

**TOPIC GUIDE ON
FRAGILE STATES**

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About this guide

This resource guide introduces some of the best literature on the causes, characteristics and impact of state fragility and the challenge of aid effectiveness and lessons learned from international engagement in these contexts. It highlights the major critical debates that are ongoing within the international development and academic community in relation to understanding and responding to fragile situations. It is intended primarily as a reference guide for policymakers. New publications and emerging issues will be incorporated on a quarterly basis.

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About the GSDRC

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Introduction: Fragile states on the international agenda

Over the past 5 years, so-called 'fragile states' and how best to engage with them have emerged as a key priority in the international development community. This concern has surfaced from the confluence of several factors, including (i) an emphasis on human security and peace building; (ii) a concern with the relationship between state effectiveness and development; and (iii) a belief that underdevelopment and insecurity (individual and international) are related.

One billion people, including about 340m of the world's extreme poor, are estimated to live in this small group of between 30-50 'fragile' countries, located mainly in Africa, that are 'falling behind and falling apart' (Collier, 2007). There is now consensus that without a strengthened model of international engagement, these countries will continue to fall behind.

It is recognised that delivering aid in these contexts cannot be 'business as usual', and that fragile situations require a co-ordinated, cross-sectoral approach that combines support to state building and peace building and uses whole-of-government approaches. But fragile states are 'under-aided', even against allocation models that take their performance into account. Aid flows are excessively volatile, poorly coordinated, and often reactive rather than preventive.

The fragile states agenda is surrounded by a great deal of critical debate. The term itself is highly contested - some argue it implicitly contains normative assumptions of how states should perform and a misguided notion that all states will eventually converge around a Western model of statehood. But in spite of the many criticisms of how fragile states have been conceptualised, few would dispute the severe impacts this group of states impose on the security and well being of their populations, or that without progress in them, the MDGs are unlikely to be met.

Collier, P., 2007, *The Bottom Billion: Why the Poorest Countries are Failing and What can be Done About it*, Oxford University Press, Oxford

<http://blids.ids.ac.uk/cf/opacsf/detailed.cfm?RN=262811>

This seminal book argues the real challenge of development is the small group of countries at the bottom that are falling behind and often falling apart. These countries, and the billion people who live in them, are caught in one or another of four traps: the conflict trap; the natural resources trap; the trap of being landlocked with bad neighbours; and the trap of bad governance in a small country. Whilst these traps are not inescapable, standard solutions will not work: aid has been ineffective, and globalisation has made things worse. A new mix of policy instruments is required, supported by a bold new plan of action for the G8.

Andersen, L., 2008, 'Fragile States on the International Agenda', Part I in *Fragile Situations: Background papers*, Danish Institute for International Studies, Copenhagen

<http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3321>

What are the underlying tenets of the fragile states debate? This research from the Danish Institute for International Studies argues the fragile states debate is essentially about politics. Focusing on the security-development nexus and on state building, it suggests the debate concerns principles that are fundamental to the way we perceive the present world order. This creates a tension between idealism and realism. There is a need to prioritize and make choices between different values.

Zoellick, R., 'Fragile States: Securing Development', *Survival*, Vol 50, No. 6, December 2008 pp. 67-84

<http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3211>

How can security, governance and economics be synthesised so as to secure the development of fragile states? This journal article by the President of the World Bank Group argues that in order to address fragile situations effectively, a new framework is required that goes beyond the development model. This new framework involves building security, legitimacy, governance and economy. It is about securing development – bringing security and development together to smooth the transition from conflict to peace and to embed stability so that development can take hold.

Department for International Development, 2005, 'Why we Need to Work More Effectively in Fragile States', DFID, London

<http://www.gsdr.org/go/display/document/legacyid/1291>

Why has aid not reduced poverty in fragile states? Why do donors need to work more effectively in fragile states, and how should they go about this? This policy paper from the Department for International Development (DFID) brings together the latest analysis from DFID and others on how to make development more effective in fragile states. It sets out some objectives and makes commitments about how DFID will work differently in the future.

Why fragile states matter

Impact on MDGs, poverty and growth

Fragile states are often characterised by ongoing violence and insecurity, a legacy of conflict, weak governance and the inability to deliver the efficient and equitable distribution of public goods. They have consistently grown more slowly than other low-income countries, and the rate of extreme poverty is rising within them. They lag behind in meeting all the Millennium Development Goals; with a 50% higher prevalence of malnutrition, 20% higher child mortality, and 18% lower primary education completion rates than other low-income countries (World Bank, 2007).

Global Monitoring Report, 2007, 'Weak Growth and Less Poverty Reduction in Fragile States', Chapter I in *Global Monitoring Report: Confronting the Challenges of Gender Equality and Fragile States*, World Bank, Washington

http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTGLOMONREP2007/Resources/3413191-1179404785559/Chp1-GMR07_webPDF-corrected-may-14-2007-4.pdf

Impact on vulnerable populations

It is widely acknowledged that fragility most negatively affects the poorest and the most vulnerable groups in society, including women and children. These groups experience the greatest impacts in terms of increased risk of violence, exploitation, abuse, neglect, loss of livelihood, threats to personal safety, poverty and malnutrition.

UNU-Wider, 2008, 'The Impact of Conflict and Fragility on Households: A Conceptual Framework with Reference to Widows', UNU WIDER

<http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3271>

How do mass violent conflict and a fragile environment affect households? How do poor households cope with such an environment? This paper from the United Nations University World Institute for Development Research analyses the channels through which mass violent conflict and post-conflict fragility affect households. It highlights how a fragile environment impairs a household's core functions, boundaries and choice of income generating activities.

Regional and global implications of state fragility

Fragile states have been linked with a range of transnational security threats and humanitarian concerns, including; mass migration, organized crime, violent conflict, communicable diseases, environmental degradation and, more recently, terrorism. Some argue fragile states have direct 'spillover' effects on neighbouring countries, including reduced growth and destabilisation. The negative impacts of fragility across borders is often considered as justification for international intervention. Nevertheless, relatively little empirical analysis has been conducted on the 'costs' of fragile states, and some research has questioned the notion of a direct causal link between fragility and threats to international security.

Chauvet, L., Collier, P., and Hoeffler, A., 2007, 'The Cost of Failing States and the Limits to Sovereignty', UNU-WIDER Research Paper No.30, UNU, Helsinki
<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3343>

What are the costs of state failure? What implications do these costs have for sovereignty? This paper from the United Nations University World Institute for Development Economics Research estimates the costs of state failure for failing states and their neighbours. It finds that the total cost of state failure is very large and borne mainly by the neighbours of failing states. There may therefore be good reason to vest sovereignty in the region or sub-region rather than the state, empowering international intervention in the process.

Patrick, S., 2006, 'Weak States and Global Threats: Assessing Evidence of "Spillovers"', Working Paper no. 73, Center for Global Development, Washington

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=1793>

Since September 11, the 'spillover effect' – the presumed connection between weak states and a variety of transnational threats such as terrorism, weapons proliferation and organised crime - has been a key motivation behind foreign and aid policy. But is there any evidence to support the 'spillover' assertion? This paper from the Centre for Global Development explores the links between weak states and global threats, concluding that whilst weak states do often incubate global threats, this correlation is far from universal. A deeper understanding of the underlying mechanisms linking the two is required.

Iqbal, Z. and Starr, H., 2008, 'Bad Neighbors: Failed States and Their Consequences', Conflict Management and Peace Science, 2 vol. 5, pp. 315-331

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3342>

When states fail, do they destabilise entire regions? This study from Pennsylvania State University and the University of South Carolina assesses the negative effects of state collapse, focusing particularly on the spatial diffusion of these consequences. It argues that when a state collapses, neighbouring states are also likely to experience higher levels of political instability, unrest, civil war and interstate conflict. It

concludes that state failure is not contagious but some of its most negative consequences diffuse to other states.

Definitions and typologies of fragile states

This page introduces the range of terms used to describe and typologise ‘fragile states’, introducing critical perspectives on their evolution and usage.

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Definitions of fragile states and contexts

Whilst there is no internationally agreed definition of the term ‘fragile states’, or ‘fragility’, most development agencies have converged around the OECD DAC’s definition, according to which:

‘States are fragile when state structures lack political will and/or capacity to provide the basic functions needed for poverty reduction, development and to safeguard the security and human rights of their population’.
(OECD DAC, 2007)

This reflects the prevailing characterisation of state fragility as the *failure of states to perform certain functions* to meet citizens’ basic needs and expectations. Fragile states are often described as incapable of assuring basic security, maintaining rule of law and justice, or providing basic services and economic opportunities for their citizens. DFID accordingly define fragile states as: ‘those where the government cannot or will not deliver core functions to the majority of its people, including the poor’ (DFID, 2005). At the more conceptual level, some agencies understand this in terms of a fundamental failure to keep societal expectations and state capacity in equilibrium, which results in non-reciprocal state-society relations and the absence of a binding social contract.

Some recent definitions explicitly focus on lack of or weak state legitimacy as a key characteristic of fragility. The Centre for Research on Inequality and Social Exclusion, for example, defines fragile states as ‘failing, or at risk of failing, with respect to authority, comprehensive service entitlements or legitimacy’ (CRISE 2009).

There has been much criticism of the emphasis on state ‘will’ to perform certain functions on the grounds that ‘will’ is seen as a normative and nebulous concept. An alternative, non-normative definition of fragility is: ‘institutional instability undermining the predictability, transparency and accountability of public decision-making processes and the provision of security and social services to the population’ (Andersen and Engberg-Pedersen, 2008). The Crisis States Research Centre similarly defines a fragile state as one that is significantly susceptible to crisis in one or more of its sub-systems and particularly vulnerable to internal and external shocks and domestic and international conflicts (2007).

It is increasingly common for development agencies to conceptualise and discuss fragility in relation to its opposite - resilience. Resilient states are able to maintain order and stability, keep societal expectations and capacity in equilibrium, and survive and ameliorate the negative effects of external and internal shocks.

Evolution of the term: From 'fragile states' to situations of fragility

The fragile states terminology has been much maligned as stigmatising and analytically imprecise. Many see the term 'fragile' as a pejorative and inherently political label reflecting Weberian ideals of how a 'successful' state should function. At the empirical level, it arguably does not adequately differentiate between the unique economic and socio-political dimensions of states. Others contend that in practice, state fragility is not an 'either/or' condition, but varies along a continuum of performance, as well as across areas of state function and capacity.

In recognition of the empirical and normative shortcomings of the term 'fragile states', development agencies are now increasingly favouring the much broader terminology of 'fragility' or 'situations of fragility'. These terms are also seen to better capture the fact that fragility is not exclusively determined by the nature and boundaries of states – there is a need to look beyond the state to the state of society in both assessing and addressing fragility.

Stewart, F., and Brown G., 2009, 'Fragile States', Centre for Research on Inequality, Human Security and Ethnicity (CRISE), London

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3197>

What constitutes a fragile state and how can the concept be operationalised for development policy? This working paper from CRISE proposes a three-pronged definition of fragility: states may be fragile because they lack authority, fail to provide services or lack legitimacy. Reversing these interrelated dimensions of fragility requires a tailored, comprehensive and long-term approach based on careful contextual analysis.

Stepputat, F and Engberg-Pedersen, L., 2008, 'Fragile States: Definitions, Measurements and Processes', in Fragile Situations: Background Papers, Danish Institute for International Studies, DIIS, Copenhagen

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3203>

How far is it possible to define and measure fragile states, and to distinguish between different types and processes of state fragility? This paper forms part of a report by the Danish Institute for International Studies, and argues that the debate on fragility suffers from three interlinked, mistaken assumptions. These are that: i) different fragile situations share sufficient characteristics to allow for similar types of support; ii) social change can be engineered through careful planning; and iii) that a Weberian conceptualisation of the state is a relevant goal in all fragile situations. In order to work effectively with fragile states, however, there can be no shortcut to detailed analysis of the historical evolution and specific characteristics of individual situations.

Strong/weak state terminology

Whilst the concept of fragile states is relatively new to the international agenda, there has been long-standing concern with understanding state failure in academic research.

A range of terminology has emerged which characterises the relative strength or weakness of states on a continuum; from 'weak' and 'fragile' states at one end, to 'failed' and 'collapsed' states at the other. The meaning of all these terms is contested, many of them are seen to embed inherent contradictions, and in practice the terminology is inconsistently applied. Nevertheless, they can be broadly defined as follows:

Weak states: Weak states are poor states suffering from significant "gaps" in security, performance and legitimacy (Brookings Institution). They lack control over certain areas of their territory, and therefore (critically from an international security perspective) the capacity to combat internal threats of terrorism, or insurgency. But given that so-called 'weak states' may still be capable of repression, or may exhibit authoritarian tendencies, some see this term as inherently contradictory and misleading. Furthermore, even in high capacity, well-functioning states, there can be peripheral regions where the state is weak and challenged by local actors.

Failing states: This term is often used to describe states that are substantially failing their citizens and/or are failing to achieve economic growth. But it is contentious because it is confusingly applied both to states that are failing and those at risk of failing, and it is criticised for masking the more nuanced reality that states can be failing in some respects but not others.

Failed states: A failed state is marked by the collapse of central government authority to impose order, resulting in loss of physical control of territory, and/or the monopoly over the legitimate use of force. Crucially, it can no longer reproduce the conditions for its own existence (Crisis States, 2007).

Collapsed states: Collapsed and failed states are often used interchangeably to convey a situation where the state has entirely ceased to function (Crisis States, 2007).

Crisis States Research Centre, 2007, 'Crisis, Fragile and Failed States: Definitions used by the Crisis States Research Centre', Crisis States, London
<http://www.crisisstates.com/download/drc/FailedState.pdf>

Rotberg, R., 2004, 'The Failure and Collapse of Nation-States', in When States Fail: Causes and Consequences, Princeton University Press
<http://www.gsdcrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3346>

What is a failed state? How can a failed state be distinguished from a collapsed state? This first chapter from a book published by Princeton University argues that a state's success or failure can be assessed by looking at how effectively it delivers crucial political goods.

Critiques of strong/weak terminology

Strong/weak state terminology is often criticised for being too broad-brush, for implying that all states move along set trajectories, for representing an 'end state' when in reality states can recover from failure and collapse, and for offering no way of theorising about competing (informal) systems of governance.

Recently, there has been growing realisation that characterising ‘failed’ or ‘collapsed’ states as anarchic situations completely absent of order and systems of governance is misleading: A growing body of research has demonstrated how alternative (informal) forms of order, security and governance emerge and sustain themselves in the absence of a formal state.

Zartman, W., 1995, 'Introduction: Posing the Problem of State Collapse' in Collapsed States: the Disintegration and Restoration of Legitimate Authority, Boulder, London, UK

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display/document/legacyid/1421>

What separates state collapse from conflicts and changes that occur without the state being destroyed? This chapter from the School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) at Johns Hopkins University analyses examples of state collapse in African countries and identifies five signposts of proximity to state collapse. Contemporary collapse does not involve societal ‘civilisational’ collapse - societies continue to function and to offer sources of legitimate authority. State collapse is not a short-term phenomenon but rather a long-term degenerative process. However, it is not inevitable, and many states recover their balance and return to more or less normal functions.

Hagmann T., Hoehne M., 2009, 'Failures of the State Failure Debate: Evidence from the Somali Territories', Journal of International Development, Volume 21, pp. 42-57

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3193>

Is the literature on state failure failing? This article from the Journal of International Development argues that the state failure debate is based on fundamental conceptual flaws that render its insights and recommendations unconvincing in the light of empirical evidence. Scholars too readily equate the lack of a central government with failed or anarchical states. Yet, contrary to state-centred approaches, life can and does go on with non-state actors performing many of the functions usually associated with the state.

Donor typologies of fragile states

Several development agencies use typologies of fragility, which categorize states according to the degree or nature of failure within them, in order to identify the possibilities and appropriate strategies for donor engagement. These typologies are criticized on the grounds they limit the diversity of fragile situations to a few categories, categorizing states is substantively normative, and interventions based on a categorization of countries may be harmful. Nevertheless, they are still seen as a useful way to understand (at the most basic level) state dynamics and trajectories, and how these may continually evolve.

OECD DAC International Network on Conflict and Fragility

The OECD DAC International Network on Conflict and Fragility (INCAF) uses a fourfold classification of fragile states: (i) post-conflict/crisis or political transition situations; (ii) deteriorating governance environments, (iii) gradual improvement, and; (iv) prolonged crisis or impasse.

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2007, 'Principles for Good International Engagement in Fragile States', Learning and Advisory Process on Difficult Partnerships, Development Assistance Committee (DAC), OECD, Paris

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=1360>

How can international actors maximise the positive impact of engagement in fragile situations and minimise unintentional harm? These updated Principles from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development suggest ways in which international actors can foster constructive engagement between national and international stakeholders. It argues it is essential for international actors to understand the specific context in each country, and develop a shared view of the strategic response required. It is particularly important to recognise the different constraints of capacity, political will and legitimacy, and the differences between post-conflict/crisis or political transition situations deteriorating governance environments, gradual improvement, and prolonged crisis or impasse.

DFID

DFID's typology of fragile states includes 4 types of environments: (i) 'Monterrey' cases of strong capacity and reasonable political will; (ii) 'weak but willing' where government capacity is an obstacle to implementing policy; (iii) 'strong but unresponsive' where state capacity is directed to achieving development goals; (iv) 'weak-weak' where both state capacity and political will are lacking.

Moreno-Torres, M. & Anderson, M., 2004, 'Fragile States: Defining Difficult Environments for Poverty Reduction', Department for International Development (DFID), United Kingdom

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display/document/legacyid/1343>

Fragile states take many forms. What is the most useful way of defining them? This paper, by the Department for International Development (DFID), adopts a definition of 'difficult environments' grounded in the role of the state in development effectiveness. It argues that when assessing the willingness of a state to engage in partnerships for poverty reduction, there are two closely related notions: First, an explicit political commitment to policies aimed at promoting human welfare should be reflected in actions and outcomes. Second, there should be an inclusive approach that does not exclude particular social groups from the benefits of development. Based on these two key concepts, four broad types of environments are distinguishable.

World Bank

The World Bank similarly advocates differentiated approaches across a spectrum of classification, which is: deterioration, prolonged crisis or impasse, post-conflict or political transition, and early recovery or reform.

World Bank, 2005, 'Fragile States – Good Practice in Country Assistance Strategies', World Bank, Washington

http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/main?pagePK=64193027&piPK=64187937&theSitePK=523679&menuPK=64187510&searchMenuPK=64187283&siteName=WDS&entityID=000090341_20051222094709

The World Bank identifies fragile states by weak performance on the Country Policy and Institutional Assessment (CPIA). Within this, it distinguishes a fourfold typology of business models, based on the extent of consensus between donors and government on development strategy, and the pace and direction of change.

Nature of the state terminology

A separate group of terminology describes states according to the prevailing characteristics or underlying causes of their perceived weakness or strength. Many of these terms describe informal systems of governance, power or order which exist alongside or within the structures of the formal state.

