In terms of contracts, for example, several projects were initiated by MEW; however, after DABS was established, donors and private companies were unsure of how to proceed. A senior Afghan official stated that, while many donors left MEW alone, the Germans stayed to further develop the sector at the ministerial level. He explained that "donors find it hard to work with several agencies for one task. Such structural issues increases the cost, and lowers the efficiency and effectiveness of the aid" (Informant 2, 2018). Hence, the German government stepped in to fill a major gap, which was expected to not only meet the needs of the

Afghans, but also generate revenue for Afghanistan (Amin and Bernell, 2018). Nevertheless, due to high investment and the involvement of many intermediaries in the energy sector, mainly foreign companies and NGOs, coordination and the negotiation of their positions was complex and monotonous.

Table 20.1 German sectoral development aid disbursements in Afghanistan, 2002–2018

Sector	Number of projects	Volume in USD millions
Agriculture	79	42.231
Banking	17	26.126
Business & Other Services	50	62.713
Communication, Media & Information	101	69.896
Conflict, Peace & Security	250	523.981
Debt Forgiveness	3	64.261
Disaster Prevention & Preparedness	31	9.99
Education	325	315.824
Election	25	56.6
Emergency Responses	248	279.922
Energy	128	250.461
Food Assistance	27	20.259
Government & Civil Society	364	1067.308
Health	121	123.154
Industry/Mining Mineral Resources	41	20.677
Legal and Judicial development	171	787.41
Multisector Aid	76	109.649
Other Multisector	22	11.162
Other Social Infrastructure & Services	161	35.654
Other Services	49	12.654
Post-Secondary Education	115	99.815
Reconstruction Relief & Rehabilitation	92	183.458
Refugees in Donor Country	6	11.08
Rural Development	53	213.635
Scholarships/Training in Germany	59	22.431
Transport & Storage	78	58.252
Vocational Training	133	138.517
Water Supply & Sanitation	125	93.465

Source: OECD (2020).

Germany has invested a significant volume of its ODA into Afghanistan's higher education, particularly on scholarships. Since 2002, the German government was an active donor in post-secondary education, including through offering training to Afghan university lecturers in Germany; for example, modernizing university education in Afghanistan's mining sector. The donor disbursed close to USD 22.43 million for such projects. This figure does not include major projects by DAAD, such as an "Alumni program at German universities (training, networking, coordination)" in 2016 with a total cost of USD 0.021 million or several other "DAAD evaluation projects" (OECD, 2020). Ten projects "financing tuition in higher education for students from developing countries in Germany" ran between 2008 and 2017 and cost Germany USD 29.7 million (OECD, 2020). Research done in 2013, however, asserted that despite the claim of delivering aid to recipient countries, a noticeable volume of ODA is spent within donor countries. The study found that 20 per cent of all aid never leaves donor

Table 20.2 German sectoral ODA disbursement among selected provinces, 2002–2018

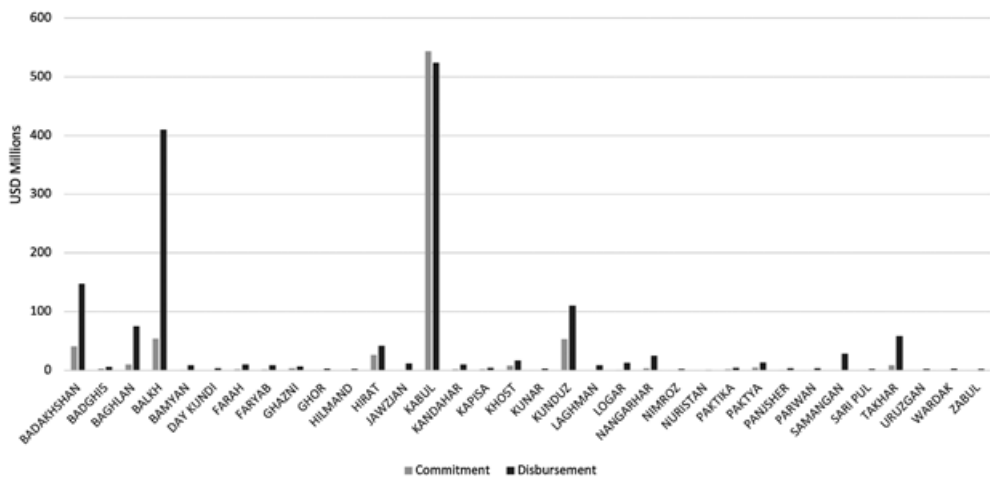
Sector	Kunduz		Takhar		Badkshshan		Balkh		Kabul		Baghlan	
	Number of projects	USD millions	Number of projects	USD millions	Number of projects	USD millions	Number of projects	USD millions	Number of projects	USD millions	Number of projects	USD millions
Agriculture	1	0.08	4	1.84			1	0.11			14	12.37
Banking												
Business & Other Services	1	0.44							2	19.76		
Communication, Media & Information	2	0.02					2	0.17				
Conflict, Peace & Security	13	214.41	1	1.56	1	0.03	10	49.08	6	1.73		
Debt Forgiveness												
Disaster Prevention & Preparedness	16	39.9			2	1.57	2	0.34			2	0.29
Education	31	6.27	3	0.26	23	2.93	14	4.51	51	30.28		
Elections												
Emergency Responses	14	8.16	3	0.23	7	6.4	12	8.83	12	4.19		
Energy	2	0.24	5	0.42			4	20.97	10	10.39		
Food Assistance	3	3.69			4	2.91						
Government & Civil Society	40	66.32			21	2.19	16	54.39	17	10.29		
Health	10	46.38	1	0.27	13	16.33	43	56.08	59	12.74		
Industry/Mining									4	16.72	4	0.31
Legal and Judicial Development					2	0.2						
Multisector					2	0.03						
Other Multisector												
Social Infrastructure & Services			1	0.02			10	1.76	18	2.95		
Other Services	2	0.11					2	0.4	2	7.86		
Post Secondary Education												
Reconstruction Relief & Rehabilitation	2	3.44	1	0.04					5	19.31	2	1.69
Refugees in Donor Countries												
Rural Development					2	0.51						
Transport & Storage	26	91.16	3	0.84	2	0.58	5	2.6	5	4.94		
Water Supply & Sanitation	11	6.82	1	0.28	10	6.09	11	35.28	33	99.58	1	0.004
Total		487.3		5.76		39.8		234.5		240.7		14.7

Source: OECD (2020).

countries whilst 40 per cent tend to return to donor countries in some other forms (Provost, 2013). President Ghani in 2010 directly accused USAID of spending only 10 to 30 per cent of the allocated funds within the country because of “contracting and subcontracting, using parallel systems to manage funds and projects through UN agencies and private firms” (Ghani, 2010, p. 43).

Germany’s sectoral aid allocation within its focal geographical areas (delineated by provinces) was very contextualized, or as one official claims, “they are tailored to the needs” (Informant 8, 2018). A few examples were mentioned earlier in assessing the drivers of Germany’s sectoral aid allocation, especially in the context of the northern provinces and Kabul, which have been Germany’s focal areas. The province of Kunduz received USD 487 million of German aid, and that excludes some of its intra-regional projects. Table 20.2 shows Germany’s sectoral development aid allocation in Kunduz between 2002 and 2018, along with that to its other most heavily supported provinces. There were clear disparities between the two provinces of Balkh and Jowzjan. The German government allocated USD 240.47 million in the security and development of Balkh province, while its western provincial neighbour, Jowzjan, received less than USD 12 million of German aid. Out of this amount, USD 10 million was allocated to humanitarian aid.

Figure 20.1 presents German off-budget subnational commitments and disbursements. Amongst Germany’s sectoral aid allocation in the north, “conflict, peace and security” received the most aid with a total of USD 266.81 million in all six focal provinces, which once more highlights the donors’ securitization in the north. Following that is Germany’s contribution to Water Supply and Sanitation (WSS), which received USD 148.05 million between 2002 and 2018. The contribution to WSS is particularly interesting because it is the only sector that received aid in all six provinces, while also being one of its implementing agencies’ main strengths, a point identified by a senior German aid officer (Informant 9, 2019). At the same time, Germany’s sectoral aid allocation shows that the donor approached each province



Source: MOF (2020).

Figure 20.1 *Off-budget commitment and disbursement of ODA by Germany among all provinces, 2002–2018*

differently and such decentralization gives the donor the ability to negotiate different policies for different localities. Hence, while Germany contributed to 26 sectors and sub-sectors, over half of the contributions were directed to four focus areas, while the other sectors served its diversification agenda in Afghanistan.

Germany's sectoral aid allocation in the north was significantly different than its nationwide projects, which further emphasizes the role of aid securitization. On the national-level projects, for example, the Germans focused on elections, vocational training, legal and judicial development, and support for the Afghan police and security forces. At the national level, most of Germany's projects focused on the development of the Afghan police, following the Bonn Conference mandate in 2002 (GIZ, 2020; Feilke, 2010). Although Germany has initiated some projects in the eastern provinces and Herat in the west, most of the German aid remains either in the north, or was disbursed through nationwide projects such as energy, humanitarian assistance, or vocational training.

CHALLENGES FOR NEGOTIATION

An important concept in analysing Germany's sectoral aid allocation is to understand its fungibility, which essentially defines the dynamics of negotiating sectoral aid allocation within Afghanistan. One of the persistent challenges in Afghanistan was the issue of on- and off-budget aid delivery. This challenge was deepened through lack of accurate and prompt reporting by donors and their implementing agencies. While in theory the on-budget fund was at the discretion of the Afghan government, donors wielded substantial power in directing their aid, or at least part of it, to their preferred sectors.

One of the main issues in sectoral aid allocation in Afghanistan was donor persistence around taking the lead in certain projects. If aid is given through a "gap-filling process" then the recipient government can use the aid where it sees fit. In the case of an aid dependent country like Afghanistan, as suggested by a former senior aid official, "there is little fungibility when most sectors are severely dependent on donors' contribution" (Informant 1, 2018). At the same time, despite that dependency, the Afghan government had used some leverage and power in donors' aid disbursement modalities within the country. As part of that, the Afghan government had pushed to increase the on-budget assistance, with the hope of directing aid to its priorities. Regarding the on-budget delivery, like dozens of cases in the off-budget allocation, donors exercised their power on where the aid should be spent. This and similar projects and their conditionalities continued to challenge the Afghan government and its MOF, which led negotiations on behalf of the government of Afghanistan and some of its line-ministries.

Regarding the structure of aid delivery, in both on- and off-budget delivery, the five identified groups in this chapter are particularly useful for providing insight into German aid disbursement modality and strategy in Afghanistan. The German community-led model, otherwise known as the *Shura* strategy, ought to help people on the ground, especially in areas where German forces are present. The emphasis here is on the inextricable link between security and development in Afghanistan, highlighting the overwhelming impact of security on development. Firstly, the mandate of the German forces "limited Germany's contribution not only numerically, but also geographically" (Noetzel and Rid, 2009, p. 74). Because of this mandate, a senior German official highlighted that the Germans were reluctant to "operate in unsafe zones" (Informant 18, 2020). That limitation impacted Germany's off-budget sectoral

aid allocation because having access to a wider community meant larger contributions to other areas. Secondly, the German officials insisted on “not spreading themselves too thin” as that might compromise their effectiveness (Informant 7, 2018). A German aid official underlined that “this is the same approach that we are doing in other countries as well. In South Africa for instance, we have nationwide projects, but we also have specific regions to do our projects” (Informant 8, 2018).

The motives for donor sectoral preferences remain contested. Germany had special interests in certain sectors, which at least in those areas opened little room for negotiations. Even though their interventions were complementing the Afghan government’s strategy, their selections were rooted in donors’ domestic politics and economics. In the case of awarding scholarships to Afghan academics, for instance, these projects were aligned with Germany’s larger focus on “capacity development”, an approach that dated back to the Cold War era. At that time, the universities of Cologne, Bochum, and Bonn were in partnership with Kabul University until the mid-1970s. Although according to donors’ narratives, such projects were supporting development, in fact they helped donors’ business more than they helped the Afghans. This was especially the case, in the scholarship example, if the awardees did not return to Afghanistan, or if they did not return to working with donor agencies.

CONCLUSION

Negotiating sectoral allocation is a challenging task, especially when donors insist that their projects are aligned with Afghanistan’s National Development Strategy. Over the years, issues such as corruption, lack of capacity, and the inability of the Afghan government ministries to finish their development budget on time contributed to donors’ scepticism around increasing their on-budget contribution. Despite these challenges, the Afghan government, within a very insecure context which worked against donors’ free mobility in the community, had managed to increase on-budget support and disburse more aid to its priorities in its final years. This did not mean the Afghan government had the power to allocate aid wherever it deemed necessary. German aid officials, and to some extent Afghan officials, concurred that the needs of the Afghan government were not always what the community wanted. Despite friendly relations, perhaps expectedly, donor officials questioned both the capacity of the government and its motives in sectoral aid allocation. In response, the Afghans pointed to donors’ economic and political motives in diverting aid away from the Afghan government, and often its people. This conundrum severely impacted the outcome of negotiations over sectoral aid allocation within Afghanistan.

The case of German aid in Afghanistan highlights deep challenges in the securitization of aid within fragile states. Whilst varying by context, the case of German aid in Afghanistan shows the dilemma of balancing between security and development for the donor. It also indicates how the over-emphasis on security objectives overwhelmingly affected the allocation and the disbursement of development aid in Afghanistan. Moreover, the case of Germany, and perhaps to some degree like most major donors, attests that when security objectives were unclear, the development aid was also at risk of being forgotten. Evident in 2021, when major donors intended to fully withdraw their forces, the Afghan government, its states and institutions began to collapse at an unprecedented pace. This chain of events clearly highlights that

donors will continue to struggle in fragile states, particularly if their developmental objectives are tied to and highly influenced by their security objectives.

NOTES

1. This chapter is in part based on key informant interviews. The informants were selected purposively and were interviewed during the period 2018 to 2020 as part of a broader study of development aid to Afghanistan in a Doctoral Thesis by the second author. Informants are cited throughout the chapter, with each informant being allocated a number. Further details of the informants and their selection are available from the authors of this chapter.
2. Deutsche Investitions und Entwicklungsgesellschaft is a Development Finance Institution and a subsidiary of the Germany Development Bank (KfW).

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21. Exiting the fragility trap: evidence from Bangladesh

David Carment and Emilia Vydelingum¹

INTRODUCTION

This chapter examines how diasporas can shape exits from state fragility. Potential linkages where effective policy reform might take place, include, but are not limited to, trade, direct investment and property rights. Our chapter builds on our prior research that examines six different linkages between diaspora and fragile states (Carment and Calleja, 2018). Our focus is on host–homeland relations with a specific emphasis on the Canada–Bangladesh relationship.

The chapter unfolds in four sections. First, we compare and synthesize existing knowledge on understanding diaspora strategies in host states using ideas and concepts on positionality and alignment. Second, we consider the conditions under which diasporas are likely to influence home state policy reform (Debass and Ardovino, 2009). Third, to illustrate and demonstrate the utility of this comparative framework we evaluate the impact that Canada–Bangladesh diaspora relations have on Bangladesh’s exit from fragility. In the fourth section, we conclude by focusing on implications for further research and policy. Methodologically, this chapter’s data collection focuses on structural components of diasporic influence and components of fragility defined as authority, legitimacy, and capacity (ALC) drawn from the fragile states framework that we detail in subsequent sections. There are some advantages in concentrating on a single diaspora group such as the Bangladesh diaspora. First, the Bangladeshi diaspora is a well-recognized transnational actor that has a long, well documented record of maintaining ties to its homeland. Evidence gathering is conducted through an evaluation of readily available data and a wide range of prior research (Faist, 2008; Carment and Calleja, 2018). Second, a single case study focused on the bilateral relationship gives us greater control over isolating and comparing specific features of diaspora behavior while observing changes in Bangladesh’s fragility performance over time. The advantage in doing so is the creation of a longitudinal study focused on only a few explanatory variables drawn from an empirically valid theory of fragile state transitions (Carment and Samy, 2019). Future studies that compare Bangladeshi diaspora against those diaspora whose countries remain “stuck” in fragility will generate even further insights on policy and theory.

Understanding and explaining state-to-state diaspora linkages are also important because much of the literature focuses on the value and impact of diaspora transnational linkages (as opposed to state linkages) as key inputs to reform and development (Carment and Calleja, 2018). This emphasis on transnational behavior is driven, in part, by a heavy emphasis on remittances within the literature. But as we argue, diaspora groups are drivers of development in their homelands, not only through remittances, but also through bilateral linkages, such as the transfer of human and social capital, and direct support for democratic processes and peacebuilding in fragile states (Carment et al., 2021; Nikolko et al., 2021).

In addition to providing financial resources, diasporas who have been exposed to government effectiveness in a host state also have a potentially important and crucial role as an intellectual and operational bridge to sound policy in the home state (Carment and Landry, 2017). In this context, diasporas contribute to the economic development of a fragile state as “agents of change” (Carment and Calleja, 2018).

In this regard, we have chosen Bangladesh as our case study because, despite regional conflict, civil war and entrenched poverty, the country has moved to middle-income status and can be considered to have exited from fragility (Carment and Samy, 2019). This transition out of fragility is interesting because it compels us to ask to what extent and how the home and host diaspora relationship contributed to this positive transformation.

In general terms, social and economic integration, identity, and well-being of those who migrate out of conflict and fragility carry significant weight in explaining positive fragile state transitions. For example, studies on the settlement and integration of migrants and refugees indicate that informal social networks that connect to the homeland are a well-used source of information when it comes to newcomer settlement (Shuva, 2021; Litchfield et al., 2015; Martin et al., 2019). A related study conducted by Morad and Della Puppa (2019), in two cities in Northern Italy, found that its Bangladeshi diaspora used migrant organizations to form a community and to retain cultural roots that contributed to their sense of belonging to the homeland (Morad and Della Puppa, 2019).

Similar studies show that diaspora integration, including economic integration in host states, contributes to the development of home states more directly (Hansen, 2008; Bodomo, 2013). For example, a study by Leblang (2017) found that some countries, including Bangladesh, are able to harness the diaspora using dual citizenship as a method to increase remittances given their likelihood to return to the homeland. Under the right conditions, host state integrative mechanisms can enhance capital access, business creation and increase economic openness (Vaaler, 2011; Ketkar and Ratha, 2009). To be sure, remittances provide only part of the answer in explaining exits from fragility. For example, diaspora groups’ transnational and informal knowledge and financial networks play a significant role in influencing charity, development and governance policy (Brinkerhoff, 2019). There are also findings indicating that with sufficient host-state government support, diasporas can be mobilized to help fragile states transition away from dependence on foreign aid towards formalized bilateral trading relationships (Singh, 2012; Carment and Sadjed, 2017).

For our purposes, a country that has exited fragility is one that has moved out of the top 40 list of fragile states and has stayed there for at least a decade (Carment and Samy, 2019). According to the CIFP project (www.carleton.ca/cifp) Bangladesh qualifies because from 1980 to 2019, it gradually improved its fragility ranking, in particular its capacity or economic development ranking. Indeed, Bangladesh succeeded in exiting severe fragility, having left the ranks of the 40 most fragile states in 1991, with the era of military rule finally coming to an end and parliamentary democracy restored. Bangladesh is also a fairly young nation having achieved statehood in the early 1970s. Bangladesh’s relative success motivates our desire to understand how diaspora can prevent reversals and contribute to economic and political development, as well as stability over time for countries emerging from civil war and economic collapse.

POSITIONALITY AND ALIGNMENT

In examining the home–host state relationship, it is important to understand that the mere presence of a sizable diaspora group in the host state does not directly translate to positive changes in the home state (Brinkerhoff, 2012; Newland and Plaza, 2013). Our proposition, similar to Koinova (2012) and Carment et al. (2006), is that diaspora positionality and alignment are important. Positionality is conditioned by institutions and structures within the host state such as political representational structures, associations, and multicultural policies. Positionality measures the degree to which the diaspora not only associates itself with host-state policy but also has the capacity to influence it. For example, in cases of mobilization to counter state fragility in the homeland, well-established diasporas with higher positionality in higher-income democratic countries tend to promote stability. Building on notions of network theory, the concept of positionality offers insights into applied cases of mobilizing migrants and diaspora.

In order to determine the influence of positionality on diaspora behavior, Carment and Calleja (2018) develop a categorization in which six case studies of diaspora influence are studied using the ALC framework alongside indicators of state fragility. In this context, the positionality lens is particularly important in framing the argument as to why some host states have a higher capacity to mobilize resources in favor of home states. In this study, we operationalize and measure positionality through an evaluation of capability, organizational capacity, and leadership within the diaspora as examined in detail further on.

