Fragile Politics

WEAK STATES IN THE GREATER MIDDLE EAST

SUMMARY REPORT

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Weak States in the Greater Middle East
Working Group Summary Report

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A growing body of literature within the social science disciplines has developed over the last few decades around the concept of "state failure." Initially, the scholarship focused on the poor economic performance of certain states, highlighting their weaknesses in delivering efficient economic growth and fostering development. An emerging developmental discourse, fuelled by the enthusiasm of international organizations that embraced the notion of inherent but potentially "fixable" weaknesses, added weight to this body of scholarship. Aid and assistance programs were implemented on the basis of this idea of state weakness, and on the assumption that these internal "weaknesses" could somehow be mitigated through externally-supported and specifically targeted development initiatives. Bilateral and multilateral efforts were devoted to turning these weak states around, supposedly from the brink of failure, into healthy, viable entities.

Economically-based definitions of state weakness have been significantly challenged over the last couple of decades, as further scholarly efforts have considered them wanting for analytic purposes. More recent interest in state failure has emphasized an additional subset of issues regarding state capacity and state weakness, and broadened the discussion in different directions. Much greater attention has been drawn to deeper political conditions, such as a state's legitimacy, its ability to penetrate society effectively, and its capacity to maintain both external and internal security. Weak states are no longer just those that face constraints in terms of resources and economic viability, but those that also feature incoherent, fragile, or dysfunctional political systems.

Within this expanded definition of what construes a weak state, an increasing number of countries have appeared to be in the throes of failure, particularly in Africa, but also within the greater Middle East. From the perspective of international relations, fragile states are often considered a political "menace" to the rest of the world, threatening international security, spreading instability to their neighbors, and creating potential safe-havens for terrorists with global agendas. For those examining domestic politics, conflict, internecine agitation, and civil war are all a result of the weakness, failure, or collapse of the affected state.

In spite of the burgeoning focus on studying weak states, there has been limited engagement in terms of challenging the validity of these nebulous and evolving concepts of weak, failed, and collapsed states. There is a need for further focus and exploration on exactly what is meant by state strength and by state weakness. The terminology itself has become politicized; a certain global discourse has developed around it, and the classification as a weak state often has a variety of negative implications for a state so designated. Weak states have less capacity to assert sovereignty in the international arena, and in fact have their sovereignty frequently tested in both economic and political terms. Further examination of the range of accepted "indicators" for the classification of failed and weak states is also needed.

This CIRS research initiative on weak states in the Middle East begins with a critical analysis of current definitions and terminology of weak and fragile states, scrutinizing the political implications of the prevailing discourse within the setting of the broader Middle East. The research also examines the domestic, regional, and global causes and consequences for the Middle East of the "fragility" of states stretching from Afghanistan and Pakistan in the east to Libya in the west. Employing multidisciplinary perspectives, we study the causes and implications of conceptual notions of state fragility across the region in relation to areas such as politics and security, economics and natural resources, intra- and inter-state relations, migration and population movements, and the broader regional and global political economies.

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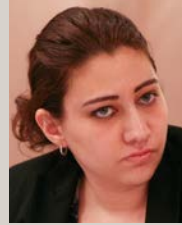
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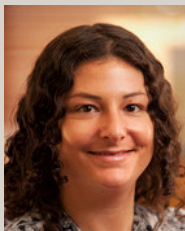
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1.   *Weak States in the Middle East*
        Mehran Kamrava

The outbreak and domino-like spread of uprisings in much of the Arab world beginning in 2011 has brought added urgency to the study of weak and failing states in the Middle East. Despite the region's history of wars and revolutions, the general scholarly consensus has often favored the prevalence of mammoth, strong states in the Middle East. In fact, despite considerable regional variations in the political and institutional make-up of Middle Eastern countries, statism tends to be one of the most common denominators that an overwhelming majority of the region's countries share. Nevertheless, as this volume makes amply clear, not only are several states in the Middle East chronically "weak"—Lebanon, Yemen, and the Sudan—most others inhere structural and institutional features that compromise their capacity, devoid them of legitimacy, and make them prone to weakness.

    This introductory chapter presents a broad survey of the study of weak states both as a scholarly exercise and in relation to the Middle East. The study of weak states, the chapter shows, is a contested terrain. Much of the controversy arises from the fact that the study of weak states is not merely an academic endeavor and goes to the heart of practical development policies as well. Equally troubling is the frequent association of weak or collapsed states with terrorism and terrorist groups, as the rise first of sea piracy and then the Al Shabaab group in Somalia, the March 23 Movement (M23) in the Democratic Republic of Congo, and the al-Qaʻida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) in Yemen, to mention only a few examples, attest. Not surprisingly, at times the concept of "failed states" has been used by policy experts to link international security with domestic stability and development promotion.

    The chapter begins with a discussion of some of the more salient controversies involving the weak and failed states discourse. These controversies bear on the very designation of states as weak, failing, or failed. The chapter then turns to the question of where weak states come from, examining the causes and characteristics of state weakness and failure. State weakness is rooted in diminished "capacity" and eroded or non-existent "legitimacy." At the broadest level, states feature two key ingredients. All have institutional frameworks within which their capacity is generated and through which it is exercised. They also have leaders who operate within these institutional frameworks and make choices along the way. Especially in non-democratic states, commonly found in the Middle East, leaders can at times craft or shape institutions to their own liking. In understanding state weakness, in other words, both structure and agency are important.

    In studying state weakness, our traditional conceptions of both notions of capacity and legitimacy need to be fine-tuned in order to take into account state leaders' ability to manipulate existing social cleavages for their own advantages and to further their tenure in office. This is particularly the case in the Middle East, as the chapters on Yemen and Sudan in this volume demonstrate, where despite significant state weakness leaders were able to remain in office through reliance on institutions that were just strong enough, and practices that were politically rewarding enough, to maintain them in power.

    There are essentially three broad perspectives about failed states. Some scholars view the concept of failed state as analytically useful, especially insofar as the study of international relations and security are concerned. A second group of scholars are open to the concept but do not see it as analytically useful because, they maintain, it is often hard to define. Fragile state terminology is often maligned because of its analytical imprecision. Scholars in a third group are openly hostile to the concept, which they see as ethnocentric and motivated by hegemonic

political agendas. They point to the fact that international and especially US interests in the study of weak and failed states peaked especially after the 9/11 attacks. Because fragile states are seen as threat to the United States and to international security, much of the state-building efforts around the world by the US and its allies have focused firstly and primarily on building up the security sector.

Much of the controversy surrounding the discourse arises, in fact, because of its alleged concern with the protection of US and Western national and international security interests. In addition to a number of conceptual flaws in the "failed state" moniker, a number of scholars maintain, there are also ideological underpinnings to the concept that emphasize the use of power and advancing hegemony. Realizing that weak states can threaten security, the more powerful states and international organizations have invested considerable sums of money in countering conflict and stabilizing societies. The remedy needed to fix weak states is often assumed to be more order; "without security, nothing else is possible." Especially within the United Nations, there is an assumption that peace-building and state-building are connected. This entails placing emphasis on the strength and the coercive institutions of the state: the military, police, civil service, system of justice, and leadership. The relationship between peace-building and state-building is more complicated, with state-building potentially privileging one ethnic group over another, while peace deals may enable military leaders to divide the spoils of the state amongst themselves.

Some of the controversy involving the study of weak and failed states has to do with the precise categories— or lack thereof—of states that deserve such designations, especially since donor agencies rely on typologies and degrees of state fragility to determine appropriate strategies for donor engagement. The very definitions of "weak" and "collapsed" or "failed" states are contested. In broad terms, the distinction between the two categories of "weak" and "failed" states is self-evident.