Neopatrimonial states

Patrimonialism - a term often used in reference to African states - was first conceived by Max Weber as a system of patron-client rule in which elites exploit public resources and distribute them to political followers in return for loyalty. Neopatrimonialism describes a situation in which patrimonial and formal bureaucratic rules co-exist.

Van de Walle, N., 1997, 'Neopatrimonial Rule in Africa', in Democratic Experiments in Africa: Regime Transitions in Comparative Perspective, eds. Bratton, M. and Van de Walle, N., Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK
<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display/document/legacyid/1413>

Although neopatrimonial practices can be found in all polities, they have been a core feature of post-colonial politics in Africa. Neopatrimonial rule is an overarching concept that embraces a variety of subsidiary regime types. Its characteristic feature is the incorporation of patrimonial logic into bureaucratic institutions. The right to rule is ascribed to an individual rather than an office, and personalised exchanges, systemic clientelism and the use of state resources for political legitimation are the norm. Nonetheless, there is significant variation in the political institutions that have evolved in different African states as well as the degree of political competition and participation which is permitted.

Parallel states

The term 'parallel state' is being used with ever-greater frequency to describe the existence of a clandestine nexus between formal political leadership, self-serving factions within the state apparatus, organised crime and/or experts in violence.

Briscoe I., 2008, 'The Proliferation of the "Parallel State"', Fundación para las Relaciones Internacionales y el Diálogo Exterior (FRIDE), Madrid
<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3180>

How do 'parallel states' emerge and what is their impact on state functioning? How should the international community respond? This working paper from the Fundación para las Relaciones Internacionales y el Diálogo Exterior draws on cases such as Pakistan and Guatemala to explain the parallel state as a form of political-criminal nexus which generates insecurity and stalls efforts to reduce poverty. International actors engaged in state building must recognise its specific features to avoid strengthening informal networks at the expense of formal institutions.

Quasi states

Fragile states are sometimes described as 'quasi states', which have *de jure* but not *de facto* sovereignty. These states achieve *de jure* sovereignty by virtue of their acceptance into the international system of states, but nevertheless are not recognised by their citizens as a legitimate public authority.

Jackson, R., 1990, 'States and Quasi-States', in Quasi-States: Sovereignty, International Relations and the Third World, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=2023>

How have notions of sovereignty changed in the post-colonial era? How do these changes affect the way development is done? This chapter from Quasi-states: Sovereignty, International Relations and the Third World explores these questions, using a distinction between "negative" and "positive" sovereignty. Quasi-states enjoy a right to exist and high prospects for survival, despite their weakness and illegitimacy. The author argues that this is a new constitutional mechanism. It has replaced colonial, military and diplomatic security arrangements, and is the basis of international aid.

Warlord states

Warlord states are ones where virtually all power is channeled through a very real and highly organised (but not formally recognised) patronage system based on rulers' control over resources and violence. The term was coined in relation to African states (Reno, 1998 below) but has been taken up and debated in a range of contexts.

Reno, W., 1998, 'The Distinctive Political Logic of Weak States', in Warlord Politics and African States, Boulder, London, UK

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display/document/legacyid/1385>

Why is warlord politics so prevalent in Africa? Why do African rulers persistently give only lip-service to good governance, and weaken the organs of government? This first chapter of a book on warlord politics in Africa examines the political logic of weak states. Donor attempts to build strong African states fail because rulers' power rests on outside factors not on the citizenry. Attempts to impose good governance as conditions of loans or aid rest on flawed assumptions about rulers' interests, and are subverted by local politics.

Giustozzi, A., 2005. 'The Debate on Warlordism: The Importance of Military Legitimacy' Crisis States Research Centre Discussion Paper, No. 13 (September 2005), London School of Economics (LSE), London

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display/document/legacyid/1659>

The terms 'warlord' and 'warlordism' have become increasingly popular amongst academics, even if some scholars object to their use. However, not every leader of a militia is a warlord. This paper by the Crisis States Research Centre aims at reconciling different perspectives and proposing a definition of warlordism for the social sciences. It differentiates between warlords and military-political entrepreneurs.

Warlords have military legitimacy and are more likely to evolve into statemakers. Studying them can enhance the study of government.

Causes and characteristics of fragility

This section introduces some of the key literature on the structural, economic, political, social and international drivers of fragility.

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There are many theories about why states fail or experience fragility, the majority of which are highly contested.

At a very broad level, fragility is the result of a dynamic interplay between internal factors (including violent conflict, poverty, economic and structural conditions, weak formal institutions), and external factors (including international political economy, regional and global insecurity). All of these are unique in any given context. Fragility is frequently associated (if not synonymous) with violent conflict and sustained poverty. Development agencies have largely adopted a functional understanding, often characterising fragility in terms of bad governance and weak state will or capacity. Increasingly, state fragility is also associated with weak state legitimacy.

Two key trends are discernible in the recent literature; firstly, the rise of the new institutionalism, prevalent among explanations of fragility by economists and some political scientists. These focus on individual actors and their incentives as the focus of analysis. A second trend is a growing recognition that fragile states are not only the result of internal ‘malfunctions’ but are situated within an international system and international political economy which also determine their relative fragility or resilience. Recently, there has been increasing concern about the impact of exogenous ‘trigger’ factors, including the global economic downturn, and climate change, on fragile states.

Overview of causes and characteristics of fragility

Although fragility is accepted to be multi-causal and multi-dimensional in any given context, some analysts place more importance on certain causal factors over others. The following groups of factors - which can be seen as both causes and characteristics of fragility - are among the more prevalent in the literature:

Structural and economic factors: Poverty, low income and economic decline, violent conflict, presence of armed insurgents, natural resource wealth/lack of natural resource wealth, geography (‘bad neighbours’), demographic stress (including urbanization).

Political and institutional factors: Crises of state legitimacy and authority, bad governance, repression of political competition, weak (formal) institutions, hybrid political orders, institutional multiplicity, political

transitions, succession and reform crises in authoritarian states, state predation, neo-patrimonial politics.

Social factors: Horizontal inequalities, severe identity fragmentation, social exclusion, gender inequality, lack of social cohesion (including lack of social capital), weak civil society.

International factors: Legacy of colonialism, international political economy, climate change, global economic shocks (including food prices).

These causes and characteristics are often described as self- and mutually-reinforcing. Some argue fragile states are caught in negative cycles or 'traps' of perpetual poverty and instability, prompting debate about the extent to which fragility is a long-term condition, and the likelihood of turnarounds.

European University Institute, 2009, 'Fragility: Drivers and Consequences', Chapter 2 in Development in a Context of Fragility: Focus on Africa, European Report on Development, 2009

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3355>

How can fragility be described and understood? This chapter of the 2009 European Report on Development (ERD) reviews the literature on the main drivers and consequences of fragility, focusing on the relationship between fragility and conflict. It argues in spite of the diversity of definitions of fragile states, there is consensus that they are characterised by authority, service entitlements and legitimacy failures. Previous armed conflict, poor governance and political instability, militarisation, ethnically and socially heterogeneous and polarised populations are key causes. The circular nature of these various factors is at the heart of the 'fragility trap' concept.

Collier, P., 2007, 'The Bottom Billion: Why the Poorest Countries are Failing and What can be Done about it', Oxford University Press, London

<http://blids.ids.ac.uk/cf/opac/cf/detailed.cfm?RN=262811>

This seminal book argues the real challenge of development is the small group of countries at the bottom that are falling behind and often falling apart. These countries, and the billion people who live in them, are caught in one or another of four traps: the conflict trap; the natural resources trap; the trap of being landlocked with bad neighbours; and the trap of bad governance in a small country. Whilst these traps are not inescapable, standard solutions will not work: aid has been ineffective, and globalisation has made things worse. A new mix of policy instruments is required, supported by a bold new plan of action for the G8.

Di John, J., 2008, 'Conceptualising the Causes and Consequences of Failed States: A Critical Review of the Literature', Working Paper No. 25, Crisis States Research Centre, London

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3177>

What are the causes and consequences of state failure? This paper from the Crisis States Research Centre reviews the extensive literature on failed states, examining definitions, possible causes, and common consequences of state failure, particularly in Africa. It finds that functionalist or natural resource theories of state failure are based on a liberal view of the state that defines state failure by the degree to which a state deviates from 'best practice', as represented by Western developed economies. But late developers, particularly fragile states, require different analytic tools. A more sophisticated political economy of fragile states can be developed through the lenses of: Institutional multiplicity (whereby different rules of the game coexist in the same

territory); State capacity and capability; 'Influencing' or rent-seeking; Coalitional analysis (shifting constellations of power that underpin formal and informal institutional arrangements); and Divisibility and boundary activation.

Goldstone J., 2008, 'Pathways to State Failure', *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, vol. 25, no. 4, pp. 285-296

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3189>

How does state failure come about, and how can donors help to prevent it? This article from *Conflict Management and Peace Science* identifies five pathways to state failure: escalating ethnic conflicts, state predation, regional guerrilla rebellion, democratic collapse, and succession/reform crises in authoritarian states. States must possess legitimacy and effectiveness to remain stable. Donors should keep both factors in mind to avoid the problems that arise when states focus on one to the exclusion of the other. Goldstone finds that the two most influential variables for stability are the character of political competition and the extent of checks on the executive. Factionalised, restricted or repressed political competition is closely linked to instability.

Structural and economic factors

Conflict

Some argue what distinguishes fragile states from other states experiencing 'underdevelopment' is violent conflict. Many states considered to be fragile have experienced conflict. The relationship is often described as circular: conflict both creates and is created by the weak authority and legitimacy of states. Much of the literature on the causes and characteristics of fragility is closely related to theories about the causes and characteristics of conflict.

Read more about the causes of conflict in the GSDRC [conflict topic guide](#).

Natural resources and unearned state income

A good portion of the literature on fragility has been concerned with the impact of natural resource wealth on political governance and economic growth. The 'rentier state' model argues that natural resource wealth makes democracies malfunction because it removes the need for the state to make bargains or pacts in support of a social contract and encourages the politics of patronage. Some contend natural resource wealth also leads to conflict over control of those resources. Extensive research, thorough econometric analyses and case studies have been carried out on the relationship between natural resources, poor development and fragility, but the idea remains highly contested. Some call for a more nuanced understanding to better account for why some states with natural resource wealth are more stable than others. Furthermore, others argue not having natural resource endowments can actually lead to state failure because it reduces incentives to form a central authority.

DIIS, 2008, 'Fragility and Natural Resources', *Danish Institute for International Studies, Policy Brief*

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3304>

How can fragile states make the most of their resource endowments without falling victim to resource conflicts or authoritarianism? This policy brief from the Danish

Institute for International Studies advocates a re-examination of the link between natural resource governance and state fragility in order to better understand why many states fall victim to the 'resource curse'. Donors can help fragile states make the most of their resource endowments by seeking to improve the internal governance environment through greater transparency and capacity and the external market environment through more incentives for foreign investment and more equitable trade conditions.

DiJohn, J., 2003, 'Mineral-Resource Abundance and Violent Political Conflict: A Critical Assessment of the Rentier State Model' Crisis States Working Paper No. 20, Development Studies Institute, London School of Economics, London

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=1422>

How useful is the idea of a 'resource curse' in understanding the causes of conflict in low and middle-income countries? This paper from the Crisis States Programme at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) critically examines this argument on both methodological and empirical grounds. It finds little convincing evidence that mineral abundance in itself causes conflict, and argues that the most influential models of conflict offer only a superficial understanding of the causes of conflict in poor economies.

Dibeh, G., 2008, 'Resources and the Political Economy of State Fragility in Conflict States', UNU WIDER

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3265>

How does resource availability affect governance incentives? This paper from the World Institute for Development Economics Research studies political and governance systems contributing to fragility in resource-rich states such as Iraq and resource-poor areas such as Somalia. In an ethnically divided or tribal society, a consociational democratic state will arise if resources are larger than a threshold value; the level of resources available influences groups' desire to establish a central state authority. A consociational political system following war can strengthen rather than weaken rent-seeking coalitions.

Cities and fragile states

New research is looking at how cities - as social, economic, political and spatial entities - can promote or prevent the unraveling of the state. Over the past two decades, many cities around the world have become characterised by rising forms of violence, insecurity and illegality. Increasingly, cities are considered to be constitutive of state fragility but also important sites for state reconstruction and development. Historically the relationship between cities and states has been recognised as important. City development and the growth of urban systems have played significant roles in state formation and transformation. Yet cities can develop a relative autonomy from states, particularly when they are ignored or bypassed by state resources and processes, with risks for state stability. For example, city economies might be animated by regional rather than national markets that lie outside the reach of states and their fiscal capacity. National governments and elites often fail to invest in cities at the expense of local and national economic development. Ignoring the interests of the majority of urban citizens can increase the potential for urban conflict. Equally, state crisis and conflict can fuel urban conflict, further weakening state capacity and legitimacy in a vicious circle.

Esser D., 2009, 'Who governs Kabul? Explaining urban politics in a post-war capital city', Crisis States Research Centre, London

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3276>

Wars, particularly civil wars, are increasingly focused on cities. How can they best be tackled? This study from London School of Economics reviews the history of city politics in Kabul and the processes of governance that occur at different levels. Multi-layered conflicts in capital cities can concentrate political attention and overload urban development and governance agendas. It should be understood that, in post-war capital cities, conflicts at the fault lines of local, national and international institutions shape political and economic agendas for the city.

Rodgers, D., 2007, 'Slum Wars of the 21st Century: The New Geography of Conflict in Central America', Crisis States Research Centre, London

<http://www.crisisstates.com/download/wp/wpSeries2/wp10.2.pdf>

Political and institutional factors

Institutional multiplicity

Fragile states are often described as places where diverse and competing claims to power and logics of order co-exist, namely 'formal' state and 'informal' institutions. Formal state institutions are often seen as weakened or operated according to informal or competing rules of the game, including traditional authorities, warlords, patronage networks, and social norms and customs. Some argue that in order to achieve resilience, the state must achieve 'institutional hegemony', that is, it must be able to set the rules by which society is governed.

Reno, W., 1998, 'Introduction' in Warlord Politics and African States, Lynne Rienner publications, London

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=1339>

Why has warlord politics developed in weak states? Which factors promote dissolution into factional struggle and which generally help weak-state rulers to reassert their political authority through warlord means? This chapter argues that in order to answer these questions, it is important to analyse not the formal role of institutions, but rulers' efforts to manage external challenges and the reconfiguration of old patron-client politics.

Neo-patrimonialism

Many have argued neo-patrimonialism has undermined the functioning and institutionalisation of formal political systems in fragile states, particularly in Africa. Chabal and Daloz (1999) describe the informalisation of politics and the neo-patrimonial nature of reciprocity and exchange in Africa as 'the instrumentalisation of disorder'. But some dispute the assumption there is a negative relationship between neopatrimonialism and economic growth (di John, 2007). Others controversially argue that patrimonialism does not necessarily preclude state-citizen accountability.

Chabal and Daloz, 1999, 'W(h)ither The State?', Chapter 1 in Africa Works: Disorder as Political Instrument', African Issues, James Currey, Oxford

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display/document/legacyid/1330>

This book chapter argues the state in Africa was never properly institutionalised because it was never properly emancipated from society. This is due to both historical and cultural factors. The weakness and inefficiency of the state has been profitable to African elites. The severity of the current economic crisis in Africa is unlikely to favour the institutionalisation of the state. Political elites, bereft of the means of their patrimonial legitimacy, urgently seek the resources that the informalisation of politics might generate. Such heightened competition is apt to bring about greater disorder, if not violence.

Acemoglu, D., Robinson, J., Verdier, T., 2003, 'Kleptocracy and Divide-and-Rule: a Model of Personal Rule', NBER working paper 10136, Paper presented at the European Economic Association Annual Meeting, Stockholm
<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display/document/legacyid/1258>

How and why do kleptocracies (regimes based on personal rule) last so long in some developing countries, despite the lack of a significant support base? How can the study of policymaking in weakly-institutionalised societies help to understand the emergence of these regimes? This paper from the National Bureau of Economic Research proposes a model to describe the strategies of many kleptocratic regimes, and includes historical case studies from the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Dominican Republic.

Pitcher A., Moran M., Johnston M., 2009, 'Rethinking Patrimonialism and Neopatrimonialism in Africa', African Studies Review, Volume 52, Number , pp. 125–56
<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3344>

Is 'patrimonialism' really the source of Africa's poor governance? This article from the African Studies Review argues that contemporary conceptions of patrimonialism and neopatrimonialism as negative regime types associated with corruption, clientelism, and autocracy are based on a fundamental misreading of theory. Weber's 'patrimonialism' is, rather, a specific form of authority derived from traditional sources of legitimacy and based on a mutual understanding of responsibilities between the ruler and the ruled. Casting aside these misconceptions will allow African scholars to better analyze the character of African states, without falling back on the notion of African exceptionalism.

Elite incentives and elite predation

Some research focuses on the relationship between elite incentives and forms of political order created through them (e.g. elite bargains, and coalitions) as critical to understanding state fragility. Underlying this is the notion that states will be stable only if the incentives of rulers and citizens are to preserve order. The relationship between rewards from predation and incentives for violence is critical. New research is looking at whether inclusive, as opposed to exclusive, elite pacts may be more capable of maintaining political order than others because they help to accommodate social fragmentation and provide a disincentive for violent rebellion.

Bates, R., 2008, 'The Logic of State Failure: Learning from Late Century Africa', Conflict Management and Peace Science 25, pp. 297-314
<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3345>

Why did so many African states fail in the late 20th century? This article from *Conflict Management and Peace Science* emphasises the material and political needs of state elites, their failure to act in the public good and the short time horizons of and narrow

resource base on offer to politicians. Political order is a choice. Recent history shows that African leaders can choose to behave as warlords or as statesmen and that citizens can choose to arm themselves or to live peacefully. Order prevails when both rules and citizens choose to employ their respective capabilities to the creation and maintenance of wealth. A state exists when these choices form equilibrium.

Lindemann, S., 2008, 'Do Inclusive Elite Bargains Matter? A Research Framework for Understanding the Causes of Civil War in Sub-Saharan Africa', Crisis States Research Centre, London

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3235>

Sub-Saharan Africa is the world's most conflict-intensive region. But why have some African states experienced civil war, while others have managed to maintain political stability? This discussion paper from the Crisis States Research Centre argues that the ability of post-colonial states in Sub-Saharan Africa to maintain political stability depends on the ability of the ruling political parties to overcome the historical legacy of social fragmentation. Inclusive elite bargains' involve a ruling party that integrates a broad coalition of key elites by defining inclusive access to state structures (jobs) and state resources (rents). 'Exclusionary elite bargains' involve a narrow coalition of elites who define exclusionary access to state structures (jobs) and state resources (rents). 'Inclusive elite bargains' permit the maintenance of political stability, whereas 'exclusionary elite bargains' give rise to trajectories of civil war.

