STATE-FAILURE OR POLITY-CREATION?

World Politics beyond State-centrism

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I declare that this thesis is the product of my original research

Daniel Biró
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Daniel Biró
To the memory of my Mother, Vera Birch

and

with love for my twin sister, Diana Amery Birch
To the memory of my Mother, Vera Biró

and

with love for my twin sister, Diana Andersson-Biró
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Abstract

The prominence of state-building in contemporary practice is hard to overstate, being variably described as “one of the most important issues for the world community … having risen to the top of the global agenda” (Fukuyama, 2004a: ix-xi) and as constituting “the dominant framework for the international regulation of non-Western states” (Chandler, 2005: 2). Designed in the 1990s as a reactive strategy of interventions on humanitarian or post-conflict reconstruction grounds, state-building becomes increasingly perceived, after 9/11, as “the preventive solution to a wide range of economic, social and political problems facing … weak or failing states” (Chandler, 2010: 1). Despite the increased centrality of international interventions subsumed under this label, the gap between ambitions of exporting Western templates of “good governance” and the reality on the ground can at best only modestly be said to be bridged, and is frequently regarded as having been widened by “building state-failure” (Chopra, 2002). Furthermore, despite undeniable progress on the quantitative dimension, the frameworks of state-failure and state-building remain conceptually underdeveloped.

This thesis suggests a set of ideas that can form the starting point for the (re)conceptualization of these frameworks. At the core of this alternative framework is the conviction that, by naturalizing an idealized Weberian model of the state based on the centralization and bureaucratization of political institutions monopolizing the means of violence, the concepts of state-failure and state-building are not so much incorrect as incomplete. As a concept based on a “negative logic”, the narrative of state-failure tells the story of what the respective units are not, but cannot appropriately analyze the existing political and social relations on their own terms. In turn, although an important process which cannot be ignored by analysts as long as it remains a strategic option for policy-makers, state-building can best be conceptualized as only one process in the dynamic construction of local political communities and institutions of governance. To correct these limitations, my suggestions are in line with Wallerstein’s (1991) call to engage in unthinking both the state and state-building as ultimate, teleological projects by conceptualizing the former as a particular instantiation of the open-ended concept of polity and the latter as just one element of the process of polity-creation. Rejuvenating the Tillyan logic of unintended consequences, the Westphalian Periphery could thus be analyzed as the result of a dynamic interaction between three waves of polity-creation – labeled here as state-formation, state-making and state-building carried out by different actors with different, sometimes compatible, but mostly incompatible objectives.

The thesis closes by speculating about the consequences of such a framework for the way we theorize International Relations. On a domestic level, the like-units
assumption would have to be abandoned given the hybrid nature of polities resulting from the confluence of two or even all three processes of polity-creation. At the international level, the neo-medievalist scenario could be re-articulated away from the image rejected by Bull (1977), towards an image including co-existence in the international system of a diversity of polities, of which the modern state remains the dominant, but not the only form.
Introduction

A consensus appears to have formed lately in political analyst and decision-making circles that international interventions are, if not desirable, at least an unavoidable element of contemporary international relations. A particularly visible example of this commonly-held belief is associated with the enterprise of state-building, which has “emerged as the leading form of international interventions in recent years” (Bickerton, 2007: 94). The role of state-building in today’s international relations can hardly be over-stated. The centrality of this process is reflected, firstly, in the burgeoning literature dedicated to state-failure from which it derives the formulation of a “cure” to this assumed plague in the form of programmes of state-building. In addition, there is an increased level of institutionalization of state-building as a practice in international politics; this is visible through the multiplicity of actors and agencies involved in designing and implementing the templates of state-building, from international governmental organizations (IGOs) to a range of agencies within the governmental structures of the most powerful states, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and down to a plethora of local actors.

And yet, despite, or perhaps because of, the seemingly avid appetite for international state-building, this is most often accompanied by a puzzling level of confusion, expressed most forcefully in the proliferation of labels attempting to capture the essence of these interventions. This mystifying Babylonian terminology operates on three levels. The first level refers to the target for intervention. Inscribed under a pathological view of deviancy, aberration and breakdown (Morton, 2005: 372; Raaymaekers, 2005: 2), distinctions are made among various instances of state non-functionality in providing the services expected. In this regard, analysts speak variously about “weakness”, “fragility”, “failure” or “collapse”, the descriptions of which are reinforced and complicated by attempts to describe the above, not as individual static moments (of fragility, failure or collapse), but processually as instances of weakening, failing and collapsing states (Milliken and Krause, 2002). The second level refers to the methods of intervention. Seeing these instances as anomalies or deviations from the “normal” functionality of a modern political community, the so-called international community is poised
to intervene in a variety of missions, often indistinguishably labeled as “peace-
buiding”, “nation-building” or “state-building” (for a critical view, see for
instance, Bendana, 2005). Finally, the third level refers to the purpose of
intervention. In a desire to understand the mechanisms through which modern
polities are constructed, an obvious choice (not without its own dangers) is to
look at similar enterprises in the past, starting with the formation of the first
modern states. The end result of these combined tendencies is that concepts
such as “state-formation”, “state-making” and “state-building” are used
indiscriminately at an analytical level, a level which in turn informs policy
responses.

The proliferation of labels is just one part of the puzzle. Terminological confusion is accompanied by a dearth of “positive” data, that is, positive results of the attempts to state-build, with most analysts concurring in characterizing such results as modest at best. Despite a tremendous effort in terms of institutional, financial and epistemic resources directed by the international community to problematic areas, there continue to be persistent levels of instability and violence precisely in those places where most efforts are expanded – violence perpetrated both by the elements controlling the carcass of the states to be (re)built, and by actors outside the states’ control. At an institutional level, the situation does not look any more promising, with numerous calls denouncing the corruption, non-functionality or fragility of the resulting edifices.

Underlying the policy of these interventions as well as the interpretations of their “success” stands the explicit and/or implicit assumption that, in the absence of a state’s monopoly over violence in its territory, the modern kind of social order, if it ever was in place, has been completely swept away; and, with it, all the functions currently expected to be performed by states, including security, representation and the provision of social services such as health and education (Milliken and Krause, 2002; Schwartz, 2005).

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1 Most recently, the limits of this conflation are becoming increasingly recognized in the literature with scholars deploring the state of a field in which a confusing terminology “such as ‘peace-building’, ‘nation-building’ and ‘state-building’ [is used] to describe the same general phenomenon of international interventions in weak states” (Belloni, 2007: 97). For a good analysis on the use of the concept of “peace-building” by various agencies, see Barnett et al. 2007.

2 Doyle and Sambanis (2006) offer probably the most prominent and well documented scholarly effort to describe the mildly successful nature of the UN’s peace-building operations, but even they refer to peace-building rather than “state-building”. Other, more critical assessments include Zuercher, 2006 and Barnett, 2007.
Certainly, this is the view upheld in much of the literature on “state-failure” or “state-building”. In what might be called the “Westphalian Periphery”, political communities are not organized in a way that conforms to Weber’s description of the modern state as a rational-legal bureaucratic organization exercising a monopoly over the means of violence within its territory. Yet, despite the assumptions of the literature, what seems to happen in some, even though not all, parts of this Periphery, is contestation through armed violence, less over the existence of the state itself, and more over particular forms and functions the state has or should have, including most prominently the monopoly over violence. Instructive in this sense is the fact that, contrary to the assumed zero-sum game between the state and non-state orders, despite protracted violence in places as different as Afghanistan, Lebanon or Colombia, the existence of the state per se was not challenged by the respective non-state armed groups.\(^3\) Equally important, and belying the assumed absence of any form of governance, the “non-governed territories” are in fact governed, even if not by state actors or at a level to which we are accustomed in the western world. Having made this observation, a crucial task emerges for social scientists to examine and analyze the nature of the social order in polities situated at the periphery of the modern system of states, where certain functions of the state, including the monopoly over violence and its prominence in the provision of social services, are contested.

Before proceeding further, however, it is important to observe that the modes of thinking underlying the analysis of “state-failure” and its corollary practices of “state-building” are inadequate to investigating social orders other than states. This is precisely because of the temptation to evaluate such ideas and practices in terms of the distance that separates them from an imagined view of desired modern states. Continuing to rely exclusively on the “modern state” as the fundamental unit in the analysis of international relations (IR) can merely reveal that at the periphery of the modern system of states, there are political units that do not conform to the parameters of modern states. At worst, such analyses offer a caricatured description of alternative political units as either “states-in-waiting” or as “ungoverned territories”, but in any

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\(^3\) Even in the paradigmatic case of “state collapse” such as in Somalia, the state as one of the possible forms of organising modern political communities does not seem to be totally rejected, as the examples of Somaliland and Putland arguably testify.
case as peripheral aberrations that must be forced to fit in the dominant narrative of a linear and teleological progress with its pinnacle in the modern state. As a consequence, these places are too often treated as pawns, where the latest techniques of social engineering (in the form of state-building) can and should be applied for the sake not only of the stability of the international system, but also, allegedly, to serve the interests of their populations.

There is a further caveat to be expressed: while it is unlikely that one can perform a proper analysis of these alternative political units from within the conceptual framework informing the literature on state-failure and state-building, one must also be aware of the dangers of assuming uniformity in the world of non-state polities. Instead, it is important to note the rather impressive diversity within the world of contemporary non-state political units. In fact, one can identify several categories of politics at the Westphalian Periphery in which the state is incapable of successfully claiming a monopoly over the use of violence, with consequences resulting in long-lasting and devastating internal wars (see Fig. 1). While some of these categories have received a certain degree of scholarly attention, one particular category, which refers to the social order of the non-state armed groups, has been, by and large, either ignored, or treated as a temporary, transitory stage towards the formation of a modern state.

Fig. 1. Categories of polities in the Westphalian Periphery
The scholarly analysis of the 1990s brought to prominence cases in which violent conflicts were institutionalized as a form of economic interaction, phenomena encapsulated in the “economy of war” literature (Keen, 1998; Berdal and Malone, 2000; Collier et al. 2001). With a predilection for African cases like Angola, Sierra Leone, Liberia or Somalia, as well as non-African cases such as Bosnia, Colombia or Afghanistan, the economic approach focuses on the ability of particular actors to profit from the conflict, with an emphasis on the processes through which economic activities influenced and prolonged conflict dynamics. However valuable the insights of this perspective, it nonetheless ignores the important dimension of social service delivery.

Working from the “premise that the crumbling of one form of political order can reveal or give rise to the emergence of new or incipient kinds of political order” (Kingston, 2004: 1), the “states-within-states” perspective opens up the investigation to the provision of social services in political (sub)units lacking a monopoly over violence within their territory. Nevertheless, it does so by focusing exclusively on the category of polities exhibiting to some degree state-like characteristics, but unable to secure international recognition as states. In addition, a second category, that of “states-in-waiting”, captures the dynamic at work in places such as Somaliland in Somalia, Kurdistan, Tamil Eelam in Sri Lanka before May 2009, Transnistria in Moldova, or Eritrea and East Timor before their recognized independence in 1993 and 2002 respectively. All these are instances in which the contenders for the control of violence are driven by explicit secessionist goals: what united politico-military formations such as the Somali National Movement (SNM) militias and the elder leaders in Somalia, Tamil Elam Liberation Tigers (LTTE) in Sri Lanka or Hamas and Fatah in the case of Palestine, is that they all have expressed and fought for the creation of political structures associated with the modern state.

In contrast with these cases there are others in which, despite fervent military confrontations, governance along the lines of an independent state is not the final goal: neither the Afghan warlords, the Lebanese militias nor the Columbian guerillas expressed secessionist goals.4 Taking on board insights

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4 Before the military defeat at the hands of the Sri Lankan military in May 2009, the language of LTTE has slowly become more ambivalent about autonomy and secession. This is shown in
derived from cases of governance where there is an absence of centralized monopoly over violence, it is this last, mostly neglected, category that inspires this thesis. This is not to say that the cases mentioned above constitute a homogeneous category. On the contrary, in emphasizing their variation, one can analyze, for example, the difference between what can be called the warlord and militia systems, as illustrated by Afghanistan and Lebanon respectively. On the political-military dimension, the poliarhnic model of the Afghan warlords’ contestation of the state’s monopoly over violence can be contrasted with Hizbullah’s hierarchical model of co-existence with the Lebanese state army. Correspondingly, with regard to the provision of social services, while the Lebanese militia remains directly involved in this process, in Afghanistan the main role continues to be taken by international NGOs and UN agencies, while the Mujahedeen played more of an intermediary role in a globalized network of state and non-state actors.  

What these cases tend to show is the limitations of the analytical frameworks used to describe various forms of governance other than the states. Against the assumption of uniformity permeating the state-failure literature and informing the practice of state-building, these cases offer a more complex picture, with diverse socio-economic-politico-military arrangements. Further, against the assumption of temporary aberrations, the stubborn resilience of these formations point to a more stable foundation than usually assumed; and, finally, against the assumption of a strict competition, or incompatibility with the institutions of the modern state, they point to various forms of hybridity.

Another important aspect of the study of these polities is the decisive role played by external actors – be they state or non-state in nature. Against the portrayal of “state failure” as a strictly domestic phenomenon, my investigation finds that the alternative social orders created by warlord or militia systems are built at the intersection of domestic forces (be they traditional or newly invented), with international processes reflective of the

Figure 1 by placing Tamil Elam in the overlapping category between the states-within-states and alternative forms of polities.

If Lebanon militia and Afghanistan warlord systems could be conceptualized as ideal-types of social order characterized by the form of military contestation of monopoly over violence and the modes of social service delivery, Somalia’s social order would occupy a position towards the warlord end, while the territory under the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Columbia (FARC)’s control would move towards the militia system.
contemporary international system of modern states, including humanitarian development, reconstruction and aid governance. Not only is the intervention of regional powers closely associated with the majority of “state-failure” cases, but armed resistance and provision of social services are both conducted through the association of local actors with various external networks of support, including but not limited to diasporas. In most cases, the emergence, survival and affluence of different types of non-state armed groups within the framework of fragmented societies is linked with external interventions and the continuous support of regional powers. In connection with the regional dynamic, a fundamental role is played by refugees and their manipulation both by foreign states in their attempts to influence the events in the “failing state”, and by domestic actors within this state. Probably the most illustrative case remains that of Afghanistan: on the one hand, refugee camps are exploited by Pakistan in its attempts to control the events in Afghanistan; on the other, Afghan warlords are dependent on the political parties represented for a long time in Peshawar’s refugee camps.