However, contrasting and varying levels of knowledge and interests that a diaspora has about a home-state situation raises the likelihood that the diaspora has a potentially greater advantage than positionality alone would suggest. That is why, in addition to positionality, it is also important to understand the concept of alignment. Alignment is the degree to which diaspora interests and host-state interests converge. There is evidence to show that if host states' foreign policy posture vis-à-vis the host state differs from that of the diaspora, then the diaspora will resort to engagement mechanisms and strategies independent of the host state, thus characterizing low alignment (Koinova, 2014; Carment et al., 2006). Under conditions of low alignment, informal and transnational diaspora strategies will dominate, in which the diaspora is organized at the global level through transnational networks, where the host state has less influence and reach (Adamson, 2005).

As Carment et al. (2021) show in a study of Canada's Ukraine diaspora, high positionality and alignment are not a guarantee for successful policy reform or even exits from fragility. This is because ineffectiveness can occur when host states emphasize one diaspora linkage at the expense of others (Carment and Calleja, 2018). For example, privileging remittance flows while neglecting sustainable development policies that focus on long-term human, social and physical capital development can prove counterproductive (Bermeo and Leblang, 2009; Berthélemy et al., 2009; Carment et al., 2021).

As Nikolko (2017) and Carment et al. (2021) demonstrate, both positionality and alignment evolve over time. Additionally, diaspora exhibiting a strong and distinctive identity that differentiates itself from others may facilitate unity of identity and action. Our goal is to specify those linkages which are most likely to generate positive home-state reform while taking into account the range of effects that diaspora has on host-state policy. From a policy perspective, a better understanding of diaspora–state relationships allows policymakers to prevent misalignment of incentives or, at the very least, identify mitigation methods that incorporate social

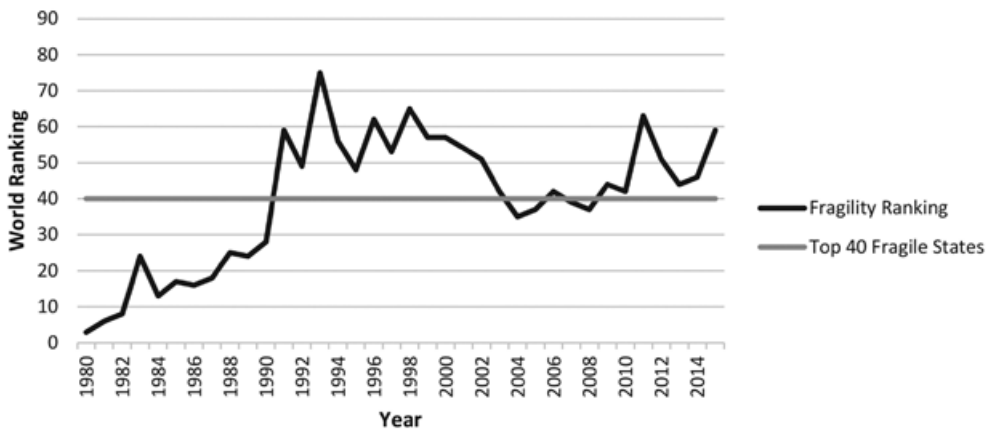
and human capital development (Martin, 2019). To illustrate these causal linkages and explain how they impact exits from fragility we turn now to our analytical framework and case study.

BANGLADESH’S EXIT FROM FRAGILITY

Despite its middle-income status, Bangladesh has been beset by assassinations, mass killings, internecine political infighting and deep corruption (Carment and Samy, 2019). Yet its economic circumstances have improved significantly, despite an enduring dependence on foreign aid (Carment and Samy, 2019).

When Bangladesh gained independence from Pakistan in 1971, its future appeared grim. The post-independence government led by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman soon sank into authoritarianism and military rule (Zaman, 2012). Within a few decades, Bangladesh’s political and economic development improved as repressive military rule was supplanted by a favorable but dysfunctional multiparty system in 1991. Over the next two decades Bangladesh moved from a low-income country to a low-middle-income country in 2016 (World Bank, 2016). In 2017, its GDP per capita exceeded that of Pakistan (WDI, 2017; Carment and Samy, 2019).

Economically, Bangladesh has progressed more than most other countries of similar economic status (Asadullah et al., 2014). Manufacturing, especially in the garment and textile industries, has been the engine for the country’s growing economy. At the same time, a severe environment with a high predilection for flooding and other natural disasters has made the country susceptible to exogenous shocks (Carment and Samy, 2019).

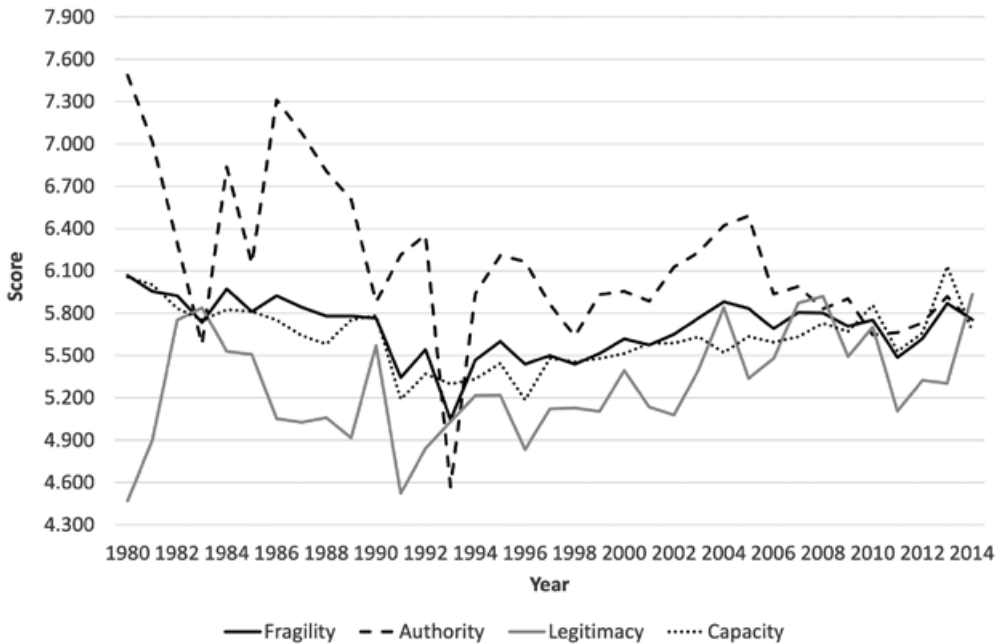


Source: Carment and Samy (2019).

Figure 21.1 Bangladesh’s fragility ranking

Bangladesh’s transition is reflected in the country’s ranking in Figure 21.1 (Carment and Samy, 2019). Bangladesh has gradually improved its fragility scores over the past three decades. It has qualified as fragile twice since the 1990s (2004/2005 and 2007/2008).² As Figure 21.2 shows, Bangladesh’s structural transformation is the result of an overall improvement in Bangladesh’s ALC rankings. Authority is the extent to which a state is able to enact

binding legislation, exercise coercive force over its sovereign territory, provide core public goods, and provide a stable and secure environment to its citizens. Legitimacy is the extent to which a government commands public loyalty and generates domestic support for legislation and policy. Capacity is the ability of a state to mobilize and employ resources towards productive ends (Carment and Samy, 2019). However, while in relative terms ALC rankings remain high, Bangladesh remains potentially vulnerable to a return to fragility if adverse conditions were to emerge.



Source: Carment and Samy (2019).

Figure 21.2 *Bangladesh ALC trends*

For the first two decades of independence, authority scores fluctuated dramatically. Higher scores are associated with worsening performance; legitimacy scores worsened and then stabilized (Carment and Samy, 2019). Capacity fluctuates less from about 1991 onward. In essence, capacity has had an important role in guiding Bangladeshi's transition out of fragility. As the economy improves, that underpins the legitimacy of government actions. When the economy deteriorates, legitimacy is weakened as well (Carment and Samy, 2019).

According to Carment and Samy (2019), Bangladesh's exit from fragility followed a two-stage path. The first phase consisted of military rule followed by a "civilianization process." The second phase saw the rise of the representative government – first with the emergence of coalition parties and then with the rise of personalized, combative and dynastic two-party political rivalry (Islam, 2013). Each stage in this transformation reflected about a six- to seven-year period with rapid fluctuations of ALC rankings in the first 15 years diminishing over time.

Over the last 15 years, Bangladesh has transitioned to a manufacturing economy, maintaining an average growth rate of 6 percent per year, for the past decade (Rana and Wahid, 2017; World Bank, 2016). At the same time, poverty has been substantially reduced, going from 70 percent in the 1970s to 32 percent in 2010 (Khandker et al., 2016; Rana and Wahid, 2017). In examining the potential drivers that account for Bangladesh's exit from fragility, certainly manufacturing would be paramount, as would international and domestic development initiatives. In particular, the widespread use of microfinance institutions to fund small household enterprises has helped the country overcome some of its structural weaknesses. Microfinance has helped strengthen the social contract by giving voice to some of Bangladesh's rural poor. While not fundamental to Bangladesh's economic development, its compensatory effects are instructive for a fragile state with poor output legitimacy and a disengaged and partly disenfranchised rural population (Carment and Samy, 2019; Khandker et al., 2016).

Civil society, particularly non-governmental organizations (NGOs), are often praised for playing a significant role in Bangladesh's development.³ They, too, compensate somewhat for Bangladesh's poor governance especially at the local level (Smillie and Hailey, 2001). More diffuse and unfocused than the small credit scheme, NGOs have nevertheless been instrumental in a variety of ways, ranging from combating poverty in rural areas, to advocating for governance reforms in rural areas (Parnini, 2006).⁴

WHAT ROLE DOES CANADA'S DIASPORA PLAY IN SUPPORTING BANGLADESH'S EXIT FROM FRAGILITY?

Canada's Bangladesh diaspora directly supports Bangladesh's exit from fragility as it contributes financially (i.e., FDI and remittances) to Bangladesh and facilitates the development and maintenance of bilateral relations between Canada and Bangladesh. Economic strength within the Canada Bangladesh diaspora has grown since 1971 with the majority of current Bangladeshi immigration to Canada falling under the economic class category. Primarily located in major cities, such as Toronto, the Bangladeshi diaspora has established itself and grown in terms of organizational capacity, size, and resources that it can access and utilize, changing the scope of its influence in the host state (Canada) and home state (Bangladesh).

The arrival of Bangladeshis in Canada, similar to other diasporas, occurred in immigration waves brought about by cataclysmic trauma and upheaval. At the outbreak of the Bangladeshi Liberation War in 1971, many arrived as refugees with thousands of Bengali Muslims settling in Canada (Ghosh, 2007; Keung, 2008; Government of Canada, 2021a). Since then, skilled immigrants have settled in Canada throughout the 1990s and continue to immigrate largely under economic admission categories, as well as family sponsorship (Keung, 2008; Statistics Canada, 2019a).

The Canadian census provides some quantitative data for diasporic populations within the country, including information regarding the size, growth, and integration (economic and acquisition of citizenship), among others, within the Canadian polity. In the 2011 Canadian Census, 34,205 individuals identified as Bangladeshi, while in the 2016 Canadian Census, there were 45,940 individuals who identified as Bangladeshi (Statistics Canada, 2019b, 2019c) (Appendix, Table 21A.1). From 2011 to 2016, there was an increase in the Bangladeshi ethnic response by approximately 11,000 people over a five-year period. From 2011 to 2016, there was an increase of approximately 14,000 individuals reportedly born in Bangladesh, residing

in Canada, identifying that Canada's position as a high-income democratic country and facilitative immigration policies maintain a strong draw for Bangladeshi immigrants (Appendix, Table 21A.2). Further, there was an increase in the number of individuals born in Bangladesh that had Canadian citizenship and held that of another country. It is reasonable to suggest that accessibility to citizenship corresponds to integration into the host state.

The size of the Bangladeshi diaspora in Canada as reported by the High Commission of Bangladesh to Canada currently sits at 100,000 (High Commission for Bangladesh to Canada, 2020). This immigration figure exceeds the Census number by a slight margin. This discrepancy suggests that there is, as noted above, historical under-reporting within the diaspora community in Canada.

More importantly, immigration applications have changed from a majority of refugee claimants around 1971 to economic migrants in subsequent immigration waves. Since 1980 and in terms of Canadian immigration admission categories, those born in Bangladesh now immigrate to Canada as economic migrants (both principal and secondary applicants), with the next largest migration admission category being immigrants sponsored by family (Statistics Canada, 2019e) (Appendix, Table 21A.3).

This change in the immigration class of migrants also affects the resources available to those immigrating. Under the Canadian immigration system, economic migrants are selected based on the strength of their human capital (e.g., language, work experience, formal education) that will contribute to the Canadian economy. Those sponsored by family members may have opportunities to live with that family, thus cutting the cost of living and potentially gaining employment prior to moving out, if they so choose (Tani, 2014). Thus, economic integration in the host country (Canada) can result in increased remittance flows, higher levels of FDI, and a strengthened bilateral relationship, each of which are essential factors in understanding Bangladesh's exit from fragility.

Location of the Bangladesh Diaspora in Canada

More specifically, the settlement and integration of the Bangladesh diaspora within Canada allow for growth in an individual's capabilities (skills, education level), capacity (civic and community organizations), and economic abilities (labor force participation) (Murphy, 2010). For example, settlement and integration (social and economic) allow for easier access to and the generation of resources, as well as funds that can be used to support Bangladesh through, for example, remittances. The location of a diaspora is relevant as diasporic resources build organizational capacity, and can create social networks that can facilitate knowledge transfer within the community (Murphy, 2010; Bitran and Tan, 2013). Damm (2009) shows that residence in an ethnic enclave can influence the economic success of immigrants (both positively and negatively). Settlement location can also play a part when government and charitable organizations tailor available resources, such as settlement support, to the needs of specific communities (Murphy, 2010). Social networks within such enclaves can also be leveraged for social capital, drawing on knowledge and expertise within the community to increase their economic participation (Bitran and Tan, 2013).

The largest enclave in Canada is located in Ontario, mostly within Toronto. The remainder of the diaspora is split between Quebec (Montreal) and Alberta (Calgary). In Toronto, Bangladeshi immigrants are mostly economic immigrants, such as skilled workers and business investors (Akbar and Preston, 2020). For newly arrived immigrants, ethnic clustering

– the settlement within specific areas – allows for “financial and personal support, information and guidance, and social mores” (McDonald, 2004, p. 85). Further, Bangladeshi community support and family reunification also play a role in settlement location. Bangladeshi immigrants in Toronto are primarily economic immigrants which may lead to a preference to settle in city centers, such as Toronto, where the Bangladeshi diaspora is located and where the same language, culture, and ethnic background play a role in creating an initial customer base (Akbar and Preston, 2020).

Diaspora Capability

Capability is defined as the scope and depth of resources at the diaspora’s disposal which in turn impacts a diaspora’s positionality within a host state. The Bangladesh diaspora’s capability has improved over time in Canada. For example, in 2017, Statistics Canada estimated that approximately 38 percent of the Bangladeshi diaspora in Canada sent money back to their home country for a total of \$58 million a year (range estimate of 30–86 million) (Dimbuene and Turcotte, 2019). These findings support our prior claim that the Bangladeshi diaspora is larger than recorded and that remittance flows are highly active.

Over time, diaspora human capital has also improved. Several waves of Bangladeshi migrants have become active participants in the labor force. Further, of those in Canada and born in Bangladesh, 43,680 were reported to hold Canadian citizenship in 2016 (Appendix, Table 21A.2). In addition, they became property owners in Canada, established successful businesses and Bangladeshi organizations, as well as integrated their children in Canada; all factors that enrich the human capital of the Bangladesh diaspora within Canada. The generational impact refers to the relationship that non-immigrants – namely subsequent generations – have with Bangladesh, wherein there are fewer direct connections (MEW and IMO, 2004). The generational effect also determines the integration of the diaspora within the host country, and is central to understanding changing income and educational levels over time. The growth within the Bangladeshi diaspora in Canada creates a generational effect, as identified by Carment et al. (2021) wherein “more established generations of the diaspora are attentive to the country’s longer-term structural and macro problems,” which also develops the diaspora’s resources and can influence governance and institutional policies in both the home and host states, over time.

The Bangladeshi diaspora in Canada is also known for small and medium businesses, including restaurants, groceries, and boutiques (High Commission for Bangladesh to Canada, 2020; Rahman, 2018). Rahman (2018) found that Bangladeshi immigrants open micro-enterprises to serve co-national, South Asian and mainstream markets and their entrepreneurship has seen their business steadily grow. In his study, 35 respondents were interviewed all having opened businesses in Canada and arrived under non-business immigration categories. Rahman (2018) found that only 10 of the 35 had business experience prior to migrating, indicating that their motivation for migration was not tied to business engagement in Canada, but that small and medium businesses proved to be an occupational choice amongst the Bangladeshi interviewed. Further, in 2019, the Bangladesh-Canada Business Forum created an avenue for Bangladeshi businesses to develop trade opportunities within Canada (Ontario Chamber of Commerce, 2019). While the Covid-19 pandemic has acted as a potential mitigator of business development, the Forum found that business relations continue to be built between Canada and Bangladesh, spurred on, in part, by the Bangladeshi diaspora in Canada. Overall, as the

Bangladeshi diaspora have settled in Canada, small and medium businesses, human capital, and the generational effect have contributed to the growth of the diaspora's capability in Canada.

Organizational Capacity

The organizational capacity within the Bangladesh diaspora in Canada has grown over time, and includes resources to newly arrived Bangladeshi to Canada, supports for business growth and offers settlement services. There are several Bangladeshi organizations that support immigrants within Canada, for example, the Bangladeshi Canadian Community Services located in Toronto serves as a social integration organization. There are also Bangladeshi business organizations across Canada, such as the Canada-Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce, which aims to grow businesses in Canada and improve community economic welfare (Canada-Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce, 2021).

The organizational capacity within the Bangladeshi diaspora is focused primarily on Toronto and Montreal, their major settlement locations in Canada. One such organization is the National Bangladeshi-Canadian Council, an active community organization in Montreal. This organization has links to other Bangladeshi organizations, including the Federation of Bangladesh Association in Canada, and has met with Canadian government officials, including Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, through events that they have hosted (National Bangladeshi-Canadian Council, 2020). In addition, there are several Bangladeshi ethnic newspapers, such as the *Bengali Times*, and *Weekly Ajkal*, available in Toronto (Rahman, 2018). These organizations and ethnic newspapers are key indicators of the organizational capacity growth of the diaspora and its overall influence, as well as its integration (economic and social) into Canada. The expansion of its organizational capacity also provides a stabilizing effect within the diaspora, as more resources become available and easily accessible within the community.

The Government of Bangladesh recognizes the capacity of the diaspora abroad, suggesting that the diaspora can be used to maintain Bangladesh's transition out of fragility and prevents any reversal as it recognizes the growth in social capital, knowledge, and economic power (i.e., FDI) that the diaspora can provide to Bangladesh.

Leadership

There does not appear to be any decisive political leader within the Bangladeshi diaspora in Canada, although, in June 2018, Doly Begum was elected MPP in Scarborough Southwest and became "the first Canadian of Bangladeshi origin to hold elective office at any level in Canada" (Begum, n.d.). In the case of the Canada-Bangladesh diaspora, it becomes evident that a diaspora does not require political leadership for representation or influence, nor does the diaspora need to hold office to wield influence. For example, in 2016, Bill 44, the Bangladeshi Heritage Month Act proclaimed the month of March as Bangladeshi Heritage Month and was brought forward by Mr. Berardinetti, the Scarborough Southwest riding representative in Ontario from 2003 to 2018 (Berardinetti, 2016).

Other forms of leadership can be identified in the private sector, and in community services. While there is no indication of political motivations in regards to foreign policy, nor are there indications that these organizations are maneuvering beyond their focus on immigrants and

cultural/social services, the diasporic influence becomes apparent as the Prime Minister of Canada met with the President of the National Bangladeshi-Canadian Council, one of the community leaders. There do not appear to be high profile Government of Canada officials with any personal Bangladeshi diasporic ties.

The election of Doly Begum, a Canadian of Bangladeshi origin, indicates the diaspora has the potential to grow its organizational capacity. The impact of the diaspora within Ontario has already been recognized in Canada, and by extending into the political sphere, this progression further stabilizes the diaspora in Canada.