Beall, J. with M. Ngonyama, 2009 'Indigenous Institutions, Traditional Leaders and Elite Coalitions for Development: The case of Greater Durban, South Africa', Crisis States Research Centre, London School of economics (LSE), London

<http://www.crisisstates.com/Publications/wp/WP55.2.htm>

Political transitions

Transitions between leaders can be destabilising in fragile situations. Uncertainty and collective fears of the future, stemming from transitions, may result in the emergence of nationalist, ethnic or other populist ideologies and the susceptibility to violent conflict. In this context, elections can become arenas of violent contestation and can trigger instability.

Mansfield, E.D. and Snyder, J., 2007, 'Turbulent Transitions: Why Emerging Democracies Go to War in the Twenty-first Century', in Leashing the Dogs of War: Conflict Management in a Divided World, eds., C. Crocker, F.O. Hampson, and P. All, United States Institute for Peace, Washington, DC, pp. 161-176

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=2975>

Is democratisation the best way to promote peace? This research from the United States Institute of Peace argues that the world would probably be safer if there were more mature democracies but, in the transition to democracy, countries become more aggressive and war prone. The international community should be realistic about the dangers of encouraging democratisation where the conditions are unripe. The risk of violence increases if democratic institutions are not in place when mass electoral politics are introduced.

Branch, D., Cheeseman N., 2008, 'Democratization, Sequencing, and State Failure in Africa: Lessons from Kenya', African Affairs, Vol. 108, Issue 430, pp. 1–26

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3350>

What were the origins of the crisis that grew out of the disputed Kenyan presidential election in December 2007? What lessons does the case of Kenya have for other states with regard to the debate on democratisation and sequencing? This article from African Affairs examines the wider lessons and implications of the Kenyan election crisis for other states undergoing political liberalisation. It argues that the case of Kenya shows that political liberalisation is a high-risk activity that can produce unintended side effects. The processes of democratisation and reform can be undertaken simultaneously, but require institutional reforms not yet undertaken by many African states.

Sisk, T., 2008, 'Elections in Fragile States: Between Voice and Violence', Paper prepared for the International Studies Association Annual Meeting San Francisco, California, March 24-28, 2008

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3087>

What factors generate election-related violence in fragile states? How can the international community address these? This study from the University of Denver suggests that social structure, political competition, the competence of the electoral administration and the degree of professionalism in the security sector contribute to election-related violence. International influence at mid-rank levels among the perpetrators of violence is limited. Donors therefore need to take a pragmatic approach by working with parties to develop pre-election peace pledges and by tracking violent incidents.

Further resources on the relationship between elections and fragility can be found in elections in post-conflict or fragile environments in the GSDRC's [political systems guide](#).

Social factors and the social context of fragility

Weak state-society relations

Many argue the nature of the state cannot be separated from the nature of societies, and that state fragility therefore has to be understood in terms of state-society relations. Migdal's seminal work in this area starts with the premise that there is often disjuncture between the state's rules of the game and the operative dictates of society. In order to achieve social control (the primary determinant of state strength), states have to become a real and symbolic aspect of people's daily survival strategies.

Migdal, J.S., 1988, Strong Societies and Weak States: State-society Relations in the Third World, Princeton University Press

<http://blids.ids.ac.uk/cf/opac/cf/detailed.cfm?RN=28509>

This book presents a model for understanding state capabilities in the Third World based on state-society relations. Its central premises are i) the nature of the state cannot be separated from the nature of societies and ii) the emergence of a strong, capable state can occur only with a tremendous concentration of social control (to the state). The state's struggle for social control is characterised by conflict between state leaders, who seek to mobilize people and resources and impose a single set of rules,

and other social organisations applying different rules in parts of the society. The distribution of social control in society that emerges as a result of this conflict (between societies and states) is the main determinant of whether states become strong or weak.

Lack of social cohesion

Societies in fragile states are often polarised in ethnic, religious or class-based groups, often as a result of a legacy of conflict, or, some argue, colonialism. Critically, these societies are often dislocated from - and ambivalent towards - the state. Some argue identity fragmentation results in fragile states lacking the virtuous cycles of cooperation, trust, reciprocity and collective well-being that are vital in forming the social contract. Others argue states work best when they are structured around cohesive groups that can capitalize on their common institutions and affinities.

Kaplan, S., 2008, 'Fragile States, Fractured Societies', Chapter 3 in Fixing Fragile States: A New Paradigm for Development, Praeger Security International, London

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3205>

What has caused the difficulties experienced by fragile states? This book chapter from Praeger Security International explores the roots of state fragility and the role of foreign aid in sustaining past dysfunction. Two structural problems – political identity fragmentation (often based on arbitrarily drawn state borders) and weak national institutions – reinforce each other. They undermine state legitimacy, interpersonal trust and the formation of robust governance systems and encourage neopatrimonialism. Fragile states' formal institutions need to be reconnected with the local societies upon which they have been imposed.

Social exclusion

Social exclusion, particularly based on identity in terms of gender, ethnicity, class, or religion, has long been viewed as a critical underlying cause of conflict and fragility. Where societal or political groups are excluded from the state or its key institutions, they may seek to challenge the state. Failure to manage such challenges through political negotiation may lead these groups to have recourse to violent opposition. Denials or violations of rights based on social exclusion and discrimination can therefore lead to fragility. Within this, some research has focused on links between youth exclusion, violence and fragile states.

Douma P., 2006, 'Poverty, Relative Deprivation and Political Exclusion as Drivers of Violent Conflict in Sub Saharan Africa', Journal on Science and World Affairs, Volume 2, Number 2, pp. 59-6

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3237>

How can states in sub-Saharan Africa better provide for the needs of their populations and reduce inter-group violence? This article from the Journal on Science and World Affairs examines poverty and conflict escalation in Niger and Senegal. It argues that during the post-colonial period, the sub-Saharan region has witnessed a substantial number of violent conflicts, mostly within states between contending ethno-political entities manipulated by rival political elite groups. The problems within these so-called fragile or failed states are closely related to a lack of a 'social contract' between incumbent elite groups and constituent ethnic communities, which leads to political

fragmentation. This is exacerbated by the interaction of diverse social, ethnic and resource exploitation-related issues.

Hilker M., Fraser E., 2009, 'Youth Exclusion, Violence, Conflict and Fragile States', Report prepared for DFID by Social Development Direct, London
<http://www.gsdr.org/docs/open/CON66.pdf>

Horizontal inequalities

Recent research has analysed how horizontal inequalities can be manipulated to engender political violence. Horizontal inequalities are inequalities between groups (defined by identity, such as ethnicity, religion or caste) across economic, social and political dimensions. These can lead to resentment and tensions, and can foster group mobilisation. Mobilisation may initially be peaceful, but where this has no effect or is put down violently by the state, it can lead to violent conflict.

Stewart F., Brown G.K., Langer A., 2008, 'Major Findings and Conclusions on the Relationship Between Horizontal Inequalities and Conflict', in Stewart, F. (ed.), 'Horizontal Inequalities and Conflict: Understanding Group Violence in Multiethnic Societies', Palgrave Macmillan

How direct is the link between horizontal inequalities (HIs) and conflict? This book chapter, published by Palgrave Macmillan, explicates the numerous factors which determine the impact HIs will have on a country's stability. The evidence comes from a comparison of case studies of countries which have experienced violence and those which have avoided it. Severe HIs are particularly likely to be a source of conflict when they remain consistent across dimensions. HIs are best analysed as multidimensional indicators--for instance, abrupt changes in political HIs, when other HIs are at extreme levels, are more likely to trigger conflict.

Read more in the GSDRC's [social exclusion](#) and [conflict](#) topic guides.

Weak civil society

Fragility is also seen to erode the foundations and the structures of civil society. In turn, weak civil society, and its lack of capacity to act as a check on the accountability of leaders, creates an environment conducive to the continuation of fragility.

Chabal, P. and Daloz, J.P., 1999, 'The Illusions of Civil Society' in Africa works: Disorder as Political Instrument (African Issues), James Currey, Oxford
<http://www.gsdr.org/go/display/document/legacyid/1331>

Current thinking on the post-colonial state in Africa stresses the need to cut back or bypass the state, which is seen as inefficient and predatory. Can civil society perform the role of reforming the political realm that is currently expected of it? This chapter from the book 'Africa Works: Disorder as Political Instrument', argues that the dichotomy between state and civil society, which is taken for granted, does not reflect realities in Africa.

Reno, 2002, 'The Politics of Insurgency in Collapsing States', Development and Change, vol. 33, no.5
<http://www.gsdr.org/go/display/document/legacyid/1389>

When states fail, do mass-based social movements develop to address the ensuing

social problems? This article by Northwestern University looks at the situation of Nigeria's Bakassi Boys and the Oodua People's Congress and suggests that, contrary to expectation, reformist insurgencies fail to develop in failed states. The cause of this failure is found in the legacy of patronage politics. Specifically, the ensuing popular movements favour those who pursue their own economic interests, marginalizing those with more ideological agendas.

International factors

International political economy

Exogenous factors, including the legacy of colonialism and international government and/or corporate interests, may create or reinforce fragility. Many have argued that historically, colonialism undermined the basis of state legitimacy and disrupted the formation of the social contract in Africa.

Clapham, C., 2002, 'The Challenge to the State in a Globalized World', *Development and Change*, vol. 33, issue 5

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display/document/legacyid/1337>

State failure and collapse must be placed within a broader appreciation of the evolution of statehood within the international system. What impact has globalisation had on the development of states and their social and economic structure? This paper published by *Development and Change* traces the origins of the state and identifies the structural and contextual factors that enhance the vulnerability of states. It argues that state failure has to be understood in the context of a world in which maintaining states has become increasingly difficult.

Doornbos, M., 2006, 'Fragile States or Failing Models? Accounting for the Incidence of State Collapse', Chapter 1 in *Failing States or Failed States? The Role of Development Models: Collected Works*

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3312>

Why do states collapse, and why do some states seem to collapse more readily than others? Are failing models of state-building in some way to blame? This working paper from the Fundación para las Relaciones Internacionales y el Diálogo Exterior examines the links between fragile states and models of state-building. It argues that in order to understand and respond to situations of state collapse it is important to understand the specific trajectories of failing states.

Sogge, D., 2009, 'Angola: 'Failed' yet 'Successful'', FRIDE Working Paper 81, FRIDE, Madrid

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3266>

What are the causes of state weakness? How best can the international community help weak states move forward? This research from the Transnational Institute argues that the ranking of states in terms of weakness has little value. Furthermore, the political problems that come with natural resources are more complicated than might appear. In the case of Angola, developmental change is unlikely as long as powerful and poorly-regulated offshore incentives continue to shape elite motivations.

Vulnerability to external shocks

Fragile states are vulnerable to external shocks (e.g. spikes in food and oil prices) because they lack the essential capacities to control or mitigate the negative effects on their economies and their citizens. This has been a long-standing concern, but recent research is focusing on the links between climate change, environmental degradation, resource scarcity and state fragility. Many argue climate change has the potential to overstretch the adaptive capacities of fragile states, which could potentially lead to mass displacement, destabilisation and ultimately violence.

GSDRC Helpdesk Research Report, 2009: Climate Change and State Fragility

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Helpdesk&id=458>

The vulnerability of people to climate change depends on extent to which they can adapt to changes to the climate sensitive resources and services that they rely upon. This ability to adapt is based on a broad range of social factors, including poverty, support from the state, access to economic opportunities, effectiveness of decision making processes, and the extent of social cohesion within and surrounding vulnerable groups. These factors are all linked to the state's capacity to provide services and maintain institutions, which is often lacking in fragile states.

GSDRC Helpdesk Research Report, 2009: The Impact of the Global Economic Crisis on Conflict and Social Stability

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Helpdesk&id=486>

While most countries will be able to mitigate the impact of the crisis in the short-term, many countries in Latin America, and sub-Saharan Africa, as well as the former Soviet Union states, lack sufficient cash reserves, access to international aid or credit, or other coping mechanisms to do the same. There is concern that should the crisis persist beyond one or two years, the danger of regime-threatening instability will increase.

Useful websites

The **Crisis States Research Centre (Crisis States)** is a leading centre of interdisciplinary research into processes of war, state collapse and reconstruction in fragile states:

<http://www.crisisstates.com>

The **Center on International Cooperation, New York University**, runs a research programme on 'Reducing State Fragility'

<http://www.cic.nyu.edu/global/reducing%20state%20fragility.html>

The **Centre for Global Development** is running a research initiative on 'Engaging Fragile States'

http://www.cgdev.org/section/initiatives/_active/engagingfragilestates

Measuring and assessing fragility

This page introduces some of the most widely used statistically based indexes and political economy methodologies for understanding the nature and risk of state fragility.

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Despite some convergence and overlap, large variations exist in how donors and international agencies measure state fragility, and which countries are classified as fragile. These various classifications have been widely criticised as arbitrary, methodologically questionable, and lacking in transparency, and for producing only a snapshot of the condition of a state a particular point in time, rather than explaining how change occurs.

Nevertheless, some maintain there is value in measuring and classifying fragility, in that it helps us to understand causality, to monitor changes over time, and to pre-empt crisis by recognising and responding to deteriorating situations.

Indexes of state fragility

A plethora of analytical frameworks and instruments have been developed to measure certain dimensions and indicators of state fragility. These often culminate in lists or indexes of fragile states which are organised in a hierarchy according to their performance against certain state functions. The overarching aim of these indexes is to record a state's past, present and future performance, and its performance relative to other states, to provide policymakers with an objective reference point against which to track trends.

But indexes are often criticized for being subjective, arbitrary in terms of where they draw the line between performing and non-performing institutions, and for inconsistencies within and between them. Also because aggregate scores do not adequately illustrate how state capacity varies across functions.

Country Policy and Institutional Assessment (CPIA) - World Bank

The World Bank's Country Policy and Institutional Assessment (CPIA) is the most prominent and widely used index. It rates the quality of a country's policies and institutional arrangements against a set of criteria grouped in four clusters: (1) economic management; (2) structural policies; (3) policies for social inclusion and equity; and (4) public sector management and institutions. CPIA scores are used by the World Bank, and the OECD DAC to determine aid allocation and to categorise states that are fragile or Low Income Countries Under Stress (LICUS). A major criticism of this prominent index is that it equates fragility with 'underdevelopment'.

- **CPIA: Methodology**
<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/EXTABOUTUS/IDA/0,,contentMDK:20941073~pagePK:51236175~piPK:437394~theSitePK:73154,00.html>
- **CPIA: 2004 Country Ranking**
<http://siteresources.worldbank.org/IDA/Resources/2004CPIAweb1.pdf>

Baliamoune-Lutz, M and McGillivray, M., 2008, 'State Fragility: Concept and Measurement', Research Paper No. 2008/44, WIDER, Helsinki.

http://www.wider.unu.edu/publications/working-papers/research-papers/2008/en_GB/rp2008-44/

Country Indicators for Foreign Policy (CIFP) - Carleton University

The CIFP fragility index posits that a state needs to exhibit three fundamental properties - Authority, Legitimacy, and Capacity - and that weaknesses in one or more of these dimensions will have an impact on its overall fragility. Structural indicators are grouped into six clusters: Governance, Economics, Security and Crime, Human Development, Demography, and Environment.

- **2008 Fragility Ranking - CIFP**
<http://www.carleton.ca/cifp/app/serve.php/1207.pdf>

Failed States Index - Foreign Policy / The Fund for Peace

The Failed States index is based on 12 indicators of vulnerability: Demographic Pressures, Refugees/IDPs, Group Grievance, Human Flight, Uneven Development, Economic Decline, Delegitimization of the State, Public Services, Human Rights, Security Apparatus, Factionalized Elites, and External Intervention.

- **2009 Failed States Index**
http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2009/06/22/the_2009_failed_states_index

Index of State Weakness in the Developing World - Brookings Institution

This index uses 20 economic, political, security and social welfare indicators to provide an aggregate rating.

- **2008 Index of State Weakness**
http://www.brookings.edu/reports/2008/02_weak_states_index.aspx

Risk assessment and early warning

Assessing the risk of state failure is seen as critical for facilitating a preventative rather than curative international approach. There has been much analytical work on preventive forecasting, most prominently by the Political Instability Task Force (PITF), which has developed global models and datasets for predicting state instability and failure using four key indicators: regime type, infant mortality, armed conflict in neighbouring countries and state-led political discrimination.

Yet it is acknowledged that there remains a wide gap between the preventative forecasting literature and meaningful policy-related results. Early warning rarely translates into early response. Recently, the OECD has stressed the important role of regional and so-called “third generation” (e.g. internet-based) early warning systems as well as the need to work with local actors on the ground, both as ‘early warners’ and as the first line of response. They also call for a more effective global and regional early warning architecture to overcome the problem of a fragmented approach.

Marshall, M., 2008, ‘Fragility, Instability and the Failure of States: Assessing the Sources of Systemic risk’, Council on Foreign Relations Centre for Preventative Action, Working Paper

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3305>

What is the best way to assess the risk of state failure? What are the key indicators that a state is likely to fail? Authored by a member of the United States Government’s Political Instability Task Force (PITF), this Council on Foreign Relations paper draws heavily on PITF’s research and modeling. PITF’s recent models are 80 to 90 per cent accurate in predicting state failure.

OECD DAC, 2009, ‘Toolkit: Preventing Violence, War and State Collapse: The Future of Conflict Early Warning and Response’, OECD DAC, Paris

http://www.humansecuritygateway.info/documents/OECD_PreventingViolenceWarStateCollapse.pdf

Social and political economy analysis in fragile contexts

Some argue measuring institutional performance against benchmarks is a managerial response that depoliticizes state failure. Political economy analysis can complement institutional assessments, highlighting competing rules of the game in (and between) the formal and informal institutions often prevalent in fragile settings. It can identify shifting coalitions that contribute to or prevent state collapse; the nature and sources of state capacity, authority and legitimacy; and how and why rent seeking and patrimonial political systems can either contribute to, or undermine, state stability. A state-society analytical framework can identify the underlying causes of weak interaction between state institutions and citizens, and facilitate a thorough understanding of the complex power dynamics that characterise state-society relations. For these reasons, a historically-informed assessment of the ‘state of the state’, including the nexus of state-society relations, is now widely recognized as vital in order to better inform development interventions in fragile situations.

Hameiri, S., 2007, ‘Failed States or a Failed Paradigm? State Capacity and the Limits of Institutionalism’, Journal of International Relations and Development, 10, pp.122-149

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3328>

How useful are current conceptions of state failure for dealing with problems of state fragility? This article from the Journal of International Relations and Development argues that the international community has adopted an overly technocratic notion of the state, which does not view power and conflict as intrinsic to the phenomenon of the state, conflates politics with governance and masks the political nature of state-

building. It concludes that a new framework is needed, one based on system-level analyses of social cleavages and their impact on the state and state institutions.

GSDRC, 2008, 'Political Economy Methodologies for Fragile States', Helpdesk Research Report, GSDRC, Birmingham

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Helpdesk&id=414>

This report looks at various political economy approaches and methodologies, including new political economy; institutional economics; drivers of change/politics of development; sustainable livelihoods; and early warning models and conflict analysis. While not all are designed specifically for fragile state contexts, the concepts and approaches are applicable to many differing situations.