Altogether, as the contributions to this volume make clear, we see in the Middle East a number of states in a condition of seemingly perpetual weakness—Sudan, Yemen, and Lebanon, plus Pakistan and Afghanistan, if the geographic designation of the region can be stretched slightly—and then the recurrence of episodes that push states toward weakness, most notable of which are wars, war making, and mass rebellions. State leaders, meanwhile, devise a variety of coping mechanisms and survival strategies, prolonging their own tenure in office and ensuring the operations of supportive institutions at sufficient, though not necessarily optimum, levels. Weakness persists, but failure and collapse is averted, at times just barely.

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2.   *Yemen: Failing State or Failing Politics?*
      Charles Schmitz

The literature on failing states focuses on a country's incapability of serving domestic needs. Beyond the scale of the nation-state, the literature argues that states provide stability for an amorphous international community. Yet, just as in the domestic arena, where the literature on failing states obscures politics by reducing the state to a functional apparatus that delivers goods to citizens, the literature is silent on the international and transnational politics that shape domestic state institutions. The origins of states in the post-colonial world lie in the global colonial projects of imperial powers. As in the Yemeni case, foreign interests have been critical in determining the course of domestic politics, including the historical development of key political institutions in the post-independence period. The British introduced the concept of the modern state to the Arabian Peninsula in order to secure British interests. The transformation of tribesmen into citizens, and sheikhs into heads of state, was done to guarantee the security of British trade routes. When Yemeni nationalists attacked the palace of the Zaydi Imam in September 1962 and founded the modern Yemen Arab Republic, Saudi Arabia and Egypt fought a proxy war in Yemen that was critical in determining the course of Republican politics. Throughout the modern period, Saudi Arabia jealously guarded its influence in Yemen by making payments to all kinds of domestic actors in order to maintain its influence over Yemeni politics. Then in 2011, when Yemenis revolted against the rule of Ali Abdullah Saleh and Yemen began a descent into civil war, the United States and Saudi Arabia intervened to shepherd the political settlement that led to the current transitional government. Both the United States and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia were concerned primarily with threats emanating from Yemen.

Thus, the Yemeni state is a complex blend of foreign pressures and domestic interests. The state's forms, its policies, and its institutions are all outcomes not only of "domestic" struggles, but regional and global political struggles and contests as well. Thinking of the state as a set of institutions that serves a domestic political community and defends it against an external foreign world is fictitious. The designation of state weakness or strength may have more to do with the political interests of those arrogating themselves the power to label states weak or strong than some measure of state capacity.

In essence, state failure means the failure to conform to expected models of behavior derived from an idealized, functional model of the state. The actual social and political foundations of states, even in the context of Europe from which the idealized form of state is derived, are ignored. The state in this conception is a moral and political imperative rather than an empirical reality. The state is stripped of the struggle for power that is its essence and replaced with a set of institutions that provide services to a domestic political community and to the international community.

Reducing states to functional structures whose success is measured in quality of services delivered to citizens and to international states obscures rather than reveals the dynamics of politics in places like Yemen. The very idea of a state came to Yemen in the form of an imperial British project to subdue the Arabian Peninsula under British power. The state failure literature understands the origin of the state as the social contract of an egalitarian community that revolted against tyrannical monarchs in Europe and America, yet, in Yemen, the state came in the guise of a foreign imposition, not the striving for freedom of a natural political community.

In the 1960s, a group of military leaders led a movement to instill in Yemen the model of the state as proposed by the failed state literature. Yet, the geopolitical struggle between competing blocs of the international

community frustrated the state-building project of the Yemeni free officers. Saudi Arabia, Britain, and Israel wanted to undermine Nasser's influence in Yemen. The resulting war and political compromise in 1970 created a particular constellation of power in Yemen that persists to this day. An essential characteristic of the Yemeni state is its fractured nature, which facilitates Saudi influence in Yemen. The state is not a functional apparatus serving a domestic political community; rather, the state reflects the struggle for power between domestic actors and between "foreign" actors seeking influence in the country.

Finally, the state failure literature rests on the fundamental element of the autonomous citizen—an individual with a set of preferences shared to some degree with others in a prescribed geographical territory. The state aggregates these preferences into a happy political blend—the Wilsonian ideal. In fact, individuals' political subjectivity is constructed in society. People's ideas of politics are formed in relation to ideas and projects of groups vying for power. In the south of Yemen, the definition of the political community is contested, and the idea of a separate political community defined by being "southern" has gained wide currency. The north of Yemen, which is demographically much larger, rejects any notion of a separate southern political community and insists that southern political aspirations will be met by reform of the government in Sana'a rather than the formation of a separate political entity. The international community rejects any notion of a separate political community. This is not as a result of an examination of the political reality of the south, but because the United Nations, the United States, and Europe fear instability in Yemen, presuming that secession will contribute to instability rather than stability. The formation of a southern political community depends upon the power of local southern groups to provide leadership, the actions of the Yemeni leadership in Sana'a, and the decisions of the United States, Europe, and Saudi Arabia. Group identity and political community are constructed in overlapping geographic circuits of power at the local, regional, and international levels. Political communities are not predetermined, naturally distinct groups of people, as the state failure literature presumes.

By failing to grasp the empirical dynamics of power, the failed states literature becomes a collection of particularistic political and moral imperatives rather than an investigation of the realities of power.

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3.   *Questioning Failure, Stability, and Risk in Yemen*
        Sarah Phillips

This chapter is concerned with the impact that Western conceptions of stability and state failure have had on the actions of the international community, particularly those of the United States, in Yemen. It begins by questioning the usefulness of the orthodox failed states narrative from which international policy to "stabilize" Yemen largely draws its intellectual justification. The chapter concludes by suggesting that while Yemen desperately needs development, assistance that is explicitly given in the expectation of receiving political or security benefits risks not being targeted at the areas of greatest need and being perceived as self-serving. Ultimately, this undermines the intention of winning "hearts and minds" and encouraging pro-Western sentiment. This chapter also suggests that there is another implicit objective to Western stabilization strategies: to demonstrate to a domestic audience that complexity can be domesticated, and power can outmanoeuvre uncertainty.

Yemen's uprising, which began in 2011, was understood as an impediment to the counterterrorism efforts that were already underway. It was framed by Western donors and the Gulf Cooperation Council as a situation that required urgent "stabilization," rather than one that demonstrated the popular urgency of genuine change. Stabilization is an ambiguous, open-ended concept that combines humanitarian assistance, development programs, and, often, coercive or military operations in countries that are experiencing conflict, complex political emergencies, or the withdrawal of popular legitimacy from an internationally recognized authority. Based on a foundational assumption that underdevelopment and lack of public services can generate instability that can then spill over to other states, stabilization has essentially become shorthand for a politicized approach to development assistance that has an explicit aim of achieving greater security for the implementing state. Moreover, it is based on an inherent assumption that the inability of the host state's institutions to provide goods for its citizens is correlated with the likelihood of terrorism occurring beyond the borders of the state.

The USAID strategy (2010-2012) to bring greater stability to Yemen defined people who distrust the central government—because of its apparent disconnection from their lives—as being vulnerable to engaging in illegal and/or rebellious activities. This is a profoundly different definition of "vulnerable" to that usually found in development literature, where an individual's vulnerability is a function of having uncertain access to the goods required for basic subsistence and security—not the possibility that they might resist that which they believe contributes to their insecurity. In USAID's strategy, the primary concern is for the vulnerability of the seemingly distant, disconnected central authority—the state—that is at risk of being challenged by its citizens.