Drawing on the minimal number of political positions held by the Canada-Bangladesh diaspora, it appears that the bulk of the diasporic activity is either personal or financial. While this further extends to minimal lobbying of political agencies, Canada does provide financial assistance to Bangladesh. In 2019, Canada provided 81.6 million USD to Bangladesh as per Official Development Assistance (ODA) (OECD, 2021). The assistance was provided as Canada is promoting gender equality and is focused on eradicating poverty, as well as building a peaceful and prosperous world (OECD, 2021). Further, in 2017–2018, Canada continued with a \$19.5 million (CAD) project in partnership with the Government of Bangladesh and the International Labour Organization. This project focused on development of skills and trainings to disadvantaged group, especially women. Therefore, while the Canada-Bangladesh diasporic influence appears to be more personal in nature, the Government of Canada and Government of Bangladesh continue to nurture relations, and the Government of Canada's leadership has identified Bangladesh as a location to send development aid (Global Affairs Canada, 2019).

MAPPING CANADA'S DIASPORA ON TO FRAGILITY

The Canada-Bangladesh diaspora is smaller in size and influence in comparison to other high-income democratic countries, such as the United States and the United Kingdom (MEW and IMO, 2004). While Canada's diaspora role may be relatively more modest, our findings show they promote investment, political development and trade opportunities through established networks. Further, developing and maintaining bilateral trade relationships, as per the manufacturing relationships that Canadian companies have in Bangladesh, support and maintain a sustained exit from fragility. In this section we consider proxy linkages for the ALC components. There are two proxy measures for each. The rationale and theory underlying these linkages are explained in Carment and Calleja (2018).

Authority

The relationship between the Canada-Bangladesh diaspora, the Government of Canada, and the Government of Bangladesh is complex, and has a multi-generational impact. The diasporic authority in Canada and Bangladesh is a multi-directional complex relationship with the appearance that the Canada-Bangladesh diaspora has provided some stability to Bangladesh based on remittances, which further assisted in Bangladesh's exit from fragility.

Government regulations

At independence in 1971, Bangladesh's government and regulatory frameworks were not established but have since grown, and the Bangladeshi Government now has a Ministry

of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment that manages "migration and ensur[es] welfare of expatriate communities abroad" as well as "initiating their participation in development activities in Bangladesh" (MEW and IMO, 2004). This diaspora institution – defined as "formal offices of state dedicated to emigrants and their descendants" – underlines that Bangladesh has recognized and attempts to capitalize on the expatriate Bangladeshis as development, trade, and business networks can all benefit from their expertise, skills, and capital (Gamlen, 2014).

The International Development Group reported that the US Bangladeshi diaspora identified "that a barrier to Bangladeshi development is government corruption, safety/security, red tape, high taxation levels, policy unpredictability and uncertainty" (International Development Group, 2020). Further, concerns surrounding property right protection also present a barrier for diasporic investment. While these findings were based on the US diaspora, it is reasonable to consider that the same barriers would be identified by the Canadian-Bangladeshi diaspora as acting as a limiting factor for diasporic involvement (International Development Group, 2020).

Dual nationality can influence the sense of belonging the diaspora has towards Bangladesh. Since 1978, those born in Bangladesh and their children can obtain a Dual Nationality certificate. These certificates, while arduous to obtain, allow individuals to live, work or run a business in Bangladesh, but restrict election contestations (International Labour Organization, 2014). Unfortunately, some members of the diaspora have identified difficulties with the process, detailing that there is corruption within the process, and that certain countries are not covered by the provisions (International Labour Organization, 2014).

There is a generational impact within the Bangladeshi diaspora in Canada where the first generation have links to Bangladesh, while the second and subsequent generations have fewer connections to Bangladesh (MEW and IMO, 2004). Zeitlyn (2012) explored the second generation Bangladeshi in Britain and found that visits to Bangladesh strengthened relations but experiences differed within the diaspora. Further, there has been limited influence of the Bangladeshi diaspora identified in Canadian governance regulations, leadership representation, and within the policy process. The organizational capacity of the Bangladeshi diaspora in Canada is partly focused on immigration and settlement, as well as promoting culture and language, as evidenced by the Bangladeshi-Canadian Community Services and the National Bangladeshi-Canadian Council. Other diasporic organizational capacity focuses on business development and entrepreneurship. While there are those in the diasporic community who are active entrepreneurially and in business circles, their impact on government regulations remains minimal.

Remittances

Remittances and development activities of expatriated Bangladeshis can be linked to a generational impact, wherein "deep emotional attachment of the first generation [...] expatriated Bangladeshis with Bangladesh will not automatically be passed on to the second generation" (MEW and IMO, 2004).

Bangladesh receives a large portion of remittances from diasporic communities internationally. However, a majority of the remittances are used for consumption, rather than investment or development (International Labour Organization, 2014). In a study by Barai (2012), the international Bangladeshi diaspora remittances were calculated and "66 percent of remittances received are used for consumption and the remaining 34 percent are invested". In Canada,

38 percent of the Bangladeshi diaspora remits to Bangladesh, sending a total of \$58 million in 2017 (Dimbuene and Turcotte, 2019). Bangladeshi diasporas in other countries, such as the UK and the US, are larger remitters as a total of money received by Bangladesh, as their diasporas are larger (Barai, 2012; International Labour Organization, 2014). The Government of Bangladesh has created mechanisms to entice the Bangladeshi diaspora to remit or invest in Bangladesh, such as the Wage Earners' Development Bond (1981), although in 2013, there was a reported "loss in momentum of sales" as there were unfavorable conditions, including "depreciation of the Bangladeshi taka," "scams within the Bangladesh bourses," and "lack of confidence brought on by interest rate fluctuations," among others (International Labour Organization, 2014). There was also the creation of a bank for non-resident Bangladeshis (NRB Commercial Bank Ltd), which provided some advantages to investors; however, a chairperson of the bank disclosed that "the process of running a business venture in Bangladesh is marred by bureaucratic control and rigidity" and "the collection of capital was difficult, largely because of the politically unstable situation and lack of good governance in Bangladesh" (International Labour Organization, 2014).

For Bangladesh, remittances "translate into meaningful cross-border connections and significant capital transfers" and are made by those "who maintain ties to their country of origin" (Bitran and Tan, 2013). This significant capital transfer offers financial stability to the receiving parties of the remittances, offering better economic conditions to these individuals and families, and a method to improve impoverished positions. By improving economic conditions and with the maintenance of these flows or the improved social capital of these individuals (education, health, etc.), Bangladesh can be further secured in its exit from fragility. The social capital developed can also ensure that there is no reverting back into fragility for Bangladesh.

Legitimacy

Legitimacy is evaluated through two distinct proxy measures: foreign direct investment (FDI) and property rights.

Foreign direct investment⁵

Current literature identifies that FDI plays an essential role in economic growth and development; however, fragile states tend to have difficulty attracting FDI (Rodriguez-Montemayor, 2012; Carment and Calleja, 2018). Tabassum and Ahmed (2014, p. 117) identify that Bangladesh, after fulfilling its basic needs, "is unable to gather enough domestic savings to invest in lucrative projects as it is an under-developed country," and that FDI is a pathway for economic growth. The US Department of State (2017) cited that "according to the central bank of Bangladesh, the country received \$2.0 billion in foreign direct investment (FDI) FY 2015–16, up from \$1.8 billion in the previous year" (US Department of State, 2017).

The Government of Bangladesh has attempted to create opportunities for FDI in Bangladesh, leveraging the Bangladeshi diasporic communities. Although investment opportunities are present, there are challenges to productive investments, as there are risks for the investors including "lack of information on the scope for investment"; "risk in the purchase of land and construction of houses"; "political unrest and uncertainty"; "lack of infrastructure and services"; "high hidden costs in doing business"; "better investment prospects in a third country"; and "bureaucratic red tape" (International Labour Organization, 2014). However, that did not prevent some companies from investing in Bangladesh. For example, in 2015, SkyPower,

a Toronto-based solar power company, invested \$6.1 billion into the Bangladeshi power sector (Asian Pacific Foundation of Canada, 2020).

From 2003 to 2019, Canada invested \$6,741 million in Bangladesh as part of the Asian Pacific Investment Portfolio. Further, from 2003 to 2019, Canada invested over \$22.6 billion into clean technology deals within the Asia Pacific, with an invested \$6.6 billion of Canadian cleantech investment in Bangladesh (Asian Pacific Foundation of Canada, 2020). Another aspect that affects FDI is Global Affairs Canada's focus on due diligence and responsible business practices within the retail garment industry. Canada, jointly with the International Labour Organization, has provided \$8 million towards improving work conditions in garment factories. There is currently large-scale production of retail garments in Bangladesh for Canadian companies, and, as many factories have poor working conditions and low wages, some business investors may not be willing to enter into the Bangladesh textile industry, due to their irresponsible business practices (Global Affairs Canada, 2021).

Bangladesh has received FDI from developed countries, such as Canada and the US, which translates into advancements in technology, as seen in Canada's cleantech investments, and offers a pathway for economic growth. At times, business practices are addressed through FDI mechanisms, such as Canada's joint project with the International Labour Organization to improve working conditions in garment factories, that endeavor to change conditions to be increasingly attractive to further investments. Not only does this positively influence Bangladesh's position as a state that is no longer fragile, but it solidifies its position to prevent returning to its previous fragile ranking.

Property rights

Carment and Calleja (2018, p. 1274) consider that property rights "can facilitate state-society interaction by creating a network of norms that encourage trusting relationships and constructive outcomes" and the underdevelopment of property rights might result in the diaspora using fewer formal mechanisms for social contracts. In Bangladesh, property rights can be complicated due to "antiquated real property laws and poor record-keeping systems"; in addition, land registration records have been challenged by competing claims, and there have been fraudulent land sales recorded by US companies and citizens (US Department of State, 2017). Property rights are granted to citizens, but due to a weak judiciary system, there are difficulties with protections. Further, the laws in place, the Transfer of Property Act of 1882 and the Registration Act of 1908, "do not have any specific provisions covering foreign and/or non-resident investors" (US Department of State, 2017). This poses a challenge for businesses and expatriated Bangladeshi in securing or purchasing land. Further, the US Bangladeshi diaspora identified property right protection as a barrier to diasporic investment, emphasizing the lack of governance and legal security offered to the international Bangladeshi diaspora (International Development Group, 2020).

Intellectual property (IP) rights are also limited in Bangladesh, although steps have been taken to improve its legislative framework for IP protection. Readily available counterfeit goods, and pirating of business software remain a threat for foreign direct investment and businesses. In fact, "a number of US firms, including film studios, manufacturers of consumer goods, and software firms, have reported violations of their intellectual property rights" (US Department of State, 2017). While this context is in reference to US firms, it is reasonable to assume that Canadian firms will face the same conditionalities in terms of IP rights.

In Canada, Akbar (2019) found that 18.7 percent of the Bangladeshi immigrants in the Canada-Bangladesh diaspora lived in singled detached houses, 62 percent lived in apartment buildings, and 19.3 percent lived in another structural type of dwelling. Akbar (2019) also identified that 52.1 percent of Bangladeshi immigrants in Canada rented, and the other 47.9 percent of the dwellings were owned by a member of the household. Therefore, while the majority of Bangladeshi immigrants live in apartment buildings, they still have access to owning property in Canada. Access to property and owning property can stabilize the diaspora in Canada. It becomes evident that property rights, including intellectual property, build trust and confidence for investment.

Capacity

Capacity is measured by two main elements: micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and trade (Carment and Calleja, 2018).

MSMEs

Bangladeshi immigrants in Canada run small businesses across the nation and “open up micro-enterprises to serve co-national, South Asian and mainstream markets” (Rahman, 2018). Rahman (2018) establishes that their micro-enterprises have low entry barriers in Canada; however, this is often linked to high levels of competition. According to Rahman (2018), Bangladeshis’ work or employment has cultural significance as some positions hold prestige, while others are considered less so. In fact, “the cultural notion of work and education among Bangladeshi immigrants puts them in a dilemma and influences their economic life.” As Bangladeshi immigrants to Canada tend to be highly skilled and highly educated, a “status-consistent professional career” is the goal. As there are barriers to the labor market and jobs might not match their educational or financial aspirations, businesses are identified as opportunities.

Bangladeshi businesses in Canada not only serve those of Bangladeshi origin, but also cater to other clientele of South Asian origin, as well as Muslim clients, due to their restaurants offering halal options. Further, Bangladeshi businesses offer recent immigrants financial consultancy services, real-estate, and used-car services, leveraging connections (Rahman, 2018). As the Bangladeshi businesses cater to those within the diaspora, there are some ties to the country they left, as cultural goods, foods, and textiles can be sought from Bangladesh (Rahman, 2018).

While business organizations exist, they appear to support the Bangladeshi diaspora in Canada rather than creating further ties to Bangladesh. This does not mean that the Bangladeshi diaspora in Canada does not have ties to Bangladesh, but is more indicative of a community supporting further settlement in Canada, and perhaps using fewer formal mechanisms for maintaining relations to Bangladesh. There are efforts for investment in small businesses as evidenced by the Government of Bangladesh and the Government of Canada having developed more business relations over the recent years, as identified by the Bangladesh-Canada Business Forum in 2019 (Consulate General of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh, 2020).

Trade

Canadian foreign policy towards Bangladesh, since 1972, has seen the creation of a partnership between the two countries. Canada supported Bangladesh in 1972, when it became

a member of the Commonwealth; and also in 1974, when Bangladesh was admitted to the United Nations, and when Bangladesh sought membership in other international institutions. Politically, Canada secured their relationship with a visit from Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau in the 1980s, and bilateral accords between Canada and Bangladesh in the 1970s and 1980s (Haider, 2005). This has been paired with aid packages from Canada, and trade deals between Canada and Bangladesh.

The Government of Canada reports that Canada–Bangladesh relations include commercial relationships with trade at \$600.5 million in 2004 to \$2.4 billion in 2018. Of the \$651 million Canadian exports to Bangladesh, 70 percent were agriculture items, such as dried peas, lentils, chickpeas, and wheat. Canadian exports include cereals, pulses, iron and steel, fertilizer, chemicals, and aircraft related equipment and services. Canada’s imports from Bangladesh include woven and knit apparel, textiles, and headgear and footwear. Further, Canada has provided \$4 billion in international assistance to Bangladesh (Government of Canada, 2021b).

The Consulate General of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh has identified that the bilateral trade between Canada and Bangladesh was reported at 2.42 billion USD in 2019. It reports that Bangladesh is the second largest importer for Canadian agricultural products within South Asia, and further identifies potential trade areas between Canada and Bangladesh, including “pharmaceuticals, leather and leather products, software, ICT collaboration, jute and jute products, textile, handicrafts, vegetables, bicycles, high-end RMG, etc.” (Consulate General of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh, 2020). Bilateral relations can support state fragility exits and while the trade relationship between Bangladesh and Canada is not tied directly to the diaspora, these bilateral relationships further stabilize Bangladesh offering a framework to prevent reversion into fragility.

CONCLUSION

On the one hand, the Canadian-Bangladeshi diaspora does not rank high on positionality due to limited influence in Canadian policy and leadership, nor more directly on Bangladesh’s policies or governance performance. On the other hand, the diaspora appears to enjoy a reasonable degree of alignment given Canada’s formal policies on Bangladesh especially in regard to investment and trade. Both positionality and alignment are improving. For example, there are strong trade linkages between the two states, totaling \$2.4 billion CAD in 2018. This trade appears to be linked primarily to a concerted effort by Bangladeshi based businesses and government (Government of Canada, 2021b).

While the Bangladeshi diaspora in Canada does remit funds, weak governance structure and low property rights acts as a deterrent for further diasporic involvement. Further, while first generation expatriates have emotional connections to Bangladesh, this does not necessarily translate to similar commitments from the second generation, creating some barriers to the influence of the diaspora (MEW and IMO, 2004). The minimal organizational capacity, in terms of leadership and political influence in Canada, identifies that homeland interests and campaigns for these interests are slight. This weakness corresponding to less advocacy and challenges to voting by expatriated Bangladeshi also creates a misalignment between diasporic communities and Bangladesh as there are limits to the diasporic influence in both the home and host countries. There is also potential misalignment in political interests and development goals between the Bangladeshi diaspora and Bangladesh as Bangladeshi immigrants have

mainly arrived as economic immigrants, meaning that Canada presents better opportunities for some. The Government of Bangladesh and the Government of Canada have some alignment in trade relations and business ties, although there appears to be limited involvement with the Bangladeshi-Canadian diaspora. All the aforementioned factors point to a weak Canada–diaspora positionality within the Bangladeshi diaspora in Canada.

While the Canada–Bangladesh diaspora plays a small but effective role in comparison to some of the other Bangladesh diasporas globally, the Canada–Bangladesh diaspora has social capital (knowledge and gender equality) and maintains strong MSMEs in Canada, aspects that can offer stability to Bangladesh if additional relationships are built and maintained. Canada, as a host state, has multicultural policies, and several diasporas have political influence within Canadian institutions and structures. However, the Bangladesh diaspora does not have strong positionality, and thus is not highly influential in these host-country structures presently. In addition, while the Canada–Bangladesh diaspora contributes to Bangladesh’s development, it is not the most favorable environment for mobilization of migrants and diaspora for homeland development as there is misalignment between the Bangladesh diaspora and the Government of Bangladesh, as well as barriers to diaspora involvement in Bangladesh (Brinkerhoff, 2012; Newland and Plaza, 2013).

While the international Bangladeshi diaspora supports Bangladesh’s exit from fragility and currently offers a method to prevent its reversal into fragility, it, by no means, is the sole factor, but is one of many contributing factors. For Bangladesh, preventing a retreat into fragility is of utmost importance for state stability and economic growth. Both informal and formal mechanisms that leverage diasporic social capital, including gender equality measures, established MSMEs, entrepreneurial engagement, knowledge transfer, and financial aspects, like FDI, can offer a substantial and diversified stabilization plan. While Bangladesh has exited fragility, the positionality and alignment of the Canada–Bangladesh diaspora can improve with proactive policy reform, and further support Bangladesh’s development.

NOTES

1. This research received funding from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council.
2. Figures and data drawn from Carment and Samy (2019).
3. See <http://bdnews24.com/bangladesh/2017/04/04/perception-of-ngos-role-in-development-changed-in-bangladesh-kailash-satyarthi-tells-pm-hasina>.
4. Local NGOs and international organizations such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund have also played a key role in pushing for neoliberal reforms in Bangladesh’s economy, leading to greater market liberalization that has helped fuel its economic growth (Parnini, 2006).
5. Foreign Direct Investment: “FDI occurs when an investor residing in one country holds at least 10% equity in an enterprise resident in another country. The stock of FDI is the value of the accumulated equity owned by investors abroad; the stock changes from year to year based on flows of FDI” (Parliament of Canada, 2016).

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APPENDIX A

Table 21A.1 Canada – census information

Census year	Ethnic origin	Total – single and multiple ethnic origin responses	Single ethnic origin responses	Multiple ethnic origin responses
Census – 2011 (Statistics Canada, 2019b)	Bangladeshi	34,205	28,660	5,545
Census – 2016 (Statistics Canada, 2019c)	Bangladeshi	45,940	39,255	6,685

Table 21A.2 Canada – census information

Census year	Place of birth	Total – citizenship	Canadian citizens	Canadian citizens only	Citizens of Canada and at least one other country	Not Canadian citizens
Census 2011 (Statistics Canada, 2019d)	Bangladesh	47,180	31,680	24,765	6,920	15,495
Census 2016 (Statistics Canada, 2019a)	Bangladesh	61,675	43,680	29,960	13,720	17,995

Table 21A.3 Canada – census 2016 – place of birth: Bangladesh (Statistics Canada, 2019e)

Admission category and applicant type	Period of immigration					
	Total – period of immigration	1980 to 1990	1991 to 2000	2001 to 2010	2001 to 2005	
Total – admission category and applicant type	57,805	3,375	15,445	26,085	12,630	
Economic immigrants	34,945	1,640	6,160	17,585	8,080	
Principal applicants	13,565	965	2,460	6,425	2,920	
Secondary applicants	21,380	675	3,700	11,160	5,160	
Immigrants sponsored by family	15,045	1,095	4,985	5,955	2,985	
Refugees	7,150	635	4,020	2,215	1,440	
Other immigrants	665	0	275	320	125	

Note: “Other immigrants” includes immigrants who were granted permanent resident status under a program that does not fall under the economic immigrants, the immigrants sponsored by family or the refugee categories (Statistics Canada, 2017).