Di John, J., 2008, 'Conceptualising the Causes and Consequences of Failed States: A Critical Review of the Literature', Working Paper No. 25, Crisis States Research Centre, London

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3177>

This paper from the Crisis States Research Centre suggests several lenses might be used to develop a sophisticated political economy of conflict in fragile states. These include: (1) Institutional multiplicity: a situation in which different sets of rules of the game coexist in the same territory, putting citizens and economic agents in complex, often unsolvable, situations, but offering them the possibility of switching strategically from one institutional universe to another; (2) State capacity and capability: the abilities and skills of personnel and the organisational culture within the subsystems of the state; (3) 'Influencing' or rent-seeking: legal and institutional influencing activities, informal patron-client networks, or corruption; (4) Coalitional analysis: according attention to the shifting constellations of power that underpin formal and informal institutional arrangements; and (5) Divisibility and boundary activation: the creation and activation of boundaries contribute to the escalation of political conflict and violence.

Mezzera, M., and Aftab, S., 2009, 'Pakistan State-Society Analysis', Initiative for Peacebuilding and Netherlands Institute of International Relations (Clingendael), The Hague

http://www.clingendael.nl/publications/2009/20090300_cru_pakistan_mezzera.pdf

The analysis in this report originates from the application of the 'State-Society Analytical Framework' (SSAF), a methodology developed by the Democratisation and Transitional Justice Cluster of the Initiative for Peacebuilding (IfP), to the Pakistani context. Structured around three main analytical dimensions, SSAF aims to identify the underlying causes of weak interaction between state institutions and citizens, and to achieve a thorough understanding of the complex power dynamics that characterise state-society relations.

See also, conflict analysis in the GSDRC [conflict topic guide](#), [political economy analysis](#), and gender analysis in this guide.

Useful websites

The **Political Instability Task Force (PITF)** is a prominent organisation working on predicting political instability and the vulnerability of states around the world to political instability and state failure. <http://globalpolicy.gmu.edu/pitf/index.htm>

The **International Poverty Institute** is conducting a research programme on 'Knowing What Counts' highlighting the importance of understanding the local political context in which peacebuilding and statebuilding processes take place.
<http://www.ipacademy.org/our-work/state-building/knowning-what-counts>

National CEDAW Reports provide useful overviews on the general status of women in specific countries.
www.un.org/womenwatch

Aid effectiveness in fragile contexts (I): Aid allocation, donor policy and co-ordination

It is now widely acknowledged that conventional aid instruments and principles of aid effectiveness are difficult to apply in fragile situations. This page introduces the particular challenges surrounding aid allocation, co-ordination, and alignment in fragile situations.

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Aid allocation in fragile states

Recent years have seen a historic shift from a focus on aiding ‘good performers’ towards a greater recognition that fragile states should not be neglected and exposed to the risk of becoming ‘aid orphans’ (McGillivray, 2006). In spite of this, research has shown that fragile states continue to receive disproportionately less aid, and more volatile aid flows, than other low income countries. States with weak authority and legitimacy receive less aid than states with low capacity (Carment, 2008). Yet calls for increased aid to fragile states often spark concerns about the effectiveness and absorptive capacity of aid in environments where institutions are weak.

McGillivray, M., 2005, ‘Aid Allocation and Fragile States’, UNU-WIDER, paper presented at the Senior Level Forum on Development Effectiveness in Fragile States, OECD-DAC, 13th-14th January, London

<http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=1264>

How can donors provide poverty reducing and efficient aid allocations, particularly in relation to fragile states? This paper, written for the Senior Level Forum on Development Effectiveness in Fragile States, summarises research on aid allocation and effectiveness, with a particular focus on fragile states. It finds that historically, fragile states have received less aid relative to need and absorptive capacities than most, and some - categorised as ‘aid orphans’ - have received far less than others. Donors need to resolve the co-ordination problem that leads to donor orphans and excessive aid flows.

Levin, V. and Dollar, D., 2005, ‘The Forgotten States: Aid Volumes and Volatility in Difficult Partnership Countries’, paper prepared for the OECD-DAC Learning and Advisory Process on Difficult Partnership Countries Senior Level Forum, 13th-14th January, London

<http://www.gsdr.org/go/display/document/legacyid/1356>

Is aid efficiently distributed? Do some countries receive less than might be predicted by their need as well as their policy and institutional strength? This paper by the

World Bank examines aid patterns between 1992 and 2002. It argues there is a set of 'forgotten states' with low income and weak institutions, which receive significantly less aid than other recipients, even controlling for the variables discussed in aid effectiveness studies.

Carment, D., Prest, S., and Samy, Y., 2008, 'Determinants of State Fragility and Implications for Aid Allocation', UNU WIDER, Helsinki

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3311>

How can aid be deployed most effectively in fragile states? This paper, published by the World Institute for Development Economics Research at the United Nations University, argues that such aid should bolster the underlying determinants of fragility. In particular, donors should direct the flow of aid to context-specific weak points of fragile states in terms of authority, legitimacy and capacity (ALC). Measuring ALC components, along six dimensions of government performance—economics, governance, security and crime, human development, demographics and the environment—yielded a fragility index for the period 1999-2005.

To draw attention to the risks of fragile states being marginalised in aid flows, the OECD-DAC publishes an annual report on the allocation of resources to these states:

- **OECD-DAC, 2009, 'Ensuring Fragile States are Not Left Behind', Summary Report, OECD-DAC, Paris**
<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/14/57/43293283.pdf>
- **OECD-DAC, 2009, 'Resource Flows to Fragile and Conflict-affected States', Annual Report 2008, OECD-DAC, Paris**
<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/14/14/43293581.pdf>

Further information on resource flows to fragile states is available on the [OECD-DAC website](#).

McGillivray, M and Feeny, S., 2008, 'Aid and Growth in Fragile States', Research Paper No. 2008/3, UNU-WIDER, Helsinki

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3285>

This paper by the World Institute for Development Economics Research at the United Nations University examines possible links between aid and economic growth in fragile states. It addresses a gap in the literature, examining the hypothesis that interaction between aid and policies in fragile states yields less growth than in non-fragile states. It concludes that donors should be particularly concerned with highly fragile states. Many highly fragile states are substantially over aided in that they receive more aid than they can efficiently absorb.

Principles for international engagement

The OECD-DAC's principles for good engagement in fragile situations stress that aid should be flexible, long-term, harmonised, and integrated in such a way as to bridge humanitarian, recovery and longer-term development phases of assistance. The principle of 'do no harm', meaning not reinforcing societal division or engendering corruption, is also seen as central to good international engagement in fragile states. The Accra Agenda for Action adopted at the 3rd High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness reinforces these principles, committing donors to monitoring their

implementation.

OECD-DAC, 2007, 'Principles for Good International Engagement in Fragile States', Learning and Advisory Process on Difficult Partnerships, Development Assistance Committee (DAC), OECD, Paris

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=1360>

This brief outlines the following principles for good international engagement in fragile situations: 1. Take context as the starting point; 2. Ensure all activities do no harm; 3. Focus on state building as the central objective; 4. Prioritise prevention; 5. Recognise the links between political, security and development objectives; 6. Promote non discrimination as a basis for inclusive and stable societies; 7. Align with local priorities in different ways and in different contexts; 8. Agree on practical co-ordination mechanisms between international actors; 9. Act fast... but stay engaged long enough to give success a chance; 10. Avoid pockets of exclusion (or "aid orphans").

3rd High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, 2008, 'Roundtable 7 Summary: Aid Effectiveness in Situations of Fragility and Conflict', Third High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, Accra, Ghana, 2-4 September

<http://siteresources.worldbank.org/ACCRAEXT/Resources/4700790-1225142330310/RT7-Fragility-Conflict.pdf>

Harmonisation and alignment

The Paris Declaration principles of harmonisation and alignment are seen as vitally important for building country ownership and developing state legitimacy in fragile situations. But the context of fragility often makes these principles particularly difficult to apply. Alignment and ownership are problematic where states lack capacity and/or legitimacy. Often there is no nationally-owned development strategy behind which donors can align. Evaluations of the applicability of the Paris Declaration in fragile situations suggest that needs assessments, joint planning and prioritisation tools and joint donor offices have supported greater harmonisation, alignment and ownership.

OPM/IDL, 2008, 'The Applicability of the Paris Declaration in Fragile and Conflict-affected Situations', Oxford Policy Management and The IDL Group, Oxford

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3186>

What are the challenges of applying the Paris Declaration in fragile and conflict-affected situations? This report from Oxford Policy Management examines aid effectiveness and state building in fragile states and includes case studies of Afghanistan, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Nepal. A harmonised approach by development partners is particularly relevant in fragile situations, and shared approaches to context, conflict and risk analysis are required.

Whole of government approaches

It is increasingly recognised that external assistance in fragile situations should be designed and implemented in a coherent, coordinated and complementary manner both across departments within donor governments as well as between national and

international organisations. The range of actors involved, the complexity of aid instruments, and the interconnectedness of governance, economic and security needs in fragile states necessitates close collaboration among diplomatic, security, economic and development actors. But there are significant impediments to donors adopting so-called 'Whole of Government Approaches' in fragile situations, including the different and often conflicting objectives, mandates, approaches and resources among ministries. Development and foreign policy objectives, for example, are not always coherent or complimentary.

Whole of government approaches are in their infancy, and there are risks that coordination within capitals can drive out co-ordination between capitals (OECD-DAC, 2008). Evidence suggests that considerable gaps remain between what has been agreed in principle and the practice of implementation.

OECD-DAC, 2006, 'Whole of Government Approaches to Fragile States', DAC Guidelines and Reference Series, OECD-DAC, Paris

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=2721>

How can a Whole-of-Government Approach (WGA) be implemented by development practitioners to address the specific needs of fragile states? This study from the OECD-DAC assesses the mechanisms and processes that contribute to effective WGAs in fragile states. Drawing on recent field-level case studies, the paper assesses the appropriateness of the Principles for Good International Engagement in Fragile States and makes recommendations for putting them into practice.

Patrick, S. and Brown, K., 2007, 'Main Findings and Recommendations' in Greater than the Sum of its Parts? Assessing "Whole of Government" Approaches to Fragile States, International Peace Academy, New York, pp 128-144

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=2762>

Promoting security, good governance and recovery in weak, failing and war-torn countries requires integrated, coherent approaches. Many international donors are adopting 'whole-of government' approaches that bring together their diplomatic, defence and development instruments: the 3Ds. This report from the International Peace Academy examines these approaches in seven leading donor countries. It argues that policy coherence remains a work in progress.

Anten, L., van Beijnum, M., and Specker, L., 2009, '3C Approaches to Fragile and Conflict Situations – Taking stock of commitments and challenges', Netherlands Institute of International Relations (Clingendael), The Hague

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3315>

How can the international community advance the implementation of a Coherent, Coordinated and Complementary (3C) approach in fragile states? This paper from the Netherlands Institute of International Relations (Clingendael) outlines the findings of previous OECD-DAC studies on whole of government approaches as well as the main recommendations of three thematic meetings in 2008. While progress has been made, a number of challenges remain, including how to develop common objectives for diplomatic, defence, security, finance and development actions.

Donor policy papers

Bilateral donor policies on fragile states are often grounded in OECD-DAC principles, reflecting the international consensus on the need for coherent and joined-up approaches, for increased and sustained engagement in fragile situations, and for adapting to context.

Cammack, D. et al., 2006, 'Donors and the 'Fragile States' Agenda: A Survey of Current Thinking and Practice', ODI Report for the Japan International Cooperation Agency, Overseas Development Institute, London

<http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=2845>

What are the challenges associated with implementing the fragile states (FS) agenda? This report commissioned by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) outlines the FS agenda as it relates to international development and aid. It focuses on the experiences of three key donors - the United States (US), the United Kingdom (UK) and Germany - and explores the operationalisation of the agenda in Afghanistan, Cambodia and Nepal. To date, implementation efforts have remained largely uncoordinated and incomplete.

African Development Bank, 2008, 'Strategy for Enhanced Engagement in Fragile States', African Development Bank, Tunis

<http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3333>

How should the African Development Bank (ADB) enhance its engagement with fragile states? This strategy document advocates strengthening incentives for fragile states to pursue good economic management as a means of facilitating transitions out of conflict or state failure. Recognising the diversity of state fragility, it concludes that the ADB must establish units and financing facilities dedicated to environments of state fragility and reform several of its practices to most effectively engage with fragile states.

Department for International Development, 2005, 'Why we need to work more effectively in fragile states', DFID, London

<http://www.gsdr.org/go/display/document/legacyid/1291>

Why has aid not reduced poverty in fragile states? Why do donors need to work more effectively in fragile states, and how should they go about this? This policy paper from the Department for International Development (DFID) brings together the latest analysis from DFID and others on how to make development more effective in fragile states. It sets out some objectives and makes commitments about how DFID will work differently in the future.

USAID, 2005, 'Fragile States Strategy', United States Agency for International Development, Washington

<http://www.gsdr.org/go/display/document/legacyid/1378>

What factors should donors consider when identifying an approach to reverse decline in fragile states? How do fragile states differ from those that are stable and able to pursue development? This paper by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) outlines a strategy for its engagement with fragile states. It details how USAID can respond effectively by identifying strategic priorities, initial directions for programming and a new management and administrative approach.

France Diplomatie, 2007, 'Fragile States and Situations of Fragility: France's Policy Paper', France Diplomatie, Paris

<http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/IMG/pdf/EtatsFragiles-2.pdf>

Aid instruments

The choice of aid instrument in fragile situations is often based on a context-specific assessment of government capacity and level of consensus on policy priorities. There is much debate about the conditions under which the conventional aid instruments of general budget support (GBS) and Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) can work in fragile settings. A critical concern for donors is how to manage fiduciary risks whilst wherever possible channeling funds through government. Recently there has been some success with multi-donor trust funds, national programmes, social funds community driven development, and the formation of national compacts, all of which are viewed as ways to align donor funds behind national and community priorities.

Foster, M., 2008, 'Aid Instruments in Fragile and Post Conflict States: A Desk Review for DFID Nepal', Mick Foster Economics Ltd, London
<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3262>

Which aid instruments are most effective in promoting a sustainable exit from conflict? Which sectors should be prioritised for support in post-conflict environments? This report from Mick Foster Economics reviews the literature on aid instruments in fragile and post conflict states. A range of aid instruments can enable donors to manage the fiduciary risks of working in post-conflict situations. Both national programmes and the aid instruments that support them should be flexible and adaptable.

Leader, N. and Colenso, P., 2005, 'Aid Instruments in Fragile States', PRDE working paper no. 5, Department for International Development, London
<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=1285>

What type and mix of aid instruments are currently being used in difficult environments? How can donors work more effectively in fragile states? This paper by the UK Department for International Development describes the limitations of current approaches to aid instruments and discusses the emerging understanding of their use within fragile states. In addition, a selection of aid instruments that may be more effective in achieving objectives in difficult environments is highlighted.

Dudwick, N., and Nelson, A., 2008, 'A Stocktaking of PRSPs in Fragile States', Prem note, World Bank, Washington
<http://www1.worldbank.org/prem/PREMNotes/premnote127.pdf>

Ghani, A., and Lockhart, C., 2008, 'International Compacts: Sovereignty Strategies', Chapter 8 in Fixing Failed States: A Framework for Rebuilding a Fractured World, Oxford University Press, Oxford

What is the best way achieve global stability and prosperity? This chapter from the book 'Fixing Failed States' argues that a stable world requires functioning states in order to overcome challenges to the political and economic system. Domestic and global leadership must find a new approach to transform states so that they provide security and prosperity for their citizens and also act as responsible members of the international community. The study terms this a sovereignty strategy. A long-term state-building strategy tailored to specific contexts should be an organising principle for the international community. It requires harnessing collective energies and capital.

Robinson, M., 2004, 'Community Driven Development in Conflict and Post-conflict Conditions: the Northern Uganda Social Action Fund (NUSAF project)', paper prepared for the World Bank LICUS initiative, Institute of Development Studies, Brighton

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=1335>

How appropriate is it to work through local governments and communities as a response to endemic poverty, weak capacity and the legacy of violent conflict? This study by the Institute of Development Studies reviews the lessons arising from the design and implementation of the Northern Uganda Social Action Fund Project (NUSAF) in conditions of ongoing conflict and post-conflict recovery. It argues that considerable demand from communities for project resources and rapid implementation of infrastructure and income generation projects confirms the validity of working through local communities.

Useful websites

Eldis on Aid Effectiveness in Fragile Situations

<http://www.eldis.org/go/topics/dossiers/health-and-fragile-states/aid-effectiveness-in-fragile-states>

UNDP Aid Effectiveness Portal: fragility and conflict

http://www.aideffectiveness.org/flash/2_7Fragility_and_conflict.htm

OECD-DAC International Network on Conflict and Fragility (INCAF)

http://www.oecd.org/department/0,3355,en_2649_33693550_1_1_1_1_1,00.html

Aid effectiveness in fragile contexts (II): Measuring impact, lessons learned and implications for improved donor practice

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Critical views on donor engagement and aid effectiveness

Much of the criticism levelled against overseas aid to fragile states converges on the perceived disjuncture between, on the one hand the principles of good engagement, and on the other their inconsistent or lack of application on the ground. A number of commentators are concerned about the capacity and role of multilateral institutions in determining and sustaining a co-ordinated/harmonised approach. Some argue security objectives dominate development interventions in fragile states, and that whole of government approaches have exacerbated this.

Many call for improved mechanisms for donor accountability, and for donor strategies to better allow for local participation and ownership, and to be guided by a better understanding of local issues. Top-down, 'one-size-fits-all' approaches and short-term 'gap filling' systems are seen to undermine long-term capacity building. Recently, some have begun to question the adequacy of an approach to fragile states based on the MDG targets. More broadly, others argue that aid alone is not sufficient for addressing the complex needs of fragile states, and that donors need to pursue a more comprehensive approach that combines development, foreign and defence policy priorities, international political economy and trade.

Anten, L., 2009, 'Fragile States: State Building is Not Enough', Clingendael Conflict Research Unit, The Hague

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3290>

What are the likely future trends for fragile states? What policy implications do these trends have for international actors? This paper from Clingendael examines the reasons for international interest in fragile states and past and future trends in state fragility. It argues that state fragility will probably increase in the coming decades and that focusing on state-building is not sufficient to address this problem. Instead, the industrialised states will also have to effectively address external factors leading to state fragility that they themselves are largely responsible for.

Care International, 2009, 'Aid Reform: Addressing Conflict and Situations of Fragility', Care International, Chatelaine, Switzerland

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3370>

Violent conflict and 'situations of fragility' represent significant challenges for aid effectiveness. This Care International briefing paper argues that applying traditional development approaches in an unchanged fashion in such contexts simply does not work. Aid can have unintended interactions with conflict – both to exacerbate or

mitigate violence or the potential for violence. Aid reforms need to place a much greater emphasis on conflict sensitivity and human rights-centred approaches to aid.