If underdevelopment is seen as posing a security threat beyond the borders of the state, then development assistance drifts from being about poverty reduction and supporting basic education, healthcare, and infrastructure to becoming a means of containing perceived risk. Stabilization strategies use the language of human rights and empowerment but are essentially about strengthening foreign state institutions to a sufficient degree that their citizens do not take up arms in resistance to it. Development assistance is deployed as a means of promoting the security of the donor state by increasing citizens' satisfaction with the performance of their own state authorities. Both stabilization and the concept of failed states have trouble imagining the possibility that security can exist beyond—or despite—the formal state. As a result of the perceived need to strengthen the formal apparatus of

the state, stabilization strategies attempt to create the perception that the host state is driving the development initiatives that are in fact being funded by external donors.

The chapter also situates al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) within narratives of state failure and stabilization, arguing that because orthodox views shy away from explicitly engaging with politics and power, they overlook key sources of resilience for militant movements. AQAP is adept at articulating narratives of injustice; theirs is a highly political narrative about Yemen's power structures and the injustice contained within them. Rightly or wrongly, it is widely believed within Yemen that factions of the old regime are entangled with AQAP, and the fight against it is thus partly seen as a political game of one faction against the other. The U.S. failure to grapple with these nuances have left it not only apparently taking AQAP at face value to a Yemeni audience—which further causes many Yemenis to think it naïve—but also being seen to take sides in a domestic confrontation that they are widely believed to misunderstand.

AQAP cannot be defeated through technical fixes and poverty alleviation because its existence does not express a glitch in Yemen's otherwise functional politics. As both an organization and a mythology, it draws part of its resilience from its entanglement in the malignance of Yemen's opaque elite politics. By viewing the massive changes underway in Yemeni society as a threat to be contained, USAID enacted a policy to secure the "vulnerable" Yemeni state from its "rebellious" citizens. Perhaps inadvertently, this framing of the crisis made political passivity and stasis the core components of the desired stability, the contradiction and self-serving nature of which risks entrenching a level of anti-Western sentiment that may prove difficult to unmake.

Sarah Phillips is Senior Lecturer in international security and development, international relations, and comparative politics at the University of Sydney. She has conducted extensive fieldwork in the Middle East and the Horn of Africa—particularly in Yemen, Somaliland, Kenya, Jordan, Pakistan, and Oman—and has advised numerous governments and international development agencies on matters pertaining to these areas. More broadly, her research investigates the securitization of development, post colonial perspectives on international relations, the politics of contemporary state-building, the management of violence beyond the state, non-state actors, and informal institutions. Her most recent book, *Yemen and the Politics of Permanent Crisis,* analyzes the dynamics of the country's informal institutions amid rapid political and social change.

4.   *Interventionism and the Fear of Urban Agency in Afghanistan and Iraq*
      Daniel Esser

"State weakness" in the Greater Middle East is part of a hegemonic discourse that eclipses state-building efforts of sub-national, non-violent collective action in countries emerging from externally induced regime change. This eclipse reflects a level-of-analysis problem grounded in a predominantly statist conceptualization of governance anchored in global norms rather than local realities. Conceiving governance as primarily state-led is rooted in post-9/11 hegemonic concerns about state weakness and failure, and precludes an appreciation of sub-state dynamics as potential building blocks for both human security and improved service delivery. It ignores evidence from cities in developing regions in the global South that suggests that a de facto absence of functioning state structures does not automatically translate into anarchy.

I first examine how the underlying discourse on statist governance dovetails with an increasingly influential depiction of cities in developing countries as breeding grounds for organized violence and terrorism. I then juxtapose these two converging discourses with an investigation of the extent to which sub-state collective action in cities in Afghanistan and Iraq factored into hegemonic strategies for both war-making and state-building. Counterfactual reasoning does not suggest that the consideration of urban dynamics would necessarily have altered post-invasion realities in either of the two countries. It does, however, illustrate how the negation of, and in many cases, active interference with local agency in state-building served to limit the policy space for both national and international actors in their quest for post-invasion pacification in both settings. These states have thus not only been failed internationally, as a result of global power politics, but also locally, where citizens of these states have encountered occupation, political exclusion, and resurgent violence.

Prior to the second invasion of Iraq, the United States and its allies singled it out as a state which had failed its citizens. This recourse to the decade-old terminology of state weakness and failure was designed to help legitimize international aggression. Identical language had been used two years earlier to help justify the U.S.-led invasion of Afghanistan. On this basis, I argue that the determination of "state failure" is primarily a political rather than an analytical process and that its application has altered the prospect of state sovereignty, especially in the Greater Middle East where U.S. energy and security interests are most acutely at stake. Resulting international invasions are supposed to create opportunities for recreating statehood according to a liberal ideal that merges a consumerist vision of citizens with a facade of popular participation through apolitical civil society organizations. In contrast, I question which societal processes in a post-invasion setting have been proven capable of producing state legitimacy and at which level of polity these processes have most commonly occurred.

Conceptual as well as empirical research on the potential of state-building from below in the context of fragile statehood, specifically in the cases of Yemen, Somalia, and Sierra Leone, suggest that by virtue of human proximity, resulting density of interaction, and easier access to information, social dynamics in cities are constitutive of state-building. Since state institutions are located predominantly in cities, smaller units of governance such as towns and municipalities hold promise for spontaneous collective action. Cities serve as arenas for citizens to encounter realities of the state and are training grounds for the practice of democracy, rendering them critical sites of state-building via local governance. Although cities commonly host the main offices of local non-governmental organizations (NGOs), it is urban informal networks and resulting collective action that drive urban civil

societies. Whereas NGOs are primarily accountable to their donors, city-based civil societies are characterized by informal communal organization, rendering them largely invisible to the international development industry. Such evidence regarding the potential of cities as sites of state consolidation challenges recent arguments about the static nature of ethnic identities as place-independent catalysts of conflict. While there is no reason to believe that tribal, ethnic, and religious identities have not been important catalysts of political behavior in countries such as Afghanistan and Iraq, we should try to understand the specific conditions under which such agency does or does not take place.

However, rather than leverage the proven ingenuity of collective urban actors to create and maintain basic systems of service delivery, even in the absence of an organizing central state, global policymakers have chosen to focus on cities' presumed propensity to foment and sustain large-scale insurgencies and violent conflict. This, in turn, has resulted in explicitly anti-sub-state politics and practices in the aftermath of international invasions. Despite their obvious structural and historical differences, the cases of Afghanistan and Iraq provide evidence in support of this proposition. In both cases, hegemonic military invasions legitimized previously selected rulers chosen primarily on the basis of their perceived loyalty to U.S. interests through national ballots, while stalling sub-national elections in order to stifle the emergence of a domestic opposition. Political stability rather than multi-party governance promised the greatest return on the military investment of invasion. In Afghanistan, calls by Afghan intellectuals to seize the historical momentum for reinventing the space of governance as a core function and virtue of cities were ignored. Likewise, in the case of post-invasion Iraq, the Coalition Provisional Authority of Iraq adopted a "greenfield approach" to municipal governance based on virtually no available intelligence on how cities were actually governed under Saddam Hussein. At the same time, both in Afghanistan and Iraq, city-level experiments on reinventing participatory local governance mushroomed, but were either ended by the occupying authorities or mainstreamed into the latter's imposed political structures. Democracy suppression rather than democracy promotion thus characterized the early period of both occupations and was justified by a characterization of cities as cradles of instability that threatened the vision of unified national governments as key components of the liberal international order.