22. “Nothing about us without us”: the g7+ and the New Deal

Habib ur Rehman Mayar, Helder da Costa and Felix Piedade

INTRODUCTION

Using the OECD’s classification of fragile countries, 23 percent of the world’s population live in fragile and conflict-affected countries/contexts that are also home to 76.5 percent of the world’s poorest people (OECD, 2020). These countries have been the focus of peacekeeping, humanitarian and development actors for decades even though the attention of the international community in its various interventions is also guided by vested interests or geopolitical consideration. Some if not most of these fragile countries have experienced repeated cycles of conflicts. For example, 57 percent of the countries that experienced civil war after 2009 had previously experienced wars during the period 1945–2009 (World Bank, 2011). Characterized by extreme poverty, weak state institutions and societal and political fragmentations, most of these countries are labeled as “fragile,” “failing” and “failed” states by the international community, and are classified as such by organizations such as the Fund for Peace (using its Fragile States Index) and the State Failure Taskforce (using its State Fragility Index). In trying to measure the wicked problem of state fragility, these classifications and indices often reflect, arguably, more of the consequences rather than the root causes that can be helpful for the development, humanitarian and peacekeeping community in their engagement in these countries to assist in achieving lasting peace and stability.

Although each fragile country has a unique context, there are some common trends that g7+ and other conflict-affected countries share. These include but are not limited to the following.

First, almost all the countries considered as fragile by the OECD have inherited the legacy of colonialism. Their colonial past has affected the evolution of state institutions, their economies, and politics. Most of these countries are located in areas that have had geostrategic importance for the regional and global hegemonic powers. Having inherited weak and fragmented political, institutional and economic foundations, they were prone to aggression, civil war and extreme poverty. Many were caught up in the Cold War, which directly or indirectly affected their trajectory. The impact of the Cold War lasted for decades and further affected the development of institutions, social cohesion and their economic foundations. Social disintegration and political fragmentation are the usual legacies that wars leave behind. If not healed, these wounds breed more conflicts in the future. While many of the fragile countries have remained fragile over long periods of time, a few have succeeded in achieving peace and (lasting) stability, and have avoided a relapse into protracted conflict. For example, countries such as Timor-Leste and Rwanda have benefited from visionary leadership that gave a new direction to peace and prosperity. In addition, countries like Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Liberia and Timor-Leste have also benefited from, and taken advantage of, greater and coordinated

support from the international community that has enabled them to pursue stability (Marc and Jones, 2021).

Second, conflict-affected countries and contexts have depended on foreign aid and hence have often been passive in pursuit of their pathways. However indispensable and well-intended it might be, foreign assistance delivery has often aimed at quick fixes and short-term outcomes and has been effective in achieving them. While foreign aid has been the major source of service delivery and has constituted the major portion of these countries' national incomes, it has often prolonged dependency (Kabonga, 2017). Empirical evidence in the form of monitoring and evaluation of aid shows that aid has been less effective in addressing the root causes of fragility in these countries. Foreign assistance has often focused on consequences or has been reactive in nature and hence has had mixed impact on lasting peace and stability. For instance, Chandy et al. (2016) examine aid effectiveness in fragile states and find that while donor performance is lower in fragile states, there is also variation between donors. They propose the adoption of a minimum standard for donor practices and a stronger division of labor among donors to improve the effectiveness of aid interventions. More recently, Mross et al. (2022) found that most peaceful cases can be explained by support for politics and governance. The authors argue that a combination of all types of support – peacekeeping, nonmilitary security, politics and governance, for socioeconomic development and societal conflict transformation – is needed to address difficult contexts and that peacekeeping is just one important component. Furthermore, when countries are neglected by the international community, they tend to re-experience conflict.

Third, most of the fragile countries (at least most of those in the *g7+*) are rich in natural resources such as minerals, oil, gas, and arable land and have climates that are conducive for agriculture and hence large food production. In theory, the existing resources can pave the way to their stability if they are exploited with a vision to bring prosperity. Those countries that have been able to manage natural resources effectively and avoid the resource curse have been able to break the cycle of aid dependency and achieve self-reliance. Timor-Leste is an example where the management of oil revenue through a sovereign wealth fund is considered as the strongest factor for self-reliance. More than 90 percent of its national budget is funded by domestic revenue (Ministry of Finance of Timor-Leste, 2022), a situation that was made possible as a result of peace and political stability.

Finally, fragile countries occupy the bottom place on socioeconomic indicators as captured by the UNDP's Human Development Index IEP's (Institute for Economics & Peace) Global Peace Index. Most of them have failed to achieve the benchmarks set in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which were replaced by the more ambitious Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015. As of now, everything seems to indicate that many fragile states will again be left behind by the SDGs, continuing an unfortunate trend that happened with the MDGs (Samman et al., 2018).

As an intergovernmental organization of 20 conflict-affected countries, the *g7+*, established in 2010, emerged as a vocal actor in the international discourse on addressing fragility. This chapter elaborates on the factors that led to the creation of the *g7+* and its collective agenda, the impact that it has had, the challenges that it has faced and the way forward. It explains the motivation behind the New Deal principles (Hearn, 2016; see also the Appendix to this chapter) and the impact they have had on the narrative and discourse on fragile states. The chapter argues that global policies intended to address fragility were established without much consultation and buy-in from countries about where they would be implemented. Peace was

considered as an outcome of development rather than a necessary condition. The g7+ has thus become an indispensable platform that provides a fragile countries' perspective on contemporary discourse on peacebuilding and statebuilding.

The remainder of this chapter is organized as follows. In the next section, we briefly discuss the origins of the g7+. We then consider the impact of the g7+, followed by an examination of the challenges that it faces. The final section of the chapter concludes with some reflections about the way forward.

ORIGINS OF THE g7+

The group of Seven Plus (g7+) is an intergovernmental organization that came into being as an antidote to the setbacks faced by fragile states and the international community's attempts to address them. Established in 2010 as an informal association of conflict-affected countries, the rationale for the g7+ is predicated on the premise that there can be no development without peace and that peace cannot be sustained without development. Article II of the g7+ Charter defines the purpose of the g7+ group which is summarized as follows: (1) Facilitate peer learning and sharing of experience among conflict-affected countries in the areas of peacebuilding, statebuilding, stability and development; (2) Advocate for effective and country-owned and country-led cooperation in areas of peace and statebuilding, humanitarian and development engagement that supports achieving resilient state institutions capable of serving the citizens; (3) Promote homegrown peace through national dialogue and reconciliation founded on the principles of country ownership.

Countries in the g7+ have hosted peacekeeping, humanitarian and development assistance missions for years and even decades. However, the governments and people of these countries have little or no say in the design of these interventions. Moreover, the assistance programs and policies have lacked the flexibility to adapt to the country's context. As a result, foreign aid missions that are externally driven have not always been effective enough to pursue stability. Among others, the g7+ was formed to empower the recipient countries to own their trajectories and hence have a voice in the design of peacekeeping, humanitarian and peacebuilding operations. Therefore, it collectively advocates that the assistance/intervention should be owned by the people and leaders of the fragile countries and should be adapted to the specific context. Conflicts, poverty and fragility in each of these countries are rooted in a unique context which is framed by complex societal and political dynamics. International actors including the so-called country experts who design aid programs and projects are incapable of fully grasping the nature of these dynamics. As a result, foreign aid has often failed to appreciate the local contexts and has led to further fragmentation. Foreign humanitarian, peacekeeping and development interventions that are not context sensitive have the potential to violate the "do-no-harm" principle of international engagement.

Unlike many other organizations, the formation of the g7+ group did not result from any exogenous global policy based on pre-set criteria such as regional and socioeconomic factors. Instead, it was the result of discourse on enhancing effectiveness of foreign interventions in fragile countries where the existing members happen to convene and share their experiences to inspire reforms in the global policies guiding peacebuilding and statebuilding. As it evolved to become a formal association of countries, the member countries engaged in peer-to-peer cooperation, which has now become one of the main pillars of the g7+ work. The cooperation

has purely been founded on solidarity for the sake of more peace and stability, which lie at the core of the group's basic principles.

The g7+ currently comprises 20 member countries namely, Afghanistan, Burundi, Central African Republic (CAR), Chad, Union of Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Haiti, Liberia, Papua New Guinea, São Tomé and Príncipe, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Sudan, Timor-Leste, Togo, and Yemen. The membership into the g7+ is voluntary and is not determined by any benchmarks used by the OECD or World Bank to assess fragility. While it is erroneously referred to as a "self-identified group of fragile countries," membership in the g7+ does not validate the benchmark of "fragility." In contrast, it provides an alternate narrative to the notion of state fragility that is common among the development and peacebuilding actors. The members join the group voluntarily with the aim of peer learning and collectively advocating for the principles of g7+. Therefore, membership of the group is open for any country who wishes to join. Currently chaired by the Minister of Planning and Economic Development of Sierra Leone, the headquarters of the g7+ is in Dili, Timor-Leste with a hub in Lisbon, Portugal. Given its important role in global discourse on peacebuilding and statebuilding, the g7+ was granted an observer status at the United Nations in the year 2019. Although the g7+ has engaged at the United Nations during General Assembly sessions, it did not have an allocated seat to participate in the debates taking place at the UN. With the observer status, the g7+ can now participate and intervene in certain discussions. It can establish a permanent representation at the United Nations similar to that of the African Union. The observer status at the United Nations provides a further avenue for collective advocacy with even more impact. The member countries have the opportunity to raise their voice on the issues that are relevant to them, including providing more inputs to the UN policies. The g7+ plans to optimize the use of the observer status through regular engagement as a group in debates at the UN and also providing more inputs to policymaking.

IMPACT OF THE g7+

Recognition of Peace through National Means

Several countries within and outside the g7+ group in the Global South have achieved lasting peace after decades of conflicts of different forms, and from which important lessons can be drawn. g7+ members such as Liberia, Sierra Leone and Timor-Leste, and other countries such as Rwanda and South Africa are the prime examples. The process of achieving peace, as seen in these cases, underlies national leadership, unity and ownership through national dialogue and reconciliation. We argue that an important factor determining their success in achieving peace was the national resolve to leave behind the bitter past through reconciliation that further resulted in unity, restorative justice and forgiveness. While the source of fragility in conflict-affected countries is a function of various factors such as regime types, political instability and of course protracted conflicts, the roots often extend to their colonial past (Tusalem, 2016), the Cold War and the hegemonic contest of regional and global powers. Yet the exogenous factors of conflicts and fragility benefit from societal and political fragmentation that contributes to successive wars and crises. In other words, it is often the lack of national cohesion that leads to undue interference from outside. Afghanistan and Yemen are the typical examples of countries where factional, societal and political fragmentation make them prone

to foreign interference and proxy wars. Only through national dialogue can we reconcile those differences that otherwise attract antagonists from outside. For peace to be sustained, it needs to take place from within the countries that have been in conflict, as opposed to being an externally driven process.

The primary mission of the g7+ includes promoting and advocating for what is called “home-grown peace” through national mechanisms that have existed for centuries in the fragile societies affected by conflicts. The g7+ has brought to the fore of international debate the primacy of national leadership in pursuing peace through dialogue and reconciliation. Through its concerted advocacy, the g7+ has shared those lessons with the UN and other international organizations. It has provided platforms to leaders from the Global South and in particular the g7+ countries to share their experiences on how demonstrating national leadership in the peace process has resulted in stability. Specifically, through its “fragile-to-fragile cooperation” (which will be discussed below), the g7+ facilitated mediation between the warring factions in Central African Republic (CAR) and remained vocal on the need for a nationally owned peace process in Afghanistan. A g7+ mission led by Xanana Gusmão, the former Prime Minister of Timor-Leste and eminent person of g7+, was conducted in 2014 to share experience and facilitate dialogue between the groups of Seleka and anti-Balaka. The dialogue between the warring factions paved the way for the Bangui National Forum with the themes of peace and security, justice and reconciliation, social and economic development, and governance in May 2015 (Klausen, 2016). The forum brought together 700 leaders from diverse groups to discuss how to develop a framework agreement. The forum was followed by elections. Unlike past hearings on peace and reconciliation, the Bangui Forum relied heavily on grassroots consultations in CAR (Copley and Sy, 2015). This forum contributed to relatively long-lasting peace despite minor conflicts. The g7+ repeatedly called upon the international community and the Afghan actors involved in the peace process to recognize that lasting peace will only be possible if it is led and owned by Afghans. However, there existed no political will on the part of the US and its allies to support the notion of initiating a truly Afghanized process of national dialogue that would involve truth and reconciliation to mend the wounds of war. Instead, the so-called peace process was more concerned with a timeframe for US troops’ withdrawal, which ultimately resulted in the collapse of the government and hence the republic.

At the global level, the g7+ was the top advocate for the inclusion of a stand-alone goal on peace within Agenda 2030, and this led to SDG 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions. Conversation on peace had for long been considered irrelevant in debates on development whereas in conflict-affected countries lasting peace, access to justice, effective institutions and sustainable development go hand in hand. It is now widely recognized that these objectives must be brought under one umbrella rather than attempting to achieve each in a siloed approach and in a projectized manner. Therefore, inclusion of SDG 16 in Agenda 2030 was a breakthrough in recognizing the nexus among peace, development, justice and effective institutions. The role of the g7+ in discourse around developing Agenda 2030 was also to ensure that no one is left behind, an important preface of the agenda.

Renegotiating the “Rules of Engagement”

The g7+ engaged on the platform of the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (IDPS), a trilateral forum consisting of OECD-DAC donors, g7+ countries and civil society. The IDPS was established to reform the international policies of engaging in

fragile and conflict-affected countries. Informed by countries' experiences, the IDPS developed and agreed on the New Deal (see Appendix) for engagement in fragile states that was launched during the High-Level Political forum on Aid Effectiveness in Busan in 2011. The New Deal is a set of principles asserting that: peace is a precondition to sustainable development; inclusive politics, security, access to justice, and resilient institutions capable of generating revenue and services are the important pillars of stability; conflict-affected countries must lead and own their transition; and aid delivery should be in line with the national context and priorities.

Agreement on the New Deal was a historical milestone that was meant to reform the “aid industry” to better and effectively respond to the current challenges facing conflict-affected least developed countries such as those in the g7+. In addition, the framework of the New Deal provided a forum to pursue redefining the prevailing narrative on state fragility. This included shifting the relation between donors and recipients, where the latter were usually passive actors. Manifesting the ownership of countries, the New Deal empowers aid recipient countries to own and lead their national priorities, which include peace and stability. The PSGs, FOCUS and TRUST principles – discussed further in the Appendix to this chapter – are valuable if they are implemented with the aim of fostering a new partnership rooted in ownership and context, and achieving lasting peace and stability (Rocha de Siqueira, 2019). These principles would enable donors and other peacebuilding actors to harmonize and align their assistance behind the far-sighted vision of stability.

The New Deal was the first international framework that recognized the nexus between peace and development. This helped the g7+ advocate for the stand-alone goal on Peace, Justice and effective institutions (SDG 16) and its realization within Agenda 2030. It was further supposed to guide the implementation of SDGs in conflict-affected countries (Hearn, 2016).

Fragile-to-Fragile Cooperation

While South–South engagement has been an important form of cooperation within the stratum of cooperation, the g7+ coined the concept of fragile-to-fragile cooperation. This includes peer learning and sharing of experience among conflict-affected countries. Solidarity and voluntarism have been unique features of fragile-to-fragile cooperation. “The significance of Fragile-to-Fragile Cooperation goes beyond its immediate impacts and is also about the values and principles that it affirms, and how they relate to the global development agenda” (United Nations Office for South–South Cooperation and the g7+, 2017). It is posited on the fact that conflict-affected countries are better placed to cooperate in sharing lessons that would inspire them for change. These lessons are more suitable and relevant for each of these countries.

Conventionally, cooperation among nation states has more often been guided by their respective pursuit of national interest for understandable reasons. This has also applied to assistance by countries in the process of peacemaking. However, the fragile-to-fragile cooperation of the g7+ countries has to a larger extent been founded on the sense of humane solidarity, which is a phenomenon alien to practices in international relations. The very composition of the g7+ group demonstrates the notion of solidarity to be the motivating reason rather than promoting mere national interest. The peer learning or cooperation among g7+ countries has been in areas of peacebuilding and statebuilding, which includes peace and reconciliation, strengthening democracy, natural resource management and justice.

Popular examples of this cooperation include support of Timor-Leste to Guinea Bissau in conducting elections in 2013 when the latter was abandoned internationally. Similarly, Timor-Leste supported elections in São Tomé and Príncipe (STP). This included sharing of tangible lessons of Timor-Leste with Guinea Bissau and STP. Moreover, Timor-Leste provided assistance to the Central African Republic to help with the resettlement of internally displaced peoples using the Timorese experience. The g7+ has also facilitated such cooperation among countries during specific crises such as Ebola when Timor-Leste provided financial assistance to the West African countries (Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea). An important feature of such assistance has been the fact that it was channeled using the New Deal principles, which is a good precedent for traditional donors to follow.

The aforementioned examples of assistance have been effective in the pursuit of peace and stability. In 2013, Guinea Bissau was under the embargo of donors who required the former to conduct democratic elections, which according to the popular estimates by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) would require about USD 57.8 million for voter registration, training of electoral officials and conducting voting. The estimates by the Guinea Bissau election commission to conduct elections was USD 26.6 million (Mission Report, Timor-Leste's Support to the Return of Constitutional Order of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau, 2014, pp. 19–20). At the same time, Guinea Bissau was denied the assistance it would require to hold the elections since it was sanctioned until the country restores constitutional order. Using the g7+ forum, the government of Timor-Leste under the leadership of Xanana Gusmão, the then Prime Minister of Timor-Leste, visited Guinea Bissau to share experiences on peace and statebuilding. This was followed by a mission from the National Election Commission (CNE) of Timor-Leste to assess the needs in conducting the election in Guinea Bissau and concluded that the country requires about USD 6 million, as compared to USD 57.8 million estimated by UNDP and USD 26.6 million by the Guinea Bissau election commission, for the election (Mission Report, 2014, pp. 19–20). In addition, it decided to provide the required amount and conduct the election. The government of Timor-Leste under the umbrella of g7+ fragile-to-fragile cooperation undertook the technical mission and helped in conducting the presidential election in 2014. This support took place during a situation of acute donor fatigue and international embargo. The process involved no international consultants or advisors, which are always expensive and that might be a reason why the UN estimate was so high. The technical team from Timor-Leste consisted of the staff of the National Commission of Election headed by its president. In addition, while appreciating the local context, Timor-Leste used its own experience in the process that stemmed from voter registration to the final conducting of elections. The support also included paying the public servants of the electoral bodies in Guinea Bissau. This example highlights the fact that conventional mechanisms of aid delivery have often been less effective and less efficient. This further indicates the relevance of lessons of conflict-affected countries for each other.

CHALLENGES FACED BY THE g7+

The g7+ has undertaken an ambitious mission of helping to achieve lasting peace and stability in the world's poorest and conflict-affected countries, most of which are subject to disruptive geopolitics, civil war and political fragmentation at the national level. The g7+ is a tiny yet

an important voice that has emerged and is striving against the odds that are briefly described below.

Recent global reports highlight that the world on average has become more peaceful since the Second World War. This is probably marked by the fact that there has not been any major military confrontation between major global powers. However, fragile countries such as those in the g7+ have been an exception to this conclusion. Most if not all of these conflicts exhibit elements of proxy wars among regional and global powers where actors such as g7+ have to struggle against the narrative shaping hegemonic contest. Furthermore, the recent invasion of Ukraine by Russia, and the continued conflict between these two countries, is a reminder that peace cannot be taken for granted.

The world is increasingly becoming multipolar due to the emergence of new global and regional powers such as China, India and Brazil. These powers are at odds with each other and are competing for more economic and political influence. There is often serious competition among these powers who use countries that are already vulnerable, and which are at the crossroads of geopolitics. Compared to others, fragile countries are more often seen through the lens of hegemonic interest and national security of the big powers. And even more worrying is the fact that global and regional players are malign in their approach. The internal division and lack of political and social cohesion in fragile countries have been a breeding ground for instability and hence competition among global and regional powers. Yemen and Afghanistan are the classic examples of how lack of national unity, among other factors, has led these countries to be victims of interference from regional and global actors. National unity and cohesion can reduce the chances of undue interference by external actors that results in instability. While different economic and political means are used to exert and extend the sphere of their influence on fragile countries, mighty powers often act in their own interests and hence are insensitive to the impact of their conduct on the lives of hundreds of millions of people. It is difficult if not impossible for organizations such as the g7+ to reconcile differences among the global and regional powers so that poor countries can be saved from the scourge of wars and interventions that are not fully in their interests. However, the only alternative for its members and other conflict-affected countries is to unite and attempt to build cohesion at the national level so that they can engage in their international affairs with other countries on a mutually beneficial footing founded on mutual respect.