Browne, S., 2007, 'Aid to Fragile States: Do Donors Help or Hinder?' UNU-WIDER Discussion Paper, no. 2007/01, United Nations University - World Institute for Development Economics Research, Helsinki

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=2836>

Does donor aid to fragile and poorly-performing states do more harm than good? This paper, from the World Institute for Development Economics Research at the United Nations University examines the aid relationship with respect to Burma, Rwanda and Zambia. It offers eight principles for donors to observe in engaging more productively with fragile states. Influencing political will and supporting development capacity are two of the most important ways in which donors can help move a state from fragility towards stability.

Debiel, T., Klingebiel, S., Mehler, A. and Schneckener, U., 2005, 'Between Ignorance and Intervention: Strategies and Dilemmas of External Actors in Fragile States', Policy Paper 23, Development and Peace Foundation, Bonn

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display/document/legacyid/1313>

How can development assistance be effectively carried out in weak or failed states? How can the legitimacy of state institutions be promoted in fragile states? This policy paper by the Development and Peace Foundation for the German Government addresses these questions and sets out some of the dilemmas and challenges facing external actors. The authors argue that the rigid concept of statehood needs to be rethought to include *de facto* states, and that an integrated approach to engagement is required that includes both security and development programmes.

International Alert, 2008, 'The World Bank in Fragile and Conflict-affected Countries', International Alert, London

http://www.international-alert.org/pdf/WBank_in_fragile_and_conflict-affected_c.pdf

Gender mainstreaming

Men and women are affected differently by the poverty, lack of access to justice, and physical insecurity that often characterizes fragile states. In principle it is widely accepted that donor strategies for engagement in fragile situations should be based on and be sensitive to an understanding of these differential impacts. But progress on mainstreaming gender into development aid in fragile states has been slow.

World Bank, 2007, 'Global Monitoring Report 2007: Confronting the Challenges of Gender Equality and Fragile States', World Bank, Washington

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=2743>

As 2015 draws closer, what progress has been made towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)? This fourth annual Global Monitoring Report (GMR) from The World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) assesses the contributions of developing countries, donor nations and international financial institutions. While there have been gains in tackling extreme poverty, human development and aid quality, two serious challenges remain: achieving gender equality and addressing problems in fragile states.

Baranyi, S., and Powell, K., 2005, 'Fragile States, Gender Equality and Aid Effectiveness: A Review of Donor Perspectives', Report prepared for CID, The North-South Institute, Ottawa

www.gsdc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3280

To what extent is gender a strong thread running through donor thinking on fragile states? What opportunities exist to enhance the systematic integration of gender equality in donors' thinking on state fragility? This paper from the North-South Institute looks at how gender issues are integrated into the emerging policy on state fragility of six donor agencies/bodies. It argues that donors are only beginning to bring their learning about gender equality into their emerging work on fragile states.

Baranyi, S., and Powell, K., 2005, 'Bringing Gender Back into Canada's Engagement in Fragile States: Options for CIDA in a Whole-of-Government Approach', North-South Institute, Ottawa

http://www.nsi-ins.ca/english/pdf/Gender_FS_Paper_Engagement.pdf

Gender analysis

Gender analysis can help identify the differential impacts of fragility on men and women, how gender affects access to resources and power and social and cultural constraints on promoting gender.

DFID, 2008, 'Gender and Social Exclusion Analysis How to Note', A Practice Paper, Department for International Development, UK (DFID), London

www.gsdc.org/docs/open/SE7.pdf

This paper from DFID provides guidance on carrying out a GSEA, suggesting a structure, methodology and analytical framework. It emphasises the importance of a GSEA to ensuring that DFID's policies and programmes are effective in reaching excluded groups.

BRIDGE, 2003, 'Gender and Armed Conflict', Institute of Development Studies, Brighton

<http://www.bridge.ids.ac.uk/reports/CEP-Conflict-Report.pdf>

Danida, 2007, Country Gender Analysis

http://www.danidadevforum.um.dk/NR/rdonlyres/4C333908-7CD4-433C-8792-FBCD145AB684/0/04_CountryGenderAnalysis.pdf

Measuring impact

Evaluation and assessment are critical for understanding and improving the effectiveness of aid in fragile states. But many argue that existing methodologies, tools and approaches cannot meaningfully determine the impact of interventions in these very complex, often volatile, environments. In practice, monitoring and evaluating in fragile settings present huge methodological and logistical challenges. There is often a lack of or unreliable data, or it is unfeasible or too dangerous to collect it. Added to this, it is inherently difficult to demonstrate causality or attribution in volatile situations, or to measure changes in key factors such as state legitimacy or inclusion.

Whilst there is an emerging consensus that clear objectives and measures of progress for fragile and conflict affected states are needed, such measures are yet to be set. Developing statistical capacity in fragile situations is key to supporting better monitoring and evaluation; a key concern recently taken up by [Paris 21](#).

Social Impact, 2006, ‘Monitoring, Evaluating and Learning for Fragile States and Peacebuilding Programs’, Practical Tools for Improving Program Performance and Results’, Prepared for USAID, Social Impact, Arlington, Virginia

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=2674>

How can organisations implement fragile states peacebuilding (FSP) programmes with realistic development outcomes that can rapidly adapt to changing circumstances? This guide from Social Impact aims to increase the effectiveness of FSP programmes through more systematic approaches to Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (ME&L). Stronger ME&L enables agencies and communities to understand what is effective, how to consolidate best practice and how to increase accountability to stakeholders.

Paris 21, 2009, ‘Fragile Situations: Report to the Paris 21 Steering Committee’, June

<http://www.paris21.org/documents/3535.pdf>

Further resources on monitoring and evaluating interventions in conflict-affected areas can be found in the GSDRC’s [conflict guide](#).

Lessons learned and implications for improved donor practice

A number of evaluations of aid programmes in fragile states stress the need for aid to prioritise a limited programme of reform, to be based on sound political analysis, to be responsive to a varied and volatile environment (including flexible funding arrangements), and to be delivered in a way that is inclusive and accountable. Other common themes include the need to focus efforts on potential change agents, and to develop locally appropriate strategies. Whilst there has been some progress with multi-donor trust funds (MDTFs) and pooled technical assistance funds, both of these instruments require improvement.

Cox, M., and Hemon, K., 2009, ‘Engagement in Fragile Situations: Preliminary Lessons from Donor Experience – A literature review’, Evaluation Report EV699, DFID, London

<http://www.dfid.gov.uk/Documents/publications/evaluation/fragile-situ-literature.pdf>

Cox, M., and Thornton, N., 2009, ‘DFID Engagement in Fragile Situations: A Portfolio Review: Synthesis Report’, Evaluation Report EV700, DFID, London

<http://www.dfid.gov.uk/Documents/publications/evaluation/fragile-situ-engagement.pdf>

Cox, M., and Thornton, N., 2009, ‘DFID Engagement in Fragile Situations: A Portfolio Review: Case Studies’, Evaluation Report EV702, DFID, London

<http://www.dfid.gov.uk/Documents/publications/evaluation/fragile-situ-case-studies.pdf>

World Bank Independent Evaluation Group, 2006, 'Recommendations', chapter 5 in Engaging with fragile situations: An IEG review of World Bank support to Low-Income Countries Under Stress, World Bank, Washington

http://www.worldbank.org/ieg/licus/docs/licus_chap5.pdf

IMF, 2008, 'The Fund's Engagement in Fragile States and Post-Conflict Countries—A Review of Experience—Issues and Options', International Monetary Fund, Washington

<http://www.imf.org/external/pp/longres.aspx?id=4236>

Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation (SDC), 2009, 'Context-sensitive engagement: Lessons learned from Swiss experiences in South Asia', Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) in collaboration with the Centre on Conflict, Development and Peacebuilding, Geneva

http://www.humansecuritygateway.info/documents/SDC_LessonsLearnedSwissExperiences_SouthAsia_AidEffectiveness.pdf

Case studies: Aid that works?

The following case studies describe successful interventions in fragile states. They consider the conditions necessary and the types of reforms that can help transition out of fragility.

Manor, J., 2006, 'Introduction: Synthesizing Case Study Findings' in Manor, J., (ed.) 'Aid That Works: Successful Development in Fragile States', World Bank, Washington

<http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=2828>

How can development agencies work with weak governments in fragile states? This introductory chapter from the book 'Aid That Works: Successful Development in Fragile States' looks at the design, implementation and governance outcomes of development initiatives in Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. Despite numerous challenges, much can be achieved through a consultative approach linked with democratic decentralisation efforts. The potential for constructive action is greater at and just above the local level than at higher levels in the political system.

World Bank, 2004, 'Making Aid Work in Fragile States: Case Studies of Effective Aid-Financed Programs', World Bank, Washington

<http://www.gsdr.org/go/display/document/legacyid/1341>

Can donors "do development" in recent post-conflict settings? Can aid achieve sustainable results in a poor governance framework? This background document for the World Bank looks at four programmes that have been successful in war-torn settings. The case studies from Timor Leste, Northern Uganda, Cambodia, and North-Western Afghanistan are assessed in terms of their poverty reduction and governance impacts.

Chauvet, L, and Collier, P, 2008, 'What are the Preconditions for Turnarounds in Failing States?', Conflict Management and Peace Science, Volume 25, Number 4, pp. 332-348

<http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3348>

This paper analyzes the preconditions for sustained policy turnarounds in failing states. It focuses on the explanatory variables of resource rents, education, and aid,

distinguishing between finance and technical assistance. Overall, these variables have significant and large effects on the duration of state failure. Appropriate donor intervention can radically shorten state failure, whereas additional finance, whether from aid or resource rents, has the opposite effect.

State-building in fragile contexts (I): State-building models, state functions and state legitimacy

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State-building has recently been adopted as the central objective of international engagement in fragile situations. The growing prominence of state-building on the international development agenda in part stems from the realisation that the MDG's are unlikely to be achieved in fragile situations without the establishment of both a basic level of security and a functioning state.

State-building is broadly understood as an ongoing, long-term, and endogenous process of establishing and/or developing effective and legitimate state institutions and state-society relations. The OECD-DAC defines state-building as: 'purposeful action to develop the capacity, institutions and legitimacy of the state in relation to an effective political process for negotiating the mutual demands between state and societal groups' (OECD-DAC, 2008). Central to this understanding is the critical importance of positive state-society bargaining underpinning the formation of the social contract.

International donors are increasingly applying a state-building lens to analysing and addressing fragility. But the idea of state-building as a framework for development assistance remains controversial. Many caution that international actors can and should only have limited influence in endogenous processes of state formation. Critics of international engagement argue that state-building is undertaken with the underlying aim of transferring institutional models based on an ideal type of well-functioning state, and that this offers little room for alternative models of statehood.

State-building and peace-building

State-building and peace-building are conceptually distinct, with complementarities, trade-offs and tensions between the two. Peace-building specifically refers to efforts to create conditions in which violence will not recur. State-building is the developing of effective and legitimate state institutions and state-society relations. Both are inherently political processes. The complementarities between peace-building and state-building in post-conflict situations and the imperative for international agencies to adopt integrated approaches are increasingly recognised.

DFID, 2009, 'Building the State and Securing the Peace', Emerging Policy Paper, Department for International Development, London

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3210>

How can support for state-building and peace-building be integrated? This Emerging Policy Paper from the UK Department for International Development (DFID) outlines a strategic framework for DFID's engagement in situations of conflict and fragility, plus operational implications. DFID's integrated approach to state-building and peace-building aims to promote inclusive political settlements, which underpin the further objectives of: (i) addressing causes of conflict and building resolution mechanisms; (ii) developing state survival functions; and (iii) responding to public expectations. Support across all four of these inter-related areas is necessary to help create a positive peace- and state-building dynamic.

Suhrke, A. and Wimpelmann, T., 2007, 'Peace Processes and State building: Economic and Institutional Provisions of Peace Agreements', Chr. Michelsen Institute, Bergen

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=2732>

To what extent have recent civil war peace agreements included state-building provisions? This paper, prepared for the World Bank and the UNDP by the Chr. Michelsen Institute (CMI), reviews the academic literature and examines recent peace agreements to assess the degree to which they make provision for future state operations. State-building provisions may involve a trade-off between the goals of ending hostilities and setting norms for peace-building.

See the related peace-building section of the GSDRC [conflict guide](#).

State-building models

For the most part, the model of state-building promoted by the international community has entailed three main prongs: supporting the legitimacy and accountability of states through democratic governance (holding elections and constitutional processes); economic liberalisation/marketisation; and strengthening the capacity of states to fulfil their core functions in order to reduce poverty. These activities are seen as essential for the development of 'reciprocal relations between a state that delivers services for its people and social and political groups who constructively engage with their state' (OECD-DAC, 2008). This 'responsive' model of state-building is distinguishable from 'unresponsive' state-building, which is characterised by rent-seeking and political repression and can lead to conflict (Whaites, 2008).

OECD-DAC, 2008, 'State-building in Situations of Fragility: Initial findings', OECD-DAC, Paris

<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/62/9/41212290.pdf>

What is the nature of state-building in the context of fragile states and situations? This paper from the OECD-DAC summarises the findings of discussions between OECD-DAC members initiated to deepen the international community's knowledge and understanding of the concept of state-building. It concludes that state-building in fragile contexts is an endogenous process driven by state-society relations which, in spite of its linkages with other kinds of economic and political development, is a distinct and necessary process for long-term state legitimacy and effectiveness.

Whaites A., 2008, 'States in Development: Understanding State-building', Department for International Development, London

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3264>

Why do some states manage state-building better than others? How can development actors support positive state-building? This paper from the UK Department for International Development's Governance and Social Development Group argues that improved understanding of state-building can increase the impact of aid, while lack of understanding reduces its benefits. Two conceptual frameworks, or models, for state-building dynamics are evident: The first is a model of how state-building can work to produce capable, accountable and responsive states - namely responsive state-building. The second is a model of unresponsive state-building - a set of dynamics likely to lead to states affected by problems such as endemic rent-seeking or political repression. The models are based on three elements – political settlements; survival functions; and expected functions.

Some argue there may be tensions embedded in the international state-building model in the sense that the three elements (as outlined in the DFID discussion paper and emerging policy paper) may not always go together in mutually reinforcing ways, or may be undermined by political economy factors. There is also some divergence of opinion about whether state-building is necessarily a development activity. Some argue resilient states do not necessarily preside over economic growth and poverty reduction (many encounter so-called 'resilient stagnation'). Conversely, what allows states to preside over economic growth may not necessarily be the same as what is required for responsive state-building.

Fritz, V. and Menocal, A.R., 2007, 'Understanding State-Building from a Political Economy Perspective', Overseas Development Institute (ODI), London
<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3178>

This paper from the Overseas Development Institute seeks to contribute to a more conceptually informed understanding of state-building, adopting a political economy perspective. In addition, the paper suggests that donors face (at least) three significant challenges in their engagement with state-building. These include political economy challenges, such as corruption and neo-patrimonialism; a knowledge gap about what works in providing external support for various state-building domains; and tensions embedded in the state-building model that the international community is currently pursuing.

Crisis States Research Centre, 2008, 'Development as State Making', CSRC Brief, London School of Economics (LSE), London
<http://www.crisisstates.com/download/publicity/DSMbrochure.pdf>

This brief discusses the key findings of the CSRC's research stream on state building. A key finding is that what accounts for state resilience may not be the same as what allows states to preside over economic growth and poverty reduction. The difference between fragile and resilient states is a function of elite bargains, coalitional politics, security and production. State resilience seems to depend on the inclusiveness of bargains struck among elites and the extent to which state organisations have established their presence throughout a country's territory. There may be trade-offs at any given time between securing peace and promoting positive programmes for economic growth and welfare.

An alternative 'developmental states' model of state-building questions the focus on the development of democratic institutions and good governance as necessary for poverty reduction, suggesting that economic transformation and elite consensus are the more critical elements of state-building. But the relevance and applicability of the

developmental state model to fragile situations is highly controversial.

Barbara, J, 2008, 'Rethinking neo-liberal state building: building post-conflict development states', *Development in Practice*,18:3,307 — 318

www.informaworld.com/smpp/content~db=all~content=a793276875

In attempting to rebuild post-conflict failed states, the international community has drawn heavily on neo-liberal development paradigms. However, neo-liberal state-building has proved ineffectual in stimulating economic development in post-conflict states, thus undermining prospects for state consolidation. This article offers the developmental state as an alternative model for international state-building, better suited to overcoming the developmental challenges that face post-conflict states. Drawing on the East Asian experience, developmental state-building would seek to build state capacity to intervene in the economy to guide development, compensating for the failure of growth led by the private sector to materialise in many post-conflict states.

Briscoe I., 2008, 'Can Fragile States Learn from the Development Tigers?', *Fundación para las Relaciones Internacionales y el Diálogo Exterior (FRIDE)*, Madrid

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3263>

Can the developmental success of East Asian countries be used as a road map for low-income economies run by weak states? According to this paper from FRIDE, the national and historical context of fragile states means that it is difficult to export the experience of states like South Korea or Taiwan. However, there are important lessons to be learned. Active state intervention, strategic economic policies and a hands-off approach by the international community are all crucial components in kick-starting fast economic growth.

State functions

Whilst there is consensus that a resilient state must be able to deliver certain functions which meet citizens' needs and expectations, there is a great deal of debate about what these functions should be, and whether it is possible to establish a hierarchy between them. DFID and other donors distinguish between state 'survival' functions and 'expected' functions which are essential to meet public expectations and ensure state legitimacy. DFID does not propose a hierarchy between these, as action in both areas is required to generate a positive state-building dynamic. The literature offers various combinations of 'core' functions, the more common of which are: a monopoly over the legitimate use of force; revenue generation; safety, security and justice; basic service delivery; and economic governance.

Relatively little evidence-based work has been done to substantiate the arguments about which core functions states should perform or prioritise. Importantly, expected functions will differ according to the historical and cultural factors that shape state-society relations in different contexts. Many view the discussion as essentially political, since it questions the proper role and size of the state vis-à-vis other authorities and groups in society.

Ghani A., Lockhart C., 2005, 'Closing the Sovereignty Gap: An Approach to State Building', *Overseas Development Institute (ODI)*, London

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3176>

Where a state consistently fails to meet the basic prerequisites of a sovereign government, how can this 'sovereignty gap' be closed in order to improve its security and prosperity? This working paper from the Overseas Development Institute argues greater emphasis should be placed on core functions that a sovereign state must perform. When they are performed well, the state creates a virtuous circle generating greater legitimacy and trust between the governing and the governed. The failure to perform one or a number of the functions well creates, by contrast, a vicious circle, leading in the end to varying degrees of state failure.

The Ghani/Lockhart framework of state functions is available on the website of the [Institute for State Effectiveness](#).