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5.   *Libya After Qadhafi: Fragmentation, Hybridity, and Informality*
        Frederic Wehrey

Libya after Qadhafi is a country facing a dizzying array of challenges. A weak central government, gutted of institutions by the dictator's personalistic and idiosyncratic rule, has struggled to assert its authority over vast expanses of the country's territory. The restive eastern region of the country—long marginalized under the Qadhafi regime—has witnessed a worsening spiral of violence between rival tribal factions, Islamists, and remnants of the old regime, as it calls out for greater political autonomy. Porous and ill-policed borders have become veritable thoroughfares for arms smuggling, illicit trafficking, and the movement of armed militants across Africa and the Middle East. Deep and historic political divisions between Tripoli, Misrata, and the east continue to obstruct the formation of a broad-based consensus government and the drafting of an effective constitution. Long-suppressed grievances by ethnic Tabu, Tuareg, and Amazigh have surfaced along the country's southern and western periphery. In short, post-revolutionary Libya seems to be displaying all the hallmarks of a failing or failed state: a state that is unable to control its territory or provide basic security and other goods for its citizens, and is one that exports its problems to its neighbors.

Contrary to popular assumptions, the Islamist-secular divide is not the country's principal fault-line. The main issue is tension between several regional loci of power in Libya that have each produced their own constellation of militias. Overlaying this contest, a fierce struggle has emerged over the mantle of revolutionary legitimacy between factions and individuals that were long persecuted by Qadhafi, those who collaborated with the regime but then defected during the revolution, and those who joined the uprising after years abroad. The struggle has taken on a zero-sum quality because the hollow and ineffective institutions of coercion—the army and police—have been unable to play an arbitrating role. As result, a stalemate has ensued with none of these armed groups strong enough to dominate the others.

Three years after the revolution, nearly all the armed groups are affiliated in some way to the state. How this arrangement came about stems from a fateful set of policies established in late 2011 and early 2012 by the country's weak and unelected transitional government. Bereft of a way to project its shaky authority and keep order, the National Transitional Council (NTC) tried to establish a measure of control over the armed groups by putting them on its payroll. By all accounts, the results of this hybrid arrangement have been mixed, if not negative, for Libya's stability and its fragile democracy. The government's subsidization of militias had the undesirable effect of swelling the size of the armed groups as young men flocked to their ranks, drawn by the promise of a steady salary that far exceeded that of the police and army. The new structures essentially preserved the cohesion and parochial outlook of the militias, albeit under the cover of the state. Having been effectively "deputized" by the government and flush with funds, the armed groups are now even more emboldened to pursue agendas that were increasingly political and self-serving.

An additional reason why demobilizing the brigades has proven so difficult is that the young men filling their ranks have no other employment options. Whether from state subsidies or the capture of illicit networks, the militias are now a lucrative source of income for Libya's youth. In 2012, the country experienced roughly 104 percent GDP growth but in 2013, it suffered a 10 percent GDP contraction as a result of the variances in oil production. The vestiges of the Qadhafi state, particularly subsidies and dysfunctional welfare institutions, need to be overhauled, but there are few signs of that occurring. If anything, public sector salaries and subsidies form a greater proportion of state budget than under Qadhafi; nearly 80 percent of all employees are state employees—a great portion of this includes the state-sponsored militias.

The government devotes 60 percent of the budget to salaries and subsidies and 40 percent to debts and contracts with international firms. Even with the return of oil production, this economic mismanagement, combined with the depletion of Libya's reserves, suggests a bleak outlook.

Yet, beneath this grim narrative, there are a number of structural factors that when examined more closely present a more balanced picture and even grounds for guarded optimism. First, Libya has a mostly urban and relatively homogenous population that is concentrated in a narrow territorial strip. Second, it has an infrastructure that was largely unscathed by the NATO campaign. In contrast to Iraq or Syria, it is not afflicted by serious meddling by ill-meaning and more powerful neighbors. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, a robust civil society and networks of informal actors (tribes, religious figures, merchant elites, and militias) have stepped in to fill the shortcomings of the feeble state institutions, providing an array of goods and services.

In this sense, Libya seems to validate much of the criticism of the failed state literature that places too much emphasis on the Weberian ideal and ignores the wide variation of state-like functions within a given political community. This is particularly the case regarding the security sector, where much western commentary has adopted a rather simplistic Weberian framework for analyzing militias as antithetical to the state, discounting much of the literature on hybridity and informality that has arisen in sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia. That said, the longer the institutional vacuum in Libya persists, the greater the strains on this informal and hybrid arrangement, exacerbating dangerous fissures that either existed in the Qadhafi era or arose during the revolution.

As Libya continues its post-revolutionary journey, the powerful pull of Qadhafi's forty-two-year rule will be difficult to escape. The Libyan despot's personalized, hyper-centralized style of rule left the country bereft of many of the basic bureaucratic structures needed for government—to say nothing of depriving the citizenry of any sort of political participation. Diplomats and NGOs report all-too-common stories of dealing with ministries that are staffed by two or three senior officials but devoid of competent lower-level staff; decision-making is ponderous and rarely delegated to middle or lower levels. Added to this, there is still the residual distrustful perception of outside parties as predatory—a perception that stems from four decades of Qadhafi's paranoid rule and the country's international isolation. The longer the institutional vacuum continues, the greater the likelihood that the country will succumb to Qadhafi-era practices and processes, spurring greater fragmentation and dimming hopes for a truly functioning democracy.

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6.   ***Strong Actor in a Weak State: The Geopolitics of Hizbullah***
        Shoghig Mikaelian and Bassel F. Salloukh

Over the past three decades, Hizbullah has metamorphosed from a little-known secretive security apparatus founded by Iran's Revolutionary Guard into the most powerful non-state domestic actor in Lebanon, and a major player in regional politics. The party's geopolitical agenda also changed in parallel with this metamorphosis. Hizbullah evolved from being a resistance movement preoccupied with liberating Lebanese territory from Israeli occupation into a powerful domestic political actor, yet one that also assumes a central role in Iran's regional strategy and deterrence posture. After the 2006 war with Israel, Hizbullah marketed itself as Lebanon's only viable deterrence against a future Israeli military operation. By the time the Arab uprisings made their way to Syria, engulfing it in a violent war between the regime and a mix of domestic rebels and external Salafi-jihadi groups, Hizbullah crossed the Lebanese-Syrian borders in support of Bashar al-Assad's besieged regime and in defense of the "axis of resistance."

Hizbullah's domestic and regional transformations transpired in the context of an institutionally weak and externally penetrated Lebanese state. The party capitalized on the state's disregard of the socioeconomic development of Shi'a areas as well as its inability to liberate occupied Lebanese territory or deter future Israeli incursions into southern Lebanon. Moreover, and like other Lebanese sub-state actors, Hizbullah finds itself bandwagoning with external regional players to balance against the latter's regional and international opponents but also its own domestic adversaries. The Lebanese state often finds itself positioned as a weak and hapless bystander in this overlapping domestic-regional contest to control the country's local politics as well as its geopolitical orientation.

This chapter traces the impacts of the aforementioned transformations on Hizbullah's geopolitical calculations, and situates it within the context of Lebanon's perpetually weak state structure. The chapter then unpacks Hizbullah's political and ideological transformations and concomitant geopolitical considerations in several important temporal periods. The first covers the period from the party's formal birth with the 1985 "Open Letter to the Downtrodden in Lebanon and the World" to the end of the Lebanese civil war in 1990-1991. This is followed by an examination of the party's domestic and geopolitical positions from the onset of Pax Syriana in 1991 to Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon in 2000. The chapter then tackles Hizbullah's geopolitics during the period between Israel's withdrawal and the 2005 Syrian exit from Lebanon. The analysis then turns to the domestic and geopolitical exigencies created for the party by Syria's withdrawal from Lebanon, followed by the Arab uprisings.

This overlapping domestic-external contest over post-Syria Lebanon further weakened state institutions, dividing them into sectarian fiefdoms organized along clientelist loyalties. It also exposed the country to penetration by a host of external actors each vying to relocate Lebanon to its own geopolitical camp. Rather than straining the relationship between Hizbullah and Damascus, these overlapping domestic and external pressures fortified it. The partnership between the two reached a point whereby Damascus outsourced its Lebanon policy to Hizbullah. Instead of reducing Hizbullah's influence in Lebanese and regional politics, the concerted efforts on

the part of Western states and their Lebanese allies after the Hariri assassination had the opposite effect. This was in no small part due to the weakness of the Lebanese state in comparison to Hizbullah's material and institutional resources, its substantial domestic support base, its enormous military experience, and its strategic regional role.