Heavy dependence of fragile countries on foreign aid that is externally managed and owned has undermined the will and ownership of the people and leaders of fragile states in pursuing their pathway to stability. However important foreign aid has been, it has been less effective in achieving self-reliance and hence lasting peace and sustainable development. Aid delivery in these countries has continued to be donor driven and hence projectized and ad hoc. The endorsement of the New Deal was supposed to induce reforms in the way foreign assistance is managed; in a manner that will unleash the potential of these countries for stability and strengthen the foundation for peace. However, the New Deal implementation has remained restrained within the so-called “technocracy trap” whereas it was meant to harness political will and leadership to change behavior of the international and national actors. The New Deal suffered from a lack of political commitment, especially by donors, and this further hindered the process of identifying what needs to be done to realize the ambition set by its principles (Hearn, 2016). The New Deal, for example, provided an unprecedented platform in countries such as Somalia where it was used to guide aid coordination and management. However, the cabinet members of Somalia commented during the joint mission of g7+ and IDPS that

the New Deal process was very donor driven and at the same time very technical. It failed to empower the government to decide on the allocation of aid resources. It had and still has the potential to empower fragile countries, their leaders, and people to own the transition from being fragile to becoming more resilient. Although the New Deal principles provided a roadmap and guidelines for realizing Agenda 2030 in fragile countries, they were neglected in the policy discourse and its implementation. It is difficult to imagine how the SDGs could be realized in fragile countries in the absence of concerted action to apply the principles of the New Deal (Hearn, 2016).

In some cases, actors such as donors and governments attempted to cherry pick their approach in implementing the New Deal principles. They failed in realizing the principles of the New Deal in a way that would result in a desired outcome and the donors continued avoiding using country systems. Fragility assessments, for example, have been the most favored milestone that was required of countries by donors. However important these assessments have been, their results failed to fully align foreign aid with the national priorities identified by fragility assessments; neither did they lead to a harmonization of policies and interventions on the part of various actors. In addition, the principles of the New Deal inspired technocrats more than it could the politics involved in the decision-making process. Politics, despite the legitimacy challenges that come with foreign interventions, is at the center of peace and statebuilding, and the New Deal has the potential to effectively guide intervention in these spheres (Rocha de Siqueira, 2019) with the collaboration of local partners. Even more ironic is the fact that some donors have attributed their failure to enhance the effectiveness of aid to the New Deal principles without fully realizing their potential. In addition, the endorsers of the New Deal or the IDPS community did not really sensitize the New Deal within emerging actors such as China, India, Indonesia, Brazil and Arab countries who are increasingly engaging in fragile countries. Hence, it was perceived to be an OECD-led initiative rather than a global framework. However, the g7+ has remained firm on its conviction in the principles of the New Deal if they are understood and contextualized. The principles have continued to guide the collective discourse at the global level on various platforms such as the UN, World Bank, and other multilateral forums.

Exogenous events such as Covid-19 and the emergence of debates over issues such as climate change have had tremendous impact on the prospect of conflict-affected countries to manifest their position at the global level. As expected, the pandemic has had adverse direct and indirect impacts on fragile countries and they are likely to last longer than they would in normal circumstances. The decline in GDP was significant and fragile and conflict-affected countries also experienced downturns in domestic revenue and remittances. The socio-economic impact of Covid-19 on fragile and conflict-affected countries has erased the gains made over the years (Kose and Nishio, 2021). With the already fragile institutions and minimum capacity to cope with a crisis such as Covid-19, conflict-affected countries will take longer to recover economically and socially. The outbreak of the pandemic has placed huge restraints on the prospects of peace and stability. Institutional fragility, weak economies, lack of resilience and political fragmentation made containing the impact of the spread of the virus very difficult. Initially, it was expected that the outbreak of Covid-19 would induce humane solidarity and hence ceasefire and peace. In the g7+ countries, that did not happen. Instead, incidents such as insurgency, terrorism and sporadic attacks increased in Afghanistan, Somalia and Syria, where the armed groups weaponized Covid-19 by scaling up their attacks (Shire, 2022). Moreover, fragile countries have continued to lag in the immunization of their populations. Vaccine

delivery and health diplomacy by rich countries has resulted in preferential treatment of some countries, in addition to being a tool for economic and political influence in fragile countries. Similarly, climate change continues to threaten the survival of countries in fragile situations. The rising sea level has challenged the very survival of countries in the Pacific while drought and famine constitute a threat to the lives of millions of people in Africa, the Middle East and Asia (for example in Yemen, South Sudan and Afghanistan). The impact of climate change has further escalated tribal conflicts over land in these countries. While underdeveloped countries are the least contributors of CO₂ emissions, they bear the most burden from its consequences. The UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) could not result in consensus on measures to reduce CO₂ emissions among the industrialized nations. This will result in failure to achieve the target of net zero emissions by 2050.

CONCLUSION: WHAT IS THE WAY FORWARD FOR THE g7+

Agenda 2030 aspires to eradicate extreme poverty by the end of this decade. However, this is in sharp contrast with the prediction that more than 80 percent of the world's poorest people will be living in conflict-affected countries by then. Whether this trend can be reversed will depend to a large extent on lasting peace and stability in these contexts. However, the prospect of peace and stability rests in the hands of leaders and people of these countries. The g7+, as the unique forum that mobilizes conflict-affected countries for the noble mission of promoting peace, has the potential to be a new force in empowering the people and leaders of these countries to influence the discourse in favor of peace and stability.

Despite the limited progress made in implementing its principles, the New Deal is one of the most suitable and relevant partnership frameworks for conflict-affected countries. It provides useful tools to reform the peacebuilding and statebuilding policies of the United Nations and international community. Its success will depend on renewed commitment and political support from the IDPS members, in particular the g7+ and the OECD donors. With the observer status at the UN, the g7+ has the potential to socialize the New Deal principles at the UN and in particular the Security Council that mandates the peacekeeping operations in conflict-affected countries. For the principles to be effective in pursuing reforms in aid management, the IDPS needs to become a real political dialogue between the g7+, donors, and civil society around the New Deal principles.

Fragmentation in international politics due to increasing realism in the conduct of global powers has and will continue to have adverse impacts on stability in the world's poorest conflict-affected countries. The recent Human Development Report (2022) highlights how the sense of insecurity on the part of people has increased. It calls for more humane solidarity as a guide to the future at the national and international level: "Solidarity recognizes that human security in the Anthropocene must go beyond securing individuals and their communities for institutions and policies to systematically consider the interdependence across all people and between people and the planet" (UNDP, 2022, p. 6).

Empathy and solidarity, which are the core of the g7+ mission, are paramount for addressing conflicts and hence fragility that countries are facing. This will include pursuing peace through national reconciliation and the very mission of the g7+ is a good starting point to inform global policies. The g7+ should continue to argue for the introduction of humane solidarity to be at the center of international politics and therefore to the international engagement in

conflict-affected countries. In addition, the g7+ can use its leadership to leverage reforms in international peacebuilding and statebuilding policies. The privilege of having observer status at the UN increases the prospect for the g7+ to become a global player in peacemaking. By involving global leaders who have championed peace through national dialogue and reconciliation, the g7+ can mobilize political leadership in mediation. In addition, the experience of g7+ countries in managing peacekeeping and aid missions has the potential to inform the reforms within the peacebuilding architecture of the United Nations.

The g7+ forum can be used to bring together countries that have successfully achieved peace in the Global South on a common position at the global level that can advocate for a fair share in establishing global policies such as those related to the world trading system, humanitarian and development cooperation. The g7+ has already made an impact on such policies. The g7+ WTO accession group, for example, offers a unique opportunity for developing and least developed countries to advocate for reforms in the world trading system that are fair and sensitive to the challenges that countries in the Global South are facing. In other words, it has the potential to decentralize the trade policymaking and norms setting therein, which have usually been the realm of the developed countries. The least developed and fragile countries have mostly relied on the export of commodities such as oil and minerals (UNCTAD, 2021). But through fairer trade policies, these countries can diversify their exports with even more impact on their stability and peace.

The g7+ has already become an interface on the issues related to addressing conflicts and hence fragility. It has voiced the perspective of people living in fragile countries on important global debates. By enhancing engagement with emerging actors such as those in the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa), the g7+ can have a vital influence on their policies of engagement in conflict-affected countries. This can help in socializing these actors with the norms and principles of effective partnership such as accountability and responsible investment. With the division of global actors and hence the multipolarity in global politics, which is marked by trade wars and geopolitical tensions, the g7+ can act as a block to promote and/or safeguard the minimum peace in already conflict-affected countries. This can avoid further division along geopolitical lines. It is possible that if the g7+ consolidates and further seeks political buy-in from member countries it will harmonize their vision for peace and stability in the Global South. Its peer learning (fragile-to-fragile cooperation) has a potential that has yet to be realized. The group is aiming at enhancing the scope of such exchange. This includes its intent to engage with the non-g7+ countries in the Global South such as Rwanda, Cambodia, Colombia, and the like, whose stories can inspire change. The unique feature of such cooperation is the fact that it is cross regional and hence does not carry with it any vested political and economic interest. This has been the factor that contributes to the effectiveness of cooperation among member countries as illustrated above.

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APPENDIX: THE NEW DEAL FOR ENGAGEMENT IN FRAGILE STATES

Endorsed during the 4th High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in 2011, the New Deal is a set of principles guiding a new approach for engagement in fragile situations. The New Deal was developed against the backdrop of challenges facing the conflict-affected countries in enhancing the effectiveness of international engagement in fragile states. It was agreed upon among the g7+, OECD-DAC donors and civil society through a tripartite forum of International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and statebuilding (IDPS). With the increasing linkage among development, security, justice and institutions, the New Deal proposes peacebuilding and statebuilding goals (PSGs) to be recognized as the foundations necessary to achieve stability, development and resilience.

The PSGs are:

- *Legitimate politics* – Foster inclusive political settlements and conflict resolution
- *Security* – Establish and strengthen people's security
- *Justice* – Address injustices and increase people's access to justice
- *Economic foundations* – Generate employment and improve livelihoods
- *Revenues and services* – Manage revenue and build capacity for accountable and fair service delivery.

To ensure that any international intervention supports and is aligned with the PSGs, the New Deal suggests a new way of engaging that is guided by the priorities identified by the country and is premised on systematic analysis across each of the PSGs. The FOCUS principles propose that:

- Each country conduct periodic **Fragility Assessments** that will identify across the spectrum where each country is on each PSG
- Based on that evidence, the country develops **One Vision One Plan**
- Resources (foreign aid) be aligned with the One Vision One Plan through a mechanism of aid delivery, in the form of a **Compact** agreed upon between a country and its partners
- Conduct periodic monitoring to measure progress, **use the PSGs targets** and indicators
- **Support Country-Owned Political Dialogue** and help build the capacity of the state to lead peacebuilding and statebuilding efforts.

In order to ensure transition out of fragility and realize the PSGs, the New Deal proposes that there is a need that aid be more effectively delivered, and in line with national priorities. The **TRUST** principles requires the partners to commit to:

- **Transparent** use of resources
- **Risk** management during transition
- **Use and strengthen** country systems through building necessary fiduciary and administrative capacity
- **Strengthen** institutional capacity though reducing parallel mechanisms and focusing on the core state functions
- Provide **Timely** and predictable aid.

The members of IDPS agreed to periodic monitoring of the implementation of the New Deal principles.

23. The EU's approach to fragile states: conflicting norms, practices, and lessons learnt

Julian Bergmann and Mark Furness

INTRODUCTION

State fragility and conflict are key challenges that the European Union (EU) encounters in its external relations. As clearly stated in the third implementation report on the EU Global Strategy published in 2019:

[F]ragility and conflict continue to plague much of our surrounding regions, both east and south. This is true of our eastern and southern neighbours, as well as of regions further afield, from Afghanistan to the Gulf, to the Sahel. The resilience of states and societies, and an integrated approach to conflicts and crises capture the essence of what the EU seeks to achieve in this vast geographical space. (European Union, 2019, p. 22)

Over the past two decades, the EU has developed a distinct approach to conflict prevention, crisis management, and peacebuilding that has significantly shaped its engagement in fragile and conflict-affected states (FCAS). The EU has invested heavily in its capacities for addressing state fragility. It has increased humanitarian and development aid, and developed instruments such as military operations and civilian missions, peace mediation engagements, and a dedicated policy framework setting out the EU's objectives and guiding the deployment of its many tools. These advances have made the EU an important actor in FCAS, both in terms of its contributions to advancing international policy and best practices, and its capabilities to fund and deploy engagements. The EU's ambitions have created high expectations about what it can achieve with regard to addressing state fragility, both within Europe and with regard to external partners. However, as many observers have noted, incoherencies at both strategic and operational levels, and the collective action problems that frame the EU's intervention mandates and engagements, are persistent features of the EU's approach to FCAS (Davis, 2018; Furness and Gänzle, 2017). These weaknesses have prevented the EU from reaching its significant potential to make a positive contribution to peace and stability in FCAS.

In this chapter, we address three main questions: What defines the EU's approach towards state fragility and its engagements in this domain? What are the EU's main strengths as an actor in fragile contexts and what challenges does it face? Finally, how do these strengths and challenges affect the extent to which the EU is able to provide effective responses to state fragility?

The key insight from our analysis is that conflicting normative drivers – both at the European level and among EU member states – are behind the conflicts of interest and substantive incoherencies between policy tools that have prevented the EU from realizing its potential in FCAS. We argue that there is contestation between two sets of fundamental norms driving EU foreign policy decision-making – “solidarity” with the peoples of conflict-affected countries on one hand, and the “protection” of European interests, values and citizens on the other.

The “solidarity” and “protection” norms are influential because they are rooted in the policy constituencies competing for influence over EU and member state foreign and development policy. Contestation between these groups and the ideas they promote has indelibly shaped the strategies, instruments and operations of EU state fragility policy and practice.

The remainder of the chapter is structured as follows. First, we trace the evolution of the EU’s strategic policy approach towards FCAS, analysing key documents in the spheres of foreign policy, development policy, and conflict prevention and peacebuilding. Second, we discuss the EU’s main financial and institutional instruments created to address state fragility, prevent conflict, and support peace. We then discuss three EU engagements in FCAS: Afghanistan, Libya and Mali. These experiences provide examples of the successes and challenges of the EU’s approach to state fragility. They also offer insights into how contestation between the “solidarity” and “protection” drivers has impacted the EU’s potential to make a positive contribution to peacebuilding processes in these countries. We conclude that contesting normative drivers are at the heart of coherence and collective action problems which, while not unique to the EU, are persistent features of its approach to state fragility.

THE EVOLUTION OF THE EU’S APPROACH TO STATE FRAGILITY

The ambition to develop an “EU approach” to fragile and conflict-affected countries as a distinct grouping or category of cooperation partners dates from April 2001, when the European Commission published its Communication on Conflict Prevention.¹ This Communication also marks the beginning of the evolution of an EU policy on peacebuilding, which has been closely linked with its approach to state fragility (Grimm, 2014). Two months after the Communication’s publication, the European Council adopted the Gothenburg Programme for the Prevention of Violent Conflict (European Commission, 2001; Council of the EU, 2001; European Council, 2001a). Since then, the EU has published an array of policy documents, including communications, council conclusions, handbooks, parliamentary studies, strategy documents, expert evaluations, and programming guidelines, which outline the EU’s approach to crisis response, conflict prevention and peacebuilding in fragile and conflict-affected countries. Some documents established instruments and defined substantive guidelines for the EU’s engagement in FCAS, while other policy statements set out the overarching principles and guiding norms of EU foreign policy.

The 2001 Communication on Conflict Prevention (European Commission, 2001) opened by stating that “The EU is a peace project”. The Communication called for “mainstreaming” conflict prevention in external action and for more coherence and better coordination, which were already considered problematic. The 2001 Communication was taken up by the European Council’s Gothenburg Programme on Preventing Violent Conflicts, which maintained a strong emphasis on solidarity as the key motive of EU engagement in fragile and conflict-affected states (European Council, 2001a, p. 2). The European Council stated that “the international community has a political and moral responsibility to act to avoid the human suffering and the destruction of resources caused by violent conflicts” (European Council, 2001a, Annex I). In line with these fundamental values, the Council pledged to give the highest political priority to improving the effectiveness and coherence of external conflict prevention activities.

The 2006 European Consensus on Development included “addressing state fragility” under “principles”: “The EU will improve its response to difficult partnerships and fragile states, where a third of the world’s poor live” (European Parliament et al., 2006, p. 4; see also European Parliament et al., 2017). The linking of poverty and state fragility established conflict prevention and response as tasks for development cooperation, but also reflected a predominant perception that state fragility is primarily a challenge for the “under-developed” world. The consensus indicated that the EU was conforming with the liberal peace doctrine by supporting democratic governance and institutional capacity building in FCAS (Richmond et al., 2011).

The 2007 Communication on fragile states was the EU’s first effort to define its own approach to situations of fragility: a conceptual understanding of fragility, the identification of challenges, a framework for dialogue and analysis, and a definition of strategies. The document expressed both general principles and the intention to be clear and coherent when it comes to specific countries, conflicts, and responses. Although a “European approach” was never clearly defined nor differentiated from other actors, the focus was very much on the needs of the partner countries and what the EU can contribute (European Commission, 2007b, p. 7). The 2007 Communication framed state fragility primarily as a development issue, with reference to the 2006 Consensus on Development as the appropriate policy framework for addressing the various dimensions of fragility. The Communication expressed solidarity with populations affected by fragility and attributed responsibility for breaking the social contract to states’ incapacity or unwillingness to deliver basic functions, meet obligations and protect citizens’ rights and freedoms (European Commission, 2007b, p. 5).

However, by 2007 an emphasis on the EU’s self-interest as a key driver of its engagement in fragile and conflict-affected states was emerging. The Communication pointed out that the EU had become an important political and security actor, with special responsibilities for addressing challenges posed by fragile situations. These included state collapse or withdrawal, chronic violence, and humanitarian crises. The document also alluded to potential threats that fragile states may pose to Europe. It noted that a range of transnational security and instability threats may emerge from these situations, with the potential to undermine EU strategic objectives and interests (European Commission, 2007b, p. 5).

In 2013, the European Commission and the High Representative of the EU for Foreign and Security Policy released a Communication on the Comprehensive Approach to External Conflicts and Crises. This was the first major post-Lisbon Treaty EU policy statement on conflict management and peacebuilding from the new EU external relations institutional structure, including the European External Action Service (EEAS). The document asserted the EU’s new ambitions and capabilities, and attempted to inspire member state commitment to a joint EU foreign policy approach, thereby maximizing Europe’s impact and influence (European Commission / High Representative, 2013). Responding to the Communication, the 2014 Council Conclusions on the Comprehensive Approach confirmed member states’ support for the comprehensive approach and highlighted that it “is most acute in crisis and conflict situations and in fragile states, enabling a rapid and effective EU response, including through conflict prevention” (Council of the EU, 2014, p. 1).

The EU made efforts to concretize these general statements in a 2015 handbook on operating in situations of conflict and fragility (European Commission, 2015).² The handbook recognized that conflict and fragility are long-term processes, and asserted that the EU is a long-term actor with an array of policy tools and instruments, including state building contracts, trust

funds, and flexible procurement procedures. The handbook's section on "the EU approach" to conflict and fragility included (i) the comprehensive approach, which concerned mainly EU-level instruments, but expressed the ambition of developing a "whole of EU approach" including member states; (ii) the "resilience approach" addressing the "root causes" of conflicts and crises; (iii) the active engagement of well-staffed and resourced EU delegations in around 50 fragile states, implying a strong role for on-the-ground expertise, well-coordinated with HQ in Brussels; and (iv) making the best of the EU's comparative advantages, including size, networks, policy tools, and expertise.

The portrayal of state fragility as a threat to the EU became less ambiguous following the 2015 "refugee crisis". Threat perception is clearly visible in the 2016 EU Global Strategy, which was drafted following a broad consultation process canvassing government and expert advice from throughout the EU (Tocci, 2017). The document stated that the starting point for EU foreign policy is to protect EU citizens: "Our Union has enabled citizens to enjoy unprecedented security, democracy and prosperity. Yet today terrorism, hybrid threats, economic volatility, climate change and energy insecurity endanger our people and territory" (European Union, 2016, p. 9). The Global Strategy linked fragile states with protecting the EU, as violent conflict resulting from state fragility "threatens our shared vital interests" (European Union, 2016, p. 28). It emphasized the "practical and principled way in peacebuilding", alluding to the tension between hard security interests and moral/principled concerns that is inherent to the EU's peacebuilding approach (European Union, 2016, p. 4).