Prioritisation and sequencing issues

An appropriate prioritisation and sequencing of state-building processes and functions is seen as important in low capacity contexts where there are likely to be limited resources and therefore a need for high levels of (donor) co-ordination. One key debate concerns whether a certain level of security is required prior to the establishment of democratic institutions. The OECD-DAC contends that the first priority in state building should be a form of political governance through which state and society can reconcile their expectations of one another, which determines whether security is provided in a way that meets the needs of citizens (OECD-DAC, 2008).

OECD-DAC., 2008, 'From Fragility to Resilience: Concepts and Dilemmas of Statebuilding in Fragile States', Report prepared by the Center on International Cooperation at New York University and International Peace Academy, New York

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3187>

This discussion paper from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development sees state building as an internal political process of state-society bargaining. Donors therefore need to focus first and foremost on political governance. This includes the local political processes that create public institutions and generate their legitimacy in the eyes of a state's population. Fragility arises primarily from weaknesses in the dynamic political process through which citizens' expectations of the state and state expectations of citizens are reconciled and brought into equilibrium with the state's capacity to deliver services. Disequilibrium can arise as a result of extremes of incapacity, elite behaviour, or crises of legitimacy. It can arise through shocks or chronic erosion, and be driven alternately by internal and external factors. Resilient states are able to manage these pressures through a political process that is responsive, adjusting the social contract.

Paris, R., 2004, 'Introduction', in At War's End: Building Peace After Civil Conflict, Cambridge University Press, pp.1-10.

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3059>

What is the relationship between liberalisation, institution building and peace in countries that are just emerging from civil conflict? Roland Paris' book examines post-conflict operations between 1989 and 1999. This introductory chapter outlines the author's argument that while peace-builders should preserve the broad goal of converting war-shattered states into liberal market democracies, peace-building strategies need to build effective institutions before liberalisation takes place.

Bratton, M. and Chang, E., 2006, 'State Building and Democratization in Sub-Saharan Africa: Forwards, Backwards, or Together?', Comparative Political Studies, vol. 39, no. 9, pp 1059-1080

<http://cps.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/39/9/1059>

Is democracy feasible in sub-Saharan Africa? Which aspects of state-building are most important? This research from Michigan State University shows that new democracies emerge only in the context of effective states. The scope of state infrastructure and the delivery of welfare services have little impact on democratisation. But the establishment of a rule of law is critical to building democracy. Because the legitimacy of the state is itself a reciprocal product of democratisation, African states and African regimes should be understood together.

Hesselbein, G., Golooba-Mutebi, F. and Putzel, J., 2006, 'Economic and Political Foundations of State Making in Africa: Understanding State Reconstruction', Crisis States Research Centre Working Paper, Series 2, no. 3., London School of Economics (LSE), London

<http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=2601>

How can the process of state reconstruction be understood? This working paper from the Crisis States Research Centre examines state reconstruction in Uganda, Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo in light of Tanzania's experience of establishing a stable state. Overall, it argues that a 'state in the making' lies somewhere between 'traditional' forms of organisation and the modern state and formal economy. Its conclusions cast doubt on the idea that state-making is best pursued through modern liberal democracy.

Further resources on the timing of elections in post-conflict and fragile situations is available in the [political systems guide](#).

Political settlements

The nature and evolution of the 'political settlement' is increasingly viewed as a key underlying determinant of state fragility or resilience. A political settlement can be understood as: 'the forging of a common understanding, usually among elites, that their interests or beliefs are served by a particular way of organising political power' (Whaites, 2008). These often unarticulated, negotiated agreements usually extend beyond elites to bind together state and society, provide legitimacy for rulers, and can prevent violent conflict from occurring. Recent research has emphasised that the inclusiveness of the political settlement affects the potential for political stability.

Donors typically support political settlements through formal power-sharing mechanisms, elections, parliamentary strengthening, and constitution-building processes. But many stress that although political settlements may adopt the structures of the 'modern' state and be underpinned by a constitution, in practice the power relations behind the settlement may be very different.

Whaites A., 2008, 'States in Development: Understanding State-building', Department for International Development, London

www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3264

Why do some states manage state-building better than others? How can development actors support positive state-building? This paper from the UK Department for International Development's Governance and Social Development Group locates the

political settlement within a proposed state-building model. It argues that improved understanding of state-building can increase the impact of aid, while lack of understanding reduces its benefits. Two conceptual frameworks, or models, for statebuilding dynamics are evident: The first is a model of how state-building can work to produce capable, accountable and responsive states - namely responsive statebuilding. The second is a model of unresponsive state-building - a set of dynamics likely to lead to states affected by problems such as endemic rent-seeking or political repression. The extent to which the political settlement is inclusive or exclusionary is a critical factor in determining whether state-building is responsive or unresponsive.

Lindemann, S, 2008, 'Do Inclusive Elite Bargains Matter? A Research Framework for Understanding the Causes of Civil War in Sub-Saharan Africa', Crisis States Research Centre, London School of Economics (LSE), London
<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3235>

Sub-Saharan Africa is the world's most conflict-intensive region. But why have some African states experienced civil war, while others have managed to maintain political stability? This discussion paper from the Crisis States Research Centre argues that the ability of post-colonial states in Sub-Saharan Africa to maintain political stability depends on the ability of the ruling political parties to overcome the historical legacy of social fragmentation. Inclusive elite bargains' involve a ruling party that integrates a broad coalition of key elites by defining inclusive access to state structures (jobs) and state resources (rents). 'Exclusionary elite bargains' involve a narrow coalition of elites who define exclusionary access to state structures (jobs) and state resources (rents). 'Inclusive elite bargains' permit the maintenance of political stability, whereas 'exclusionary elite bargains' give rise to trajectories of civil war.

Samuels, K., 2008 'Postwar Constitution Building: Opportunities and Challenges', Chapter 8 in (eds.) R. Paris and T.Sisk, The Dilemmas of State-building: Confronting the Contradictions of Postwar Peace Operations, Routledge

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3335>

What role does constitution-building play in postwar state-building? This research from 'The Dilemmas of State-building' looks at the political dynamics, choices and implementation challenges that confront constitution-building. It suggests that the process can provide a key opportunity to shape the institutional and governance framework, and opens the door to societal dialogue. However, ensuring that such a process supports the establishment of a peaceful and legitimate state is a challenge that requires careful balancing of the compromises needed to maintain the peace and involvement of the people in deciding the future of their country.

Sisk, T., 2008, 'Pathways of the Political: Electoral Processes after Civil War', Discussion draft for Research Partnership on Postwar State-Building, Chapter 9 in (eds.) R. Paris and T.Sisk, The Dilemmas of State-building: Confronting the Contradictions of Postwar Peace Operations, Routledge

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3279>

How do election processes contribute to stability after civil war? This research from the University of Denver compares statebuilding in Cambodia, South Africa, Afghanistan and Liberia. It argues that electoral processes are necessary in moving beyond violence. However, the way elections are carried out is critical. Sequencing, design and the extent of international oversight are the key variables that determine the extent to which electoral processes contribute to capable, responsive states or to captured, fragmented and weak states.

Mehler, A., 2008, 'Not Always in the People's Interest: Power-sharing Arrangements in African Peace Agreements', GIGA German Institute of Global and Area Studies, Hamburg

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3368>

Peace agreements that place a heavy emphasis on power-sharing often preclude the people's interests and can impede sustainable peace. This paper, published by the German Institute of Global and Area Studies, analyses the impact of power-sharing arrangements in recent African peace agreements. Many peace agreement failures are caused in part by the international community's support of power-sharing that benefits armed rebel movements to the detriment of long-term conflict solutions.

State legitimacy

Fragile states often experience crises of legitimacy in the sense that citizens may not accept the state's basic right to rule. State legitimacy and the development of trust between state and society have long been considered a critical dimension of state-building processes in the political science literature. But many argue that state legitimacy has often been poorly understood or overlooked by external actors aiming to support these processes.

The OECD-DAC identifies an opportunity for state-building to create a 'virtuous cycle of legitimacy' in the sense that: i) legitimacy is necessary for the process of state-building because the ability of the state to manage state-society expectations depends on its legitimacy in the eyes of its population, and ii) state-building and the delivery of certain functions which benefit people strengthens citizen confidence and trust in the state and in turn reinforces its legitimacy. But many argue there are tremendous limits on the capacity of external actors to influence state legitimacy, and very little empirical evidence of how donors can support state legitimisation.

The literature denotes various types of legitimacy (including grounded, embedded, charismatic, international, self-legitimacy, performance) and sources of legitimacy (including performance against certain functions, representation, accountability, citizenship, rights). Understanding what state legitimacy means in different contexts is a critical concern for external actors. Some argue a state-building process is most likely to generate legitimacy for the state when it is inclusive of all major political forces and open to the participation of the public.

Kaplan, S., 2008 'Fragile States, Fractured Societies', chapter 3 in Fixing Fragile States: A New Paradigm for Development, Praeger Security International, London

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3205>

What has caused the difficulties experienced by fragile states? This book chapter from Praeger Security International explores the roots of state fragility and the role of foreign aid in sustaining past dysfunction. Two structural problems – political identity fragmentation (often based on arbitrarily drawn state borders) and weak national institutions – reinforce each other. They undermine state legitimacy, interpersonal trust and the formation of robust governance systems and encourage neopatrimonialism. Fragile states' formal institutions need to be reconnected with the local societies upon which they have been imposed. The key to fixing states is to legitimise the state by deeply enmeshing it within society.

Papagianni, K., 2008, 'Participation and State Legitimation', Chapter 3 in (eds.) C T Call and V Wyeth, Building States to Build Peace, Lynne Reinner, Colorado
www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3365

How do postwar countries gain legitimacy in the eyes of political elites and the public? This study from the Harriman Institute argues that state-building should be approached as a process (not an event) to legitimate new state institutions. It should also be seen as a process that meets the criteria of inclusion and participation. Although inclusive and participatory political processes do not necessarily lead to legitimate outcomes, when managed well, they have a significant chance of bolstering the legitimacy of postwar states.

Lake, D., 2007, 'Building Legitimate States After Civil Wars: Order, Authority, and Institutions', Unpublished Paper

<http://dss.ucsd.edu/~dlake/documents/LakeBuildingLegitimateStatesv1.2.pdf>

How can statebuilding be improved? This paper from the University of California argues that successful statebuilding may be possible if the international community adopts a new framework. It presents a relational concept, using Somalia and Somaliland as case studies, and identifies alternative ways to rebuild state legitimacy.

A key question is not only how donors can support the development of state-legitimacy, but how they can avoid undermining it. Particularly in reference to Afghanistan, some have argued that intervening from the outside to build a state carries with it the risk of undermining the legitimacy and sovereignty of the very state donors are trying to secure and build. Specifically, donor interference in the management of budgets and resources is likely to undermine legitimacy rather than build state capacity (see Ghani and Lockhart, 2005 above).

ID21, 2007, 'Retaining Legitimacy in Fragile States', ID21 Insights, Volume 66, Institute of Development Studies, Brighton

<http://www.id21.org/insights/insights66/insights66.pdf>

Tax and state building

Many argue taxation is a critical aspect of state-building. The ability to raise revenue and manage public expenditure are core state functions which underpin the formation of the social contract. Revenue raised through taxation, rather than through aid, arguably better supports state accountability to its citizens and, in turn, state legitimacy. Taxation and public expenditure are also important redistributive mechanisms which can allow the state to correct horizontal and vertical inequalities over time. Nevertheless, some argue that donors have paid insufficient attention to supporting taxation in fragile states, partly because reforming tax administration is a highly complex and ultimately political undertaking.

Fjeldstad, O-H., and Moore, M., 2009, 'Taxation and State Building: Poor Countries in a Globalised World', CMI, Bergen

<http://bora.cmi.no/dspace/bitstream/10202/49/1/Working%20paper%20WP%202007-11.pdf>

Moore, M., 2004, 'Revenues, State Formation and the Quality of Governance in Developing Countries', International Political Science Review, vol. 25, no. 3.

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=1520>

Sources of state revenue have a major impact on patterns of state formation. This article, published in *International Political Science Review*, investigates how far the quality of governance in developing countries might improve if states were more dependent for their financial resources on domestic taxpayers. It argues that we can best understand patterns of state formation in the South by exploring the different context in which they were formed in comparison with that of earlier western European states.

The literature indicates rebuilding and supporting state capacity is critical but not sufficient. Institution building needs to be closely linked with reforms of both revenue and expenditure policies. Ultimately state revenues should be able to sustain state expenditure policies without donor support. The challenge, however, is that the tax base in fragile environments is often too small (or overly reliant on natural resources) to sustain these expenditure demands. Research suggests careful thought needs to be given to how, ultimately, different aspects of a state's tax and expenditure policies will be drawn together.

Gupta, S., 2005, 'Rebuilding Fiscal Institutions in Post Conflict Countries', Occasional Paper 247, International Monetary Fund, Washington
www.imf.org/External/Pubs/NFT/Op/247/op247.pdf

Useful websites

OECD DAC: Peace-building, state-building and security

http://www.oecd.org/document/30/0,3343,en_2649_33693550_42113822_1_1_1_1,0_0.html

International Peace Institute: Research partnership on post-war state-building

<http://www.ipacademy.org/>

Institute for State Effectiveness <http://www.effectivestates.org/about.htm>

Princeton University is running a research partnership on "Institutions for Fragile States", in response to demand for problem-focused knowledge and practical "lessons" on the organisational designs, recruitment procedures, and management practices that yield accountable and capable government in volatile political settings.
<http://www.princeton.edu/states/>

State-building in fragile contexts (II): Strategies, dilemmas and lessons for external engagement

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Critiques and dilemmas of externally-assisted state building

International actors confront a range of dilemmas in engaging with state-building processes. Many see inherent tensions and contradictions between external assistance and the need to develop local ownership, between universal values and local expectations, and between short-term imperatives (such as elite bargains) and the development of longer-term state institutions. At the practical level, donors need to reconcile the need for long-term but not open-ended engagement, ensure policy coherence and divisions of labour within and between donor governments and agencies, and be mindful that aid instruments do not undermine state legitimacy.

Paris, R., and Sisk, T., 2007, ‘Managing Contradictions: The Inherent Dilemmas of Postwar Statebuilding’, Research Partnership on post-war state-building, International Peace Institute, New York

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3261>

How can legitimate, effective institutions best be built to create peaceful states? This research from the Research Partnership on Postwar Statebuilding suggests that state-building has become a central focus of multidimensional peace operations in war-torn societies. But efforts to construct legitimate, effective state institutions are full of tensions and contradictions. Understanding these tensions and contradictions is essential for anticipating many of the practical problems that international agencies face in the course of state-building operations and for devising more nuanced and effective state-building strategies for future missions.

Ottaway, M., 2002, ‘Rebuilding State Institutions in Collapsed States’, Development and Change, vol 33, no. 5

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=1378>

Is institution building the best way of reconstructing collapsed states? What can be done to avert failure in reconstruction efforts? This paper by the Democracy and Rule of Law Project, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace critiques the model of state reconstruction currently adopted by the international community. The article compares exogenous state-building (using the examples of Mozambique, Cambodia and Bosnia) with endogenous efforts (for example, Uganda, Ethiopia and Eritrea) and

finds that exogenous, donor driven attempts are more expensive and tend to focus on building institutions rather than establishing power. She criticises donor state-building techniques as focusing more on imported 'best practice' than local solutions, as being overwhelming for the country in question and for not being resourced adequately enough to see the donors' goals realised.

Englebert, P., and Tull, D., 2008, 'Postconflict Reconstruction in Africa: Flawed Ideas about Failed States', *International Security*, Volume 32, Number 4, pp. 106-139

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3284>

Why have international efforts to reconstruct public institutions in failed and collapsed states in Africa enjoyed such little success, particularly in establishing self-sustaining state institutions? This article from *International Security* examines the obstacles to successful reconstruction in the failed states of sub-Saharan Africa. It argues that three flawed assumptions underpin international efforts to rebuild failed states in Africa and recommends a greater reliance on indigenous reconstruction efforts.

Lun, M., 2009, 'Reconnecting Joined-up Approaches: Nation-building Through State-Building', Overseas Development Institute, London

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3325>

How can sustainable peace be built in fragile states? This study from the Overseas Development Institute shows that while donors have largely focused on state-building, stability requires a deeper process of nation-building. External actors are restricted to using state-building as a means of enabling nation-building. They can assist in the establishment of rule of law, create a fertile investment climate for economic regeneration and agree an exit strategy. However, only the partner country can take the active lead role in nation-building.

'Do no harm' and state-building

A 'do no harm' approach to state-building encourages external actors to mitigate the potential for aid to result in unintended harmful outcomes. Underlying this principle is the need for interventions to be based on sound contextual analysis to better facilitate external alignment behind endogenous processes. Donors are increasingly thinking about what a 'do no harm' approach to state-building means in any given context, so as to avoid some of the well-documented pitfalls of engaging in these complex and highly political processes.

Nixon, H., 2007, 'Aiding the State? International Assistance and the Statebuilding Paradox in Afghanistan', AREU Briefing Paper, Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit, Afghanistan

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=2752>

How can a sustainable, legitimate and effective state be established in Afghanistan? As it moves from a transitional framework to a longer-term development framework, insurgency, opium and popular discontent threaten to undermine progress and further destabilise the country. This paper from the Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU) argues that while these threats require short-term action, sustainable solutions depend on improved governance, which in turn requires realistic state-building goals. Aid dependence, donor-driven assistance, limited state control over

resources and budget assistance all present difficulties for state-building in Afghanistan.

Working within local contexts and institutions

Understanding informal institutions and forms of order and authority that exist within and beyond the nation state is critical for understanding the feasibility of state-building interventions. Many studies have demonstrated how local institutions and traditional authorities are resilient, can endure state failure or collapse, and determine the everyday realities of poor people, particularly in remote or peripheral areas beyond the state's reach. Some call for state-building interventions to better account for and tap into the potential for positive social change through these institutions on the basis they often carry legitimacy with the population, and that where formal state institutions do not match well with them, they will not endure. Recently there has been renewed attention on the 'mediated state' model, in which a central government with limited power and capacity relies on a diverse range of local and informal authorities to execute core functions of government and mediate relations between local communities and the state.

But others caution that local institutions should not be idealised. There are considerable challenges in addressing fragility when dominant social structures and local institutions may perpetrate violence, vulnerability, or predation. Some studies have identified a risk that state-building interventions can perpetuate weak, unstable or criminal institutions.

Boege, V., Brown, A., Clements, K., and Nolan, A., 2008, 'On Hybrid Political Orders and Emerging States: State Formation in the Context of 'Fragility'', Berghoff Research Centre for Constructive Conflict Management, Berlin
<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3330>

This paper from the Berghof Research Centre argues that current approaches to state-building rest on a narrow understanding of the sources of political order, focusing too heavily on the technical and bureaucratic functions of the state. It proposes instead that emerging states be viewed not as fragile entities lacking capabilities but as hybrid political orders whose sources of legitimacy are often more socially and culturally rooted. The reality is that state institutions co-exist with and depend on the family, religious, economic and cultural institutions. While the state, in the final analysis, has a coercive capacity to determine outcomes which other institutions lack, this does not mean that state institutions are the primary determinant of integration, security, welfare or legitimacy. These factors are much more critically determined by other institutions within the society.