The chapter closes by spelling out the possible implications of the struggle for Syria on Hizbullah's domestic and geopolitical agenda. If anything, Hizbullah's military intervention in Syria demonstrated just how important Syria's geography is to Hizbullah's operational plans and supply lines, and, concomitantly, its ability to pursue its own geopolitical interests and, by proxy, those of Iran. The party has not underestimated the dangers of a blowback from Salafi-Jihadi groups as a result of its involvement in Syria. Fighting on three simultaneous fronts—against Israel in the south of the country, Salafi-jihadi groups in Syria, and domestic groups in Lebanon—is a scenario the party takes seriously and is preparing for actively. Hizbullah's future political role in Lebanon and the region is bound to be affected by its military intervention in Syria and the fortunes of the Lebanese state. As long as the Lebanese state is weak and unable to assert meaningful territorial and institutional sovereignty, and the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) remain understaffed and under-equipped, Hizbullah will assume its socioeconomic and deterrence responsibilities vis-à-vis the Shi'a community and Israel, respectively. Lebanon's political system will continue to be based on a delicate—but respected—sectarian balance of power between its different communities, but one that exposes the country to all kinds of overlapping domestic and external contests at the expense of Lebanese sovereignty. Only the emergence of a strong and non-confessional state in Lebanon, with substantial infrastructural capabilities and trans-sectarian appeal, can undermine Hizbullah's military and political influence.

Hizbullah's vision of perpetual resistance is increasingly incommensurate with that of other sectarian communities, and has already alienated substantial sections of Lebanese society, including some in its own Shi'a community. Its military intervention in Syria reopened the domestic debate over the utility and legality of its weapons arsenal. The party also faces the challenge of reconstituting its battered image and appeal across the Arab and Muslim worlds. Yet, short of a regional grand bargain involving Iran, the US, and Saudi Arabia, Hizbullah will continue to defend the utility of its weapons arsenal for Lebanon's deterrence posture, and will continue to deploy this arsenal at the service of its own geopolitical interests and those of Iran. This, in turn, will further divide the Lebanese people, exposing the country to overlapping local and regional battles at the expense of domestic stability.

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7.   *Margin and Center in Sudan: On the Historicity of State Weakness*
        Rogaia Abusharaf

The most recent "Failed States Index" published in *Foreign Policy* in 2013 identified fifty-nine states as "failed." Sudan, which is the focus of this chapter, ranked third. The map is color-coded to reflect the situation in different states, which range from being "critical," "in danger," and "borderline," to "stable" and "most stable." States are also scored according to the following indicators: mounting demographic pressures; massive movement of refugees or internally displaced persons; vengeance-seeking group grievance; chronic and sustained human flight; uneven economic development; poverty, sharp or severe economic decline; legitimacy of the state; progressive deterioration of public services; violation of human rights and rule of law; security apparatus; rise of factionalized elites; and intervention of external actors. Besides ranking poorly on all these indices, Sudan has also recently experienced secession. Situating the discussions about weak states in their proper historical, sociopolitical, and economic frames of reference on the world stage is by no means tantamount to exonerating the failed governments' dismal political behavior. It is obvious that weakness and failure as existential conditions experienced by large populations all over the world are unquestionably real. In Sudan evidence of failure abounds. To the people of Sudan, incidents of state transgressions are not surprising, nor is the *Foreign Policy* ranking. In the face of the extraordinary suffering and sorrow that the state has inflicted on its people, Sudan has exhibited all the symptoms of a failed state. The significant grievances incurred among its diverse populations from past and present experiences are enormous, but they too need to be infused, like the "Failed States Index," with a sense of history.

This chapter is an effort to analyze a text by the late Sudanese secular intellectual Abdel Khaliq Mahgoub (1927-1971) that has been banned by both military and civilian governments. This text is arguably among the best of what had been written on colonial governance and postcolonial forms of surrogacy. Analyzing it is vital for understanding the context of the highly fraught political environment in which those who inhabit these "ungovernable spaces" find themselves. This text was chosen because of its focus on the signs of weakness that Mahgoub recognized decades ago and that have now become reality. Had those in power heeded his warnings, so much of the social and political turmoil the country has experienced could have been preempted or resolved completely.

At a critical political juncture in Sudan's history, Mahgoub managed to author a text that sought to bridge scholarship and human rights advocacy. In the realm of postcolonial writing, Mahgoub was thus distinguished by his ability to recognize the impending failure of the state through a firm grasp of irony and the ability to explain the logic behind his formulations of a Sudanese national-democratic transformation. In a path-breaking literature that combined textual analysis, a deep knowledge of history, and a rigorous critique, he probed the iniquities that overwhelmed the Sudanese social scene. His reconstructions of the details of Sudanese politics reflect an extraordinary ethnographic imagination aided by in-depth comprehension of concepts such as framing, performativity, and tradition. Several signs of failure were chronicled, ranging from the country's fragmented nationalism; hierarchy and the reproduction of colonial epistemes; militancy and militarism; and enforced silences and exclusions.

Mahgoub's thought on these indices of failure was extended in his tracings of Sudan's political trajectory in rectifying has made available for comprehending the root causes of state weakness. To Mahgoub, "fixing failure" can only be achieved through differentiating myth from reality; deconstructing political language with which mythical perceptions of the Left had been formulated and circulated on a large scale, painting Leftists and secularists as

apostates; recognition of mediation of the multiple and often opposing forces; and establishing a unified democratic front. The notion of a broad front for change embodied in democratization as an urgent task for Sudan's political future was an idea original to Maghoub. In foregrounding transformative discourses on social justice, Mahgoub's vision of new ways of reading political life necessitated drawing inspiration from successful international experiences, while simultaneously recognizing homegrown versions of what works and what does not. In today's complex, often chaotic, political situation, I suggest that intellectuals read Mahgoub to explore pathways through which subverting marginality can be accomplished in the face of current resonances in Sudanese society. For him, a robust theory of sociopolitical transformation and his advocacy on behalf of the silent majority were inseparable. In all of Mahgoub's philosophical positions on nation, class, and culture, he underscored the imperative of deep thinking. For him, this activity was in and of itself a transformative act, confronting burning issues such as old colonial structures, postcoloniality, modernity, and traditionalism—issues that span national frontiers and are germinal to understanding the seeds of state weakness. Mahgoub's work, as this chapter concludes, operates at the heart of the problems of representation and production of knowledge about fragile states and their relationships to global politics and histories.

The lessons taken from Mahgoub's work are important for apprehending the collapse and weakness that characterize the Sudanese state, which cannot be isolated from a nuanced understanding of the emergence of a privileged few who rose as the new epicenter of power and authority. Instead of promoting a more democratic society, this elite moved rapidly to acquire power and property in a market in which the Sudanese citizen was the cheapest commodity, to be ignored and flouted. State weakness and the discourse about it are emblematic of severe empathy and accountability deficits. Weak states are entangled in a web of intricate international politics in which their most stable counterparts often act to support their weakness at the same time that they establish a set of indicators that categorize them as failed. Empathy with the predicaments faced by the majority of the inhabitants of the world and recognition of the accountability of powerful states for their quandaries are conspicuously absent. Only by recognizing these political dynamics and the structures of transgression they helped engender can we crack the code of state weakness. We must, therefore, recognize the lasting intellectual legacy of Mahgoub, who summoned the courage to draw attention to the spectacular failure of the colonial and postcolonial state and to envision a public culture that holds innovation and renewal in high regard. With such an intellectual framework, fixing weak states will at least have a fighting chance.