"Resilience" is a key element in the EU Global Strategy, a concept which has become the leitmotif for peacebuilding and for the EU's international cooperation more generally (Juncos, 2017; Tocci, 2020; Wagner and Anholt, 2016). In 2017, the Commission and the High Representative outlined the EU's strategic approach to resilience in more detail (European Commission / High Representative, 2017). A section on "resilience and the security of the EU" linked EU conflict prevention and response to the security of Europe: "EU external policy, including through the CSDP, has also a role in directly contributing to resilience within our borders, at a time when the Union has a greater responsibility than ever before to contribute to the security of its citizens" (European Commission / High Representative, p. 15). Repeated links between conflict prevention and response, and the protection of the EU's citizens, indicated the protection norm's influence on the overall logic of the resilience communication.

Another innovation brought about by the Global Strategy was the EU's "integrated approach" to conflicts and crises (European Union, 2016, p. 28). Whereas the Global Strategy did not lay out in detail what "upgrading" the comprehensive approach would actually mean in terms of implementing EU external action, the Council Conclusions on the integrated approach from January 2018 included a number of concrete proposals to strengthen coherence between EU external policies. Interestingly, the Council chose to re-emphasize the importance of solidarity with fragile countries, and to anchor the integrated approach in the EU's fundamental norms and values. The Council made strong statements about the role of local ownership, resilience and inclusiveness in the EU's approach: "The Council stresses the need for EU's engagement in fragile contexts to work in a conflict sensitive manner. The Council emphasizes the importance of rule of law, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms as well as the Responsibility to Protect" (Council of the EU, 2018, p. 3).

The Von der Leyen Commission took office in 2019 with a declared ambition for the EU to become a more "geopolitical" actor. The implication that protection had become a stronger driver than solidarity with regard to fragile states was made clear in the 2020–2024 strategic

plan published by the Commission's Foreign Policy Instruments (FPI) Service (European Commission, 2020).³ The strategic plan sets out overarching objectives of acting as a "peace maker" and supporting a rules-based international order, including increasing the EU's influence in global affairs. This means supporting foreign policy initiatives that are in Europe's interest, and prioritizing conflicts that impact directly on the EU.

In sum, the policy documents exhibit a transition in emphasis towards prioritizing the EU's own interests when it engages in FCAS. The EU Global Strategy represents a turning point in this trend, in that subsequent documents focused primarily on threats posed by state fragility. The EU's engagement in FCAS has increasingly become a means to protect Europe and its citizens from mass migration, terrorism or political instability. Moreover, the EU has put strong emphasis on strengthening the coherence of its policies and engagements with FCAS through the development of the comprehensive approach, and its successor, the integrated approach. However, as discussed below the EU's experiences "on the ground" in countries such as Afghanistan, Libya or Mali show that there is still some way to go to realize this ambition.

THE EU'S "TOOLBOX" FOR ADDRESSING STATE FRAGILITY

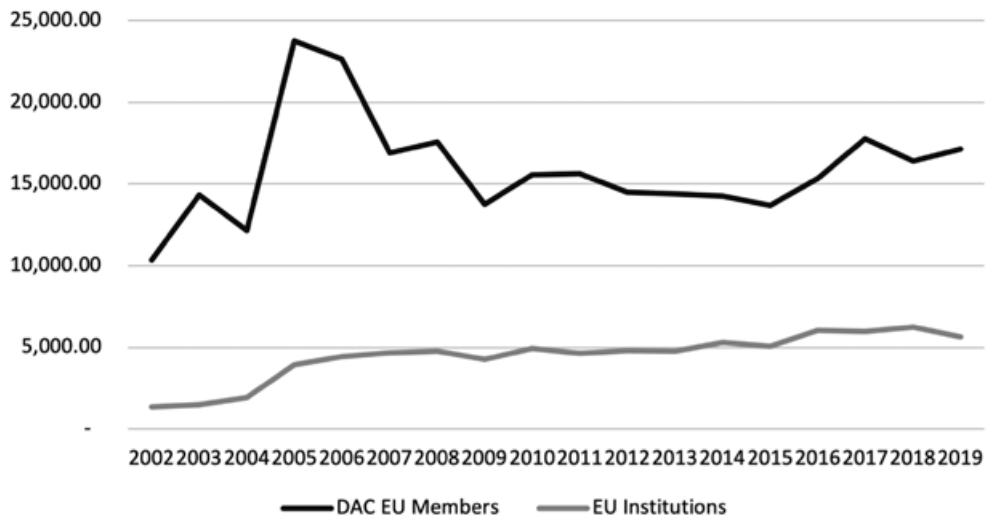
Financial Instruments

One key strength often noted by EU officials and policy documents is the Union's ability to deploy a wide range of financial and non-financial instruments globally to prevent conflict and respond to crises (European Commission, 2015). The EU's toolbox for engaging with FCAS has mostly been financed by development aid, via the Development Cooperation Instrument, the European Neighbourhood Policy Instrument, the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP), and the off-budget European Development Fund. With the adoption of the Multi-annual Financial Framework 2021–2027, the EU has merged these into a single instrument, the "Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) – Global Europe".

As Figure 23.1 shows, aid provided by EU institutions to FCAS has increased steadily and more than doubled over the past two decades in absolute terms. Aid provided by EU member states to fragile states also increased over the same period and is three times greater than the EU institutions' aid. The spike in member state aid to FCAS in 2005 and 2006 was created by rapid increases in development and humanitarian aid to Afghanistan, Sudan, West Bank and Gaza Strip, and Iraq.

The comparison between EU and member state aid provided to fragile states to total Official Development Assistance (ODA) levels illustrated in Figure 23.2 shows that the share of aid to countries classified as "fragile" has decreased over the past twenty years. This does not, however, indicate that FCAS have become less important. Rather, the change in proportion can partially be attributed to changes in the ODA classification. In recent years, the share has stabilized at about 30 per cent of total ODA, indicating that it has increased at the same rate as overall aid.

A key financial instrument for supporting FCAS is State and Resilience Building Contracts (SRBCs). Created in 2012, the SRBCs have provided general budget support to more than twenty countries with funding in three areas: (i) macroeconomic stabilization and public finance management, (ii) the provision of basic social services, and (iii) democratic govern-



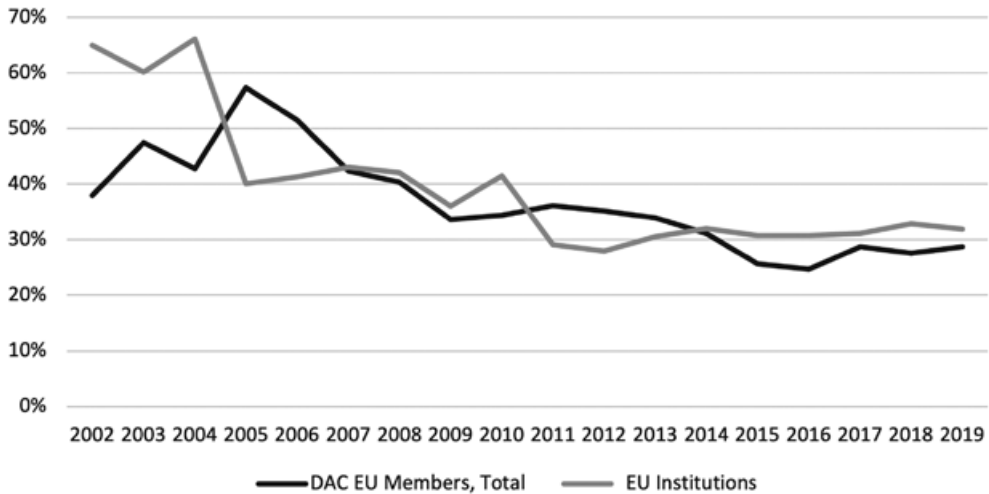
Note: To compile the data, we followed the classification of fragile states applied by the OECD’s Creditor Reporting System, which lists the following 57 countries as fragile states in the period from 2002 to 2019: Libya, Burundi, Comoros, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Mozambique, Somalia, South Sudan (since 2012), Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Angola, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Eswatini, Lesotho, Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauretania, Niger, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Togo, Haiti, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Venezuela, Cambodia, Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Iran, Iraq, Syrian Arab Republic, West Bank and Gaza Strip, Yemen, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands.

Source: Own compilation, based on OECD Creditor Reporting System data, 2021.

Figure 23.1 EU ODA to fragile states between 2002 and 2019

ance and the rule of law (European Commission, 2022). Tranches are disbursed variably, conditional on the recipient country meeting specific indicators. A 2020 evaluation of SRBCs found that they have been most effective in supporting macroeconomic stabilization, but they have had mixed results in promoting structural reforms for economic resilience and in fostering social cohesion and democratic governance (ADE, 2020).

In many conflict situations, humanitarian aid is an important, and sometimes the sole, instrument the EU has deployed to mitigate civilian suffering and provide emergency relief. Humanitarian aid is an important element in the EU’s foreign policy toolbox (European Commission, 2007a) and was fully integrated into the EU’s legal framework with the 2009 Lisbon Treaty. The Treaty, together with the 2007 European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid, specifies that the EU’s humanitarian aid operations shall be conducted in accordance with international humanitarian law and the principles of impartiality, neutrality, and non-discrimination (Treaty on European Union 2009, Art. 214). The EU’s continued adherence to these principles explains why humanitarian aid was not integrated into the NDICI. Instead, the 2021–2027 Multiannual Financial Framework includes a separate humanitarian aid instrument that amounts to EUR 9.8 billion. In its 2021 Communication on the EU’s humanitarian action, the Commission underlined its adherence to humanitarian principles,



Source: Own compilation, based on OECD CRS data, 2021.

Figure 23.2 Share of EU ODA to fragile states in relation to total EU ODA between 2002 and 2019

its commitment to strengthen the “humanitarian-development-peace nexus” and to close the global funding gap for humanitarian aid (European Commission, 2021c).

The EU has developed a dedicated instrument for financing peace support and conflict response, and “building bridges” between development and security policy (Bergmann, 2018, p. 10). The IcSP, and the budget lines in the NDICI that have succeeded it, the Thematic Programme for Stability and Peace and the Rapid Response Pillar, constitute the EU’s flagship instrument for conflict prevention and peacebuilding. The 2014 IcSP regulation defined the instrument’s objectives as providing direct support for the EU’s external policies “by increasing the efficiency and coherence of the Union’s actions in the areas of crisis response, conflict prevention, peace-building and crisis preparedness, and in addressing global and trans-regional threats” (European Union, 2014, Art. 1.1). This mandate illustrated the instrument’s dual focus on supporting conflict prevention and peacebuilding measures and on countering what the EU perceived as global and trans-regional threats to peace, security and stability.

The 2017 reform of the IcSP to implement the Capacity Building in Support of Security and Development (CBSD) initiative reinforced the gradual shift towards a stronger focus on security-related initiatives in EU development aid to fragile states. The CBSD provided the EU with a legal instrument for providing non-lethal equipment and infrastructure to the armed forces of partner countries. As Iniguez de Herredia (2021) argues, the CBSD initiative is an expression of the EU’s increasingly militarized approach to peacebuilding that puts the EU’s own security interests over broader development concerns.

The creation of the European Peace Facility (EPF) in July 2021 underscored the EU’s stronger reliance on hard security measures in its engagements with FCAS. Designed as an off-budget instrument, the EPF allows the EU to provide lethal equipment to partner country armed forces, a “novum” in the history of EU foreign policy. Despite warnings about the potentially conflict-intensifying effect of arms exports to fragile states (Ryan, 2019; Saferworld,

2020), EU institutions and member states argued for taking on “more responsibility as a global security provider” and that the EPF is a means for doing so (EEAS, 2021b; Nielsen, 2020). The creation of the EPF indicated that the increasing influence of the protection norm since the 2015 “refugee crisis” and the adoption of the EU Global Strategy has pressured EU decision makers to find political and legal solutions for providing hard security assistance to partner countries (Bergmann and Furness, 2019).

Non-Financial Instruments

The two main non-financial instruments available for deployment in FCAS are (i) peace mediation and (ii) Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) military operations and civilian missions. These instruments have different emphases but can contribute to supporting partner countries in addressing state fragility.

Peace mediation has evolved into an indispensable element of the EU’s toolbox for conflict prevention, resolution, and peacebuilding. Over the past two decades, the EU has systematically strengthened its capacities for peace mediation and has engaged in various conflict theatres around the globe (Herrberg, 2021, p. 137). In the Concept on EU Peace Mediation adopted by EU member states in December 2020, the preservation of peace as the EU’s *raison d’être* is mentioned as key motivation for engagements. Despite the strong emphasis on the EU’s value-based approach to peace, the Concept also promotes a stronger interest-driven view on peace mediation. It stresses that “mediation represents an effective avenue for the EU to pursue its foreign and security policy objectives” (Council of the EU, 2020, p. 4). Rather than making a strong normative commitment to impartiality as a guiding norm in peace mediation, the EU emphasized realizing its own foreign and security policy objectives as a mediator in peace negotiations. This is a key difference to the UN’s understanding of mediation, where impartiality is the fundamental prerequisite for any engagement (Bergmann, 2021, pp. 9–10).

Finally, CSDP military operations and civilian missions are regularly deployed in support of fragile states. The EU deployed 35 military operations, military training missions and civilian missions in third countries between 2003 and 2021. EU operations and missions in FCAS cover a wide range of objectives and models. They include successor operations to NATO engagements (such as EUFOR Althea in Bosnia), maritime operations (such as EUNAVFOR/Atalanta on the Horn of Africa), short-term stabilization operations (such as EUFOR RD Congo) and the EU military training missions (EUTM) in Mali (since 2013), Somalia (since 2010), Central African Republic (since 2016) and Mozambique (since 2021). On the civilian CSDP side, the EU has conducted more than 20 missions since 2003, with tasks including supporting rule of law, security sector reform, and ceasefire monitoring.

Since 2015, a stronger emphasis on using civilian CSDP missions for protecting the EU’s security interests is apparent. In response to the “refugee crisis”, EU member states extended the mandates of EUCAP Sahel Niger and EUBAM Libya to include the fight against irregular migration and the disruption of organized crime, including smuggling activities and human trafficking. This “mission creep” has been further institutionalized through the adoption of the Civilian CSDP Compact in 2018 that significantly widened the scope of civilian missions to issues such as irregular migration, cyber-security, hybrid threats, terrorism and radicalization, organized crime, and capacity building for border management and security (Pirozzi and Musi, 2019, p. 2).

In sum, over the past two decades the EU has acquired a comprehensive toolbox to address state fragility, ranging from humanitarian and development aid to military capacity building and deployments of civilian and military personnel to FCAS. As with the policy level, developments at the level of instruments clearly reflect the increasing emphasis on protecting the EU's own interests, including through military related means. The extent to which this trend affects the success of the EU's engagements in fragile and conflict-affected countries needs to be examined at the operational level, to which we now turn.

THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY: EU ENGAGEMENTS IN FRAGILE STATES

Evaluating the successes, challenges and failings of the EU's approach towards state fragility requires a context-specific perspective on interventions rather than generalizing about the overall success of the EU's approach to state fragility across countries and regions (Gisselquist, 2015). Lessons drawn from the examples of individual countries can nevertheless help identify, and possibly explain, some general features of the EU's engagement in FCAS. This section discusses three EU engagements that have provided lessons, some of which have led to changes to the EU's policy-level approach over the past two decades: Afghanistan, Libya, and Mali.

Afghanistan

Afghanistan was a test case for the effectiveness of the EU's approach to conflict management and peacebuilding. The 20-year intense engagement of the EU following the ousting of the Taliban regime in 2001 shaped debates both at the EU-level and within member states about the impact of international interventions in FCAS (Grimm, 2014). The European Council Conclusions in December 2001 announced the EU's objectives towards Afghanistan in the aftermath of the international military campaign. These were (i) to restore security and stability in what was perceived to be a post-conflict situation, (ii) to deliver humanitarian aid as "an absolute priority", and (iii) to "help the Afghan people and its new leaders rebuild the country and encourage as swift a return to democracy as possible" (European Council, 2001b, pp. 13–16). To achieve these objectives, the EU has deployed the full range of its state fragility toolbox: humanitarian and development aid, security sector reform assistance via the EU police mission EUPOL Afghanistan (2007–2016) and through member states' bilateral capacity building programmes, member states' military contributions to the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), and diplomatic and mediation support efforts to the Afghan peace process (Delegation of the EU to Afghanistan, 2016; Vassileva, 2021). Since 2002, the EU has provided over EUR 4 billion in development aid to Afghanistan (European Commission, 2021a). Following the takeover of Afghanistan by the Taliban in August 2021, the EU suspended most of its cooperation with the country, but continued to provide humanitarian aid and development aid in the health sector under the label "Humanitarian Plus" (European Commission, 2021b).

Given the Taliban takeover in 2021, associating any notion of "success" with the EU's engagement in Afghanistan may sound cynical. Nevertheless, the EU's support to the post-conflict reconstruction of Afghanistan and its efforts in the education and health sectors,

often with a focus on empowering girls and women, made a positive contribution to the country's development (see also Hassan, 2020, pp. 83–84). At the same time, the EU has made its development assistance conditional on the Afghan government's cooperation on returns and readmissions of Afghan citizens among refugees arriving in Europe (Quie and Hakimi, 2020, pp. 4–5). This underscores that the EU's agenda towards Afghanistan has become increasingly influenced by its interests in the sphere of migration management.

The EU's engagement in Afghanistan has undoubtedly been marked by policy failures, a conclusion that is, of course, valid for the international community's intervention as a whole. The EU could not compensate for the USA's flawed Afghanistan strategy, and country-wide security and stability were never fully achieved. The US focused primarily on counter-terrorism and supported the Karzai government, which had corrupt links to the drug trade and several warlords (Hassan, 2020, p. 87). Some EU member states supported the USA in this approach and were reluctant to coordinate with their EU partners. This led to "the EU's marginalization by the US and the Member States" (Hassan, 2020, p. 87). In addition, the EU's own efforts in security sector assistance were limited. The police mission EUPOL Afghanistan was deployed in 2007, succeeding a German-led mission in operation since 2002. A 2015 European Court of Auditors evaluation found that the EUPOL mission was largely successful in training-related activities but did not succeed "in bring[ing] together all European actors under a single European framework to improve Afghan policing" (ECA, 2015, p. 8). Moreover, the evaluation pointed out that the mission's achievements were unlikely to be sustainable due to the systemic weaknesses of the Afghan justice and policing sector, a prediction that tragically came to pass in August 2021.

Libya

The EU's experience in engaging with one of its closest and most troubled geographical neighbours is a sobering example of how threat perceptions can undermine common policy, with outcomes that hinder rather than support a peace process. Of course, the question of whether the decade since the 2011 Arab Uprisings and the overthrow and brutal assassination of Libya's dictator Muammar Qaddafi can be termed a "peace process" is open. Nevertheless, the EU's influence on Libyan politics has waned over time, and its role has become limited to humanitarian aid, migration management and supporting the diplomacy of others.

The EU initially intended to play a significant role in Libya. The member states tasked the EEAS with preparing the 2015 internal strategy document "a political framework for a crisis approach" to provide a shared conflict assessment as the basis for coordinated European engagement (EEAS, 2015). The document outlined several threats to Europe posed by the Libyan conflict, which as Loschi and Russo (2021, p. 1495) have pointed out, "actually reflect the positions of individual member states: increasing migration flows, affecting Italy and Malta; foreign fighters and weapon smuggling, pointed out by France and ... Germany; and concerns over energy security manifested by Spain and Italy". The humanitarian emergency, the legitimacy of public institutions, and the need to deliver peace dividends to the population were all identified as priorities, and the document announced the intention to support Libya's transition to a "deep and sustainable democracy" (EEAS, 2015, p. 1).

Since 2015, Libya has collapsed into a highly complex conflict both domestically, where tensions among militias of varying sizes and capabilities are fuelled by a conflict economy, and internationally as Libya has become a proxy conflict among regional powers, including

Russia, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Egypt and France. EU level efforts to facilitate and engage with the diplomatic process – via the UN and the Berlin Libya conferences – have been limited by the conflicting positions of key member states, especially France, Greece, and Italy. The EU's engagements have focused mainly on an objective that all member states can agree on, namely the prevention of irregular migration through Libya and across the Mediterranean Sea to Europe. The EU's main instruments for physical engagement have been CSDP missions: the EU Border Assistance Mission (EUBAM) in Libya, and the naval missions in the Mediterranean, EUNAVFOR Sophia and its successor, EUNAVFOR Irini.