Menkhaus, K., 2006, 'Governance without Government in Somalia: Spoilers, State Building, and the Politics of Coping', International Security, 2006/7
<http://www.mitpressjournals.org/doi/pdfplus/10.1162/isec.2007.31.3.74?cookieSet=1>

Why has statebuilding in Somalia failed so often? This research from Davidson College suggests that the problem lies in the type of state that both external and local actors have so far sought to construct. Somalia needs to develop a mediated state in which a central government with limited power and capacity relies on a range of local authorities to execute core functions of government and mediate between local communities and the state.

Cammack, D., 2007, 'The Logic of African Neopatrimonialism: What Role for Donors?', Development Policy Review, Vol. 25, Issue 5, pp. 599-614

<http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3157>

When sub-Saharan African government institutions do not function as expected by international aid agencies, they are often labelled dysfunctional. This Development Policy Review article explains the 'logic' behind neopatrimonial practices. Donors must begin to *act* politically – to confront directly the political logic that undermines economic development and democratic consolidation.

McGovern, M., 2008, 'Liberia: The Risks of Re-building a Shadow State' Chapter 14 in (eds.) C T Call and V Wyeth, Building States to Build Peace, Lynne Reinner, Colorado

<http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3332>

What lessons can the international community draw from statebuilding efforts in Liberia? This chapter from the book 'Building States to Build Peace' reviews the international community's experience in Liberia during its post-conflict transitional period and finds that deeply intrusive forms of intervention often risk long-term sustainability for medium-term success. It argues that unless reforms and reconstruction are rooted in consultation and a sense of local ownership they are likely to collapse as soon as donor interest and resources shift elsewhere.

Further resources on working with non-state justice institutions are available on the GSDRC's [justice guide](#).

The Overseas Development Institute (ODI) is leading a consortium on **Africa Power and Politics** that is assessing how donors may work “with” the grain rather than against it in different contexts in Africa. <http://www.institutions-africa.org/page/privacy>

Addressing exclusion

Social exclusion is a key cause and characteristic of state fragility. Supporting opportunities for enhancing excluded groups rights and their participation in governance is therefore viewed as a critical aspect of state-building by donors. Some view a rights-based approach to programming as crucial in the achievement of long term and sustainable empowerment of marginalised groups.

Evans D.G., 2008, 'Human Rights and State Fragility: Conceptual Foundations and Strategic Directions for State-Building', Report prepared for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Denmark

<http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3199>

How can a human rights-based approach support state building in fragile states? This paper, prepared for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Denmark, presents guidance for international actors. Given the relationship between conflict and poverty, neither factor on its own can guide responses to state fragility. A human rights-based approach to state building involves analysing and addressing issues of social, economic and political exclusion.

Stewart, F., Brown, G., and Langer, A., 2007, 'Policies towards Horizontal Inequalities', CRISE Working Paper, no. 42, Queen Elizabeth House, Oxford University, Oxford

<http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=2727>

Severe horizontal inequalities (HIs), or inequalities among groups, are undesirable in themselves and can lead to violent conflict. So, what can be done to reduce them? This paper from the Centre for Research on Inequality, Human Security and Ethnicity (CRISE) reviews a range of policies which could contribute to reducing HIs in the political, socio-economic and cultural status dimensions. Considerations of HIs are frequently ignored in policy-making, and need to become an important part of policy discussions in multicultural societies.

DIIS, 2008, 'Youth Employment in Fragile States', DIIS Policy Brief, Danish Institute for International Studies, Copenhagen

[http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/lib.nsf/db900sid/OCHA-7MEBDG/\\$file/diis-youth-employment.pdf?openelement](http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/lib.nsf/db900sid/OCHA-7MEBDG/$file/diis-youth-employment.pdf?openelement)

Directing the energy of youth towards reconstruction is a challenge and requires rapid interventions in the areas of education, family life and health, economic empowerment and civic participation.

For further reading, see also: 'Tackling social exclusion' in the GSDRC [social exclusion guide](#); 'Protecting minority rights' in the GSDRC [conflict guide](#); and 'State fragility and human rights' in the GSDRC [human rights guide](#).

Gender and state-building

Gender roles and relations can determine opportunities and obstacles to state-building. Many argue early attention needs to be given to gender equality and to increasing women's voice in political, social, and economic development in fragile and post-conflict settings. State reconstruction can provide opportunities to shape new social, economic, and political dynamics that can break existing gender stereotypes. For example, recent research has shown how the redrawing of the boundaries of authority between the formal state and customary governance systems can provide new citizenship opportunities for women. Not focusing on gender early on can entrench systems that discriminate against women which are much harder to challenge later.

At the operational level, however, gender is often not seen as a high priority by donors in the early states of post-conflict state-building, and may be ignored in the design of interventions. It is important to understand the linkages between gender and fragility, and the implications of failing to take gender into account (including the potential to inadvertently reinforce discrimination).

Castillejo, C., 2008, 'Strengthening Women's Citizenship in the Context of State Building: The Experience of Sierra Leone', Fundación para las Relaciones Internacionales y el Diálogo Exterior (FRIDE), Madrid

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3185>

How can women's citizenship in developing countries be strengthened? In many African countries women have little contact with the formal state and their lives are governed by customary governance systems that seriously limit their rights and opportunities for political participation. This is particularly true for women in fragile states, where the formal state is weak and inaccessible. Based on field research in Sierra Leone conducted by FRIDE and CGG, this Working Paper examines how processes of post-conflict state-building have redrawn the boundaries of authority between the formal state and customary governance systems, and thereby provided new citizenship opportunities for women. The paper explores the changes that are

taking place in women's rights, women's political participation and women's mobilisation in Sierra Leone, in the context of state-building. It also makes recommendations for how donors can support the strengthening of women's citizenship within their support for state-building in Africa.

Larson, A., 2008, 'A Mandate to Mainstream: Promoting Gender Equality in Afghanistan', Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit, Kabul
http://www.areu.org.af/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_details&gid=613&Itemid=99999999

How well is gender equality being promoted in Afghanistan? This study, from the Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit, argues that gender mainstreaming is not being substantively implemented in the Administration, although it is the government's principal strategy for promoting gender equality. Mainstreaming is a valuable tool and could be more effectively executed. It is the responsibility of the Government of Afghanistan (GoA), and of its leaders in particular, to ensure that its written commitment to promote gender equality in the GoA Gender Mainstreaming Policy is supported by its activities and practices.

Strengthening citizen engagement

Many caution that any reconstruction process must allow for active citizen participation, particularly from periphery populations, in order to enhance its legitimacy. Donors need to therefore balance the top-down focus on institution-building with the strengthening of bottom-up access to institutions and accountability. Civic participation is also seen to strengthen state legitimacy. Citizen-centred or community-based approaches (CBA) are increasingly advocated as ways to develop local governance capacity and social capital.

von Kaltenborn-Stachau, H., 2008, 'Fostering Positive Citizen-State Relations in Support of State-building', Part I in 'The missing link: connecting citizen and state in post-conflict environments', CommGAP, World Bank, Washington
<http://blogs.worldbank.org/publicsphere/category/tags/state-building>

How can the international community help to rebuild state-society relations in post-conflict situations? This study from the World Bank argues that current donor approaches to state-building are too narrowly focused and too fragmented to fully address the "invisible" yet critical processes of state-society relations. It recommends the adoption of a governance framework based on the concept of the public sphere in order to foster positive collaboration and engagement within post-conflict societies.

Uvin, P., 2006. 'Fostering Citizen Collective Action in Post-Conflict Societies', in What Really Works in Preventing and Rebuilding Failed States?, Occasional Paper Series, Woodrow Wilson International Center, Washington, DC
<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=2947>

How do NGOs contribute to civil society development in post-conflict environments? What role should the donor community play? This paper from the Woodrow Wilson Centre describes the challenges involved in civil society development in post-conflict Rwanda and Burundi. It concludes that in order to be successful, the donor community must find more effective and constructive means of supporting citizen opportunities for local learning and bargaining within the framework of the law. Promoting a culture of citizenship is crucial to effective civil society promotion.

Eyben, R. and Ladbury, S., 2006, 'Building Effective States: Taking a Citizen's Perspective', Development Research Centre, Citizenship, Participation and Accountability, Institute of Development Studies, Brighton

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=1994>

How can a citizen-centred approach to development build effective states by improving relations between state and society? This paper from the Development Research Centre on Citizenship, Participation and Accountability, gives an overview of current debates and analyses citizens' own views on these issues. It argues that a state's legitimacy is strengthened by civic participation, which often grows up around local issues, and can be empowered through donor support.

The National Solidarity Programme (NSP) in Afghanistan is a high-profile example of a citizen-led reconstruction effort which aimed to empower communities, improve community relations, and increase public faith in the system of government. However, other research warns about the challenges of making these structures sustainable, coherent and effective and in developing their relations with non-state actors and customary governance systems.

Ghani, A., and Lockhart, C., 2008, 'National Programs: The Challenge of Implementation', Chapter 9 in Fixing Failed States: A Framework for Rebuilding a Fractured World, Oxford University Press, Oxford

How do national programmes aid the state-building process? This chapter from the book 'Fixing Failed States' assesses the success of national programmes in Europe, the United States and Afghanistan. Currently, state-building strategies falter because they fail to link intentions to realistic and innovative delivery mechanisms. The real work lies in implementation, and national programmes can provide the implementation vehicles that align vision, rules, resources and participants to achieve a common goal.

Nixon, H., 2007, 'The Changing Face of Local Government?: Community Development Councils in Afghanistan', Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit, Kabul

www.areu.org.af/index.php?option=com_docman&Itemid=&task=doc_download&gid=569

Decentralisation in fragile states

There is considerable disagreement about whether and how decentralisation should be pursued in fragile environments. Decentralisation is often supported on the basis that it can positively impact on centre-periphery relations and bring government closer to the people. But many studies have found that informal political institutions can subvert the decentralisation process in fragile states, and some caution that the relationship between state resilience and decentralisation is not yet well understood. A long-standing concern in the state-building literature has been the need to balance the development of strong central institutions with the need for the state to have a local presence, but without local agencies becoming autonomous from the state.

Brinkerhoff, D., 2008, 'Good Enough Governance in Fragile States: The Role of Center-Periphery Relations and Local Government', Paper presented at the 4th International Specialised Conference on "International Aid and Public Administration", International Institute of Administrative Sciences, Ankara, Turkey, June 23-27

www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3366

How can fragile and post-conflict states stabilise themselves and transition toward socio-economic recovery? This paper, presented at the IIAS conference, argues that developing countries and donors should eschew ambitious idealised visions of good governance in favour of pragmatic approaches aimed at achieving "good enough governance". Drawing from evidence from stabilisation efforts in Iraq, it concludes that implementing this new strategy requires looking beyond the centre to the critical role of sub-national levels of government in post-conflict reconstruction.

GSDRC, 2008, 'Decentralisation and Assistance to Sub-national Governments in Fragile Environments', Helpdesk Research Report, Governance and Social Development Resource Centre, Birmingham

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Helpdesk&id=471>

Many argue that strengthening sub-national governance in fragile situations is vital, particularly for delivering basic services where the state is weak or absent, for addressing ethnic/regional inequalities, and for conflict management. The importance of center-periphery relations in terms of statebuilding, particularly in restoring state legitimacy, is also noted. Yet many are skeptical as to whether there is any evidence that decentralisation can produce pro-poor outcomes in fragile settings. Furthermore, there is significant concern that decentralisation in certain contexts can be potentially damaging; case studies highlight the risk that decentralisation can be subverted by politics, therefore reinforcing non-democratic and non-participatory political systems, and increasing the potential of a return to conflict or fragility.

Engberg-Pedersen, L., 2008, 'Local Governance in Fragile States', DIIS Policy Brief, Danish Institute of International Studies, Copenhagen

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3374>

This policy brief argues that early support to local governance in fragile states is vital for enabling socio-economic development in the countryside, but comprehensive political, fiscal and administrative decentralisation reforms are rarely the way forward. In situations where non-state actors fill the gaps left by absence of government, comprehensive decentralisation risks reproducing state fragility. Ignoring informal non-state authorities can considerably undermine efforts to reform local governance in fragile states. Overall, donors should not be overly ambitious and should adopt a properly sequenced and integrated approach.

Jackson, P., 2005, 'Chiefs, Money and Politicians: Rebuilding Local Government in Post-War Sierra Leone', Public Administration and Development, vol. 25, no 1., pp. 49-58

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=1208>

What are the prospects for decentralisation in post-war Sierra Leone? This paper from the University of Birmingham's International Development Department analyses the interaction between the different elements of local government, finance, and the diamond trade in Sierra Leone and offers guidance for post-conflict reconstruction at a local level. It argues that the reconstitution of the politico-economic networks surrounding diamond extraction outside of local government may lead to the alienation of the same groups that led the rebellion over the last few years.

State-building case studies and narratives

Many argue the historical trajectory of state-building in any given context, and the potential for path dependence, is vital for external actors to understand. The case studies below demonstrate how forms of the state can change over time in response to internal and external factors. Some of the studies seek to account for state resilience in a comparative perspective.

Commins, S., Rocha Menocal, A., and Othieno, T., 2009, 'States in Development: Testing the State-building Framework', Overseas Development Institute (ODI), London

<http://www.odi.org.uk/resources/details.asp?id=3467&title=fragile-state-building-framework>

Beswick, D., 2009, 'The Challenge of Warlordism to Post-Conflict State-Building: The Case of Laurent Nkunda in Eastern Congo', The Round Table, Volume 98, Issue 402, pp. 333 - 346

<http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/content~db=pair~content=a912306683>

Gutierrez-Sanin, F., M.T. Pinto, J.C. Arenas, T. Guzman and M.T. Gutierrez, 2009 'Politics and Security in Three Colombian Cities', Crisis States Research Centre, London School of Economics (LSE), London

<http://www.crisisstates.com/Publications/wp/WP44.2.htm>

Moxham, B., 2008, 'State-Making and the Post-Conflict City: Integration in Dili, Disintegration in Timor-Leste', Crisis States Research Centre, London School of Economics (LSE), London

<http://www.crisisstates.com/Publications/wp/WP32.2.htm>

Sumich, J. and Honwana, J., 2007, 'Strong Party, Weak State? Frelimo and State Survival Through the Mozambican Civil War: An Analytical Narrative on State-Making', Working Paper 23, Crisis States Research Centre, London School of Economics (LSE), London

<http://www.crisisstates.com/Publications/wp/WP23.2.htm>

Hesselbein, G., 2007, 'The Rise and Decline of the Congolese State: An analytical narrative on state-making', Crisis States Research Centre, London School of Economics (LSE), London

<http://www.crisisstates.com/Publications/wp/WP21.2.htm>

Chopra, J., 2002, 'Building State Failure in East Timor', Development and Change, vol. 33, no. 5

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=1354>

Service delivery in fragile contexts

This page introduces some of the challenges, dilemmas and lessons learned in supporting the delivery of basic services in fragile contexts.

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Failure to deliver basic services including security, health, education and justice is understood as both a cause and characteristic of fragility; states that fail to meet a society's basic needs and expectations are seen to inherently lack legitimacy and resilience, and fragile situations in turn give rise to the deterioration and fragmentation of services. The impacts of fragility on service delivery are widely documented, and include; inequitable coverage and access, the proliferation of non-state service providers (including international NGOs), and the breakdown of long-route accountability.

The impetus for donors in supporting the delivery of services in fragile states is not only meeting basic human needs, but supporting the state-building imperative, specifically, the development of reciprocal state-society relations, state legitimacy, and meaningful accountability relationships. In this sense, donors are increasingly thinking in terms of how and to what extent the delivery of services can address the root causes of fragility. But many caution that using services to address inequity and social exclusion are highly political undertakings.

Service delivery dilemmas and trade-offs

Ensuring the quality, sustainability and accessibility of basic services in fragile contexts, particularly for the poor, presents a series of dilemmas and challenges for donors. These include the need to balance short-term delivery mechanisms with the development of long-term (state) capacity and institutions (the so-called 'twin-track' dilemma in that the two tracks imply different activities) and the potential for donor involvement to distort accountability relationships.

In supporting service delivery in fragile states, many call for donors to better understand access constraints, target marginalised groups, build on local residual capacity, and support local community-based approaches, community voice and civil society oversight.

OECD-DAC, 2008, 'Service Delivery in Fragile Situations: Key Concepts, Findings and Lessons', OECD-DAC, Paris

<http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3179>

How can service delivery be strengthened in the context of a fragile state? This report from the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development reviews evidence on the impact of state fragility on service delivery. Donors should tailor interventions to context, maintain a long-term focus on governance and state-building and manage transition and hand-back sensitively. Efforts at national government level need to be balanced with programmes linked to local authorities and communities.

Pavanello, S., and Darcy, J., 2008, 'Improving the Provision of Basic Services for the Poor in Fragile Environments: International Literature Review Synthesis Paper', Report prepared for AusAID by the Overseas Development Institute, London

www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3331

What has been the international community's experience with pro-poor service provision in fragile states? This report from ODI examines the existing literature and synthesises information from three new sectoral reports to create a comprehensive picture of donor engagement in service provision in fragile contexts. While service provision in these environments is an increasingly prominent feature of donor interventions, significant challenges remain in balancing short-term and long-term objectives and tailoring engagement to the particular circumstances of each context.

Commins, S., 2005, 'Service Delivery in LICUS Contexts: Balancing Short-term Provision with Longer-term Institutional Goals', Discussion Note, World Bank, Washington

<http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=2770>

How can international development organisations balance short-term provision of services with longer-term institutional goals? This informal discussion note from the World Bank analyses service delivery in Low Income Countries Under Stress (LICUS). It looks at how to deliver services quickly to vulnerable groups, while engaging in the long-term task of rebuilding public institutions. There must be a thorough analysis of the specific country context and the creation of linkages between public institutions and aspects of service delivery from the start.

Berry, C., Forder, A., Sultan, S. and Moreno-Torres, M., 2004, 'Approaches to Improving the Delivery of Social Services in Difficult Environments', Poverty Reduction in Difficult Environments Team, Working paper 3, UK Department for International Development, London

<http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=1476>

What are the challenges faced by external actors in supporting service delivery in difficult environments (SDDE)? This working paper from the UK Department of International Development asks what type of approaches, and what conditions, improve human development outcomes and build pro-poor government-led systems in fragile states. It argues that the international community should emphasize service delivery as a key entry point to further development in difficult environments.

Delivering security and justice in fragile contexts

Justice, security, and the rule of law are widely seen as essential prerequisites for economic and social development. Security matters to the poor and other vulnerable

groups, especially women and children, because bad policing, weak justice and penal systems and corrupt militaries mean that they suffer disproportionately from crime, insecurity and fear.

