(Re)building fragile, post-conflict states: evolution, dilemmas and the role of research

Guest Seminar Series, Autumn Term
International Development Department, University of Birmingham
Birmingham, 11 October 2012

Andrea Edoardo Varisco
Post-war Reconstruction and Development Unit
University of York
Outline

1. The three-phase evolution of the concepts of fragility and post-conflict state building

2. The theoretical and practical dilemmas of this international agenda

3. Which role for research?
Essential Definitions:

1. Three-phase evolution

State Building:
- “Actions undertaken by international or national actors to establish, reform, or strengthen the institutions of the state and their relation to society” (Call & Wyeth, 2008)

Fragile States:
- “Countries where the government cannot or will not deliver core functions to the majority of its people, including the poor” (DFID, 2005)
Pre-1990 evolution

End of World War II:
• State-led reconstruction and development efforts (West Germany, Europe, Japan)

From late 1970s – early 1980s:
• Washington Consensus:
  Deregulation, minimal role of the government, neo-liberal policies supported by Bretton Woods institutions
End of the Cold War

Increased number of intrastate conflicts

Shorter length in the first post-war years
• 56 conflicts ended in 1989-2000

Increased number of states
• 26 UN access in 1991-1994

More UNSC resolutions, more peacekeeping operations
• 8 UNPK operations in 1989-1993

End of the Cold War

Source: Gleditsch, 2008
Reconsidering the state

- Phase 1: Early reflection (1990s – 2000)
- Phase 3: Proactive engagement (2005 – today)
Phase 1: Early reflection (1990s-2000)

**Historical events**
- State-led development of the Asian Tigers
- Longer-term approach to post-war recovery (Cambodia, Kosovo, Sierra Leone)

**Academic literature**
- Criticism to the orthodoxy of that time (Leftwich, 1993)
- Good governance agenda (Grindle, 1997)

**International policy agenda**
- First reconsiderations of the role of the state (An Agenda for Peace, World Development Reports, Promotion of good governance)

**British policy agenda**
- Initial commitments to weak and ineffective states in DFID WP and speeches

**Historical events**
- 9/11
- Interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq

**Academic discourse**
- Good enough governance agenda (Grindle, 2004)

**International policy agenda**
- State weakness sees as a threat to security and development
- First policy answers to tackle state weaknesses (LICUS)

**British policy agenda**
- PRDE team (later fragile states team) uses the concept of state fragility
Phase 3: Proactive engagement (2005-today)

*Historical events*
- Post-war reconstruction in Afghanistan and Iraq

*Academic literature*
- Inclusiveness and legitimacy (Ghani, 2005, Rocha Menocal, 2010)
- Merging of state building and peacebuilding (Brahimi, 2007, Call & Cousins, 2007)

*International policy agenda*
- State building as policy answer to fragility (OECD DAC)
- Capacity development, bottom-up approaches (Paris Declaration, G7+)

*British policy agenda*
- Proactive engagement with state building and fragility (more articulated answer to post-conflict state building, more funds to fragile states)
Phase 3: Proactive engagement  (2005-today)

ODA to fragile and non-fragile states 1995-2007 (Source: OECD DAC)
Phase 3: Proactive engagement (2005-today)

*Per capita ODA to fragile and non-fragile states: 1995-2007 (Source: OECD DAC)*
Phase 3: Proactive engagement (2005-today)

**Historical events**
- Post-war reconstruction in Afghanistan and Iraq

**Academic literature**
- Inclusiveness and legitimacy (Ghani, 2005, Rocha Menocal, 2010)
- Merging of state building and peacebuilding (Brahimi, 2007, Call & Cousens, 2007)

**International policy agenda**
- State building as policy answer to fragility (OECD DAC)
- Capacity development, bottom-up approaches (Paris Declaration, g7+)

**British policy agenda**
- Proactive engagement with state building and fragility (more articulated answer to post-conflict state building, more funds to fragile states)
British policy in fragile environments

Increased engagement with fragility and post-war state building
- UK global leadership of the in the field of development (OECD DAC)

Whole of government approaches
- Comprehensive response to fragility (Stabilisation Unit, Conflict Pools)

Increasing synergy with the academic literature
- Promotion of a better reflection on fragility and state building
  (Integrated approaches, increased funding to governance research)
Three-phase evolution

Reasons of change (why)
• Triggers: political or economic drivers, different examples of successful recovery or development, historical convergence or sudden events
• Old visions, remedies and policies no longer sufficient to face an international mutated environment

Processes of change (how)
• Reflection on different concepts and solutions at academic and policy level
• Re-evaluation or modification of old notions and policy answers
• Introduction of new approaches
• Progressive convergence, synergy and exchange between academic literature and policy-making
2. Theoretical and practical dilemmas

Paris and Sisk (2009):

- *Footprint dilemmas*: Scope, size, scale, role, assertiveness of international actors
- *Duration dilemmas*: Length of international presence
- *Participation dilemmas*: Central political actors vs all local groups
- *Dependency dilemmas*: Level of dependence on international actors. Dependency and long-term sustainability
- *Coherence dilemmas*: Organisational (coordination) and normative (mismatch and inconsistency between values and actual policies)
2.1: Policy coherence

Source: ODI 2011
2.2: The complexity of the aim

![Graph showing the complexity of state functions with countries plotted on a scale]

Scope of state functions

Source: Fukuyama 2004
2.2: The complexity of the aim

Scope of state functions

Strength of state

New Zealand 1995
Japan 2001
New Zealand 1981
Russia 2000
Japan 1980
USSR 1980

Source: Fukuyama 2004
2.2: The complexity of the aim

- Fukuyama (2004):
  - **Scope**: Different functions and goals taken by governments
  - **Strength (capacity)**: Ability of states to plan and execute policies and to enforce laws

- Fragile, post-conflict states: limited strength and scope

- International state building: the liberal state model (democracy, representation, market economy).
  Getting to Denmark?

- Willingness and capacity

- Which legitimacy and acceptance among the local populations?
  Hybrid political orders, informal economy, traditional justice
2.3: The nature of the enterprise

- State building as an external intervention in another country - challenge to sovereignty and state legitimacy
- Outside intervention to foster self-government: mismatch between ends and means
- “Universal” values vs local practices and traditions – ‘Big-bang’ approach
- Empowering locals vs urgency and funds limitations
- Aid dependency, aid volatility, imports
2.3: Aid dependency

Source: Barakat 2011
2.3: Aid volatility

![Graph showing aid volatility](image)

*Source: WDR team calculations based on OECD 2010d.*
2.4: Peacebuilding and state building

Supporting inclusive peace processes and agreements

Building mechanisms to resolve conflict peacefully

Addressing causes and effects of conflict

Source: DFID 2010
3. Which role for research?

- The Influence of DFID-Sponsored State Building-Oriented Research on British Policy in Fragile, Post-Conflict Environments

- Project, programmes, documents on R4D; Ad hoc research; Evaluations and assessments

- Three clusters, three country case studies (Afghanistan, Nepal, Sierra Leone)
The role of research

- **Understanding conflict**: CRISE and Stewart (Horizontal inequalities)
- **Political settlements**: Crisis States Programme
- **Effective Governance**: Centre for the Future State and Moore (Taxation)
Questions?

(Thank you very much for your attention!)