With regard to financial instruments, the EU allocated around EUR 700 million to Libya between 2014 and 2020. Much of this spending has focused on addressing the needs of desperate people stranded in the country. The EU is the largest humanitarian donor in Libya, with some EUR 84.3 million allocated to the country since 2011. Most of this aid has been channelled through the UN and other agencies. Libya has been the biggest beneficiary of financing from the North Africa window of the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa, with EUR 455 million, most of which has been spent on assistance programmes for migrants, refugees and internally displaced people, and projects supporting municipalities along the migration routes. Although the EU's ability to provide this assistance rapidly is a strength that undoubtedly has helped people affected by the conflict, it is also symbolic of the EU's powerlessness in Libya. Around EUR 57 million has been spent on border management, mostly for supporting the capacity of the Libyan coast guard to prevent migrant boats from leaving the country's waters (European Union, 2021; EEAS, 2021a).

Europe's engagement with the Libyan conflict has normative drivers that preceded the 2011 civil war and the toppling of the Qaddafi regime. Conflict between these drivers and the evolving constituencies that have pushed them has been a constant feature of the EU's engagement in Libya. The protection norm has had an enormous influence both in terms of the choice of instruments and as an overarching justification for policy outcomes that have breached not only normative standards but also international human rights law. The solidarity norm has, nevertheless, played an important role in shaping consensus for both strategic and operational decisions, and has been a constant theme in expert criticism of the EU's approach to Libya. The result has been a fragmented European engagement with Libya. In limiting itself to attempts to manage irregular migration and ineffective efforts to prevent weapons from reaching the country, the EU has not been able to make a significant contribution to addressing the factors at the core of Libya's fragility.

Libya provides an example of how the increasing influence of the protection norm and its associated *realpolitik* is almost pre-programmed to produce strategic incoherence. All EU member states identify with and express adherence to the solidarity norm. However, key EU member states, in particular France, Italy, Germany, and Greece, have diverging political and security interests in Libya. This has resulted in weak common positions, such as on support for Libya's national peacebuilding and state building processes. It has also resulted in incoherent activities. In particular, the EU's migration management agenda has not only compromised European credibility as a "normative power" in its neighbourhood, but also undermined Libya's national process by empowering militias (Fine and Megerisi, 2019). As a result, the EU's potential for relevance in Libya's peacebuilding process has not remotely been realized. Furthermore, the documented human rights abuses that the EU has more or less directly supported via its technical and financial cooperation with Libyan militias are incoherent with the EU's own declared values (United Nations, 2021).

Mali

The fall of the Qaddafi regime in Libya had spillover effects on the security situation of neighbouring countries in the Sahel, particularly Mali. Responding to the political crisis in Mali and the French intervention to counter a jihadist advance on Bamako, the EU stepped up its engagement in multiple ways. The EU was present in the country as a development aid donor before the 2012 crisis, and launched its “Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel” (Sahel Strategy) in 2011 in response to the deteriorating security situation in the whole Sahel region (European Union, 2011). After 2012, EU engagement to help address Mali’s fragility increased significantly (Lopez Lucia, 2017). In 2013, the EU launched EUTM Mali to provide training and advice to the Malian armed forces, and the EU Capacity Building Mission (EUCAP) SAHEL Mali was deployed in April 2014. Apart from the deployment of military and civilian security personnel in the context of CSDP missions, from 2017 onwards the EU’s engagement in the Sahel also included direct financial and operational support for the G5 Sahel and its G5 Sahel Joint Force. Moreover, the EU has provided significant amounts of ODA to the Malian government, including EUR 650 million committed under the 2014–2020 European Development Fund and EUR 96 million under the EUTF (EPRS, 2020, pp. 1–2).

In terms of success, the EU’s engagement in Mali certainly contributed to short-term stabilization after the 2012 crisis. While this positive impact has largely been attributed to France’s military presence in the country, the EU responded quickly to the volatile situation in 2012 with its various policy instruments. As Djiré et al. (2017, p. 54) noted, “the EU and EU Member States have been key players in helping Mali emerge from the crisis”. In particular, the EU has had a positive role in fostering national dialogue and contributing to conflict resolution through mediation, both by actively supporting local dialogue and mediation initiatives as well as acting as a guarantor of the Algiers peace agreement (Djiré et al., 2017, pp. 37–38; Herrberg, 2021, p. 143).

At the same time, however, scholars have described the EU’s policy approach towards Mali as “schizophrenic agendas” (Cold-Ravnkilde and Nissen, 2020). The EU’s drive to realize its migration and security policy objective sidelined its focus on promoting sustainable development and democratic transition in Mali. It also led to increasing alienation between the EU and its Malian partners, which reduced the Malian government’s buy-in regarding the EU’s migration policies. In the security sector, Malian actors became increasingly alienated by what they perceived as paternalistic EU behaviour, resulting in a “dysfunctional partnership” between the two sides (Tull, 2020). Contestation over conflicting objectives and appropriate means pushed EU member states into different directions concerning the EU’s approach towards Mali. France advocated a stronger military approach, for example through the creation of the Task Force Takuba. Other member states such as Germany advocated a “civilian surge” focusing on democratic development and improved public services for people affected by violence (Auswärtiges Amt, 2021). However, a coup d’état in 2020 that ousted the elected President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita and another coup in 2021 that overthrew the transitional government installed in September 2020 severed relations with the EU and increased doubts in Brussels and EU member state capitals about the chances for a democratic and stable future for Mali. In response to the Malian government’s rapprochement with Russia and its invitation to the mercenary Wagner group, the EU in February 2022 adopted targeted sanctions against members of the Malian military junta “responsible for actions that obstruct and undermine the successful completion of Mali’s political transition” (Council of the EU, 2022). In April

2022, the EU suspended EUTM Mali, responding to “no[n] sufficient guarantees [...] on non-interference by the Wagner Group” (Borrell, cited by France24, 2022). These developments called into question the entire rationale for the EU’s intervention in the country (Plank and Bergmann, 2021).

CONCLUSIONS

On the surface, the EU has endeavoured to build a European version of a “liberal peacebuilder” in all of its facets, strengths and weaknesses. It has not been able to meet the benchmarks it set itself, especially regarding its ability to influence peacebuilding processes in FCAS. The picture is not all doom and gloom, however. The fact that the EU has developed a comprehensive strategic framework for addressing state fragility is a success, given the complexity of the EU’s multi-level decision-making system, the ambiguity and political sensitivity of the issue-area, and the difficulty of the conflict between two sets of substantive norms. The fact that this process has raised expectations and set benchmarks is highly positive, even if these are often not met. The increased perception that state fragility poses a threat to the EU can also be spun positively, as it is a reason why more resources have been devoted to FCAS. The EU has repeatedly provided rapid and effective responses to crises and violent conflicts via its humanitarian aid instruments. The EU has developed a fully-fledged and comprehensive toolbox and it is able to mobilize these instruments. Its potential to make strong contributions to peacebuilding processes is significant, as long as its member states can agree on what those contributions should be.

Nevertheless, the increased threat perception has implications for how the EU engages in FCAS and for the failures and incoherencies which characterize the EU’s approach just as much as its “comprehensiveness” ambitions. We consider that the reason for this is the unresolved contestation between two key sets of normative drivers: “solidarity” with people in FCAS, and “protection” of EU citizens. Our analysis of the policy and instruments level suggests that the influence of the protection norm has become stronger over time, corresponding with a broader trend beyond the EU of aid becoming increasingly securitized (see also Olivié and Soler, 2021). This is linked to EU member states’ increasing reflex to use EU foreign policy primarily as a vehicle for pursuing “national” security interests. The decidedly mixed record of the EU’s engagements with Afghanistan, Libya and Mali illustrates that where member states’ security interests diverge, coherence at the EU level becomes impossible, and the EU’s contribution to conflict prevention and peacebuilding is weaker as a result.

NOTES

1. We have taken the seminal 2001 Communication as the starting point for our analysis. The Communication was developed by DG RELEX from several threads that came together from the late 1990s onwards, which were integral to conflict mainstreaming within the EU’s capacity building, early warning and development policy frameworks. These processes included member state government policy units, civil society actors, researchers and other experts. The handbooks, indexes, reports and studies produced by these entities provided the foundations for the subsequent evolution of EU FCAS policy. See Carment and Schnabel (2004) for details.
2. The handbook was written by and for staff, but did not represent an official EU position.

3. The FPI Service is responsible for the operational and financial management of the Thematic Programme for Stability and Peace and the Rapid Response Pillar, which have replaced the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP) under the EU's 2021–2027 budget.

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24. Coordinating aid in fragile states: the promise of country platforms and principles for effective aid architecture

Rachael Calleja and Sarah Rose¹

INTRODUCTION

Too often, development cooperation in fragile states takes the form of multiple donors pursuing uncoordinated projects focused on short-term results – an approach that is ill-suited to strategically addressing systemic drivers of underdevelopment and fragility. Recognizing the insufficiency – and high costs – of such a disjointed response, calls for improved donor harmonization emerged in the early 2000s as part of a movement to improve the effectiveness of development assistance. Changes in donor practice – and the incentives, resources, and structural factors that shape donor behavior – have been slower to evolve. Still, donors and country partners have instituted a range of instruments and approaches to foster coordination – with a mixed record of results (Orbie et al., 2017).

More recently, the focus has shifted to aid architecture, with momentum emerging around the potential promise of country platforms, government-led coordinating bodies that bring together donors and other stakeholders to coordinate development, humanitarian, and peace-building efforts in pursuit of joint – and ideally country-led – goals. With the G20 and World Bank both advocating increased investment in country platforms (Kelly and Papoulidis, 2022), there is a need to explore the role they might play in bringing coherence and coordination to country-level engagements across a broad and proliferating landscape of development actors.

In this chapter, we examine the state of donor coordination in fragile states and identify barriers to more effective harmonization. Using a desk review of the literature on coordination and country platforms, we raise questions about the ability of the next generation of platforms to fully resolve long-standing challenges to coordination. We propose that, due to the new momentum around country platforms, it is important to understand how to maximize their effectiveness.

This chapter proceeds in four parts. We begin with a literature review of past challenges to coordination and the main coordination mechanisms that have been employed, with a focus on the role of aid architecture and country platforms in particular. The second section provides a brief description of the typical model for country platforms, while the third considers whether new platforms can overcome key barriers to coordination. Our final section discusses six principles for effective country platforms, the key trade-offs and risks associated with each, and considerations for how to manage them.

THE IMPORTANCE OF DONOR COORDINATION IN FRAGILE STATES AND BARRIERS TO PROGRESS

Poor coordination between providers working in the same country is widely recognized as a serious challenge that can hinder the effectiveness of official development assistance (ODA) (Nunnenkamp et al., 2016). For providers, fragmentation not only increases transactions costs (Acharya et al., 2006), but the absence of coordination can lead to providers with similar preferences concentrating spending in key sectors to the detriment of others (Halonen-Akatwijuka, 2007), and can lower visibility of broader in-country contextual dynamics due to the absence of shared spaces for dialogue (Ingram and Papoulidis, 2022). For partner countries, multiple donors pursuing competing missions through disparate projects with different conditions and reporting requirements places a high administrative burden on partner country governments (Acharya et al., 2006). In fragile states, where administrative capacities are low, poorly coordinated donor actions can overburden overstretched institutions (Hart et al., 2015). In addition, uncoordinated, projectized approaches tend to focus on short-term solutions to the symptoms of fragility rather than contributing to state-building processes. Donors' relationships with line ministries end up centering around discrete, low-scale, sectoral interventions rather than focusing on strengthening resilience within systems and building capacity for service delivery at scale (Papoulidis, 2022; Rose, 2019).

Recognizing the costs of uncoordinated assistance, the international community has repeatedly committed to improve donor coordination, including in fragile states. High-level forums on aid effectiveness – in Rome (2003), Paris (2005), Accra (2008), and Busan (2011) – the OECD's Principles for Good International Engagement in Fragile States and Situations (2007), and the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States (2011), developed by the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding, all called for improved donor coordination that is more centered around country-led priorities. The Busan Agreement and New Deal extended the imperative for coordination to cover a broader range of development actors – including private sector and local stakeholders – and cooperation modalities, extending the effectiveness agenda from a focus on “aid” to wider “development” efforts. In the years since, however, there is little evidence that coordination has improved (Nunnenkamp et al., 2013; Aldasoro et al., 2010; GPEDC, 2014), including in fragile states (IDPS, 2014). Instead, a persistent gap between the words and deeds of providers on coordination remains (Aldasoro et al., 2010), with evidence of continued fragmentation despite international effectiveness commitments (Nunnenkamp et al., 2013, 2016). In fragile states in particular, assessments of progress towards implementing the New Deal found that lack of coordination created a state of “limbo” (IDPS, 2014). These challenges remain despite evidence that coordination can improve poverty reduction, governance, and the effectiveness of cooperation (Bourguignon and Platteau, 2015).

If coordination is necessary for development effectiveness, and providers have repeatedly committed to improving coordination, then why has progress lagged behind? Broadly, the literature presents three main answers to why donor coordination has often faltered, including in fragile states. The first relates to donor-specific factors that limit the incentives for coordination. Chief among them is the understanding that donors often seek to use ODA to advance political, strategic, or commercial self-interests rather than focusing solely on development objectives (Alesina and Dollar, 2000), including when working in fragile states (Bergmann and Furness, Chapter 23 in this volume). By pursuing their own self-interest, donors' incen-

tives to coordinate are limited by whether their interests align with others. When poorly aligned, providers may seek to use their allocations to compete against others for influence in partner countries (Öhler, 2013; Fuchs et al., 2015; Carbone, 2017). Coordination can limit the ability for providers to use ODA activities to “plant their flag” in a way that raises their profile in the host country and with important domestic political audiences (Öhler, 2013; Clemens and Kremer, 2016). While coordination challenges linked to provider interests are often acute for bilateral actors, multilateral donors, while not immune from political pressures placed by powerful member states, tend to pursue strategies that are less subject to geostrategic priorities and foster better coordination (Clemens and Kremer, 2016).

The second challenge to donor coordination pertains to donor-level institutional factors, including donors’ organizational structures and procedures (Orbie et al., 2017; Klingebiel et al., 2016; Olivé and Pérez, 2016). Within donor governments, the complexity of aid management systems can make it difficult to coordinate intra-donor activities (Olivé and Pérez, 2016; Rose, 2019). In the United States, for instance, there are over 20 separate agencies that manage foreign assistance. In fragile states, the State Department, Department of Defense, and US Agency for International Development are often prominent. However, while these agencies may share broad objectives, each views the problems of a particular fragile state – and the strategy to address them – through a lens colored by its own mission and mandate; these strategies do not always sum to a collective goal, and may in fact undermine one another (Rose, 2019). Interagency coordination efforts often get bogged down by bureaucratic turf battles, limited funding, or unclear authorities (Rose, 2019, 2020a). Similar challenges have been noted in so-called “whole-of-government” approaches – used by countries including Canada, Sweden, and Belgium – which aim to improve coherence between security and development engagement by design (OECD, 2005).

Staffing constraints and the legal requirements of some agencies may also limit the organizations’ capacity to coordinate (Klingebiel et al., 2016; Orbie et al., 2017; Rose, 2019). Smaller donor agencies, for instance, may have fewer staff resources available to engage in coordination, which is often complex and time-consuming. Since performance assessments for individual staff tend to focus more on their programmatic engagement – and often their ability to move funding out the door – rather than their coordination efforts, there is little incentive for staff to devote scarce – and often overstretched – time on coordination.

Differences in institutional practices across donors can also hamper coordination. For instance, differences related to agency-specific legal requirements for results reporting, which require providers to attribute aid to outputs and outcomes, may be less attainable through coordinated implementation as working together could blur the ability to attribute results to specific agencies (Klingebiel et al., 2016). Similarly, different planning timelines, geographical centers of decision-making, primary government interlocutors, modes of engagement and terminology can complicate coordination, especially where there is little understanding of these processes across institutions (Rose, 2019; Rose and Plant, 2020).

Third, several studies have noted that factors and conditions in partner countries can also act as barriers to coordination (Klingebiel et al., 2016; Orbie et al., 2017). The interests of partner countries, for instance, may be at odds with coordination to the degree that fragmentation improves their bargaining position vis-à-vis potential conditionalities from aid activities (Klingebiel et al., 2016; Bourguignon and Platteau, 2015). Moreover, partner country capacities can either facilitate or hinder coordination, whereby coordination is more likely in countries where the government is able to lead the process, including through the creation of

a national development strategy that providers can then support (Carbone, 2017; Klingebiel et al., 2016; Hearn, 2016; McGillivray and Taye, Chapter 20 in this volume).

While such barriers for coordination broadly apply to all partner countries, Faust et al. (2013) argue that the nature of fragility may provide an extra barrier to coordination. Specifically, they suggest that coordination in fragile states is particularly difficult due to the cognitive challenge linked to uncertainties around the triggers and drivers of development and their interaction with fragility. The basic idea is that the difficulty with identifying the root causes of fragility – in part due to the complexity of defining and diagnosing fragility – means that there may not be a common understanding of the nature of the problem around which donor approaches can be harmonized. As a result, recommendations to “focus on state-building” are functionally useless for coordination, as the genericness of the concept makes it difficult to align diverse strategies towards coordinated actions (Faust et al., 2013); Papoulidis (2022) makes a similar point about “resilient statebuilding”, noting that early guidance lacked a theory of change to diagnose fragility and move towards resilience. As a result, coordination in fragile states can be particularly difficult due to a limited common understanding of: (1) how “fragility” is conceptualized (consider the range of different approaches including the “Authority, Legitimacy, Capacity” method (Carment et al., 2008), the OECD’s multidimensional fragility approach (OECD, 2020), and the World Bank’s Harmonized List of Fragile and Conflict-Affected States (World Bank, 2021)); (2) the causes of fragility in any given case; and (3) different understandings of recommendations and appropriate responses.

A further challenge to donor coordination in fragile states is posed by the inherent difficulty of coordinating across the humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding efforts. For decades, the international community has recognized the disconnect between short-term humanitarian response and long-term development assistance. Increasingly, security or peacebuilding assistance is included in calls to create better alignment among disciplines: the so-called humanitarian-development-peace “nexus.” The nexus concept is based around the idea that support for humanitarian, development, and security needs must be more jointly coherent, complementary, and take place simultaneously – rather than sequentially – and in an integrated way, especially in situations in a protracted state of conflict or fragility (OECD, 2019). Lack of coordination among the three can contribute to unintended consequences that perpetuate or exacerbate underlying drivers of fragility. For instance, Medinilla et al. (2019) note that humanitarian aid on its own can shift power dynamics, become a contestable resource, and be instrumentalized for political gain.

While humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding goals often overlap, they are typically funded through separate financing models and funding streams, planned on different timelines, and implemented by different staff – and sometimes entirely different donor agencies. There are also different normative frameworks across the three sectors that donors must grapple with; while humanitarian principles encourage political neutrality, grappling with peacebuilding – and development – is inherently political. All of these create barriers for international providers to, individually or collectively, create a bridge between crisis response and a transition through recovery and longer-term development and resilience (Rose, 2019; Medinilla et al., 2019).

APPROACHES FOR COORDINATION IN FRAGILE STATES

Despite the many barriers to coordination, providers have developed several formal approaches for joining-up action in fragile contexts. These approaches can be divided into two categories. The first includes the individual instruments and mechanisms used to foster coordination. Typical coordination instruments work to develop a common understanding of the challenges partners face, the strategic objectives for development, or to pool funding to support joint action (DFID, 2010; Papoulidis et al., 2020; Papoulidis, 2011; IEG, 2011). Notably, three key instruments have been used in fragile states to coordinate priorities, activities and funding. These are:

1. **Joint needs assessments and analysis:** Often viewed as the first step in coordinated action, joint needs assessments provide an analysis of the country context to develop a common understanding of the “sources of fragility and the priorities for assistance” (DFID, 2010, p. 2). These assessments can be used either in the aftermath of conflict or in cases where conflict has started to spread (Papoulidis et al., 2020). They can also be used as an input into other coordination mechanisms and as a basis for raising funds (DFID, 2010) (e.g. Darfur Joint Assessment Mission (D-JAM)).
2. **Common strategic frameworks:** Strategic frameworks can follow joint assessments to provide a joint vision for aligning the priorities, activities, outcomes, and financing of national and international stakeholders for a period up to two years (DFID, 2010; Papoulidis, 2011; United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office, 2007). Such frameworks bring together engagement across multiple sectors (including security and development) and serve as “compacts” between providers and the host government (e.g. Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) Country Assistance Framework).
3. **Multi-donor trust funds (MDTFs):** MDTFs are joint funding modalities that pool development resources and disburse funds via a single channel (DFID, 2010). Typically managed by a trustee organization, such as the UN or World Bank, MDTFs provide a dedicated mechanism for funding activities agreed between the providers and the trustee organization (IEG, 2011). The pooling mechanism allows providers to share both the political and fiduciary risk of engagement (DFID, 2010), while for partner countries, pooled mechanisms can minimize the transaction costs for governments by reducing the number of parallel reporting structures (IEG, 2011). MDTFs can also allow for shared attribution; though where voting shares are weighted based on contributions, donors that provide comparatively smaller amounts may have concerns about their level of influence and the potential for misalignment with their objectives and national interests (Reinsberg et al., 2017). An example of an MDTF is the Afghanistan Reconstruction Fund.