Ball, N., Scheye, E. and Van de Goor, L., 2008, 'From Project to Program: Effective Programming for Security and Justice', Netherlands Institute of International Relations (Clingendael), The Hague

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=2974>

Security and justice activities in fragile states involve considerable risk. In such environments, what is the way forward for reform? This report, from the Netherlands Institute for International Relations (Clingendael), looks at security system reform (SSR) in fragile 'post-conflict' and fragile 'rebuilding' states. It suggests that donors should provide support in three linked stages, which would enable immediate needs to be met while longer-term programming is developed. An iterative approach would strengthen the relationship between state and non-state service providers and service users.

OECD, 2007, 'OECD-DAC Handbook on Security Sector Reform: Supporting Security and Justice', OECD, Paris

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=2744>

How can the gap between policy and practice on Security Sector Reform (SSR) be closed? This handbook from the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD-DAC) provides guidance on how to operationalise its guidelines on SSR. Addressing the challenges faced by all citizens to achieve personal safety, security and access to justice should be the key determining factor in evaluating the success or otherwise of donor support programmes.

Scheye, E., and McLean, A., 2006, 'Enhancing the Delivery of Justice and Security in Fragile States', OECD-DAC Network on Conflict, Peace and Development Co-operation (CPDC), Paris

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=2021>

How should international actors contribute to the support of justice and security in fragile states? This paper from the OECD/DAC Network on Conflict, Peace and Development Co-operation analyses the providers, processes and objectives of fragile states' justice and security services, and reviews lessons learnt by donors in this area. It argues that international actors should take a multi-layered, context-specific approach to fragile states, developing the capacity of the state, but also enabling it to engage with non-state justice and security providers.

Further resources on delivering justice in conflict-affected and fragile states can be found in the GSDRC [justice guide](#).

Further resources on delivering security sector reform in conflict-affected fragile states are available via the [Global Facilitation Network for Security Sector Reform](#).

Delivering health in fragile contexts

Fragile environments are often characterised by weak and disrupted health systems. Health system strengthening (HSS) initiatives in fragile states typically aim not only to support the achievement of the health MDGs and national health targets but also to

ensure that the delivery of national health services takes place in an equitable, accountable and sustainable manner despite very difficult, often conflict-affected, contexts. Health systems strengthening is often co-ordinated through a Basic Package of Health Services, as recently demonstrated in Afghanistan.

Health and Fragile States Network, 2009, 'Health Systems Strengthening in Fragile Contexts: A Report on Good Practices & New Approaches', Report funded by DFID

www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3357

What are the best approaches to strengthening health systems in fragile states? This report by the Health and Fragile States Network surveys current health strategies in an attempt to test the feasibility of health system strengthening in fragile contexts and to shed light on emerging 'good practices' and challenges for health issues in these environments. Its findings suggest that while there is great diversity in the approaches taken to strengthen health systems, successful interventions share common elements of community integration, partnership, and long time horizons.

Oswald, S., and Clewett, J., 2007, 'Delivering Health Services in Fragile States and Difficult Environments: 13 Key Principles', Health Unlimited, London

<http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3371>

What is needed to extend appropriate, effective healthcare to the under-served in fragile states and difficult environments? This paper, published by Health Unlimited, argues that flexibility, understanding of a given context, the establishment of trust, and long-term commitment are key to improving health outcomes. Based on decades of experience of delivering healthcare to marginalised groups, this paper outlines 13 key principles aimed at policy makers and implementers. Case studies are drawn from six countries with large under-served populations (Burma/Myanmar, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Peru and Somaliland), but the results are applicable to all communities.

K Ranson et al, 2007, 'Promoting Health Equity in Conflict-affected Fragile States', Prepared for the Health Systems Knowledge Network, Commission on Social Determinants and Health, World Health Organization, Geneva

http://www.who.int/social_determinants/resources/csdh_media/promoting_equity_conflict_2007_en.pdf

Further resources are available at:

DFID Health Resource Centre

<http://www.dfidhealthrc.org/>

Health Systems 20/20: Health Systems 20/20 is engaging in work with USAID missions and other partners to support reconstruction and development in post conflict or otherwise fragile states.

<http://www.healthsystems2020.org/section/topics/fragilestates>

Health and Fragile States Network

<http://www.healthandfragilestates.org/>

HLSP Institute: Health systems in fragile states

<http://www.hlspinstitute.org/healthsystems/fragilestates/>

Delivering education in fragile contexts

It is estimated that fragile states account for over half of all children out of school in the world (International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP), 2009). In fragile contexts, education provides opportunities to increase social and economic stability and is vital for achieving economic growth and recovery, reducing poverty, and improving health, living conditions and livelihoods. But many agencies argue education is not being prioritised in humanitarian and development aid, and that donors are not living up to the promise of Education for All.

IIEP, 2009, 'Rebuilding Resilience: The Education Challenge', IIEP Newsletter, Volume 1 Jan-April, International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP), Brussels

www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3313

What are the best strategies for supporting education programmes in fragile states? This newsletter from the UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) reviews recent educational reform projects in fragile situations. Rebuilding state resilience is the most effective means of improving education outcomes. Donors should tailor their interventions to specific contexts and commit to engaging longer and more predictably with developing country governments to achieve greater stability and educational performance.

Save the Children, 2009, 'Last in Line, Last in School: How Donors are Failing Children in Conflict-affected Fragile states, Save the Children, London

<http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3367>

What are the recent trends in donor support for education for children living in conflict-affected fragile states (CAFS) and those caught up in emergencies? This third annual Last in Line, Last in School report from Save the Children finds that although donors have increased their focus on meeting the education needs of children in these countries and situations, there is still a long way to go. If trends continue, CAFS will not receive the levels of basic education aid needed to achieve the education Millennium Development Goal of universal primary education (UPE) until 2034.

Rose, P. and Greeley, M., 2006, 'Education in Fragile States: Capturing Lessons and Identifying Good Practice', prepared for the DAC Fragile States Group Service Delivery Workstream Sub-Team for Education Services, Centre for International Education, University of Sussex Brighton

<http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=2599>

This paper, prepared for the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Fragile States Group looks at how development assistance in fragile states can enhance access to education for the poor and vulnerable, improve governance and increase aid effectiveness. It recommends strengthening the evidence base, principles, monitoring and evaluation, and co-ordination of work in this area.

Berry, C., 2009, 'A Framework for Assessing the Effectiveness of the Delivery of Education Aid in Fragile States', Journal of Education for International Development, Volume 4, Number 1, pp.1-12

<http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3259>

How can the effectiveness of education aid in fragile states be assessed and improved? This paper from the Journal of Education for International Development presents an assessment framework based on OECD principles of co-ordination, state-building and 'do no harm'. The framework is applied to four approaches to education aid (sector-

wide approaches, trust funds, social funds, and UN-led approaches). No single approach will provide all the answers. Planning structures that include a wide range of stakeholders are particularly important in fragile state contexts.

Miller-Grandvaux, Y., 2009, 'Education and Fragility: A New Framework', *Journal of Education for International Development*, 4:1

<http://www.equip123.net/jeid/articles/8/MillerGrandvaux-EducationFragilityANewFramework.pdf>

The Education and Fragility Framework positions education at the center of four key areas of influence related to economic, governance, security and social domains. Education is viewed within the context of specific root causes of fragility or conflict such as organised violence, corruption, exclusion and elitism, transitional dynamics, insufficient capacity and public disengagement. Each of these issues can be addressed through education. In all cases, the premise is that if education can contribute to a given driver of fragility, it can also contribute to finding its remedy and thus to promoting stability.

Further resources are available at:

Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies

<http://www.ineesite.org/>

International Institute for Educational Planning

<http://www.iiep.unesco.org/>

Delivering water and sanitation in fragile contexts

Fragile states are often unable to provide water services to the majority of their people, especially the poor. Many argue the water sector is a good entry point for state-building activities in fragile states, since it is non-ideological and generally in high demand. Much of the literature encourages donors to balance short-term (humanitarian) with medium to long-term support, and to develop the capacity of the state to undertake a supervisory and regulatory role regarding small, non-state providers of water and sanitation services.

Plummer, J., and Slaymaker, T., 2007, 'Rethinking Governance in Water Services, Annex A: Key Issues: A Thinkpiece for DFID Policy Division', DFID, London

www.gsdr.org/docs/open/SD33.pdf

Welle, K., 2008, 'Improving the Provision of Basic Services for the Poor in Fragile Environments: Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene', *International Literature Review*, Overseas Development Institute, London

<http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3272>

How can donors and partner governments best support the provision of water, sanitation and hygiene in fragile environments? This literature review is one of three sectoral reports from the Overseas Development Institute on service delivery in fragile states. It confirms that water supply service delivery in fragile states remains limited. Documentation on sanitation and hygiene issues in these environments is virtually non-existent. The water sector is a good entry point for state-building, but approaches depend on the type and context of state fragility.

Service delivery and state-building

Donors are increasingly concerned with the relationship between service delivery and state-building. This encompasses two related elements: i) how the delivery of basic services can best support state responsiveness, state legitimacy and social cohesion and ii) how donors can support the development of state capacity to deliver or coordinate services. Underlying this is a belief that service delivery is ultimately the responsibility of the state, and an intuition that the visible presence of services extends the state's reach and authority, supports state legitimacy and strengthens the social contract. Related to this, some argue that addressing the equitable delivery of services across disparate groups could help repair societal fractures. Nevertheless, little research has been done in this area to date, and much of it has been cautious about confirming any such causal links.

The state-building imperative encourages donors to consider the impact of their aid delivery mechanisms on the development of state capacity. Many call for donors to better manage the potential trade-offs between delivering services quickly through parallel structures that in some cases may bypass the state, and the long-term development of state capacity and accountability between service providers, government and citizens (rather than to donors).

Eldon, J., and Gunby, D., 2009, 'States in Development: State-building and Service Delivery', HLSP Institute, London

www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3377

How, when and why do basic services matter for responsive state building? This paper from HLSP uses cases studies from Cambodia, Nigeria, South Sudan and Zimbabwe to explore these questions as part of wider research on fragile states. The relationship between state responsiveness and service delivery is not straightforward. Fragility, violence, patronage, ethnicity and economic growth all play a part.

Eldon J., 2008, 'Health System Reconstruction: Can it Contribute to State-building?', HLSP Institute, London

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3182>

Can rebuilding health systems in fragile states strengthen the social contract and contribute to wider state-building? This study commissioned by the Health and Fragile States Network, which included fieldwork in Nigeria and Sierra Leone, finds that health sector strengthening can contribute to state-building in the health sector, but that its impact on wider state-building remains unclear. There may be more scope for wider state-building and the strengthening of the state-society compact through decentralised and 'bottom up' approaches. Context is the key influencer of potential for state-building, but is often inadequately understood.

GSDRC Helpdesk Research Report, 2009: Service Delivery and Stabilisation

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Helpdesk&id=49>

The most commonly cited potential benefits of service delivery in post-conflict environments are that visible delivery enhances state legitimacy, strengthens the social contract and hence, promotes state-building. Delivery of services can also address underlying causes of conflict, i.e. social exclusion, and services such as health can be used as entry points for wider peace-building processes. In stabilisation contexts, a particular challenge is how, given that the state often lacks the capacity to

ensure reliable services, provision by external actors and donors can enhance state legitimacy and not weaken it. In such a case, ensuring that the state's role in service delivery is clearly communicated is key. The long-term commitment of donors is also important. Furthermore, given that the legitimacy of the state depends on much more than the delivery of services, it is often argued that stabilisation requires a multi-pronged and multi-layered approach.

Addressing social exclusion through service delivery

There is increasing recognition that service delivery initiatives in fragile states should aim to ameliorate the negative effects of exclusion on certain groups over the long term. But issues of targeting and programming for marginalised and vulnerable groups in service delivery are highly complex and political.

Gardener, J. and Subrahmanian, R., 2006, 'Tackling Social Exclusion in Health and Education: Case Studies from South Asia', Report prepared for the Department for International Development, GHK International

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=2193>

In many Asian countries, poverty reduction is undermined by inequality and insecurity. Achieving the Millennium Development Goals in these countries requires effort from governments and development agencies to help excluded groups access health and education services. This paper from GHK International and the Institute of Development Studies uses examples from across Asia to identify ways of tackling social exclusion.

Non-state service providers in fragile states

The absence or weakness of state services in fragile situations usually means the majority of services are delivered by non-state actors (including donors, international and local NGOs, traditional and commercial (small and large) service providers), particularly in the early recovery phase. Many recent studies have argued this results in the fragmented and uneven provision of services. In addition, many donors are concerned that the delivery of services through non-state providers negatively impacts on the development of state legitimacy and capacity. Recently, donors have become concerned with how states with weak capacity can effectively perform the indirect 'stewardship' roles of managing, co-ordinating and financing non-state providers of basic services. Related to this is the issue of transition from non-state to state provision, specifically, how non-state providers can support the development of state capacity for direct provision in the long-term.

GSDRC Helpdesk Report, 2009, Non-State Providers of Health Services in Fragile and Conflict-Affected States

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Helpdesk&id=482>

Most mechanisms that use NSPs to deliver services are only being applied at a very small scale in fragile states. There is some evidence that the most widely used mechanism - contracting - can increase service utilisation, increase service quality, improve efficiency, reduce service fragmentation, and support strengthening of national capacity. The basic package of health services (BPHS) contracting approach, in particular, is often cited as an effective mechanism for health service delivery in fragile states. However, some observers have voiced concern that contracting can

promote precipitous decentralisation, erode NSP independence, and actually fragment the health system given that NSPs are seldom able to provide an overall framework in which to operate.

GSDRC Helpdesk Report, 2009, Non-State Providers of Education Services in Fragile and Conflict-Affected States

<http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Helpdesk&id=484>

NSPs are generally viewed as key service providers and as more pragmatic, flexible and adaptable than state structures in fragile states. By allowing communities to identify their own priorities they are often seen as having the potential to empower communities, set up local governance structures and strengthen social accountability mechanisms. There are also drawbacks however. As NSPs often operate outside government regulation, there is a danger that some may be providing low-quality education. In addition, they can also be disconnected from policy development in the wider sphere. Gender issues – in terms of awareness of oppressive attitudes and exploitative employment practices – are also a concern.

Batley, R., and McLoughlin, C., 2009, 'State Capacity and non-state service provision in Fragile and Conflict Affected States', Governance and Social Development Resource Centre, Birmingham

www.gsdr.org/go/emerging-issues#nsp

How can governments effectively engage with non-state providers (NSPs) of basic services where capacity is weak? This paper examines whether and how fragile and conflict affected states can co-ordinate, finance, and set and apply standards for the provision of basic services by NSPs. It explores ways of incrementally engaging the state, beginning with activities that are least likely to do harm to non-state provision.

DFID commissioned a cross-country study of non-state provision of basic (primary) education, primary and community health-care, and water and sanitation in 2005. Findings, including lessons learned for donors for supporting non-state providers, are available on the website of the [International Development Department at the University of Birmingham](http://www.gsdrc.org/go/emerging-issues#nsp).

Further resources on non-state providers can be found in the [service delivery guide](#).

Case studies and lessons learned

The following case studies draw lessons from experience of delivering basic services in fragile contexts.

Federal Ministry for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2006, 'Observations on Service Delivery in Fragile States and Situations – The German Perspective', Special 145, Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), Germany

<http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=2783>

How can donors co-operate effectively with fragile states to secure basic services whilst improving governance? This paper from the German Federal Ministry for Economic Development and Co-operation (BMZ) assesses the state of service delivery in Eritrea, Cote d'Ivoire, Nepal, Guatemala and Yemen. It suggests that development agencies need to stay engaged even under poor conditions. When partnerships with the state are difficult, donors can co-operate with civil society and

the private sector, while making contacts within the government to begin the process of state-building.

Berry, C. et al., 2004, 'Service Delivery in Difficult Environments: The Case of Nepal', Nepal Country Office and Policy Division, Department for International Development, London

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=1083>

What are the challenges for service delivery in difficult environments? What lessons can be learnt from the conflict areas of Nepal? How effective are different strategies for delivering services to the poor and the vulnerable? This collaborative report from the DFID Nepal Office, Asia Policy Regional Policy Unit and DFID Policy Division (PD) describes the different approaches development agencies have used to support service delivery in Nepal and highlights key areas for future support.

Moreno-Torres, M., 2005, 'Service Delivery in a Difficult Environment: The Child-friendly Community Initiative in Sudan', Department for International Development, London

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=1362>

The UNICEF-sponsored Child-Friendly Community Initiative (CFCI) represents an integrated, multi-sectoral and community-driven approach for the delivery of basic services to poor and vulnerable people in Sudan. What are the main achievements of CFCI? How does it differ from other donor interventions aiming to enhance service delivery? Compiled for the Department for International Development, this case study examines the effectiveness of the CFCI approach in Sudan and attempts to draw lessons for donors on service delivery in other fragile states.

PATHS, 2008, 'Strengthening Voice and Accountability in the Health Sector', Partnership for Transforming the Health Sector, Nigeria

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3387>

How can greater voice and accountability for citizens bring about improved health services? This Technical Brief from DFID reviews several voice and accountability initiatives supported by the Partnerships for Transforming Health Systems Programme (PATHS) in selected states in Nigeria. It concludes that the creation of formal mechanisms of voice and accountability can be effective in opening space for citizen-state accountability and improving service responsiveness. Further work is however needed from the government on strengthening accountability mechanisms for these initiatives to be fully successful.

Zivetz, L., 2006, 'Health Service Delivery in Early Recovery Fragile States: Lessons from Afghanistan, Cambodia, Mozambique, and Timor Leste', Arlington, Va., USA: Basic Support for Institutionalizing Child Survival (BASICS) for the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3190>

What are the impacts of foreign assistance on state stewardship of the health sector in early recovery fragile states? How can foreign aid encourage better state performance? This case study from USAID finds that donors have undermined state capacity to regulate service delivery by creating a two-track system. Promising approaches to support state stewardship include: contracting with NGOs; equity funds; civil service performance-based reform; sectoral plans; and budget support. Increased donor harmonisation is important.

CECORE, REDROC, Saferworld, and YODEO, 2008, 'Water and Conflict: Making Water Delivery Conflict-Sensitive in Uganda', Saferworld, London
<http://www.saferworld.org.uk/images/pubdocs/Water%20%20conflict%20final%20pdf.pdf>

Lindemann, S., 2006, 'Addressing the Need for Water Service Delivery in Fragile States: The Case of German Involvement in Yemen', paper presented at the Berlin Conference on the Human Dimensions of Global Environmental Change 'Resource Policies, Effectiveness, Efficiency and Equity', 17-18th November, Berlin

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=2781>

Fragile states are often unable to provide water services to the majority of their people, especially the poor. So, how can international agencies work effectively in these environments to provide the infrastructure for safe drinking water? This study from Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) analyses the effectiveness of German donor involvement in the water sector of Yemen. Its success lies in the combination of support to sectoral reform at the national and regional level, and decentralised and commercialised services at the local level.