Given the considerations above, this thesis starts from the premise that dominant contemporary analyses permeating both theoretical constructs of state-failure and the policy-making arena of state-building suffer from the effects of state-centrism, and in particular, from the obsessive association of governance with monopoly over violence and institutional centralism. Against the supposition implicit in the statements regarding “non-governed spaces” (Groh, 2006; Rabasa et al., 2007), this thesis is based instead on the assumption that the absence of a centralized monopoly of violence in the hands of the state should not be equated with an absence of governance. This view builds on the existence of certain acts of governance that can be identified in some of the so-called “failed states” – such as the provision of services in the sphere of health and education in areas outside the control of the state by actors such as the Lebanese Hizballah militia or by some of

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6 It is interesting to note that the concept of “ungoverned space/territory” is in general appropriated by scholars working in close relation with governmental organizations, and particularly with the national military establishment. This state-centrism is obvious in recent pieces written at the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey (Groh, 2006) and as a RAND Monograph (Rabasa et al. 2007). Recently within the IR scholarly community one can notice a move towards rejecting this “ungoverned” (or even worse, “ungovernable”) assumption – which in fact can be reduced to a reading as “ungoverned by a state”. For example, see Stanislawski (2008) and Clunan and Trinkunas (2010).
Afghanistan’s notorious “warlords”. When they are not completely ignored, which is especially obvious in policy-making circles, such acts are described as merely further instruments used to undermine the central state. While these forms of governance can certainly play instrumental roles, they should not be reduced to their limited instrumentality as a tool in the competition against the state, but should be analyzed as acts of governance adapted to the local circumstances. In this light, the main objective of this thesis is to question the state-centric analytical framework ubiquitous in the literature on state-failure and state-building.

Partly responsible for this state-centric attitude is the residual heritage of the modernization theories prevalent in the 1950s and 1960s, which naturalized the state as the only legitimate form of organizing political communities in modernity. In many ways, this naturalized projection is at the heart of the current focus on state-failure and the palliative of state-building. If the state is accepted as the only legitimate point of reference, other uniquely modern actors involved in the armed contestation of a state’s monopoly over violence can only be caricatured, and not properly analyzed. This state-centrist analytical bias ignores not only the modern (or perhaps post-modern) character of contemporary actors such as “warlords” or “militias”, but also the co-constitutive relations that these actors share with the state and the society within which they flourish, their complex relations with other states in the international system, as well as with a plethora of agents of globalization such as NGOs, INGOs, diasporas and so on.

The thesis argues that efforts to “build states” with the aim of imposing the ideal(ized) Weberian model of centralized political institutions complemented by the state’s monopoly over violence are doomed to “fail”. Beyond the usually suspected factors – such as the absence of sustained political will on the side of the (external) “constructors”, the geo-political context, or the financial, human and material resources invested – arguably this “failure” owes more to the employment of an analytical model projecting an idealized model of the state against the results of which the end-result must be judged. This, of course, is not to say that all such theories are accepted

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7 Sometimes this is quite significant if compared with the intra-regional average conditions of neighboring countries.
8 Perhaps the best illustration of this second approach is the recent article by Alexus Grynkewich (2008), aptly titled “Welfare as Warfare”.
uncritically. On the contrary, it is fair to acknowledge that the burgeoning literature on both “state-failure” and “peace†/‘state-building” offers a rich critical perspective within which one can identify at least four fertile lines of investigation. These are: (1) the critical perspective on “liberal peace” (Richmond, 2001, 2006a, 2006b, 2007, and with Franks, 2009; Barnett et al. 2007; Bures, 2007); (2) the critique of the depoliticization of “state-building” and the critique of the “technocratic” vision of state-building, championed particularly by the work of David Chandler (2004, 2005 2006a, 2006b, 2007a) and the authors inspired by his views (Bickerton, 2007); (3) the critique of the “development-security” nexus (Menkhaus, 2004a; Hameiri, 2007; Shah, 2009); and finally, (4) the debate on sequencing between institutionalization (state-building) and democratization (liberal peace) (Paris, 2004; Carothers, 2007).

Some of these (and other) scholars explicitly and (mostly) implicitly criticize the entire endeavor of trying to export a particular form of social order – the state – to areas which have little, negative or no experience of the “modern” state and perhaps no infrastructure to operate as states. However, with few exceptions, most such critiques focus on the mechanics – that is, on the matter of how the policies of state-building are implemented – to offer their explanations of the failure of the international effort of state-building.\footnote{Analyzes of why current policies of “state-building” are frequently failing are complex, mostly dealing with the shortcomings attributed to the implementation of “state-building” policies, starting with the “right” sequence (institutions versus democratization); the piecemeal approach – as opposed to “whole of government approaches to failed states” as the title of a 2006 OECD report announces (for an evaluation of those approaches, see Stewart and Brown, 2007); shortages of commitments (expressed in mandates, resources, time-horizons and so on) or the lack of coordination between the plethora of actors involved. A discussion of some of these issues can be found in the section dedicated to technocratic approaches in the context of modernization theory below.}

Despite the increasing number of such critical perspectives in the literature, as well as of the “lessons (not) learned”\footnote{In the section dedicated to modernization theory, I discuss the current disposition towards identifying the “root causes” of state-failure, as well as the accompanying call for an accumulation of “lessons learned” from previous practices of state-building in the same context as the technocratic approaches to modernization theory.} from assessments of the practice, a comprehensive theoretical model of the construction of contemporary polities is yet to be formulated.

As a result, it is important to bring together these different strands of critique into a cohesive framework that aims not only at establishing a dialogue between the different, non-integrated branches of critical analysis,
but also at providing an analytical scaffold to better understand the mechanisms and dynamics among what I hope to demonstrate are distinct but overlapping processes of “polity creation”.\textsuperscript{11} In taking as a starting point the \textit{rethinking} of the state as a dynamic binomial relation between the idea of state and the \textit{practices} of state(hood) (Schlichte and Migdal, 2005; Buzan, 1991), I therefore propose to move a step forward and respond to Wallerstein’s (2001) call to engage in \textit{unthinking} the state as the teleological end-point of state-building projects and replace it with an analysis of the open-ended result of \textit{polity-creation}.

In consequence, the second objective of my thesis is to introduce a different analytical framework according to which the contemporary efforts of constructing modern political communities includes not one, but up to three different and simultaneous processes, labeled here \textit{state-formation}, \textit{state-making} and \textit{state-building}, the combined result of which is better defined by the concept of a “hybrid polity”. Once this new conceptual model is introduced, the main contention is that it makes it possible to better examine the parameters of such hybrid polities; it will facilitate the analysis of the forms, functions and roles played by various actors – such as non-state violent groups, other states, international agencies or NGOs in the international system – in building alternative forms of polities. This approach would not only avoid the residual influences that modernization theory continues to exercise on current practice(s) of “state-building”, but, most importantly, the more flexible concept of polity allows for (and, in fact, necessitates) the analysis of other politico-economic structures and forms. It also leaves ground for a re-interpretation of the role of actors such as warlords, militias and other non-state armed groups as modern effects of the contemporary system rather than symptoms of a return to pre-modern political structures. Building on this alternative model of analysis, the thesis suggests that an alternative framework to that of state-failure/building must be devised in order to improve our

\textsuperscript{11} I use “polity” in order to avoid implying that the result of these processes will or should be a political community characterized as a state by its centralized bureaucratic administrative apparatus, the monopoly over violence or the performance of certain functions associated with the idea of the state in general. Similarly, I use the concept of polity creation to envisage different processes from those that I will define below as the “formation”, “making” and “building” of states. For this purpose, with the exception of quotes in which I retain the original formulation wherever I would use “state-making”, I refer to the way the concept is used in the literature, reserving the concept without inverted commas for my own conceptualization.
understanding of the contemporary dynamics between violence and governance in what can be called the Westphalian Periphery. Such an alternative framework could then help in formulating policies more adequately molded by these dynamics.

In order to formulate this alternative framework, the research first needs to engage critically the literature on state-failure as well as current practices of “state-building”. While it situates itself within the larger debate on the role played by violence in the formation of the modern polity (state), it rejects the teleological assumption that current forms of organized violence in developing states must follow the same patterns through which “war made state” (Ayoob, 2007). There already exists a growing literature in IR which shows convincingly how the social practices associated with statehood, such as the state’s monopoly over violence (Elias, 1994; Thompson, 1995) or the nature of sovereignty (Krasner, 1999) have substantially changed over time. Following Leander’s call of “taking Tilly seriously in [the] contemporary world” (Leander, 2004), my argument consists of two distinct parts. First, it assumes that disputes over control of organized violence continue to play a significant role in shaping the institutional arrangements of contemporary polities at the Westphalian Periphery. However second, it concludes that these disputes do not inevitably result in the creation of a modern polity built along Weberian lines.

Starting from the position that the social practices of statehood are in a continuous process of transformation, this study brings together the forms taken by the armed contestation of a state’s monopoly over violence and the provision of social services, particularly in the area of health and education. There are obvious difficulties in conducting research about areas characterized by on-going military confrontations, prominent among them being the limitations of physical access to the field and the difficulties of data collection in a highly politicized environment, not to mention the rapidly changing political context. However, the scarcity of primary data due to limited access to classified NGO reports and the non-reliability of existent official statistical data can be compensated for through a two-dimensional strategy. On the one hand, the protracted nature of those conflicts led to the accumulation of rich secondary literature, disparate data that supplements the information derived
from direct participants’ personal recollections as well as access to a number of archives. On the other hand, rather than aiming for an in-depth examination of a chosen case-study, the thesis explores the diversity in the modes of delivery of social services in the context of contemporary non-state armed groups engaged in military confrontation with the central state’s authorities. In view of the key purpose of this scholarly investigation, namely the building of an alternative conceptual framework of polity-creation, variety is essential for a study arguing that prolonged internal wars are contributing to the emergence of what has been described as “social orders of violence” circumventing state structures (Bakony and Stuvoy, 2005; Jennings, 2007).

It must be emphasized however, that the present thesis represents a theoretically informed study of ideas and not a major empirical analysis, although empirical elements are inevitably part of the enterprise, particularly in the chapter devoted to the rejection of a state-centric perspective on the issue of warlordism (chapters four and five) as well as the chapter devoted to the issue of hybridity (chapter nine). My thesis therefore offers primarily a critical inquiry of current models of analysis and suggests a set of ideas that can form the starting point of a radically different framework of scholarly investigation, a framework that will avoid the “blind spots” of existing theoretical structures. Starting from the limitations of the literature on state-failure and “state-building”, the central purpose of my thesis is thus to reconceptualize the dominant theoretical approach by proposing a new model of “polity creation”.

To achieve this purpose, my thesis allocates a substantial part to an investigation of the twin concepts of “state” and “building” as they are reflected in the practices of “state-building”, with a view to unpacking their premises and critiquing their theoretical underpinnings. To do this, it starts by critically reviewing the state-failure and “state-building” literature, emphasizing equally its progress and limitations. I begin this critical analysis by identifying a genealogy of current practices of “state-building”. In such a

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12 All the armed groups that conform to the criteria of this thesis, defined in chapter four, date back to the 1970s: the Afghan resistance started in 1978; Hizballah was officially founded as a result of the 1982 Israeli invasion, but Lebanese militia system took shape during the Lebanese Civil War from 1975; FARC was established in the mid-1960s as the military wing of the Communist Party (Colombia) while LTTE has been waging a military campaign against the Sri Lankan state since the late 1970s. Similarly the various warlords and militia groups were active in Somalia even before the fall of the Barre regime in 1991.
genealogy, the immediate lineage links the post-9/11 practices of "state-building" with a variety of post-Cold War practices, and in particular those of peace-building, good governance and democratization policies. Despite the fact that the concept of "state-building", and particularly that of external state-building, was coined as, and essentially describes, a post-9/11 phenomenon, the ideological architecture of external interventions designed to mould the external behavior (minimally) and the domestic composition (maximally) of the targeted states is far from new. Thus, in the context of the mature Westphalian system – based on the principle of sovereignty and non-intervention – the longer lineage of this genealogy has to look at current "state-building" processes in relation to, or as direct heirs of, the mode of thinking specific to the theory of modernization in the early stages of the Cold War – particularly in Rostow's (1960) formulation. The identification of this derivation is important as it also allows us to discern nation-building as an essential element of modernization – when nations were indeed built within and after the rise of the state in a postcolonial context. But this genealogy can be traced further back to the late 1920s transitional protectorate era (Chandler, 2007b) or, deeper in the past, the parameters of liberal political philosophy and the enlightenment in general (Jahn, 2007a and 2007b).13

From this perspective, the combination of the constant attraction exercised by the possibility of engaging in (external) social engineering of societies situated at the margins of the Westphalian system and the modest results of such repeated engagements, reflect what may be called the Dorian Gray paradox of "state-building".14 As Ganev succinctly describes it,

Dorian Gray is a reckless and arrogant person who keeps a picture of himself in the attic of his house. As the years pass by, he slides ever deeper into the abyss of immorality and crime. Miraculously, however, his stunning looks seem impervious to change: not a single wrinkle or a shade of emotional turmoil mars a youthful face that preserves its irresistible appeal. At the same time, however, the face on the picture in the attic grows ever uglier and repulsive, changing for the worse after every act of moral transgression perpetrated by Dorian. This strange synergy makes it impossible to consign the existence of Dorian and his

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13 As Chandler and Jahn show, the periods of the Cold War and post Cold War era continued to be imbued with the belief in progress and the possibility of engineering this progress under the right circumstances, by the right actors, with an appropriate template.
14 In bringing up this paradox I am inspired by Venelin Ganev's article on the nature of the redistributive conflicts in former socialist countries, from which the summary of Wilde's novel is also taken. Ganev, it must be emphasized, uses the metaphor of Dorian Gray for a different purpose than my current application of it to processes of state-building.
picture to separate spheres of being. It is the picture that bears testimony to the true nature of Dorian’s actions; it is Dorian’s behaviour that provides the key for comprehending the seemingly unfathomable forces that propel the degrading metamorphosis of the picture. (Ganev, 2001: 22)

This metaphor perfectly describes the current industry of “state-building”. On the one hand, Dorian’s artificial youthfulness corresponds to the continued appeal of the project of constructing “modern” states during the last century. On the other hand, the fate of the portrait condemned to accumulate the scars of aging and the abuses of youth appear to be similar to the hidden results of the repeated attempts to build states, masked by their description as (domestic) failures, warlords and the like.

The Dorian Gray paradox of state-building requires a more historically-informed investigation of the attitudes towards the issue of dysfunctional political units. Thus, following this introduction, the first chapter will explore the longer genealogy of the “state-failure” and “state-building” literature, and in particular, the international community’s policies towards weaker polities during the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Next chapters continue this narrative from the birth of the state-failure framework in the post-Cold War era, emphasizing its expansion in academic, policy-making and development arenas, particularly as a result of its securitization in reaction to the 9/11 terrorist attacks. The purpose is to show how the characteristics of this framework are deriving in an equal measure from its instrumental nature and its birth at the confluence of the 1990s literature on human rights, democratization and governance.

Following the critique of the state-failure literature, the next two chapters seek to build an argument against the prescriptive notion of the modern state as an analytical tool as it is used in investigating the phenomenon of the so-called “failed-state”. Instead, using illustrations from various non-state armed groups at the Westphalian Periphery, the fourth and fifth chapters show that, against the “ungoverned spaces” assumptions, at least some of those spaces exhibit some forms of “governance without government” (Rosenau and Czempiel, 1992). These ought to be scrutinized as instances of genuine “social orders” rather than anomalies or deviations from “proper”

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15 I use modern (with the sense of the “most advanced”) in quotation marks to differentiate it from the image of the modern state in modernization theory, as the content of what constitutes modern changes in different eras.
models of state governance. These chapters therefore explore the historical portrayal of one particular instance of non-state armed actor (the warlord) in the long shadow cast by the image of a Weberian state, seeking to respond to the following question: How does the idea of the state articulated in the previous chapter shape external conventional perceptions of non-state actors such as warlords and other kinds of militias?