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8.   ***Sudan: A Turbulent Political Marketplace***
        Alex de Waal

For the last thirty years, successive governments in Sudan have conspicuously failed to produce public goods such as functioning institutions, peace and security, or social and economic development. They have intermittently delivered a broad spread of private goods through patronage systems funded by borrowing, aid, and oil revenues, but the state itself is widely regarded by Sudanese citizens as corrupt and incompetent. For Sudanese, modernity has become a political project of the past—a subject for nostalgia. However, despite their evident failures, Sudanese regimes have demonstrated a resilient and dynamic hybridity. This is notably the case for President Omar al Bashir, who seized power in June 1989, and who, twenty-five years later, has proven a master at political survival under extraordinarily adverse circumstances.

Bashir is a skilled manager of a political-business plan that relies on retail patronage. He presides over a political system consisting of a flexible and updated form of neo-patrimonial governance. Its institutions are run on patrimonial lines: political conflicts are managed by bargaining with individuals and not resolved by rules and procedures. Over the decades, Sudan's leaders have seen their political legitimacy wither due to a succession of failed national projects. Lacking any credible hegemonic project and the political capital associated with it, they have relied instead on dispensing patronage through what is called the "political budget"—the system of dispensing rewards, favors, and jobs. Among the members of the ruling oligarchy, there is constant bargaining for position, and between those members and the provincial elites—many of whom command the local allegiance of armed men—a further process of bargaining over loyalties. In short, Sudan has modernized its patronage system so as to resemble a political marketplace in which loyalties are regularly auctioned to the highest bidder. Consequently, any attempt to measure Sudan's success or failure in terms of providing public goods—the conventional indicators of state fragility or failure—misses the political processes whereby the regime maintains itself by adapting to changing circumstance, and by managing violence and enrichment. Such conventional classifications of Sudan as strong, fragile, failing, or weak contribute neither to understanding of the nature of the country, nor to policies to respond to its predicament.

This analysis focuses on the specificities of a modernized and regionally and globally integrated competitive patrimonial order financed by rents—what can be termed a "deregulated political marketplace." The chapter does not construct the theoretical apparatus for this paradigm, but illustrates several key components, showing how they emerge from a historical political-economic analysis of the Sudanese case.

To understand Sudanese political life we should adapt Lenin's dictum that politics can be reduced to questions of "Who?" and "Whom?" to ask: who is buying, who is selling, how much is on offer, and how are they bargaining? One central concept is the "political budget," namely the financial capacity of a ruler to rent allegiances within the political marketplace. This is the twin of "political capital," closely associated with legitimacy, which is the non-monetary resources that a regime brings to bear, such as nationalist sentiment. With the diminution of political capital in Sudan over many decades, the importance of the political budget and the management of the political marketplace become more significant. This leads to a second concept, the "political business plan," which is a lens for studying the agency and skill of the leader.

Sudan has been challenged by the absence of a strong national narrative that legitimizes the state, and by its failure to accommodate ethnic and religious diversity. In response, successive governments in Sudan have utilized diverse ideologies and have resorted to neo-patrimonial systems of establishing a governing coalition through finance. This has enabled rulers to manage the day-to-day business of governing, but without preserving, let alone developing, the public goods necessary for citizens to feel a sense of belonging.

In the peripheries, armed rebellions have been characterized by a combination of mobilization around land and local identity, and maneuver in the political marketplace, with many provincial leaders succumbing to offers of clientship from the center. The result has been recurrent and inconclusive rebellion, repeated but dishonored peace agreements, and separatist sentiments. The political opposition at the center, lacking access to state rents, is fragmented and weak.

The Sudanese marketplace of allegiances is increasingly integrated with those of its neighbors, a factor which inflates the market price of allegiance for provincial leaders, and increases the political business challenge facing the ruler in Khartoum. The secession of South Sudan has intensified this problem, while at the same time—because South Sudan contained most of the country's oil—reducing the funds available for the government to manage its patronage system.

Overall, Sudan is characterized as "turbulent," and as a system subject to apparently random or chaotic changes in property, but which nonetheless maintains its overall structure at a higher level. Just like the incessant moment-to-moment fluctuations in a stream of water, Sudan is unpredictable from week to week, but its basic character remains constant over a longer period.

Sudanese politics may surprise us in the coming years, for good or ill, but in either direction there is little indication of the political leadership needed, or the material resources required, for a transformative change. Sudan is unlikely to climb up the rankings of states that provide public goods to their citizens. Future leaders will face much of the same challenges as President Bashir, and have much of the same resources to call upon, or fewer.

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9.   *Women, Work, and the Weak State: A Case Study of Pakistan and Sudan*
        Zahra Babar and Dwaa Osman

Within the greater Middle East, Pakistan and Sudan are two states whose chronic political instability has had significant consequences for the well-being of their citizens, particularly for marginalized groups such as women. While women encounter socioeconomic and political disadvantages globally, their levels of exclusion are heightened within weaker states. Inadequate policies and institutions along with exclusionary socio-cultural contexts mean that women face both material and non-material disadvantages. Within this context, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) can potentially begin to play an extensive role by providing a range of welfare programs, delivering human development and infrastructural projects, giving voice to the marginalized, and empowering the excluded. NGOs are often encouraged, supported, and even funded by the government in these endeavors. In weak states, NGOs move beyond the space traditionally reserved for civil society and often replicate or replace some of the core functions of government.

In both Pakistan and Sudan, women face limited access to resources and basic rights as a result of the failure of the country's development trajectory. Additionally, women face the hostility of a social discourse which terms their participation and advancement as morally reprehensible. The historical context, weak institutional environment, and the influence of more conservative interpretations of Islam on politics and society, all inform the degree and nature of women's inclusion in Pakistani and Sudanese society. The diminishing capacities of governments in both Pakistan and Sudan to provide basic services to their citizens have been further eroded through the need to maintain security, law, and order. In such a context, examining how women are being impacted and how they are being assisted makes for a compelling comparative case study.

In this chapter, we examine two weak states located at the periphery of the greater Middle East, Pakistan and Sudan, focusing in particular on how conditions within each have driven NGOs to play a dominant role in addressing the exclusion of one of society's marginalized groups. In the analysis of social exclusion and gender, the state is considered to be a principal social actor, permeating society and structuring the dynamics of everyday life. Development interventions carried out by NGOs aim to reduce inequality by engaging in parallel and complementary processes that build the capacity of both the state and social communities. Formal and informal institutions manage and structure access to resources, networks, and capabilities, and accordingly determine the prevailing distributional rules within society. Development intervention at the micro or community level is primarily concerned with community empowerment, by enabling the socially-excluded to gain equitable access to assets and capabilities and to have a more audible voice in society. Although the social exclusion discourse originally placed the most weight on the economic sphere, there is increasing recognition that multiple centers may exist within society depending on the individual's identity and various group affiliations. In the particular case studies of Pakistan and Sudan, the socio-cultural context and setting of women in rural areas that may be marked by conflict, places familial and community relations at the core of women's integration in society.

This chapter draws on the experiences of two organizations—Sarhard Rural Support Programme in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in Pakistan and Plan International in North Kordofan in Sudan—that are delivering financial services to women living in areas located at the margins of each country where the reach of the state is particularly

tenuous. We review and evaluate these attempts to provide for women's greater economic participation amidst a steady unraveling of the state's capacity and heightened conditions of insecurity and conflict.