In each case, the purpose of the instrument is to provide a framework for aligning donor activities behind common goals, to ensure that resources flowing into partner countries match domestically owned plans, and to reduce the negative effects of fragmented development engagement. Other instruments for coordination in fragile states include in-country coordinating structures, like central ODA coordination units or thematic working groups, or division of labor agreements that can also establish guidelines for donor coordination.

While such instruments are designed to deepen coordination, each is limited in terms of its ability to foster joined-up working. Joint needs assessments, for instance, are sometimes viewed as “supply-driven” and “technical exercises” that deliver inconsistent outcomes,

particularly when institutional commitment to the assessment, and corresponding plans for action, are uneven due to differing incentives across partners (Garrasi and Allen, 2016). MDTFs, for instance, have shown mixed evidence of their ability to promote harmonization and alignment and can sometimes increase transaction costs through using separate approval processes to manage pool funding (Barakat et al., 2012). Similarly, lessons learned from early strategic frameworks have highlighted the importance of domestic ownership over plans, and cross-sectoral integration, as critical for ensuring that multiple instruments act as complementary efforts to support outcomes (United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office, 2007). And none of these approaches inherently tries to address concerns about projectized assistance and the proliferation of discrete, targeted, often short-term aid projects.

A second category of coordination approaches involves broader organizational structures designed to institutionalize coordination. These types of systems – or “aid architecture” – often incorporate both structures and processes for coordinating development cooperation with domestic priorities and ensuring mutual accountability (Papoulidis, 2011). While literature on these structures is limited and typically focused on single-case studies, country platforms are often considered a main type of aid architecture for coordination in fragile states.

Put simply, country platforms are government-led organizational structures designed to improve coordination on reforms and investments in an individual country to ensure alignment of donors’ and other partners’ actions with government-led development – and sometimes peacebuilding or security – priorities. While country platforms may share some features of other coordination mechanisms – incorporating joint assessments and common strategic frameworks, for instance – they are different from these in structure and scope. They aim to support the formulation and implementation of policy goals by setting clear organizational structures for decision-making, dialogue, and coordination between government and external stakeholders – including donors, civil society, and the private sector – at political, technical, and operational levels. They offer a more comprehensive coordination structure that is fundamentally oriented around policy goals rather than projects. Country platforms can be single-sector or issue based,² but they can be particularly valuable when they steer an integrated, cross-sectoral strategy (Freeman et al., 2016). The G20 particularly emphasized that country platforms should prioritize working across peacebuilding, humanitarian, and development efforts, where historically coordination has struggled (G20 EPG, 2018).

Country platforms should be customized to reflect local context and priorities and may differ somewhat in structure across countries (G20, 2020), but they often share a multi-tiered format composed of three core elements (Papoulidis, 2020; Papoulidis et al., 2020):

- **High-level steering group:** At the top is a high-level steering group, often led or co-led by the president or prime minister of the partner country with participation or co-leadership of donors and multilateral organizations. Other stakeholders, including implementing partners, the private sector, and civil society, may also participate. The steering group sets high level strategy and secures commitments around resources.
- **Sector-based groups:** Below the steering group sit sector-based groups, often led by individual ministers, which bring together technical experts from the government, donor organizations, and other stakeholders, including civil society and the private sector, to establish sector policies and determine how projects support domestic priorities.

- **Working-level secretariat:** The base tier is a working-level secretariat, often led by the ministry of planning, which manages the day-to-day operations of the platform, including communications, analysis, and reporting (Papoulidis, 2020; Freeman et al., 2016).

In theory, these tiers work together to ensure alignment between political, technical, and operational levels. Taken together, the three-tiered platform system works to support coordinated action, while ensuring that development remains domestically owned and led, and that all actors are mutually accountable to the process. When done well, country platforms can bring together four types of coordination under one architecture: coordination across levels of government in partner countries, coordination between governments and the international community and other external stakeholders, coordination across donors and other external stakeholders, and coordination across the multiple sectors spanning the development, humanitarian, and peacebuilding interests that interact with one another in fragile states.

COUNTRY PLATFORMS: NEW MOMENTUM AND POTENTIAL

In recent years, momentum has emerged around the promise of country platforms to align international aid with country priorities, mobilize new investments toward these goals, create common standards of engagement, and bring coherence to the proliferation of development actors engaged in a fragile state. In late 2018, the G20 Eminent Persons Group on Global Financial Governance (2018) called for the international financial institutions and other donors to build effective country platforms to harmonize and rationalize overall contributions and unlock greater private sector investment. Similarly, the OECD's 2020 States of Fragility report highlighted the three-tiered platform model and affirmed its value for coordination in fragile states (OECD, 2020), while the World Bank's Strategy for Fragility, Conflict, and Violence for 2020–2025 highlighted country platforms as a method for enhancing “development impact by improving coordination on reforms and investments aimed at addressing key drivers of fragility” (World Bank Group, 2020, p. 54). Indeed, in 2019, the World Bank announced that it would work to stand up new country platforms, initially with a set of 11 countries (Igoe, 2019).

While attention to country platforms may be new, the structures themselves are not. Over the last 20 years, country platforms have been implemented in a variety of countries – including Afghanistan, Haiti, South Sudan, Timor-Leste, Somalia, Liberia, and Sierra Leone – with varying degrees of success (Kelly and Papoulidis, 2022; Papoulidis, 2011). As the G20 and World Bank lead renewed efforts to establish country platforms and revitalize country-level coordination for development, a key question is whether a new generation of country platforms will support more effective coordination and development in fragile states, especially across an increasingly diverse group of development actors and challenges.

At the most basic level, the ability for country platforms to advance coordination across providers depends on whether, and to what degree, donors choose to work with and through coordination mechanisms rather than pursuing individual action. Particularly in fragile states, there are some clear incentives for providers to engage in coordinated efforts. For instance, coordinated and collaborative approaches not only provide opportunities to share fiduciary and political risks associated with allocating funds (Guder, 2009), but can also offer opportunities to contribute more substantively to deeper state-building development processes than may be possible through individual, or activity-based, engagement.

The question then, is whether the next generation of country platforms is likely to fare better in its ability to encourage engagement. With traditional providers, the challenges to coordinating and working via country platforms are likely to be the same as in prior iterations. Providers are facing domestic environments that are increasingly hostile to development spending, creating pressure on agencies not only to achieve development outcomes but also to demonstrate domestic benefit for home constituents. Such pressures will continue to create disincentives for coordination. As noted above, an important exception to this are multilateral donors, which tend to be viewed as less politically motivated and able to act more neutrally for development outcomes.

At the same time, the landscape of development cooperation in fragile states is likely to become more complex. Providers of South–South cooperation – such as China, Turkey, and South Africa – are increasingly engaging in fragile contexts (Rawhani et al., 2017; Schiere, 2014), while demand for a broader range of actors to scale-up engagements in fragile states – including development finance institutes that support private sector development – is growing (Collier et al., 2019). While new actors can create opportunities and bring additional resources to complex challenges, they also bring different incentives, modalities, and ways of working that may further limit potential coordination.

For the new generation of country platforms, key questions are whether platforms can attract substantive engagement from a broader range of development actors, with diverse interests and incentives, and how or whether the presence of different blocs of actors may influence coordination. For instance, strong engagement from DAC donors may limit the willingness of China or other non-DAC actors to engage via country platforms, which could be seen as pseudo-DAC initiatives. In this case, the platform secretariat or multilaterals supporting the platform would need to find ways of fostering robust side engagements from non-DAC actors to ensure coherence in fragile contexts. Alternatively, if China and non-DAC actors joined platforms, this could incentivize deeper engagement from DAC members to ensure they remain active in key spaces for dialogue and coordination. While the extent to which different actors choose to engage via platforms remains to be seen, the success of country platforms will ultimately be based on their ability to attract engagement through, rather than outside of, the architecture they create.

Similarly, the issue of incentives also raises questions about the ability for next generation country platforms to correct for challenges related to supporting the development-humanitarian-security nexus. Evidence from Somalia, for instance, suggests that while an earlier iteration of the country platform was structured to coordinate across development, humanitarian, and security needs, progress towards achieving an integrated “nexus” among the three was slow, with donors largely failing to change siloed approaches to sectoral funding and specialization (Medinilla et al., 2019). Somalia’s country platform has since introduced a steering committee and joint secretariat to work across the peace and development pillars. Indeed, the success of country platforms will hinge on the ability of providers to adapt ways of working to allow for more flexible and joined up action – not only with others but within their own development systems.

LESSONS LEARNED: PRINCIPLES OF EFFECTIVE COUNTRY PLATFORMS

Even while questions about the ability of country platforms to solve coordination challenges have persisted in fragile states for decades, current momentum suggests there is value in understanding how to implement them well. This section identifies six principles for effective country platforms, discusses key trade-offs and risks country platforms may face in fragile states, and outlines considerations for how to weigh and manage these challenges.

Country Platforms Should be Government Owned and Led

Since the days of the Paris Declaration, most calls for coordination have emphasized that it should center around local priorities and put local actors – especially domestic governments – in the lead. Domestic leadership is important for several reasons.³ First, programming in support of a particular objective is likely to be more successful and better sustained when the government has bought into the goal and is invested in its achievement (Dunning et al., 2017; Reid et al., 2014). Second, country leadership can promote capacity through learning by doing (Glennie et al., 2012). Lockhart (2018) describes donors who promote local leadership as following a “sovereignty strategy,” helping local actors create or rebuild institutions and systems of governance, thereby improving their legitimacy. Perhaps more fundamentally, ensuring local leadership is a step toward shifting power dynamics. Donor organizations are increasingly recognizing the need to grapple with the power imbalances and discriminatory structures that have been historically embedded in the practice of foreign aid; in addition to being intrinsically unfavorable, these inequities may also reduce aid effectiveness (Peace Direct et al., 2020).

Because country platforms craft and steer policy, government leadership is particularly important (G20 EPG, 2018; G20, 2020; Reid et al., 2014). Haiti provides a clear example of where low country leadership contributed to the country platform’s ultimate ineffectiveness. The Interim Haiti Recovery Commission (IHRC) was established in 2010 to coordinate donor funding to the relief effort in the wake of the catastrophic earthquake that took place earlier that year. Co-chaired by the Haitian prime minister and former US President Bill Clinton, the commission was only nominally country led. Meetings were often held in English, making them inaccessible to many Haitians, and the Haitian members of the board characterized their role as merely rubber stamping the decisions of IHRC leadership (Raymond, 2015). The IHRC’s mandate expired in late 2011 and the subsequent Cooperation for Foreign Development Aid (CAED) was created, drawing lessons from the recent past, as a more government-led hub for policy dialogue, sector planning, and coordination of aid flows.

Though it is critical that country platforms be country led, trade-offs may arise between host country government leadership and expeditious decision-making and implementation. Government bureaucracies can be slow and throw up hurdles in the form of red tape. In fragile states in particular, government capacity may be weak, further slowing processes. This inefficiency can make it hard to build momentum, demonstrate the quick wins needed for initial credibility, and maintain the engagement of some external partners, like the private sector, who have shorter timelines (Reid et al., 2014).

Decisions about how to weigh efficiency relative to local ownership will depend on several factors, including the time sensitivity of engagement – which might be higher for immediate

relief efforts relative to longer-term development priorities – and may evolve over time. Where capacity is limited, donors – especially multilateral donors – may have a larger role, at least to begin with, including co-leading the platform with the government (Plant, 2020). The country platform established in Liberia after the country’s civil war was set up this way, with the World Bank and United Nations co-chairing the high-level committee, along with the president (Papoulidis, 2020). The goal, however, should be to transition increasingly to greater local leadership over time (Reid et al., 2014). For example, the first generation of the country platform in Somalia, set up to manage coordination of the New Deal compact, was heavily donor-led for its first three years but the government gradually assumed greater leadership of policy formulation and prioritization of funding (Papoulidis et al., 2020). In this case, Somalia’s country platforms also played a role in building capacity via the National Development Council – a body established to strengthen inter-governmental coordination between the federal government and member states, oversee implementation of the national development plan, and engage with international partners through the country platform – which built its government interlocutors’ capacity for internal policy formulation, prioritization, and coordination (Papoulidis, 2020). While these examples show different paths and timelines to country ownership, they highlight a key lesson emerging from the effectiveness agenda – namely, that approaches to ownership need to be adapted to the country context and the capacities or legitimacy constraints present in each case (Hart et al., 2015).

Another trade-off with government leadership revolves around the “delicate balance” that often exists between a government’s political needs and the preferences of donors (Hearn and Zimmerman, 2014). This balance may be especially precarious in fragile states where governing elites may pursue policies that advance their own interests at the expense of the broader population or where political settlements may be tenuous. Country platforms still have potential in these contexts (except in pariah states) and can be a locus for negotiating coordinated commitments and ensuring “mutual accountability,” including policy commitments by the government. In addition, in most fragile states, elite capture is not uniformly distributed across state institutions nor are its effects homogeneous across sectors. Even within malign or kleptocratic governments there can be ministries or other units more legitimately focused on expanding and improving services. Elites may even purposefully create more functional institutions to help distribute their rents or to selectively meet donor demands in areas that are relatively less important for their rent seeking behavior (Dietrich, 2011). Country platforms may also help foster growth in policy and planning capacity for some of these units which can be strengthened and repurposed over time providing new avenues for coordination.

Country Platforms Should Ensure Strong Second and Third Tier Structures

The multi-tiered model of a country platform has become a tested architecture for managing coordination. Over time, the importance of ensuring each tier is well staffed and equipped to perform its function – particularly the sectoral and working-level tiers – has become clear (Papoulidis, 2011).

Many first-generation country platforms emphasized the high-level tier, focusing less on the use of the middle tier, where the sector-based groups are responsible for discussing and shaping sector-level policy. Papoulidis et al. (2020) note that the absence of this middle tier in early country platforms in Haiti and Timor-Leste resulted in dysfunction as ministry-level

representatives – and the technical experts and international organizations that worked with them – were excluded from sector-specific policy and coordination conversations.

The secretariat level is also critical to the country platform’s overall functioning, especially in fragile states where capacity is limited (Papoulidis, 2020; Papoulidis et al., 2020; Reid et al., 2014). Papoulidis (2020) notes that in the past, secretariats were often too small to effectively support country platforms. Where this tier has been poorly staffed, country platforms have struggled to manage partners and ensure their engagement, communicate effectively, and undertake the kinds of progress reviews that could help the higher-level tiers identify and respond to challenges as they arise (Papoulidis, 2011, 2020).

Country Platforms Should Have a Well-Articulated Purpose and a Clear Strategy to Achieve It

As noted above, country platforms can be narrower or broader in scope, covering a single sector or the entirety of the national development and security plans. A clear definition of the purpose and scope of the country platform is important for determining leadership, identifying participants, and getting their buy-in and shared commitment (Plant, 2020; Reid et al., 2014).

Still, while there is little question about the need for a clearly defined purpose, there are some risks to manage in how it is articulated. First, is the risk of expectations management among participants and other stakeholders. The stated purpose and timeframe to achieve it must be ambitious enough to elicit commitment but not so ambitious as to risk disenchantment – and potential withdrawal of support – if expectations are not met (Reid et al., 2014). Second, strategies must leave room for adaptation and iteration as well as sufficiently flexible funding to enable these shifts. The G20 Reference Framework for Effective Country Platforms (2020) notes that country platforms “should be more a pragmatic process of ‘learning by doing’ than a pre-defined and rigid concept.”

Country Platforms Should Build on Existing Coordination Efforts, Where Possible

In most fragile states, there are pre-existing coordination structures; country platforms should seek to build on these, where possible (G20, 2020). Building on or adapting existing structures can reduce duplication and lower start-up costs but may not always be desirable if current structures lack strong local ownership or strong multi-stakeholder involvement (Freeman et al., 2016). Freeman et al. (2016) recommend the process of creating a country platform should first assess the landscape of existing coordination bodies and ask whether the new platform and its objectives could join an existing mechanism, adapt the mechanism to accommodate new goals and ways of working, or whether it will be necessary to create a new architecture.

Country Platforms Should Include a Wide Range of Partners

The G20 (2020) encourages country platforms to mobilize a wide range of development partners, from donor organizations and development partners to civil society to the private sector. Some country platforms have even successfully brought in local government actors. In Somalia, for instance, Puntland and the Somali states were highly focused on power and resource sharing decisions, so steps were taken to ensure their representation in the country platform (Somalia Ministry of Planning, Investment and Economic Development, 2017). An

inclusive approach can help foster better consultation and credibility and ensure goals are well aligned (Reid et al., 2014). But the more partners there are and the more diverse their views, the more unwieldy and administratively challenging the coordination process becomes. The early version of the country platform in Somalia, for example, had 50 participants in each of nine sectoral pillars, and over 100 at the High Level Partnership, the top steering group tier. The government found this was not a conducive environment for strategic discussions (Rose, 2020b). Reid et al. (2014) highlight the need to take a strategic approach to partnership, balancing a desire for inclusivity with a need to manage the potential escalation of transaction costs. One approach is to keep core groups relatively small but invite representatives from external stakeholder groups to participate in relevant discussions and debates (Papoulidis, 2011).

Strategic selection of partners based on their commitment to the clearly defined purpose and mission can help avoid unhelpful proliferation. There are also governance and management decisions that can help ease the transaction costs of managing a large, diverse group. Creating a clear and consistent set of rules and standards that govern processes and relationships can increase trust; transparency should be chief among these standards. Investing in communications and partner engagement is also valuable, reinforcing the need, noted above, for a strong working-level tier (Reid et al., 2014).

Country Platforms Should Invest in Learning and Contribute to Broader Lessons on Good Practices

While country platforms have been employed in a range of forms and countries over the last two decades, efforts to take stock of these approaches and identify lessons learned have been limited. Planning and executing regular internal reviews can help country platforms learn from their own experiences and apply that learning in an iterative way to improve practice over time (Reid et al., 2014; G20, 2020). A commitment to documenting and sharing these lessons not only helps improve the efficiency of individual platforms but also improves the collective effort over time. The G20 (2020) has committed to being a learning hub for country platforms, gathering and exchanging ideas about best practices and lessons learned.

CONCLUSION

In an increasingly complex development landscape, with a proliferation of development actors, the coordination of development action is crucial for ensuring that activities are aligned with domestic objectives and systems. In fragile states, which often face complex and interacting development, humanitarian, and security challenges and where capacity is often in short supply, systems that can coordinate efforts both across sectors and actors have long been seen as best practice for ensuring effective cooperation. Despite featuring centrally in aid effectiveness doctrine for almost two decades, progress towards better coordinated development efforts has been slow at best.

In recent years, country platforms have emerged as a potential solution to coordination challenges in fragile states and are actively being pursued by the World Bank and G20. Yet questions remain about how well these platforms can work in practice. Specifically, it seems unlikely that new country platforms will be able to overcome the challenges that have long hindered meaningful coordination including through past generations of platform structures.

This is particularly clear in the post-2008 financial crisis period, where donor interests and incentives are increasingly prioritized alongside downward pressure on budgets and demands to demonstrate clear results from development spending.

But country platforms nevertheless hold promise for helping to shift donor engagement from disjointed, projectized approaches to more coherent, standards-based contributions toward government-led policy goals, while building government capacity for policy formulation and coordination around execution. As the international community moves ahead with plans to stand-up new country platforms, it should seek to learn lessons from past experiences. The goal of the new generation of aid architecture in fragile states should be to ensure that the new systems are fit-for-purpose and structured to foster ownership, encourage buy-in across providers, and learn and adapt over time. Seeking to maximize the effectiveness of critical aid architecture systems, in which donors have underinvested for too long, can support more effective cooperation and ultimately, if done well, move the needle on complex development challenges.

NOTES

1. The authors would like to thank Jonathan Papoulidis and anonymous peer reviewers for their helpful comments and suggestions.
2. The G20 EPG report also noted that some platforms can be geared towards “global” or “regional” challenges – such as the Global Infrastructure Facility or African Development Bank’s Investment forum.
3. The claims highlighted here are based more on theory, intuition, and anecdotal evidence; concrete evidence on the effects of aid practices that emphasize local “ownership” remains limited (Dunning et al., 2017; Knack, 2013).

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