To answer this question, the fourth chapter deals with various waves of the literature on warlordism as examined in studies of the collapse of the Chinese imperial order, the 1980s studies of postcolonial independence in Africa, and the 1990s economy of war literature, all of which include depictions of the warlord which ignore the provision of social services in the warlord domain. Without claiming that the projected negative image is entirely false, the fifth chapter showcases some minimal provision of social services in states where there is no (state) monopoly over the means of violence. As a consequence, it is argued that far from representing “ungoverned spaces”, realms such as those of “warlords”, “militias” and other non-state armed groups can constitute alternative forms of governance, that is, polities which, rather than being archaic, are in fact modern if not post-modern par excellence.

Moving from the historical depiction of warlords to present day conflicts, this chapter seeks to identify and discuss the main features of armed contestation of centralized monopoly over violence in contemporary cases of fragmented societies. It investigates the diversity in the forms this contestation takes by focusing primarily on the militia- (Lebanon) and warlord- (Afghanistan) systems, and secondarily on instances from Sri Lanka, Colombia or Somalia. While the first modern states were created through innovations in domestic extractive and administrative techniques imposed under pressure from external competition, contemporary commanders reverse the relationship as they benefit from external extraction of military, financial and legitimacy resources, while confronted with predominantly internal security threats.

Under such circumstances, it is important to identify the origins of this inclination to portray current warlords and other challengers to the state’s power at the periphery of the Westphalian system as the result of unfinished or utterly failed attempts at modernization – as both lineages of state-failure do.
In chapter six, one source of this highly biased treatment of non-state political units by practitioners of “state-building” as well as analysts of state-failure is identified as deriving from the hegemony of a particular image of the state in the (predominantly realist) paradigm of International Relations theory. This investigation shows how, disproportionately with the centrality of the concept of “state”, the discipline of IR has for a long time worked within a very narrow definition of the state. What is even more important, despite developments in the last two decades in the direction of “opening the [state] box” in International Relations theory itself, the literature on state-failure and “state-building” appears to be by and large immune to these efforts, continuing to operate with a reductionist image of the state.

In contrast, this chapter serves as a platform from which to construct a plea to conceptually move from the prescriptive notion of the state towards the more flexible and open-ended notion of polity, of which the state, including its modern incarnation, is just one of the constitutive elements. Arguably, as part of an “institutionalist” perspective, and taking into consideration the construction and reconstruction of different types of polities, this move would allow more socio-political formations to become legitimate objects of investigation. As such, it will pave the way to a better-suited analytical framework from which to explore the contemporary diversity in the nature, forms and functions of political units. Accordingly, the sixth chapter concludes the first part by pointing out the need of re-articulating the cases of “state failure” at the Wesphalian Periphery as cases of (re)creation of new polities with an eye both to the past (precedent practices) and to the future (creation of new polities).

Following the critique of state-failure and state-building literatures and exploring their limitations as analytical and prescriptive frameworks for action my thesis engages in an effort to offer an alternative conceptual model – in effect a prolegomena to a theory of polity creation. The analytical benefits of articulating a genealogy of international interventions as pursued in the previous chapters is, I hope, clear (particularly insofar as it contributes to better understanding contemporary “state-building” practices, and their relations with connected practices of nation- and peace-building). Nonetheless, by itself, this genealogy does not explain the fate of the current regions at the
Westphalian Periphery, incorrectly (or insufficiently) characterized as “failed states”. What these genealogies of state-building have in common is their predominant focus on the factors of external intervention in the shaping of the territorial entities we know as “states”. Yet while the external imposition is without a doubt a very important mechanism for institutional diffusion, it is certainly not the only one. The strict focus on external interventions prevents a deeper understanding of other mechanisms of polity creation, such as imitation, improvisation and deliberate invention combined with the importation of external models (Fukase-Indergaard & Indergaard, 2008). In this sense, my thesis argues that one of the sources of their description as “failed” is the absence of a cohesive theory of modern polity (re)creation. The aim of this second part is therefore to offer a three-staged analytical framework that will contribute to the construction of such a theory.

A good starting point for this enterprise is the bellicist model of state-formation, in particular the “war made state” logic made famous by Charles Tilly’s elegant formulation. In this regard, there is already a rather rich literature concerned primarily with investigating the continuing relevance of the connection between the intensity of violence (more precisely war) and the creation of the state. In particular, this line of research is interested in the applicability of its logic to state-formation beyond the European core (Ertman, 1997; Spruyt, 1994, 2000, 2002), as well as to extra-European spaces in general (Leander, 2004a; Botea and Taylor, 2008), and in particular to regions such as Africa (Herbst, 2000), Latin America (Centeno, 1997, 2002; Lopez-Alvez, 2000a and 2000b; Thies, 2005, 2006), Asia (Stubs, 2005; Waldner, 1999; Hui, 2004; Boyd and Ngo, 2006), and the Middle East (Gongorra 1997; Heydeman, 2000 and Schwartz, 2004). The general consensus these various scholars reach is that “the ‘war makes state’ argument no longer holds as … [today, this violence] takes place in a globalized context which alters the effects of the central processes which Tilly (and others) argued placed war-making and state-making in a positive relationship … [as] wars at present do not make states, but rather unravel them” (Leander, 2004a: 69).

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16 There is a vibrant developing literature referring to the Pacific case, but this literature is driven more by a critical investigation of contemporary state-building practices rather than the application of the Tillyan model (see, among others, Hawksley, 2006; Fry and Kabutaulaka, 2008; Hameiri 2009b).
While a crucially important finding, I argue that this attempt at "taking Tilly seriously" is somewhat limited in that it only allows an investigation of a specific form of territorial political organization, that of the state, sidelines the object of my own inquiry here – the logic of the Tillyan process through which polities (in this case states) "were produced as unintended consequences (rather than by grand design) by the competition among 'wielders of coercion' for control over capital and over territory" (Leander, 2004a: 70).\textsuperscript{17} As such, my aim is to provide a conceptually and historically grounded study of the creation of new polities with a view to formulating a theoretical construction that is better able to inform a practice-oriented analysis. If it is to overcome current state-centrism, such a theoretical framework needs to relinquish its predominant emphasis on a particular form of state (the modern state), espousing, instead, a more fluid concept, such as that of polity, to allow for what I consider to be a true recuperation of the Tillyan logic – according to which the creation of the new form of political organization was the result of unintended consequences of waging wars. Only when liberated from the cage of the teleological project of the state will this Tillyan theoretical heritage allow us to investigate \textit{sine ira et studio} the types of polities to the birth of which current forms of violence may be seen to contribute.

Building on the foundation described above, the first stage of my framework introduces in chapter seven an analytical demarcation between three different waves of polity-creation, which I label (1) state-formation, (2) state-making and (3) state-building.\textsuperscript{18} Beyond semantics, I argue that they represent different processes, characterized by specific factors and actors and as such they have different consequences in the substance as well as the form

\textsuperscript{17} To a student of strategic studies this reversal of the effects war has on the formation of modern states may very well echo Edward Luttwak's paradoxical logic of strategy according to which the persistent following of the same (initially victorious) strategy inevitably leads to defeat precisely because strategy involves the adversary's adaptation to previous successes (Luttwak, 2002).

\textsuperscript{18} I am not the first to operate the metaphor of wave in International Relations, with Alvin Toeffler (1980) and Samuel Huntington (1991) possibly the most well-known examples. While influenced by both authors' use of the metaphor, I find Huntington's use of it in describing the different periods of democratization as most useful for the purpose of my argument here as his use allows the analysis to also take into consideration the fact that, as the waves in the sea for instance, they are accompanied by a withdrawal (what Huntington calls "resistance") before being taken over by the next wave. In a similar way, it will be argued that each wave of polity construction has particular consequences which the analysis of the next wave inevitably will have to take into consideration.
of the resulting polity. In pursuing this distinction, this thesis continues on the path opened by other scholars, in particular the observations of Rolf Schwartz (2004). Schwartz follows Tilly, for whom the process of “state-making” is defined as the activity of “attacking and checking competitors and challengers within the territory claimed by the state” (Tilly, 1990: 96) with the result of “eliminating or neutralizing their rivals inside those [respective] territories” (Tilly, 1985: 181). Both “state-making” - which for Schwartz is synonymous, if not identical, with “state-formation” - and “state-building” refer in effect to “the state’s ability to accumulate power”. However, Schwartz distinguishes between the two by the type of power wielded and the ways that power is accumulated. Thus, “state-formation” is defined as “those processes that lead to the centralisation of political power over a well-defined continuous territory and with a monopoly of the means of coercion” (2004: 3). This is to be distinguished from “state-building” defined as the accumulation of a particular type of power (and of accumulating that power in a particular way), which resonates with what Michael Mann calls infrastructural power: “state-building is thus the process by which the state not only grows in economic productivity and government coercion, but also in political and institutional power” (Schwartz, 2004: 2).19

For a better understanding of both past and current exercises in the creation of new polities, the conceptual distinction between state-formation, state-making and state-building should be strengthened by reference to two crucial aspects. First, the element of intentionality in the design of the polity to be created – expressed through the a priori existence of a model or template to act upon in the process of construction; and second, the nature of local (internal) agency in relation to that of international (external) agency – by looking at the preponderance of either internal or external agents of construction in what I acknowledge to be a dynamic interplay. In this sense,

19 Analyzing the power of the state in relation to its society, Mann distinguishes between “despotic power” (“power over”) defined as “the ability of state elites to take decisions without routine negotiation with groups in civil society”, from “infrastructural power” (or “power through”) defined as “the state’s capacity to actually implement decisions throughout its territories, no matter who takes the decisions ... [by] penetrating universally throughout civil society, through which political elites can extract resources from, and provide services to, all subjects” (Mann, 2002: 2). Furthermore, important for the discussion on the variability in the types of state, from this perspective the ideal modern state “would combine high infrastructural with low despotic power – having the capacity to effectively mobilize resources and commitments across its territories, while remaining democratic. It would be a fully democratic and bureaucratic nation-state” (Mann, 2002: 3).
the intentionality axis separates the first wave of polity-creation, that is state-
formation lacking a preconceived grand design, from the following waves, that
is state-making and state-building, both having different models establishing
(different) parameters of the desired polity.20 On the axis referring to the
nature of internal or external agency any theoretical model must acknowledge
the dynamic interplay between exogenous and endogenous factors.21 This
distinction makes the process(es) of state-formation and -making
predominantly internally-led, even in the cases in which the stimulating
factors or, as we will see below, the template itself, may very well be external.
By way of contrast, the process(es) of state-building are conceptualized as
being predominantly externally-led.

The second stage of my alternative framework acknowledges – against
contemporary presumptions of “state-building”, for example, as starting “from
scratch” – the cumulative effects of successive attempts of polity construction,
which can be seen as a “vertical overlapping”: there are repeated attempts of
all processes involved, each of the new attempts (“re-forming”, “re-making”
and “re-building”) having to face the social effects of the previous, unfinished,
altered or sometimes even failed projects within or between the waves.22 To be
sure, in one sense the construction of such an epistemic model is linked to a
chronological sequence reflected in the manner the subject is treated in chapter
seven. In this sense, the first wave of polity construction, that is, state-
formation, indeed takes its inspiration from Tilly’s description of the
formation of first “modern” European states. The second wave – that is, that of
state-making and re-making – refers to the expansion of the modern system of
states outside the European initial core to include the rest of Europe

20 The importance of a template is emphasized not only by Tilly, but also by most of the
scholars influenced by his work. Similarly, the importance of the external/internal nature of
the respective constructions is reflected in the identification of the “external” element as the
main factor marking the distinction between the past in which war led to the formation of states
and the present in which war leads to the unraveling of the state.

21 At no point is there any claim to say that the construction of modern polities, be it as a result
of state-formation, making or building, is the result of exclusive actions of either internal or
external agents, as those two categories, to the extent that this differentiation can move
beyond the strictly analytically level, are in constant interaction and in the process, in constant
transformation. What is of interest here is what category (endogenous or exogenous factors)
has preponderance in the process itself.

22 I distinguish re-formation, by which I mean a repetition in different contexts and most
probably with different protagonists or processes characterizing the state-formation category,
from reformation, which I use interchangeably with re-making.
(particularly Central and Eastern Europe), Latin America and, during the postcolonial era, large parts of Asia and Africa.

While there is a certain chronological sequencing between these categories, it is important to take the third step in order to correct the potentially linear assumption about their orderly succession. This third step is indeed constructed in strict opposition with the heavily deterministic evolutionary assumptions of modernization theories. On the third level of this framework, one can clearly discern what I call a “sequential overlapping” of the three waves – that is, state-formation, state-(re)making and state-building. Far from operating as discreet, isolated processes, they usually overlap sequentially, in a manner resembling a Matrioshka doll mechanism in the sense of “hiding” other waves as only the most recent seems to be visible (or at least acknowledged).

Thus reconceptualized, I argue that this model can better preserve the Tillyan logic of “unintended consequences” and in effect analyze the end result of contemporary polity-construction in terms of a “hybrid polity” (Boege et al. 2009a). If this is the case, the current exclusive focus on external state-building obscures the fact that in many instances in which it takes place at the periphery of the Westphalian system, the characteristics of the resulting polity are shaped by state-building’s intersection with local processes of polity creation characteristic of the second, and sometimes even first wave of polity creation. Using some illustrations, the last chapter brings substance to the argument that, rather than focusing solely on “state-building” efforts, current analysis and practice should also investigate concurrent processes of state-making and even state-formation, each carried out by different actors and yielding different dynamics. By looking at the interaction of these processes (and the forces carrying them), the next two chapters underline the role of internal as well as external actors in contemporary struggles for the control of domestic organized violence. Sometimes these projects do converge, at least partially. In some cases, for instance, the very assumption that the non-state military groups’ main goal is to capture the state must be re-examined: whilst fiercely defending their autonomy in the military field, they can concede a space for co-existence, if not cooperation, in the political, economic and social spheres.
What remains open to investigation is how IR, a field still dominated by a particular image of statehood, can best capture this reformulation of local governance at the Westphalian Periphery. One suggestion that this thesis makes is that such a re-formulation could emerge by looking back and reconsidering the neo-medievalist scenario with its focus on multiple sources of loyalties and overlapping authorities. Thus, in a way similar to the neo-medieval depiction of international order, instead of a zero-sum game between the state and the warlord or militia actors, there is co-existence between the two forms, even though this coexistence is often very far from a peaceful ideal. An important argument of the thesis is that the focus on the monopolization of violence as a sine qua non condition of social and political order at the periphery of the international system may be insufficient and inadequate in present day international circumstances. For if the main question ruling the relations between developed and developing states is how best to achieve stable social order, in the latter it is not enough to note the absence of a strong state modeled on the European experience. Instead, the effort should shift onto studying, for example, various practices of social service delivery by state and non-state actors alike, acknowledging the variety in forms of polities as embedded in the neo-medieval scenario of the world order. The claim of this thesis is not that the state is about to disappear in the Westphalian Periphery under the attack of various forms of non-state armed groups. However, what it does argue is that the functions of the modern state can be seen as inevitably altering and adapting as a result of various internal and external pressures, among which the most important is the contestation of the state’s monopoly over violence. Within this framework, future research can explore the role of domestic and international, state and non-state actors alike, in the provision of social services, including the role of various religious movements, international corporate business, NGOs or IGOS.