Our argument is that within weak states, limited public capacity, the erosion of rule of law, institutional inefficiencies, and poor implementation of legislative protections leave marginalized communities at the mercy of an ever more threatening and disrupted social order. The function of providing adequate social protection is increasingly left to the nongovernmental sector. Beyond serving as mere recipients of social welfare programs, through NGO support, women are engaging in their own development trajectories. It is precisely the limitations in the weak state that has opened up space for NGOs to promote women's participation in their own development, as well as that of their households and their communities. However, the NGOs included in our two case studies operate within the constraints of a prevailing social order, and their ability to deliver a "rights-based agenda" that addresses core issues of women's unequal status is curtailed. Through involvement in NGOs' social mobilization efforts, women have achieved a degree of agency and of autonomy, but their status within their homes and communities remains informed by the overarching cultural and social constraints that limit women's social inclusion in both Pakistan and Sudan. Moreover, while a degree of empowerment may be achieved through involvement in micro-level social welfare programs, women's social inclusion is contingent upon policy and institutional reform at the state level.

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10.   *Whither Palestine? Weak State, Failed State or No State at All?*
       Glenn E. Robinson

The purpose of this essay is two-fold: first, to explore the history and characteristics of Palestinian statehood in the West Bank and Gaza Strip—to what degree can Palestine even be considered a state?—and second, to identify the primary dynamics under which proto-state institutions have been built since the signing of the Declaration of Principles (the first Oslo accord) in 1993. This chapter finds that, while Palestine enjoys some of the attributes of statehood, primarily international recognition, it would be wrong to classify Palestine as a state. It further finds that the construction of Palestinian state institutions have been primarily shaped by three dynamics, all of which will create serious dysfunctions if Palestine ever does become independent: institution building under a suffocating colonial system of rule, a rentier-state type of political economy, and a legacy of personalized anti-institutionalism used by Yasir Arafat to consolidate power after Oslo—a dynamic I refer to as "the politics of antithesis."

In the century prior to the 1967 war, Palestinian state building efforts were limited. The dominant Palestinian political efforts in this period focused more on nation building and independence than constructing an institutional and legal framework for a state. Both the construction of a national identity and actual independence are certainly important for the success of statehood, but they are not necessary pre-requisites, as the Zionist experiment showed.

The state of Palestine, bounded by the 1967 borders, was formally declared by Palestinian Authority (PA) President and Palestine Liberation Organization head Mahmud 'Abbas in 2012. It was then formally recognized by the United Nations General Assembly as a "non-member observer state" on a lopsided 138-9 vote, and currently enjoys individual recognition from 132 states, or over two-thirds of the member states of the United Nations. Some analysts go back further to suggest that Palestinian statehood began with the Palestine National Council's Declaration of Independence in 1988, to the UN partition resolution (UNGAR 181) of 1947, or even to the 1924 League of Nations Mandate for Palestine. In any case, there is no question that, at least beginning in 2012, Palestinians have unequivocally claimed a sovereign state and have specified that the 1967 borders define its boundaries.

Just because the Palestinians have claimed statehood—as a current reality, not a future goal—does that make it so? When is a state really a state? Under the Westphalian system of states that has dominated first Europe and then the world since 1648, two attributes of statehood are fundamental. First, a state must have effective control over its claimed territory and, second, a state must be recognized as the legitimate sovereign by other states. Neither of these characteristics is absolute. The state of Palestine fails with regard to effective control over the territory it claims; Israel is still firmly in control of all such borders, which is why Israel is still in legal occupation of all Palestinian territory, including the Gaza Strip. In terms of international recognition, the state of Palestine enjoys wide international legitimacy, indeed, more than Israel did for much of its history.

Palestinian state- or proto-state-building has been deeply shaped by several dynamics, which themselves have created deep structural realities that will continue to inform Palestinian governing institutions for many years to come. Three such dynamics deserve special mention. First, Palestinian state institutions built under the terms of Oslo have been created in the shadow of Israeli colonialism and military occupation, and often reflect the interests of the colonial power more than those of the occupied population. Second, Palestine is essentially a rentier or distributive state that receives the large majority of its governing funds from outside powers, either Israel or

foreign donors. There are some important differences with other rentier states, especially Palestine's inability to control the flow of rents to its government coffers, but some critical rentier similarities have clearly emerged and have deeply shaped both central and municipal institutions. Third, the nature of the consolidation of power by the Arafat regime, and in particular the "inside-outside" dynamic, created a politics of antithesis that both personalized institutions and downplayed the importance of institutionalized governance. While the death of Arafat in 2004 relieved some of these pressures, the way power was consolidated has deeply impacted the nature of Palestinian state institutions.

Palestine has never enjoyed existence as a fully realized nation-state. Whether Ottoman, British, Jordanian, Egyptian, or Israeli, foreign powers have been for centuries the dominant sovereign power in the land of Palestine. Under Ottoman rule, this was not seen as a problem, as neither a separate Palestinian national identity nor attempts to build an independent sovereign Palestinian state existed. In the twentieth century, as new and independent Arab states came into existence, the lack of Palestinian statehood was deemed a much more pressing problem, particularly in light of growing Zionist claims to the land, and ultimately the creation of Israel in 1948 on 77 percent of the land of Palestine. Statehood claims became more pronounced with the Oslo peace process in 1993 and, especially, the actual claim of a Palestinian statehood by Mahmud 'Abbas in 2012. International recognition of Palestinian statehood is rather extensive and convincing, certainly more convincing than actual territorial control by the state of the territory it claims for statehood. The pivotal process of building state institutions in Palestine has been distorted by the realities of the continued Israeli occupation, by the rentier nature of government revenues, and by the exigencies of the consolidation of power by an external Palestinian elite.

In spite of its institutional deformities, it would not be fair to conclude that Palestine is a failed state when it has not been given the opportunity to be a real state, independent from Israel. Nor could we conclude that it is a weak state for the same reason. Palestine exists in a surreal place of wide legal recognition and an extensive institutional network that looks very much like what a state should look like, but that does not really exist in the full sense of statehood and independence.

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11.   ***Diasporas and State (Re)building in the MENA Region: Potential and Constraints***
Laurie Brand

While many aspects of the MENA uprisings have received significant attention, often overlooked is the role of these countries' respective diasporas. The role of these communities in state (re)building has been complex, and defies attempts at classifying their involvements dichotomously as contributing to state strength or fragility. More fruitful in trying to understand the role of diaspora communities in the home state is the approach of Charles Call, who suggests that—in place of strength or weakness—we focus on gaps in state capacity, security, and legitimacy.

In considering the relationship between these three gaps and the potential role of diasporas in contributing to state (re)building, one must first stipulate that the very existence of some diasporas, or at least their size, is a direct function of the state failures that rebuilding would or should seek to address. Indeed, a majority of emigrants have left their homes either because the state (whether post-independence or colonial) was incapable of generating sufficient employment, or because political turmoil or repression directly threatened them. In other cases, armed conflicts directly create the diasporas. The proximate cause of instability may be a capacity or security gap, but the root causes more likely lie in crises related to legitimacy and nation-building. Lack of agreement on the rules of economic and political power distribution, and the resultant failure to incorporate regions, ethno-religious groups, or others into a meaningful, inclusive sense of national identity may trigger instability that can, in extremis, lead to massive outmigration. In the MENA region, this has certainly been the major driver of the additional expansion of the Lebanese diaspora, and—exacerbated by external involvement—it is fueling the development of a new Syrian diaspora at the time of this writing. Of course, conflict-triggered diasporas can also be the result not of state failure, but of colonialism and armed external intervention, as in the case of the initial creation of the Palestinian diaspora following the 1947 partition and the 1948 Palestine war, and in Iraq after 1990 and especially after 2003.