While the first section of the thesis argues that what fails in the Westphalian Periphery is not so much the “state” as a particular model of governance, the second section posits, instead, that so-called “failed-states” can better be seen as local adaptations of governance to armed contestation of efforts to monopolize the instruments of violence. The central proposition here is that, in order to investigate the dynamic of social relations in polities where
the state has gradually lost its claim for the monopoly over the means of violence as well as in those in which this was never achieved, scholars need to move beyond a conceptual framework defined by related concepts such as “state-failure”, “state-collapse”, and ultimately “state-building”. The conceptual hegemony of a particular idea of what a modern state is and what its functions should be has become a veil that often obscures the characteristics of a social order developing in the context of protracted armed confrontations between the formal centre (state) and the informal periphery. The burgeoning literature on “state-failure” is founded on a “negative” logic triggered by the analyses of what is missing in polities at the Westphalian Periphery. In contrast, my thesis is informed by a “positive” logic centered on identifying what is already in place in those political units. It also suggests that a reconsideration of the neo-medievalist scenario has the theoretical potential of opening up to exploration some of the characteristics of these social orders by moving beyond the artificial dichotomy between the state and its contestants, and focusing instead on the formal and functional co-existence of the two.
Chapter 1. "State-Building" from the nineteenth century to the Cold War

The term "state-building" has been used in various contexts, often to describe the process by which a state is created or strengthened. This chapter will focus on the role of international organizations in this process.

The role of international organizations in state-building is complex and multifaceted. They can provide resources, expertise, and a platform for cooperation, but they can also face challenges in terms of power dynamics and legitimacy.

Two key examples of international organizations that have played a significant role in state-building are the United Nations (UN) and the European Union (EU). The UN has been involved in various peacekeeping operations, whereas the EU has sought to integrate and stabilize new member states.

By the 1990s, the UN had experienced a dramatic increase in its role, as evidenced by the number of peacekeeping missions it undertook. The European Union, on the other hand, had begun to expand its role in the European Union.

In conclusion, international organizations such as the UN and the EU have played a crucial role in state-building, helping to stabilize and integrate new states.
Chapter 1. "State-failure" from the nineteenth century to the Cold War

This chapter is an incursion into the rather complex literature on state-failure with a view to identifying a series of assumptions it makes on the state and the role of these assumptions play in informing contemporary discourses of the international community. There is little doubt that, as a reflection of the growing interest in the consequences of so-called "state-failure", "state-building" – often presented in the context of sustainable peace-building or nation-building operations – has become a major preoccupation in the international relations arena. This is the case regardless of whether one has in mind policy-makers, researchers and analysts, opinion leaders, the military or NGO workers. Two different facets of this expansion can be distinguished. On the one hand, a "horizontal" expansion is evident in the increase of the number of missions, the actors involved and the geographical area affected. The "vertical" facet, on the other hand, reflects an expansion in depth as these missions become more complex, set more ambitious aims and feature a higher degree of institutional organization. In reference to the horizontal expansion, Dobbins touches the core of this development when he characterizes the field as a "growth industry," noting how:

for the UN, this meant an eight-fold increase in the frequency with which it launched new peacekeeping operations after 1989. The United States, for its part, has led another half-dozen multinational interventions since it helped liberate Kuwait in 1991 ... Beginning in the late 1990s a third source of direction began to emerge, as European governments began to organize and lead such missions, individually or collectively (2008a: 83).  

Indeed, following the end of the Cold War, there was a material expansion of peace- and "state-building" activities scattered "across the international

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1 Referring to the UN only, Doyle and Sambanis confirm the same trend, noting how, between 1987-1994, the UN Security Council "had quadrupled the number of resolutions it issued, tripled the peacekeeping operations it authorized and multiplied by seven the number of economic sanctions it imposed per year. Military forces deployed in peacekeeping operations increased from fewer than 10,000 to more than 70,000. The annual peacekeeping budget skyrocketed correspondingly from $230 million to $3.6 billion in the same period, thus reaching to about three times the UN's regular operating budget of $1.2 billion" (Doyle and Sambanis, 2006: 6).
landscape [and involving] most major international and regional organizations, states and non-governmental organizations alike" (Barnett et al. 2007: 51).

Complementing this horizontal expansion, Lambach points to the "substantial institutional innovation [that] has occurred recently with a view to strengthening organizational capacities towards post-conflict states" (2007b: 2). Thus, at state level, new agencies/departments or ministries are built and old ones are reformed specifically to better address the issue of state-failure and "state-building". In the US for instance, the situation in Somalia led first to the creation of the "State Failure Task Force" in 1994 under the aegis of the CIA, later to become the Political Instability Task Force (PITF). Furthermore, 2004 marked the birth of the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization, with the ambitious aim to "lead, coordinate and institutionalize U.S. Government civilian capacity to prevent or prepare for post-conflict situations, and to help stabilize and reconstruct societies in transition from conflict or civil strife, so they can reach a sustainable path toward peace, democracy and a market economy" (S/CRS). In the UK, the old organization of Overseas Development Administration was reformed in 1997 to become the Department for International Development (DFID).\(^2\) In February 2005 the UK Government’s Strategy Unit report "Investing in Prevention" viewed "state-building" as a key part of its agenda. At an international level, under the authority of the Canadian government and with UN sponsorship, the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS) was formed in 2001, and its report brought to the fore the concept of "Responsibility to Protect". Later, with the purpose of "coordinating the efforts of donor countries, international financial institutions, and troop contributing countries", in 2005 the UN established the Peacebuilding Commission (Baker, 2007: 94). In March same year, the OECD countries decided to set the ‘Principles for Good International Engagement in Fragile States’, again, having "state-building" as the central objective (Chandler, 2009: 16).

\(^2\) The new Department was lead initially by Claire Short, through the speeches of which in the late 1990s the term of Security Sector Reform – so vital for the state-building programs, first came to prominence (Chappuis and Hanggi, 2009: 41). The DFID particularly through its Research Unit remains an important voice in establishing the discourse of state-failure and state-building, with interesting articulations such as the 2008 Working Paper (Whaites, 2008).
Beyond this institutional aspect, another significant indicator of the vertical expansion is that, by the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century, the image of dysfunctional states had deeply altered the manner in which decision-makers perceived themselves, the world and their role in it. First, this change of perception affected Western foreign policy bureaucrats across the departmental divide, from diplomacy to the military via developmental agencies, to the same extent that it affected the world of NGOs. In this sense, Charles T. Call takes the example of the developmental specialists among whom “old ideas that development consisted mainly of transferring resources (aid) or even reshaping policies (structural adjustment policies) were being supplanted by the idea that development consists of building institutions that can generate and manage economic policies and processes” (2006: 5). Concurrently, the same mindset leads to a call for more – if better – international interventions as a response to the problems generated by the presence of dysfunctional states. This argument seems to extend beyond ideological disagreements. Referring only to the United States, Logan and Preble illustrate “the fetish for fixing failed states [to be] found in [the] Democrat and Republican [parties] alike”, with the bipartisan example of Brent Scowcroft and Sandy Berger’s 2005 essay in which the former senior officials describe the “action to stabilize and rebuild states emerging from conflict not [only as] ‘foreign policy [but also] as social work,’ a favorite quip of the 1990s. It is equally a national security priority” (Logan and Preble, 2008: 62).³

Finally, as testimony to the potency and pervasiveness of this way of thinking, one must note the widespread use of elements of the same discourse not only among the various actors doing the intervention, but also among potential subjects of the intervention. Jourde, for instance, working within the parameters of the Copenhagen School of “securitization”, offers a fascinating account of how the language of “stability”/“instability” became the common denominator in both the policy discourses of Western powers and those of the “global South” leadership. He specifically monitors the mechanisms through which authoritarian elites of Guinea and Mauritania borrow and internalize

³ The association of Scowcroft and Berger is significant to the extent that the first served as National Security Advisor under the Republican Administrations of Gerald Ford and George Bush Sr., while Samuel Richard Berger served in a similar position in the second Administration of Bill Clinton.
elements of the “war on terror” discourse to support their own interests, with the resulting “construction of a very similar master frame for their Western interlocutors, that of stability” (Jourde, 2007: 487). In a similar manner, the idiom of state-failure and “state-building” has long ceased to be the exclusive prerogative of the so-called international community. Rather, fluency in these discourses and their successful exploitation became indispensable to the leaders or would-be leaders of the designated weak state.

One of the consequences of this twin expansion is that even the most superficial overview of the ever-expanding literature on state-failure and “state-building” poses numerous conceptual and organizational problems. To begin with – and rather like the other “hot” issue of current debates, terrorism – despite their almost ubiquitous nature, the range of literature remains fraught with deep conceptual ambiguities. For instance, there is very little consensus at a fundamental level, with “state-building” and state-failure being conceptualized differently by different institutions and scholars according to their individual or collective interests. In this sense, reflecting the way definitions translate into practices in the context of peace-building, Barnett and his team noticed how different organizations tend to focus on different activities, how different countries prefer different domains of intervention, and how differences persist even within each country at the interagency level.

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4 As Jourde describes it, local leaders engage into the construction of their own “frame of stability” by way of a two-steps mechanism: firstly by operating a binary distinction between their own regime and their domestic and, I may add, external opposition; secondly by “framing [the latter] as terrorists and warlords [insurgents one may add], therefore as ‘producers of instability’, while defining their regime as the last bastion against this instability” and even as the only one capable of acting as a “provider of regional stability” (Jourde, 2007: 489).

5 For some of the three literatures, there are recently published pieces reviewing the differences among them. Good starting-points in the definitional maze are the piece by Barnett et al. 2007 for the issue of peace-building and the second chapter of the 2009 book by Carment et al. for state-failure; both pieces compile impressive databases of the different institutional definitions of peace-building and state-failure respectively. In the literature on “state-building” I am not aware of the existence of any similar enterprise at the definitional level. A good alternative could be Scott’s literature review (2008).

6 In terms of international organizations, Barnett et al. conclude that there are significant differences of emphasis. Thus, “UN Secretariat’s units tend to define their activities in a comprehensive manner. Almost all areas of activity are included. Although the World Bank and IMF focus on economic development, the former emphasizes reconstruction and infrastructure while the latter describes its activities as recovery and technical assistance. The European Union emphasizes the political and diplomatic aspects of peacebuilding activities with a growing focus on conflict assessment and early warning activities, which can be understood as part of the security and military terrain” (Barnett et al. 2007: 47). Similarly, different countries are prone to prioritize different sectors of intervention, either in a coordinated manner (such as the strategy in Afghanistan) or simply by default. Accordingly, “the UK has focused on the security and military sector. The United States began with a
The definitional ambiguity is arguably both caused and exacerbated by the location of "state-building" literature at the intersection of several discourses from which it emerged and which continue to inform its existence. In this sense, as we have seen, discussions on "state-building" often derive from, engage, overlap with, and ultimately metamorphose into discussions on state-failure, nation-building or peace-building. In turn, they today share some common assumptions and operate in tune with discourses such as those on democratization and democratic peace, human rights and humanitarian intervention, or development and good governance.

This is not to say that any of these literatures are homogeneous. On the contrary, diversity is repeatedly emphasized. In the case of state-failure, for instance, it became compulsory in every review to at least touch on the main varying analytical interpretations and logics of causality dominating the literatures. Thus, Milliken and Krause were among the first to distinguish between "the institutional and functional understandings of state failure" by analyzing the possibility that "state institutions can persist even while the state fails to fulfill what we understand as its key attributes" (Milliken and Krause, 2002: 757). This distinction is taken on board by Hameiri, who in recent articles develops his own interpretation of the divide between what he calls "neoliberal" (that is influenced by the discourse of the liberal peace) and neo-Weberian institutionalists, which he postulates "often tend to identify dissimilar causalities for state failure, define state failure in different ways, as well as prescribe different solutions to the problems they associate with state failure" (Hameiri, 2007: 125). Leman-Hebert offers a similar distinction, though with a slightly different emphasis. Starting from a "sociological understanding of the state", he distinguishes within the "state-building" literature between "an institutional approach ... closely related to the Weberian conception of the state, focus[ing] on the importance of institutional reconstruction" and "a 'legitimacy approach' influenced by Durkheimian sociology, [which] recognizes the need to consolidate central state institutions, strong interest in democratization and economic recovery, but its experiences in Afghanistan and Iraq have caused it to refocus attention on stabilization. Japan tends to focus on broad postconflict reconstruction, while France and Germany have focused their attention on immediate postconflict stabilization and long-term democracy promotion and economic reconstruction" (Barnett et al. 2007, 48).
but puts more emphasis on the importance of socio-political cohesion in the process” (Lemay-Hebert, 2009: 21).

Considering the range of analytical frameworks, the diversity of conceptual definitions, and the multitude of actors involved, it may seem surprizing to find a recent reviewer “explor[ing] the remarkable consistency among approaches to state building applied by different states and coalitions in different contexts” (Wesley, 2008: 369). How could one talk about consistency where there is a plethora of proposed designs for interventions, ranging from a “light-footprint” approach, through a more intrusive “mainstream” type of state-building (a “whole-of-the-government” approach), and culminating with the radical solution of an International Administration of a neo-trusteeship form? One possible explanation is that, despite the variation at an analytical level, the practice of international state-building interventions generally follows the same pattern: external interventions of a predominantly military nature in post-conflict situations with the purpose of eliminating what is perceived to be local “anarchy” through the construction of a centralized state functioning along the lines of a liberal template. Alternatively, while accepting the differences resulting from different mechanics of implementation, one can emphasize the commonality of what constitutes the final objective, that is to say the ideal end-state to which the state-building missions are supposed to aim. The puzzle loses its apparent contradictory nature when, despite the absence of agreements on what constitutes a failed state, what peace-”state-building” is or how it can best be implemented, the relevant discourses converge to project a common image of the desirable state.

Consequently, it is important to identify precisely such common denominators at the level of how the state, as a concept and as a practical entity, is defined and evaluated in the discourses associated with “state-building”. My aim is not to discuss particular instances of “state-building” (or state-failure), but rather to isolate the way the assumptions underlying these

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7 Warning against the illusion of any clear-cut typology, Lambach offered this categorization in which the “Light Footprint” approach refers to the missions in which “international actors serve [only] as mediators between conflict parties and supply humanitarian and financial aid”; the “mainstream state-building approach” refers to the more intrusive measures such as “Security Sector Reform (SSR), Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) programs, the reconstruction and reform of state institutions and infrastructure, and providing technical assistance (e.g., registering voters); and finally, the International Administrations, as the missions in which “international actors under the UN umbrella construct, staff, and run administrative structures in the post-conflict country” (Lambach, 2007b: 4).
discourses came to be built and the notion of state underlying these discourses. As such, this chapter unpacks some of the shared assumptions, mainly to do with: a) what constitutes a “successful” state, with a constant emphasis on a centralized set of formal (read: bureaucratic) institutions, and the monopoly over violence in a given territory; and b) the functions it must perform both in relation to its domestic constituency (such as security, representation and welfare (Milliken and Krause, 2002; Schwartz, 2005) and in relation to the international system (stability). A Hobbesian appropriation of a deformed Weberian understanding of the modern state placed in a context favorable to what was labeled as “Wilsonianism in boots”, it is this image of the state linking the diagnosis of state-failure with the allegedly therapeutic practices of “state-building” that constitutes the object of my critical survey of the related discourses. It is the hegemony that this vision of the state exercises equally on the imagination of researchers and policy-makers that I challenge and against which I propose in chapter seven an alternative framework of polity construction.

While these themes will be developed more fully in what follows, some succinct clarifications are needed at this point. The “Hobbesian appropriation” refers to the absolute priority given to the security dimension of the state in line with Hobbes’ assumption that only the Leviathan’s possession of absolute power can bring domestic peace and external security in the absence of which human activity, development and progress cannot exist. Thus, in the absence of the state’s monopoly, “violence [becomes] the most visible manifestation of state-failure” (Wesley, 2008: 377), identified as the “root cause” of all the evils that come together - poverty, famine, disease, illiteracy, underdevelopment, corruption and so on. Conversely, testimony to this appropriation stays the priority given to a security dimension, and above all to Security Sector Reform (SSR) and Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) programs in the vast majority of discourse(s) and practice(s) of “state-building” (Dobbins et al. 2007, Ghani and Lockhart, 2008; Chappuis and Hanggi, 2009).

The reference to a “simplified Weberian understanding” appeals obviously to the widespread description of the state as the monopolizer of legitimate use of violence within the limits of a given territory on the one hand, and to the bureaucratic-administrative definition of the modern state as a
holder of a rational-legal type of authority. Again, these elements became part and parcel of the benchmark against which "failure" is measured and of the template(s) that state-builders aim to implement. While both discourses are saturated with direct or indirect, conscious or unconscious references to these elements of the Weberian sociology, they yield a simplified version of the latter. In effect, they ignore the "ideal-type" methodology which Weber uses and its conflation with "reality" (Trouillot, 2001); isolate the definition of the state from the complex Weberian sociology, and in particular from his sociology of authority; and, as a result, diminish the perspective of the state as a social relation (Bilgin and Morton, 2002: 71). In other words, while de-emphasizing the social nature of the state's institutions in favor of the issue of, for instance, stability (Pfister, 2007: 21), they thus marginalize the co-constitutive nature of the state and society, so central to Weber (Hobson, 1998; Seabrooke, 2002). These aspects will be dealt with more thoroughly in chapter three.

Finally, Pierre Hassner's catchy label of "Wilsonianism in boots" captures two essential attributes of the current enterprise of "state-building", one referring to the parameters of the state to be built, the other to the mechanisms through which that specific state can and should be exported. In this sense, "Wilsonianism" alludes to the politico-economic liberal ethos of the image of the state projected in the "state-building" enterprise (human rights, democracy, pacifying effects of trade, free market). On the other hand, "in boots" refers to the increasingly militant appetite of exporting this model by means not shy of military intervention (Hassner, 2002).

Given the prominent position "state-building" plays in contemporary international politics, the limited success that it enjoys despite the quantity and quality of resources spent in the process, and the refinement of critical theory in recent decades, the growing criticism of this enterprise is not surprising. However sophisticated, much of the substantial critique in the literature continues to operate within the parameters of what Cox described as a problem-solving approach, trying to improve the record of the operations rather than exposing and challenging the deep assumptions of the field (Cox, 1986). Discussions emphasizing the insufficient quantity or quality of the resources with respect to the ambition of the task at hand, the need for an improved coordination between the different actors involved, the weaknesses
of current methods and techniques of "state-building" (such as the sequencing debate), all belong to this category of criticism aimed at improving the circumstances in which "state-building" may become successful.

In contrast, a more radical category or critics led by with Stephen Krasner (2004) or Fearon and Laitin (2004) reject the possibility or desirability of "local ownership" in favor of a transient International Administration formula as the best method of implementation. These critics demonstrate skepticism about the feasibility of the liberal ethos dominating the implementation of state-building programs, but not its legitimacy. In this debate, I situate myself in a third camp of critical theorists, in line with the recent works of such scholars as Schwartz (2005), Brooks (2005), Chandler (2006a; 2009), or Englebert and Tull (2008), and contest both the feasibility and legitimacy of the whole enterprise. ⁸

Working on the assumption that the theoretical discourses informing and supporting the practices of "state-building" are far from being neutral and value-free, it is important to underline the manner in which they perform a unifying ideological task, with two related aspects. The first refers to the tendency of such discourses towards epistemic monopolization: "the purpose of the discursive conflict is to attain a victory of interpretation and ensure that a particular viewpoint triumphs" (Bhatia, 2005: 7). Indeed, by labeling a state as "failed", such approaches impose the premise of normalcy of the (liberal) state in a contemporary system of international relations in which such a state is expected to exist everywhere (Doornbos, 2006: 5-6). This allows the performance of the second function of the discourse - the marginalization of alternative interpretations and, ultimately, alternative policies. As Bhatia explains, "by naming, the subject becomes known in a manner which may permit certain forms of inquiry and engagement, while forbidding or excluding others" (2005: 8). Or, as Jourde warns us, the victory of a particular discursive frame "not only propose[s] only one perspective to make sense of their domestic and international political reality, but [it] simultaneously silence[s] other ways of understanding a political reality" (2007: 500).

⁸ I borrow the characterization of the critical literature on "state-building" as a triptych of attitudes regarding the feasibility and legitimacy of the liberal template from Reisinger (2009b: 8)
Indeed, this normalization imposes the (liberal) state as “the default political institution, the only imaginable way to organize communal life peaceably” (Anderson 2004: 2) and pushes the perception of any socio-political organization that distances itself from this ideal as “deviance”. Particularly in the post-9/11 world this deviance is securitized as a malign threat to the existence of the international system itself. Certainly if “states constitute the building blocks of legitimate world order” one can expect to read that “the violent disintegration and palpable weakness of [...] states threaten the very foundation of that system” (Rotberg, 2003: 1). This naturalization of the state, together with the securitization of deviances as malign threats, leads to the only possible strategy able to deliver the expectation of the state’s universalization: the threatening realm of anarchy “must be reconstituted” as a state. Not only does “the label of failed state become synonymous with an invitation for external intervention” (Bendana, 2005: 8), but with the emergence of universalist discourses of human rights and liberal peace, the idea of the state-as-means converges with the idea of the state-as-end (Brooks, 2005: 1188).

Towards a genealogy of the “state-failure paradigm

Together with the next chapter, this chapter combines a critical literature review with a genealogical overview of the “state-failure” paradigm and the emergence of the concept of “nation-building” and “state-building”. In a recent attempt to construct a “short” genealogy of the concept of state failure and its circulation in different disciplines and decision-making communities, Christian Bueger and Felix Bethke employ the Actor-Network Theory to explain the proliferation of labels and the popularity of the conceptual framework as an expression not only of gradual attempts at analytical sophistication, but, most importantly, as a reflection of distinct turf battles for the monopolization of the concept between different segments of the “international community” (Bueger and Bethke, 2010). The ANT framework allows them to a) identify the “enrolment” in the failed-states-network of

I consider it to be a “short” genealogy given the fact that at least the roots of the concept if not the terminology itself can be identified deeper in the recent history, through the “modernization” period in the middle of the twentieth and even in the nineteenth century as will be shown in the next pages. At the same time, this typology should be described as working under the presumption of the Weberian ideal-type methodology.
various actors, at different stages; b) allude to ways in which the interests and identities of these actors were reflected in and in turn were transformed by their individual employment of the concepts, and, finally c) to explore the nature and the manner in which different actors engaged in the battle for the control over the usage and utility of the concept (Bueger and Bethke, 2010: 18). Anchored in Robert Cox’s distinction between problem-solving and reflective theories (Cox, 1986), the three narratives are essential in unmasking the assumption of “analytic” or “scientific” neutrality of the “state-failure” framework. Thus, they demonstrate that “the fight for power and control of the network is closely related to practices of labeling, defining and quantifying the concept” (Bueger and Bethke, 2010: 18). In close connection, the superficial analytical layer characteristic of the literature of state-failure, particularly in opposition with the sophisticated contemporary analysis of the state in other branches of political theory, becomes possible to explain as deriving from the intensive policy-oriented – and thus problem-solving – nature of the respective competing discourses. Indeed, other analyses point in the same direction. As Hameiri argues:

because of the close relationship between policy and theory, the failed states literature has ironically developed in a different trajectory to that of state theory. The failed states literature is primarily concerned with ‘problem-solving’ and not with relating notions of state failure to the state of the art in state theory (2007: 144).

Additionally, beyond the scholastic matter of its representation, the three narratives permit an investigation of the ways in which the framework of state-failure, created at the intersection of various actors’ interests, produces in its turn weighty political consequences. These are nowhere as visible as in the post 9/11 context of the “war on terror” in which, as will be dealt with in depth below, “securitization [of failed states] becomes a profoundly political act determining not only the boundaries of political communities but also how to deal with those on the outside” (Abrahamsen, 2005: 69). Finally, the same analytical frameworks allow the student of the field to trace a shift of conceptual emphasis during the last half of a century in the perception of the “failed states”: from a preponderantly developmental problem during the Cold War, to a mainly humanitarian one in the final decade of the twentieth century, and chiefly a security problem in the post 9/11 period.
The short career-span of the concept of the failed-state that Bueger and Bethke propose consists generally of four phases, each initiated or carried out by different types of actors: from members of various academic disciplines, foreign policy-makers, international organizations as well as national and international NGOs, and the think-tank industry respectively:

only loosely mentioned in academia of the late 1980s (phase one), circulation was extended to foreign policy makers in the early 1990s and became stabilized through typologization and definition moves (phase two), it was securitized and globalized in the early 2000s (phase three), and in a contemporary phase (phase four) there is a double trend of homogenization through quantification and de-homogenization through criticism (2010: 19).

In a first phase according to this chronology, the failed-state network’s direct ancestry is identified as originating in the academic field through the area studies research of the 1980s on the variety of political, economic, social and military crises sweeping over some of the postcolonial – and in particular African – states. While initially treating the decay of the postcolonial state largely as a domestic problem, researchers soon explored the issue of political instability, under-development and violence as regional – due to the perceived regional and sub-regional clustering of problematic cases and ultimately international problems. Moreover, this was carried out in light of the role played by the international recognition of de jure sovereignty in the continued existence of the quasi-states (see above). The transition in the 1980s study of the postcolonial (African) state’s decay from a national (domestic) to a regional and, in the last instance, global angle would be emulated in the post-Cold War era in the treatment of the “failed states” first as a humanitarian, then a developmental, and finally as a security problem on a local, regional and respectively international scale.

10 Unsurprisingly, the same period and area studies are considered to lay the contemporary foundation of a related literature, that of “warlordism”. For a more detailed investigation see below, chapter four, page 118 - 126

11 In the economic sphere, for instance, as implied by the World Bank’s 1981 report warning about the serial collapse of several African economies (Berg, 1981). Similarly in the political arena the perils of warlordism became explored again in regional terms as illustrated by the 1989 special issue of the Review of African Political Economy, dedicated to the theme. Indeed, testimony to the weight the regional dimension – and in particular the African region - had and continues to have in the failed-states framework, “the first edited volume devoted entirely to the concept [Zartman’s 1995] was published within the discipline of African Studies” (Bueger and Bethke, 2010: 21). Another illustration of the impact the regional dimension has on the field is the abundant use of the “arch of instability” metaphor in the analysis of the state-failure, initially in a South Caucasian context (Shashenkov, 1994; later Malek, 2006) and more recently in an Southwest Pacific one (Reily, 2002; May, 2003; Rumley et al. 2006; Cotton, 2007).
Fig 2. Actor enrolment in the failed-state network

(Source: Bueger and Bethke, 2010: 23)

However, understanding the current perception of state-failure requires an understanding on the ways attitudes towards less efficient forms of political organization changed in time. As such, the following section investigates the literature on state-failure while drawing upon the historical context within which such failure was characterized and acted upon, mainly with reference to nineteenth century Europe. Through a critical analysis of the variety of definitions produced, as well as the typologies and causal models proposed, the central goal is to isolate the parameters of the idealized state that informs this literature. At the centre of this image is a set of claims about the proper functions political institutions must perform and the forms they must take in order to be recognized as stable, sustainable, and ultimately acceptable to both internal and external constituencies. In order to draw the contours of this image, my intention is to emphasize the ambiguous treatment of the state during the last two centuries. This chapter will therefore outline the debates on the “dying nations” and the “Old Man of Europe” in the nineteenth century, while the following chapter continues the discussion focusing on developments in the twentieth century.
On "sick men" and "dying nations"

It is difficult to overstate the extent to which the language of state-failure infuses contemporary discourses in the international arena and particularly the ubiquitous concept of "state-building". Policy-makers, think-tank analysts, the military, academics, journalists, and aid-workers alike are eager to employ the concept in different, frequently indiscriminate ways. For some, state-failure jargon serves the purpose of simplifying, mobilizing, justifying and ultimately guiding political action. Others, of a more critical disposition, engage in sophisticated efforts to refine its meanings with the aim of offering better analytical tools. Regardless of the purpose, this engagement resulted in an explosive proliferation of terminologies associated with the concept, proliferation limited only by the constraints of human imagination. To name just a few, "failed" is now associated, contrasted or replaced with concepts such as "weak", "shadow", "phantom", "fragile", "troubled", "under stress", "at risk", "neo-patrimonial", "quasi", or "warlord" in an attempt to define political entities that do not conform to a specific functional or institutional standard of (western) statehood. Under these circumstances it is easy to ignore the relative novelty of the manner in which the concepts are employed today.

However novel the manner in which this terminology is employed today though, there is nothing new in the existence of a high degree of variation in the capabilities and performances of states in the international system, a variation from which concepts such as "weak" and "failed" states are derived. Powerful states have always coexisted with less powerful and powerless ones. What in general makes a discordant note with the past is that

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12 In an attempt to refine the terminology, more recent analyses reject the static view of the state’s disfunctionality and, in turn, place states according to their performances on a continuum stretching from strong and stable states at one end of the continuum going through various stages such as fragile, weak, failing, failed, collapsing to reach the rare condition of collapsed state at the other end (Rtoberg, 2003; Chesterman et al. 2004, Tiffanny, 2009). A static view (failed) is thus replaced by a perspective of decay as a (gradual) process – thus, the continuing connotations of "failing", "collapsing", and so on.

13 In the following paragraphs, I contrast and simplify for the purpose of this chapter the distinction between strength and weakness as it is used today with the distinction between the powerful and less powerful states dominating past literatures. I use "power" in a similar way to Kenneth Waltz’s use of the concept of "capability" in the international system. Waltz seems to equate "capability" with the issue of possession of material resources in general, and with those increasing war-winning capacity in particular. Equally important, as Schmidt correctly observes, "although capabilities are a unit-level attribute, Waltz argues that it is a structural attribute in that he is most interested in how capabilities are distributed across the international
today’s concepts are part of a context in which, however undesirable the consequences, “collapse” is, in a sense, an end-state rather than a prelude to the disappearance of the political unit itself. At worst, in the absence of an external intervention (usually on behalf of the “international community”), there is a perception that the state in question will be condemned to a long-term condition of failure, with abominable consequences for the life of its inhabitants and its neighbors.