In order to evaluate the potential role of a diaspora in affecting or being affected by the gaps in state capacity, security, legitimacy, and nation-building, it is critical to recognize that diasporas are not unitary actors and to consider how each one's characteristics may shape its potential role in the home country. First, what is the reason for the diaspora's emergence? The answer to this question may well condition the way emigrants view the homeland and the degree or ways in which they are involved. If we are interested in home state success in mobilizing emigrant resources to address capacity gaps, then one factor may be the emigrant's views of the government. Is it seen as trustworthy, so that investing back home seems a patriotic—and financially sound—activity? Or, is the government viewed as corrupt or repressive, thus generally triggering hesitation, if not avoidance, on the part of the migrant?

Related to these concerns are the resources available; in other words, the emigrant's capacity—as opposed to mere desire—to engage in the sending state. Another question to consider is whether the diaspora is of relatively recent formation, and hence perhaps with limited economic resources, or is it well-established? However, even if the diaspora is old and rich in resources, length of absence from the home country may lead its members to be less interested in the sending country. Statistics underline that remittances are critical elements in the budgets of a number of MENA countries. On a national level, they can be the difference between dwindling versus stable hard currency reserves. Diaspora contributions can help mitigate some of the most severe impacts of unsuccessful development strategies, they may be key to poverty reduction, particularly in times of crisis, and, in some cases,

they may result in the establishment of successful local level initiatives or businesses. They should not, however, be looked to as a path to broader economic development, nor as a solution to rebuilding significant state capacity.

Finally, how active is the sending state in politically (re)engaging the diaspora? What sorts of instruments or institutions exist? How effectively are they used? Which new instruments may the home state need or seek to develop? Over the years, states throughout the MENA region have established separate ministries and quasi-governmental institutions to address the concerns of expatriates; they have offered language and culture classes through embassies, and have provided special facilities to tend to the religious needs of the emigrant communities and to promote particular interpretations of Islam in some instances. Perhaps most interesting from the point of view of the evolution of MENA political systems is that, since the Arab uprisings, a number of countries have implemented or expanded the right to vote from abroad accorded to their diasporans. Expatriates' securing the right to vote should be understood as part of the process of rebuilding the political system in each of these countries, ideally in ways that address the gaps in capacity that contribute to state fragility discussed earlier.

Only a careful examination of the history and composition of the diaspora will enable us to suggest likely or appropriate forms of involvement in (re)building "back home." No presumptions can be made a priori. Moreover, the forms of diaspora influence change over time, particularly today with the dramatic developments in technology allowing for swifter and more continuous communication, easier transfer of funds, and more frequent travel. Yet, analysts should harbor no illusions about diaspora potential. On the economic front, under no circumstances should expatriate or migrant remittances be viewed as an engine for development or the primary answer to home state economic malaise. Similarly, on the political front, diaspora communities may support programs that seek to reinvigorate state capacity, but they should not be looked to as the primary trigger of state-(re)building.

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12.   *State Capacity and Aid Effectiveness in Weak States in the Greater Middle East*
        Mark McGillivray, Simon Feeny, and Ashton De Silva

There are lofty development expectations for aid provided to weak, failing, or fragile states. Among these expectations are that aid will help establish and sustain peace, prevent a slide into civil collapse, and achieve sustainable growth and development over time. Therefore, it is not surprising that countries widely thought to be weak, failing, or fragile receive very large amounts of aid relative to other developing countries. The top three largest recipients in terms of aggregate official development assistance (ODA) volumes between 2007 and 2011 were three countries that are widely held to be weak, failing, or fragile: Iraq, Afghanistan, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. These three countries received 14 percent of the global ODA budget shared among 153 countries and territories over this period.

What precisely constitutes a weak, failing, or fragile state is a matter of some conjecture. Yet, irrespective of precisely what definition we might use, from a development perspective these states have two dominant characteristics. The first is that they tend to be among those with the greatest need of aid. This is typically due to low multidimensional development achievements, including high levels of income disparity and other poverty indicators. The second is that they have very limited capacities to convert foreign development aid into development results, be it in terms of higher economic growth, lower poverty, or higher overall standards of living. These characteristics combine to make the promotion of development in weak, failing, or fragile states one of the greatest, if not the greatest, challenge facing aid donors and the international community generally.

In development circles, a country is often thought to have a weak capacity to absorb aid for development purposes if it has policies that are bad for development and poorly performing institutions. It is, indeed, according to these criteria that countries in development circles have been considered fragile. A well-known measure of the quality of policies and institutional performance is the World Bank's Country Policy and Institutional Assessment (CPIA). The OECD's Development Assistance Committee has, in particular, defined fragile states as low income countries in the bottom two quintiles of CPIA. Three low-income Greater Middle East (which is treated as the Middle East traditionally defined plus the North African countries, Afghanistan, and Pakistan) countries fall into the bottom two quintiles of the most recent CPIA scores: Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Yemen.

This paper does not take issue with using CPIA scores to solely assign the fragile state classification, although it does note in passing that this approach is problematic. It does, however, take issue with using the CPIA as a sole measure of absorptive capacity. It considers the CPIA to be too narrow a measure of a country's capacity to absorb aid for development purposes. In particular, it looks only at the capacity of the recipient country and not at the capacity of donors to deliver development results in these countries. Accordingly, the first task of this paper is to develop and apply a new, more comprehensive cross-recipient country measure of the capacity to absorb aid or development purposes. This measure combines measures of major components of absorptive capacity: (i) capital constraints, including human capital and infrastructure constraints; (ii) governance constraints, including policy and institutional constraints; and (iii) donor practices, including the number of donors present in the country in question and the extent of donor fragmentation. This choice of constraints as index components is strongly justified by the findings of the aid effectiveness literature concerning their importance. There is a very broad

consensus throughout the literature that each of these constraints can hamper the use of additional aid. Data that can adequately measure these constraints are widely available for developing countries.

The paper then highlights the numerical values of this measure—the Absorptive Capacity Index (ACI)—for countries in the Greater Middle East, and compares these values to the amounts of aid these countries have received in recent years. Data availability permits the calculation of ACI scores for twelve Greater Middle East countries. Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Yemen have the lowest three scores, while Lebanon, Oman, and Saudi Arabia have the highest three scores, among these twelve countries.

Inferences for the likely development effectiveness of this aid are then drawn in the paper. This is done by using the ACI scores to calculate aid levels, relative to recipient country GDP, at which the contribution these inflows achieve the maximum contribution to per capita economic growth in recipients. These calculations are necessarily crude, but provide some insight into the contribution of aid to the economic growth achievements of countries in the Greater Middle East. They can also be used to provide an indication of whether aid allocations to these countries are appropriate from a per capita economic growth perspective, and whether countries receive too much or too little aid from an (albeit narrow) economic perspective. The level of aid that is appropriate from this perspective is termed in the paper as the "growth efficient" level: that which maximizes aid's incremental contribution to economic growth.

Results of this analysis suggest that—with the exception of Afghanistan—aid to all Greater Middle Eastern countries can be increased, from levels provided in 2011, without any loss in its incremental impact on growth. To the contrary, provided particular thresholds are not exceeded, increasing aid to these countries will increase incremental impact on growth. ODA to Afghanistan in 2011 was more than six times the inputted growth efficient level, at which the incremental impact of aid on growth is maximized. This clearly does not provide a case for immediately reducing aid to Afghanistan, keeping in mind that there are many other valid and currently more important objectives for aid that need to be pursued in this country. It does, however, provide a caution against providing such high levels in the future and an extremely strong case for building absorptive capacity in Afghanistan.

The paper concludes with a call on donors to work on improving absorptive capacity levels in all countries, including those in the Greater Middle East, and Afghanistan in particular. It acknowledges that donors do not provide aid purely for developmental reasons, as foreign policy and other objectives are also important. However, it is hard to achieve any lasting objectives, developmental or otherwise, if aid does not achieve significant and lasting development results, and this requires the alleviation of absorptive capacity constraints in recipient countries.

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