Somalia serves as the archetypical example of this case. Following a long period of decay culminating with the 1991 disintegration of President Siad Barre’s dictatorship (1969-1991), the country entered a prolonged civil war from which it is still to recover. Despite the absence of any national government worthy of its name ever since, widely described as a failed state, the state of Somalia continues to exist in the sense of its international recognition and participation in international organizations.\footnote{At the time of writing, the position of Somali Ambassador to the UN is occupied by Elmi Ahmed Duale as a representative of the Transitional Federal Government (TFN), the 14th attempt to create a functioning government in Somalia since the end of Barre’s regime in 1991. Despite the fact that its control over the Somali territory is sparse, intermittent and mostly limited to the South of the Country, the TFN – led from January 2009 by Sheikh Sharif, is recognized as the legitimate representative of the Somali state by international organizations such as the UN, the African Union or the Organization of Islamic Conference. There are numerous background papers on the issue of Somalia, among which probably the best remain the writings of Ken Menkhaus (2004; 2006), Little (2003), Lewis (2008).} At best, the course to failure could – some would say, should – be reversed, either due to international intervention, domestic leadership or a combination of both. Liberia, particularly following the election of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf who took the office of President in 2006 (Boas, 2010), or Mozambique (Reisinger, 2009b) may be two of the rare successful cases in point (Doyle and Sambanis, 2006). With the exit of the state from the international system a rare event today,\footnote{That is not to say that there are not rare cases of recent states disappearing from the International System. Yet between dissolutions (USSR and the Yugoslav Federation in 1991 or Czechoslovakia in 1993), (re)unifications (Vietnam in 1975 or Germany and Yemen in 1990), and the short-lived annexation of Kuwait by Iraq (August 1990 – February 1991), none of these disappearances can be related to the issue of “state-failure” as conceived by scholars writing in these literatures.} the “conventional wisdom appears to be that states do not – or should not die” (Fazal, 2007: 1), making the disappearance of the state itself as a

system” (Schmidt, 2007: 54). Aware of the substantial critique to the way the concept of “capability” and “power” is employed in the structural realist tradition – not least in the volume quoted above - I nonetheless argue that it was precisely this understanding of power which characterized the way in which the distinction between “strong” and “weak” states operated by and large up until the twentieth century: relational, material and, above all, manifested through the capacity to respond efficiently to external threat.
consequence of its “failure” appear almost unthinkable nowadays.\textsuperscript{16} Indeed, states, even “collapsed” ones, simply “do not die because they fail economically, fail to provide for social safety nets, or experience environmental destabilization” (Valeriano and Benthuysen, 2009: 3).

But this was not always the case. In fact, the limited number of state-deaths in the past half-century appears as an anomaly if compared with the historic record. By means ranging from conquest to colonization, annexation or partition, state-death appears to have been the traditional fate of powerless states. Taking a longue durée perspective, Spruyt introduces a natural selection explanation of the processes through which the sovereign state as a novel mode of territorial organization displaced alternative political units (Spruyt, 1994). In the process, given the competitive nature of the international system, many state-like entities disappeared, most of them violently. According to Cohen et al, this led to a situation in which, “by 1900 there were around 20 times fewer independent politics in Europe than there had been in 1500” (Cohen et al, 1981: 902). While the rhythm of state extinction slowed as we approached the twentieth century, the rate of state-death remains at a high level: suggestively, Fazal’s recent study reveals that close to half of the number of states in place at the time of the Congress of Vienna (1815) had disappeared by 2007 (Fazal, 2007: 1).\textsuperscript{17}

To point out the significantly higher number of cases of state disappearance prior to the twentieth century does not in any way mean that extinction was the only outcome for the less powerful states in the system. On the contrary, the vast majority of states in the Westphalian system have always been considerably weaker than the Great Power(s). Not only did the states

\hspace{1cm} \textsuperscript{16} It is no coincidence that, in this context, one of the first occurrences of the concept of “failed-states” appears in an article calling for identification of approaches aimed at “Saving Failed States” (Helman and Ratner, 1992, emphasis added).

\hspace{1cm} \textsuperscript{17} On a more specific basis, she notes that “since 1816, 66 out of 207 states have died”, which brings the percentage of state-death to little over 30%. (Fazal, 2007: 3). There are potentially severe limitations of the methodology employed by Fazal, particularly in her definition of “state” and “death”: a slightly revised Correlates of War definition of states around the criteria of population (over 500000) and external recognition (from France and/or Britain), cannot be fully satisfactory; similarly, defining state death as “the formal loss of control over foreign policy to another state” may reflect the core understanding of sovereignty and in particular the international legal dimension in Krasner’s typology (1999), but it raises serious questions with regard to the other understandings of sovereignty as well as about the exclusion from this category of International Protectorates or Administrations. However, her study is used illustratively here, and in this sense the accuracy of the numbers – which are likely to increase in any other reconfiguration of her database, in no way affects the point that the extinction of states in the past outnumbers the current situation by an order of high magnitude.
vary greatly in size and power but, notwithstanding the "selection-by-competition" logic exposed by Spruyt, many Lilliputian states and even alternative political units continued to exist despite their diluted power and increasingly anachronistic functions. Pointing out that the persistence of polities such as Andorra, Liechtenstein, Monaco, San Marino, Vatican or Luxembourg depended on a mixture of external regulations, internal compliance, and, one may add, geopolitical considerations, one scholar draws the conclusion that the existence of a non-conventional polity "may be, by and large, a matter of being allowed to survive by the powerful states of the states system acting individually or in concert" (Opello, 2004:5). However, the higher incidence of state disappearance up to the twentieth century brings to attention the different disposition of the international community of the time towards the issue of less capable and ultimately incapable states. Unlike the ethos inspiring today's overwhelming preference for "fixing failed states" as states, state-death was not only conceivable to political elites in the past, but often was embraced as the natural resolution for dysfunctional units.\(^{18}\)

For a good illustration of the degree to which this disposition was embraced one can take a closer look at the (in)famous 1898 "dying-nations" discourse of Lord Salisbury.\(^{19}\) Delivered at a height of imperialism only a little over a century ago, when "possession of colonies was seen as the hallmark of a vigorous nation" (Balfour, quoted in Jauregui, 2002: 4), the controversial speech applies to international politics the raw principles of Social-Darwinism as survival of the fittest combined with the acceptance of the fact that the destiny of the weak is to perish. Salisbury first divides the world into Great Powers and decaying states in a manner familiar to the student of contemporary discourses on state-failure:

> By the side of these splendid organizations [the living nations] growing in power, growing in wealth, growing in dominion and perfection ... there are a number of communities which I can only describe as dying ... [in which] disorganization and decay are advancing fast ... weaker, poorer and less provided with institutions they can trust ... [whose] Administration is a mass of corruption ...  

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\(^{18}\) The title of a recent, highly influential book (Ghani and Lockhard, 2008, emphasis added).

\(^{19}\) Not coincidentally Adam Morton identifies this same discourse as one of the inspirational sources for the "pathological view of deviancy, aberration and breakdown" that would characterize a century later the image of state-failure, as well as the medical metaphor of 'curing or cutting-up’ weak states, equated with ailing ‘patients’" (Morton, 2005: 371).
Once the diagnosis of decay was made, he proceeds by justifying the occupation of the decaying state by a Great Power in order to fix, if possible, or eliminate, if necessary, the source of decay, even at the risk of a war between the Imperial powers:

Inevitably ... for one reason or another – from necessities of politics or under the pretense of philanthropy – the living nations will gradually encroach on the territory of the dying and the seeds and causes of the conflict among civilized nations will speedily appear ... [as] it is not to be supposed that any one of the living nations will be allowed to have the profitable monopoly of curing or cutting these unfortunate patients.\(^{20}\)

Without a doubt, the category of “dying nations” refers to those populations over which the scramble for colonies was fought between the Great Powers of Europe at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century.\(^{21}\) At the same time, however, it also refers to the decay of former Great Powers. It seems plausible to think that when he wrote of the “dying nations” as being “mainly communities that are not Christian ... but that is not exclusively the case”, the case to which he alludes is that of Spain, which in the year the discourse was delivered had just lost to the US the last remnants of its colonial past, Cuba, Philippines and Puerto Rico (Jauregui, 2002: 3). However, there is another case that could not have been ignored by the British Empire’s Prime Minister for too long a period – a “dying patient” for which there was no cure, but whose “cutting” involved a risk that European diplomacy had been trying to avoid for more than a century. Against the trend, the Ottoman Empire - the “sick man of Europe” suffering from many of the ailments later associated with the concept of “failed-state” – was not allowed to disappear; this was not because the death of states was inconceivable, but because this state was “too big to die” without provoking a war which the Great Powers of Europe were not yet prepared to fight. This case constitutes one of the most significant instances of externally-led maintenance of the formal existence of a dysfunctional state, although, as will be explored, maintenance in this case was not accompanied by attempts at “fixing” the state in a manner echoing the practice in the early phase of the twentieth century.


\(^{21}\) And from among which will later be selected the vast majority of states at the centre of state-failure discourses.
Brought to the fore of European politics as a result of its gradual transformation from one of the most powerful players on the field to the “sick man of Europe”, the so-called Eastern Question revolved around the fate of a decaying Ottoman Empire gradually losing control over some of its territories following defeats during the Russo-Ottoman wars at the end of the eighteenth century. Alarmed by the potential consequences that the disappearance of the Ottoman Empire would bring to the European balanced order, in particular the unleashing of a geopolitical competition to fill the vacuum left behind, the Great Powers acting in concert decided for a policy of preserving for as long as possible the existence of the Empire. But within these parameters of survival, their policies, both individual and collective, were not aimed at reversing the state of decay, but at maintaining, if not deepening, its “sickness”. The “three major compromises negotiated by the concert on the eastern question” (Watson, 1992: 270) reflect this duality.

On the one hand, the 1856 Treaty of Paris in the aftermath of the Crimean War marked the admission of the Ottoman Empire into the Concert of Europe, which, in combination with the other treaties, helped to preserve its tottered existence (Quataert, 2005: 56).22 On the other, the same treaties contributed to the continuation of the Empire’s territorial disintegration. Thus, “the treaties of Adrianople and London in 1829–30 [were] mediated by Prussia to set up part of Greece as an independent state” (Watson, 270). Even more so, “the debilitating effect of the capitulations, the Balkanisation of the Empire by the 1878 Congress [of Berlin] … meant that Turkey was slowly becoming an unequal sovereign par excellence” (Simpson, 2004: 244-5). At the end of the day, the answer to the “Eastern Question” departed from the “curing” solution implied by the re-articulation of the image of “sickness” in the form of “failure” at the end of the twentieth century. At the same time, it also avoided the death of the sick patient closer to the spirit of the time.

Beyond the differences in the way solutions were imagined, the representation of the “sick man” echoes the terms in which the debate on “state failure” would later be formulated. Frequently attributed to the Russian Tsar Nicholas I (1796-1855), the metaphor came to define the way in which

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22 For a fascinating critical view on the role of the Treaty of Paris in the integration of the Ottoman Empire into the European “International Society”, see Burgis, 2007, especially Chapter 2.
the Ottoman Empire was seen by the Great Powers of the nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{23} At the time when Nicholas I allegedly first used the metaphor in 1853 he could have referred to at least three elements reflecting the decline of the Empire’s power, all of which deepened in the second half of the century.

To begin with, the most obvious element must have been the decreased capacity of the Empire to defend its territorial integrity and the consequent loss of territory either as a result of defeat in war or as a result of internal uprisings.\textsuperscript{24} The incapacity to defend the territorial integrity corresponds to the contemporary importance given to the monopoly over the control of violence – particularly against internal challengers – dominating the literatures on state-failure and “state-building”. Secondly, as the subsequent Crimean War was to demonstrate, the Tsar was deeply aware of the limitations of the Ottoman internal sovereignty wrought by a series of capitulations, among which the 1774 treaty of Kuchuk Kainardji was of outmost importance. Following a military victory over the Ottoman Empire, the provision of the treaty greatly improved Russia’s strategic position.\textsuperscript{25} Most importantly, the Treaty recognized the role of Russia as the “protector of the Orthodox Church and defender of religious freedom of the Sultan’s Christian subjects” (Davison, 1976: 465). One of the possible interpretations of this position would offer Russia the “right of interfering in the internal affairs of the Turkish Empire with the objective of defending the Christian populations in the East” (Davison: 465). Regardless of the veridicality of this interpretation as it was

\textsuperscript{23} The conventional view is that, in the wake of the Crimean War, “in a series of informal conversations with the British Ambassador to Petersburg, Sir Hamilton Seymour, [the Tsar] referred to the disorganized state of the Ottoman Empire with the following words: ‘we have a sick man on our hands – a man gravely ill. It will be a grave misfortune if one of these days he slips through our hands, especially before the necessary agreements are made’” (Kinross, 2008: 475).

\textsuperscript{24} Starting with the first significant permanent territorial loss following the peace of Karlowitz in 1699 (the loss of Ottoman Hungary), the trend could only be slowed but not eliminated in the 18\(^{th}\) century, the territorial hemorrhaging culminating in the 19\(^{th}\) century. By 1853, the most significant losses have been the loss of Crimea and Georgia to Russia (1792), Egypt (temporarily lost in 1798, definitively in 1882), Bessarabia (1812), Serbia (partial as a result of uprisings 1804-1817, formally recognized in 1878), and most importantly Greece as a result of the war of independence (1821-1828). In Africa, besides Egypt, Algiers and Tunis were de facto lost in the 18\(^{th}\) century. Following the Crimean War (1853-1856) the territorial losses accelerate: the Danubian Principalities of Wallachia and Moldova (1856), Bulgaria, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina (1878). For more details, see Faroqui et al. 1997, especially chapter 29.

\textsuperscript{25} Through the treaty, Russia acknowledges the Tatar’s independence as an intermediary step to the annexation of Crimea; it brought Walachia and Moldova into the Russian orbit, and it gained economic privileges including free movement in the Black Sea and through the Dardanelles into the Mediterranean Sea (Davison, 1976: 464)
adopted by Nicholas I and his chancellor, it led to the Crimean War of 1853, coincidentally also the year of the “sick man” metaphor.

Finally, the internal structure of the empire was in a shambles. In Dimitrova-Grajzl’s words,

the weakening of the Sultans ... was accompanied by the increase in power of the Sultan’s court and subsequently with a loss of direct control of the Sultan over the military and the bureaucracy ... a rise in corruption ... partly attributed to the shift from meritocracy toward the buying of office in the bureaucracy and the military ... driven by the chronic shortage of money in the Sultan’s treasury after the 17th century. (2006: 32)

Confronted with a chaotic decentralization in which the authority of the Sultan was constantly defied by both its local administration (pashas), religious communities (umma), and military formations (Janissary troops), the attempts of reform and modernization along Western lines gave rise to internal revolts. The numerous uprisings, loss of territorial possessions and the weakness of its economic system manifested through the lack of productive capacity, indebtedness due to its inability to collect taxes, the level of corruption and conspicuous consumption by an increasingly extravagant construction program initiated by the sultan, all corroborated to the increasing problem of financial insolvency (Worringer, 2004). The financial crisis, clearly visible by 1853, was to climax in 1875 when the government declared the Ottoman Empire bankrupt.

Summing up, these elements together paint the image of the “sick man of Europe” as a state incapable of protecting its sovereignty and territorial integrity against either external or internal threats. It also depicts an autocratic state incapable of reforming its ossified institutional structure, whose center of power was challenged by its provinces and survived only due to violent

26 The first of these attempts at reformation was The New Order scheme of French inspiration introduced by Selim III at the end of the eighteenth century. Confronted with a constant opposition from the ulama and the mutiny of his Janissary forces opposed to the military reforms, Selim lost: the New Order was abolished, the Sultan deposed and later killed in 1804. The long series of Janissary revolts ended with their bloody destruction in the 1826 “Auspicious Incident” (Kinross, 2008 chapter 29). The second wave of reforms, the so-called Tanzimat (1839-1876), proved to be more successful in introducing new institutions of government, from a reorganization of the army, to an administrative reform including taxation, and, most importantly, the reformation of the justice system: “the equal application of its rights to all Ottoman subjects, regardless of race or creed” (Kinross, 465). However, it also lead to instability, the rise of revolutionary movements (such as the secret society of the Young Ottomans in 1865), as well as reactionary movements and particularly tensions along religious/national lines ultimately conducing to the birth of the nationalist Young Turks’s movement at the end of the nineteenth century.
oppression of dissent with military means. The Ottoman Empire as the equivalent of the era’s failing state was thus a state in which chaotic decentralization, territorial disintegration, technological backwardness, corruption and financial insolvency added to increased poverty. At the same time it was also seen as a state increasingly under pressure from the “rise of religious fanaticism” of the ulema (Hupcik, 1993: 62; Inalcik, 1994), revolutionary movements demanding constitutional reforms and, as will be discussed below, the rising prominence of identity-politics in the shape of religious and national groupings. In other words, the image of the “sick man of Europe” represents a construct that should look familiar to the contemporary reader of the state-failure literature.

**Modernization theory: preamble to the “state-failure” paradigm**

Against the reluctance to solve the Eastern Question by dismembering the Ottoman Empire, twenty years after Salisbury’s discourse the fate of the “sick man” was sealed. The secular “Second Thirty Years’ War” of the Westphalian system (1914-1945) was to finally bring the death of Empires, “dying” alongside the “living” ones, in the process radically changing the nature and dynamics of the international system. New, “national” states emerged, re-emerged or were simply constructed from the ashes of the empires, mainly in Europe in a first stage, following the dissolution by 1918 of the Ottoman, Austro-Hungarian, German and Russian empires, and later on in the Middle East, Africa and Asia following the dissolution of the French, British, and later the remnants of the Portuguese Empires after 1945. If the first (religious) Thirty Years’ War (1618-1648) is associated - however controversially – with the birth of the Westphalian system “rooted in the primacy of the modern, territorially bounded sovereign state” (Teschke, 2003: 1), the end of the

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27 With the coinage usually attributed to Churchill – first in his message to Stalin in February 1944 (Gilbert, 1986: 687), then in the first volume of his Second World War history (Churchill, 1948: iii), the perspective that analyses the period between 1914-1945 as a whole rather than as the succession of two World Wars interrupted by an unstable 20 years peace is currently gaining currency among historians (Neumann, 1948; A.J.P. Taylor, 1966; Mayer, 1981). As Kershaw puts it, “like the Thirty years’ war of 1918-1948 … the period 1914-1945 can be seen as a single entity. It saw a crisis in international affairs, acute general crisis of the capitalist economy, immensely bitter ideological conflict, and unprecedented violence and human loss that spawned political upheavals amounting to revolutionary change” (2005: 11). In the same spirit, comparing it to the religious nature of the first Thirty Years’ Wars, Kurth refers to the period as the “wars of secular ideology or Second Thirty Years’ Wars” (2007: 123, emphasis added).
second (secular) Thirty Years’ War marks the culmination of this system - with the consecration of the nation-state as its unit and the principle of legal equality between sovereign states as its main operating mechanism – the “sovereignty-as-territorial integrity” principle (Barnett and Finnemore, 2006: 161). In this sense, the doctrine of territorial integrity and non-intervention is enshrined in the UN Charter according to which “all Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state”.28

Limited as the language of state-dysfunctionality was in the previous era, it was further marginalized in the post-war enthusiasm generated by the declarations of independence that followed. For independence did nothing to eliminate poverty, indiscriminate violence or inadequate health systems; it did not eliminate political inequalities, nor improve, overnight, educational systems; economic productivity was rarely increased and the general conditions of life in the former colonies were slow to improve. However, a change did appear in the way these issues were approached: under the weight of modernization theory, they were seen as a problem of development. At least initially, the problems of governance in the postcolonial world were seen not as a signal of “sickness”, but as a reflection of the growth difficulties associated with the youthfulness of the “late-comers” into the world of states. As Cullather describes it, “the confrontation between colonizer and colonized, rich and poor was, with a rhetorical gesture, replaced by a world order in which all nations were either developed or developing” (Cullather, 2002: 523).

In a nutshell, modernization theorists believed that, regardless of historical, political, economic or social context, development towards modernity is not only possible, but also natural and universal.29 Thus, in opposition with tradition (and traditional societies), “modernization theory posited the existence of a common and essential pattern of “development,” defined by progress in technology, military and bureaucratic institutions, and the political and social structure” (Gillman, 2003: 3). Once the possibility and in fact inevitability of this pattern was established, the only question remaining was how to (better) achieve that aim.

28 Article 2 (4), Chapter 1, UN Charter.
29 Among which Gillman identifies scholars such as Gabriel Almond, Lucian Pye, David Apter, Cyril Black, Bert Hoselitz, Myron Weiner, Karl Deutsch, and Daniel Lerner and to which one must add W.W. Rostow with his staged model of development (2003: 2).
The best known of these patterns were identified in Rostow’s (1960) five staged model of development defined as those pertaining to traditional society (1), preconditions of take-off (2), take-off (3), the drive to maturity (4) and, finally, the age of high consumption (5).\textsuperscript{30} Seen from this perspective, states, whether developed or underdeveloped, were defined by their situation on the ladder of development. Quoting a US State Department official from 1953, Cullather captures this mindset according to which, “the hands of the clock of history are set at different hours in different parts of the world”, opinion shared on the other side of the development divide as expressed by Nehru for whom, in terms of development, “there is only one-way traffic in Time” (both quotes in Cullather, 2002: 513). According to this perspective, the countries that might today be defined as dysfunctional or as “failed” were seen not as tragic deviations, but rather as being stationed at an earlier stage on the linear ladder running from tradition to modernity.

To achieve elevation on this ladder, the solutions of modernization theorists translated into various attempts to transfer and reproduce western development experiences into the newest or “developing” states. In order to disrupt traditional societies and firmly plant them on the orbit of modernization, the state, particularly under its guise as a nation-state, was considered to be the fundamental force. With the state emerging as a result of the process of de-colonization, the fundamental mechanism of development according to modernization theory was the “remaking [of] the identities of traditional people and societies” with the intention of “making men modern, by ‘freeing’ them from the annoying irregularities … [of] gender, race, ‘traditional’ values …” (Gillman, 2003: 10).\textsuperscript{31} In this context, Stein Sundstøl Eriksen was correct to identify a

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‘curious inversion’ wading through modernization theory when directed to the postcolonial world: “what was originally a version of society-centered theory [that is, emphasizing how the state was a reflection of

\textsuperscript{30} Naturally, while sharing the majority of assumptions about modernity, there were also disagreements as to how it was supposed to come – or be pushed – into being. Gillman for instance, discusses three proposed alternatives: “broadly speaking, the modernism of the modernization theorists came in three flavors: \textit{a techno-cosmopolitan flavor}, which argued that modernity must be built on the foundations of tradition; \textit{a revolutionary flavor}, which argued that modernization required a radical rupture with tradition [and finally] \textit{an authoritarian flavor}, which argued that this radical rupture could take place only through the force of a centralizing and omniscient state” (Gillman, 2003: 9).

\textsuperscript{31} In particular the remaking of identities referred to the abandonment of loyalties to traditional authorities and a reorientation towards the nation, central state and political party. Modernization also included urbanization, industrialization and bureaucratization.

\end{quote}
existing norms, depending on, or as a function of, the character of society] became clearly state-centric when applied to a postcolonial setting [that is, the state was seen as the main motor of social change and in the agent of ‘development’ … becoming responsible for creating the values] (2004: 22).

Through the state, a nation would be expected to be built- thus, the “nation-building” and, in turn, by pushing the traditional society aside, the nation-state would lead the march to modernity.

Despite its intense and lengthy impact, modernization theory was soon discredited in the social sciences, not the least due to its cultural biases, ahistorical nature, universalism and linearity, as well as the close ties of its leading theoreticians to the American political establishment.\(^{32}\) Central to the genealogy of the concept of “failed states” and to the wide literature critical of theories of modernization are two main lines of thought: a conservative one, whose chief representative is Samuel Huntington (1968), and the neomarxist dependency and World System theories developed by thinkers such as Andre Gunder Frank, Samir Amin, and especially Immanuel Wallerstein (1974).\(^{33}\)

In his influential Political Order in Changing Societies, Huntington rejects the assumption that “all good things come together” which guided early modernization theorists: the assumption that the modernization of traditional societies necessarily brings with it higher levels of socio-economic development, political institutionalization and democratization, as capitalism, democracy and security are causally intertwined.\(^{34}\) From the opening lines, he introduces the idea that “the major distinction between states lies not in their type of government, but in the degree to which the government really

\(^{32}\) As Latham’s detailed study of the Kennedy administration policies clearly demonstrated, by early the ’50s, “For Rostow, his intellectual cohort, and the policymakers they advised, the concept of modernization was much more than an academic model”, becoming an ideological tool used not only to understand but also to guide foreign policy (Latham, 2000: 2). Indeed W.W. Rostow played a prominent role in the security quarters of the Kennedy and Johnson Administrations as Deputy National Security Adviser, Chairman of the Policy Planning Council and then National Security Advisor. For a critical view of the relation between Rostow’s modernization theory and his involvement in government see Ish-Shalom, 2006 and Latham, 2000. Lucian Pye, another early proponent of the modernization paradigm was also close to governmental circles (Clemis, 2009).

\(^{33}\) In a recent review of the literature on state-failure, diJohn locates the genesis of the term “state-failure” in the rent-seeking literature with its message that “state failure, in the form of inefficient growth-retarding institutional interventions is often more costly to the economy in terms of rent-seeking and corruption costs than the market failures states were attempting to correct” (diJohn, 2008: 1). The rent-seeking literature is indeed relevant with regard to the insualtion of the state from society, affecting not only the extractive capacity (or ‘penetration’ of society), but also the social-political cohesiveness, on which, later in the chapter.

\(^{34}\) In this sense, modernization theory assumed that “state”, “nation” and “development” go together.
governs” (1968: 1). In this context, Huntington observed how, instead of coherent political institutions and economic growth, the policies of modernization and development produced “volatile situations that frequently ended in military regimes, oligarchies, ethnic conflict, or civil war” (Latham, 2000: 4). He identifies mass political participation in the context of institutional weakness as the main culprit for the destabilization of traditional societies in the process of modernization, or, as he puts it, “the lag in development of political institutions behind social and economic change” (1968: 5). As a result, Huntington warns, modernization and stability do not always go together. Furthermore, from the perspective of governance, order rather than political participation, that is to say “democratization should be prioritized in the process of development. This line of thought anticipates the later “Institutionalization First” position in the state-building sequencing debates of the post Cold War era.

On the other side of the political spectrum, theorists of the Dependency School and World-System theories have attacked the belief that processes of modernization inevitably lead to a convergence of societal systems. Instead of development, they argue that structural pressures deriving from the expansion of the capitalist system perpetuate global inequalities. Instead of taking the nation-state as the main unit of his analysis, Wallerstein’s “world-system” theory highlights the importance of the nature of capitalist “exchange relations” and trade between actors belonging to the “core”, “semi-periphery” and “periphery”. Contrary to the assumptions and expectations of modernization theory, the exploitative nature of these exchanges constrains the nature of socio-political relations and explains not only the existence, but most importantly, the persistence of underdevelopment for peripheral states (Wallerstein, 1974). Together, these critiques directly influenced the debate on state-failure and “state-building” as it developed in the later decades of the century. Huntington’s influence is deriving from his analysis of political decay in traditional political units colliding with the processes of modernization. Wallerstein and his followers on the other hand marked future inquiries through their emphasis on the structural factors determining the persistent division into developed and underdeveloped worlds.

For instance, there is a direct connection between the categories of “core” and “periphery” at the center of the World System theory and the
literature describing the international system as a “tale of two worlds” in the 1990s. Launched initially by Goldgeier and McFaul, this framework distinguishes a “great powers’ society” (core) politically characterized by democratic principles, economically by a market economy, while at the international level by the “liberal” perspective of the “security community” giving birth to multilateral institutions and international regimes. At the other extreme, a [peripheral] world less transformed by the classical “security dilemma”; a world in which military solutions continue to be prominent both at the interstate and intrastate level; a world in which territory remains the critical criterion for wealth accumulation; a less interdependent world ripped apart by ancient hatreds and ethnic loyalties (Goldgeier and McFaul, 1992). This was the picture of a world divided not only between developed and developing worlds, but between zones of peace and zones of war (Singer and Wildawsky, 1993; Buzan and Little, 2000a). This division was further expanded through the securitization of state-failure in the post 9/11 world to correspond to a realm of functional and thus peaceful states and a zone of dysfunctional states and thus a security risk not only for their own inhabitants, but also for the international system of states per se.

Finally, confronted with the failure to eliminate poverty, political instability or ethnic divisions through centralization, political mobilization, expansion of public bureaucracies, state-led industrialization or other policies associated with modernization theory, the last decade of the “short twentieth century” witnessed the emergence of two concepts crucial to the augmentation of the state-failure paradigm.\textsuperscript{35} In order to analyze the nature of statehood in the postcolonial world, particularly on the African continent, Jackson and Rosberg (1982) substituted the World-System theory’s emphasis on the nature of capitalist expansion with an explanation focused on the international norm of sovereignty and territorial integrity, paving the way for the later introduction of the “quasi-state” concept (Jackson, 1990). In order to understand the existence of what they characterize as “weak” states, they insist on the necessity of distinguishing between the \textit{empirical} (domestic) and \textit{juridical} (external) aspects of statehood.\textsuperscript{36} As Rear observes,

\textsuperscript{35} Hobsbawm defines the short twentieth century as starting with World War I in 1914 and ending with the collapse of communism in 1989 (Hobsbawm, 1994).

\textsuperscript{36} In a similar manner, in later works a distinction is made between “negative” and “positive” sovereignty (Jackson, 1990) and “legal” and “domestic” sovereignty (Krasner, 1999)
of particular interest to them is the importance for the preservation and/or breakup of existing states of de jure normative factors (including external norms of state sovereignty, territorial integrity, and nonintervention in domestic affairs) generated by international society as opposed to de facto empirical factors, which include economic development, the presence of an integrated and stable community, and the development of effective institutions (2008: 30).

For the purpose of this chapter, given their aim of adding a “juridical” dimension of statehood to the “empirical” definition of the state, Jackson and Rosberg do not provide a conceptual definition for the weak state, preferring to list a series of characteristics of (some) African states that they associate with weakness. As such, weak states would be those newly independent states marked by:

- political instability – as indicated by coups, plots, internal wars and similar forms of violence … tenuous control [of governments] over the people, organizations and activities within their territorial jurisdictions … disorder stemming from divisions along ethnic lines (1982: 1).

The temptation to avoid a conceptual definition in favor of a descriptive characterization would for a long period mark the literature of state-failure in the 1990s.

Writing in the early 1980s, Barry Buzan’s analysis of the state starts from the observation that power in the international hierarchy of states did not always correspond to domestic strength: (domestically) strong states such as Australia, the Netherlands, Norway or Singapore were small powers at international level; similarly, great regional powers such as Argentina, Nigeria, Indonesia, not to mention USSR or China, were considered to be weak states (Buzan, 1991: 97). To explain this discrepancy, Buzan

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37 Arguably, their analysis is compatible with the modernization ethos in which postcolonial states were not so much “weakened” but rather born with the inherent weaknesses of traditional societies. Unlike modernization theorists though, at no point in their writings do Jackson and Rosberg imply that the African state would eventually “strengthen” these attributes. However, as subsequent research would show, even if the distinction between “empirical” and “juridical” statehood was used only to explain the preservation of weak states, it also contributes to the perpetuation of state weakness, as “international guarantees [of territorial integrity] have made it unnecessary for these states to develop the empirical attributes of statehood normally associated with strong states” (Rear, 2008: 30). Rear associates this line of thought with Mohammad Ayoob’s work on “the Third World Security predicament”, but since then it became the staple of various attempts to “take Tilly seriously in the contemporary world” (Leander, 2004a).

38 Buzan is not the first to operate this distinction. Starting from the 1960s, there was an expanding literature concerned with the situation of small states in the global configuration of power, and their arena of maneuver, including the incentives and forms of alliance (Rothstein, 1968) or the literature on non-alignment (Vital, 1971). The classical case studies were Czechoslovakia in 1938, Israel in 1967, and the Finnish case. At the time, these analyses were framed in the context of nuclear weapon possession as one categorical criterion of distinction
introduced a re-articulation of the concept of the state in which the two dimensions of state-analysis in the classical tradition of Weberian inspiration (what he calls physical base of state and the institutional expression of the state) were complemented by the “idea of state”. The latter is responsible for the relationship between the state and its society, and particularly for the expectations held by society in relation to the state’s function. The physical base covers aspects from effective sovereignty to that of stable, and internationally recognized territorial limits; the institutional expression of the state refers to a range of attributes from a consensus on political “rules of the game” to the scope of state institutions; finally, the idea of the state refers to a kind of implicit social contract and ideological consensus pertaining to the expectations of what a state should do in relation with its society (Buzan 1991, p. 64; Holsti 1996, p. 98; Lemay-Hébert, 2009: 24). In this sense, the strength of a state is defined not only by a measurement of the physical base of the state – material capabilities, for instance - but also in the level of sociopolitical cohesiveness, that is, the degree to which the collectively shared idea of the state is reflected in the institutional dimension of the state. Interestingly enough, without further detailing, Buzan suggested that the “idea of state” has a domestic as well as an international dimension, corresponding in a way to the internal (empirical) and external (juridical) dimensions of sovereignty touched upon by Jackson and Roseberg: “unless the idea of the state is firmly planted in the minds of the population, the state as a whole has no secure foundation” he writes, while at the same time, “unless the idea of [that] state is firmly planted in the “minds” of other states [that is recognized], the state has no secure environment” (Buzan, 1983: 42).

At the same time, heavily influenced by Huntington, Migdal (1988) also investigated the nature of statehood in the postcolonial world, but from a domestic, society-centered perspective. Thus Migdal defines the state as “a field of power, marked by the use and threat of violence”; but he adds to the security function the fact that it is “shaped by (1) the image of a coherent, controlling organization in a territory, which is a representation of the people bounded by that territory and (2) the actual practices of its multiple parts” (Vital, 1967: 120). Furthermore, the 1970’s and 1980’s, in the context of interdependence theory, were the years of fascination with the “disproportionate domination of the internal-economic aspect over the external-military functions of the state” (Desch, 1996). In this sense, the literature will later reach an apex with Peter Katzenstein’s work on small states (1985).
(Migdal, 2001: 16) In this context, he changes the focus of analysis from the issue of [state’s] power as influence (power over) to that of [state’s] power as capacity. By taking into consideration the “capabilities of the state”, Migdal reaches a definition of state’s strength as a complex determined by the:

willingness and ability of a state to maintain social control, ensure societal compliance with official laws, act decisively, make effective policies, preserve stability and cohesion, encourage societal participation, provide basic services, manage and control the national economy and retain legitimacy. (Migdal, 2001: 2)

At this level, his state-in-society framework parallels the differentiation between “strong” and “weak” states defined by Buzan in terms of “socio-political cohesiveness” (Buzan, 1983). A decade later, as the concept of “failed state” takes over, the “idea of the state” and the socio-political aspect of weakness atrophies under the weight placed on the functional and institutional dimensions of the state. By critically discussing literature on state-failure, one of the purposes of this chapter has been to isolate the image of the state promoted directly or indirectly by this literature with the aim of emphasizing the “idea of the state” introduced by Buzan-Migdal’s analysis.

The next chapter explores the evolution of the concept of state-failure first in the decade following the fall of communism in Eastern Europe and with it the end of the Cold War; this will be followed by the analysis of the concept following the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Despite the differences between the two periods, they both ignore the local “idea of the state” – which may have forced scholars and practitioners alike to accept the possibility of variability of the functions a state is expected to perform as well as of the institutions through which these functions would be performed. Instead, the emphasis in both these eras is falling on the assumed homogeneity of both functions and institutions of an imagined modern state.

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39 For Migdal, state capabilities refer to “the capacity to penetrate society, regulate social relationships, extract resources, and appropriate or use resources in determined ways” (Migdal, 1988: 5 italic in original). For him, strong states are those with high capabilities along all dimensions, while weak states, even if capable of penetrating society in terms of “changing the very nature of institutional life”, prove to be lacking in “other aspects of state capabilities, especially the abilities to regulate social relations and use resources in a determined way” (Migdal, 1988: 6).
Chapter 2. The post-Cold War rise of state-failure paradigm

During the nineteenth century and for the best part of the twentieth century, the main threat to the stability of the international system was identified as residing in the activity of the (most powerful) states. By contrast, in the post-Cold War era, in the context of the discourse on “state-failure”, the state emerged as the solution to various threats, from migration to health pandemics and most prominently, terrorism. In this chapter, continuing Bueger and Bethke’s genealogy started in the previous chapter, I identify the engine of this change in a double-securitization move – of development and failed-states, in a specific context dominated by the discourses of human rights, liberal peace and democratization. By positioning the evolution of the literature of state-failure in the context of securitization, this allows me to address several flaws including the assumption of uniformity in the treatment of state as well as state-failure; the unjustified (if not unjustifiable) reproduction of normative images of states as benign providers of security and non-state entities as eternal sources of insecurity and disorder; and, finally, the equal resilience of functionally altered formal institutions, as well as of informal institutions (Englebert and Tull, 2008).

Having previously dealt with the early literature on state-failure, this chapter discusses the importance of understanding the role of securitizing failure in the post-Cold War era by scrutinizing why and how “state weakness, which like the poor has always been with us, has been transformed into a global problem and, moreover, became an issue for [international] intervention in a particular way” (Robinson, 2007: 3). The dual securitization mentioned above can be held at least partly responsible for the transformation of state weakness into a global problem. In relation to the nature of international interventions, the key may rest in the context in which “state-building” interventions take place, and in particular the intersection of several discourses.

In this chapter, I continue to explore the characteristics of contemporary forms of these discourses, showing how they simultaneously borrow and diverge from an initial modernization discourse. This process occurs through the gradual addition of layers of post-Cold War era ideas of
democratization, human rights, good governance and transformation of war in its “new wars” discourse. Finally, in the context of securitization, the third chapter aims to show how the clustering of state-building activities, in particular the emphasis on security and Security Sector Reform, mimic the image of the state and reflect the corresponding assumptions present in the literature on state-failure. This image is accompanied by a corresponding set of proposals on how to maintain, construct and impose (if necessary) institutions in places where they do not exist, are only marginally functional or are threatened. The chapter also discusses the main elements of the discourse, in particular the exogenous nature of the intervention, the central role played by the monopolization of violence in the hierarchy of state-building tasks and the technocratic aspects inherited from the modernization discourse. The main debates in the literature lead to the identification of state-building as a policy that aims to strengthen the International System of states by attempting an artificial homogenization of its units.¹ Thus, even if initiated in the context of human rights, democratization and in the last instance human security, the securitization of state-failure in the post 9/11 era has as its referent object not the individuals living in the failed-states but, mediated by the powerful Western states, the international system of states itself.

In the second phase identified by Bueger and Bethke with the 1990s and the post-Cold War years, the concept’s circulation is considerably expanded particularly by its entrance into the foreign policy realm. Put forward primarily by foreign policy decision-makers – such as the retired diplomats Helman and Ratner (1992) or the then US Ambassador to the UN, Madeleine Albright – the concept’s popularity benefitted from the euphoric transformation in the political climate following the end of the Cold War. At the risk of over-simplification, it may be said that the faith in the framework of “failure” is marked by two moments, each coincidentally linked with a 9/11 moment. First, the proclamation of a “New World Order” at the end of the Cold War by then U.S. President George H.W. Bush (11 September 1990)

¹ Among the main debates, I refer to the sequencing question opposing the policies of democratization-first to those of institutionalization first, “light-footprint” vs. “whole of government” approaches, the coordination debate as well as the main dilemmas of state-building.
defines the context against which the label itself comes to life. Second, the terrorist attacks on the US on 11 September 2001 consecrate the critical transformation in the treatment of the object of this framework, marked by the presentation of “failed states” as a security threat not only to individual “successful” states, but to the international system of states itself. Between these moments, in the shadow of expectations raised by the dominant discourses of the period – most prominently those on human rights, democratization, good governance and “new wars” – the framework of “failure” reached the form we know today.

**The New World Order**

The ascension of Mikhail Gorbachev as Secretary-General of the Soviet Union Politburo brought with it significant changes of a systemic nature. At an international level, they included the Russian withdrawal from their Afghanistan adventure, the abandonment of the Brezhnev Doctrine and its replacement by what “his press spokesman jokingly labeled the ‘Sinatra Doctrine’ under which the states of Eastern Europe were free to do it ‘their way’” (White, 2001: 66), and an attempt to revive détente with the US reflected in the numerous summits with the US President culminating with the signing of the INF Treaty in 1987. Domestically, the most prominent developments were the introduction of reforms in the economic (glasnost) as well as political domains (perestroika).

For some, these were signs not only of an end to the Cold War, but an “End of History” as ideological confrontation, as the liberal principles had successfully triumphed over ideological challengers – fascism and communism – in both the political (democracy, human rights and rule of law) and economic (free market) arenas (Fukuyama, 1989). Fukuyama is careful to notice how “the vast bulk of the Third World remained very much mired in

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2 The attribution of authorship to George Bush Snr. is somewhat arbitrary and hazardous, given the more substantial contribution to the definition of the label by for instance, Mikhail Gorbachev (1988). However, this attribution is solidly established and widely shared in the public media as well as the academia. In the context of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, President Bush launches the label in his “Toward a New World Order” speech to the Congress (Sept 11, 1990) followed by his “Operation Desert Storm Launched” (January 16, 1991). For a better understanding of the context and the intended content of the concept, an essential piece is the memoir co-authored by Bush Snr. and his National Security adviser Brent Scowcroft (1999). Important recent pieces are collected in the January 2010 issue of Diplomatic History, in particular Engel, 2010 and Sparrow, 2010.
history, and will be a terrain of conflict for many years to come” (1989: 15). But the direction of history implied in this view is clear, and sooner or later the Third World would emancipate – or be emancipated – from history. Gilman identifies Fukuyama’s thesis as illustrative for the “emergence of a new school of modernization, based on a philosophy of history spelling convergence on a universal, singular model of modernity”, despite differences in the “substantive content” of the models. As such, “the old bottle [of] ‘modernity’ has been refilled with neoliberal wine”, the novelty being visible on both its content level – the emphasis on welfare for the 1950s-1960s model of modernity as distinct from that on economic productivity in the 1990s, and in the agent of modernization – the state in the early model, the free market in the later one (Gilman, 2003: 270). Significantly, particularly with reference to the emancipation of the Third World from the burden of history, one sees a return in Fukuyama’s writing, two decades later, to the belief in the state as engine of modernization, replacing the 1990s faith in the virtues of the market (2004, 2005, 2008; Fukuyama and McFaul, 2007).

The expansion of the democratic realm in what was dubbed a “third wave of democratization” (Huntington, 1991), the collapse of communist regimes in Eastern Europe during the revolutions of 1989, the end of the Cold War marked by the fall of the Berlin Wall leading to the German unification by October 1990, and the liberation of Nelson Mandela and legalization of ANC that prefaces the end of apartheid in South Africa, all strengthened the perception that the world was facing the end of an era. The widespread sentiment was articulated by the US President in a series of discourses following Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait as a belief in a “New World Order”. While ambiguous in details referring to the content of this order, Bush Senior described a world based on the rule of law, multilateralism and a return to the UN collective security framework:

we have before us the opportunity to forge ... a world where the rule of law, not the law of the jungle, governs the conduct of nations ... an order in which a credible United Nations can use its peacekeeping role to fulfill the promise and vision of the UN's founders ... A world in which

3 For Huntington, the third wave of democratization “begun in Southern Europe, spread to the military regimes of South America in the late 1970s and early 1980s, reached East, Southeast, and South Asia by the mid- to late 1980s, then at the end of the 1980s saw a surge of transitions from Communist authoritarian rule in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union and a trend toward democracy in Central America as well” (Diamond, 1997: 2).
freedom and respect for human rights find a home among all nations (1990; 1991a; 1991b).4

Underlying this vision was a belief in the harmonization of the common interests of humanity manifested through an emphasis on collective action, economic and social interdependence and global disarmament (Kessler, 1997: 28). The rule of law and respect of human rights were expected to be achieved through the strengthening and promotion of democracy as the provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights relating to democracy were “dusted off and presented to the international community as the foundation for a new world order” (Paris, 2004: 22). Finally, as emphasized particularly during the Clinton Administration, the pursuit of liberal economic policies – free trade, free markets, deregulation and privatization – were seen as the best, if not the only way of promoting democracy, human rights and the rule of law.5 Liberated from the constraints of the bipolar confrontation of the Cold War era, the “New World Order” brought the promise of a recalibration of security considerations beyond the traditional state-centric and power-based model privileging “high politics” towards an inclusion of human security defined in terms of simultaneous preservation of the individual’s “freedom from wants” (security) and “freedom from needs” (development).6

By 1993, the days of the Cold War were a distant memory and the prospects for a New World Order were looking bright. By that time, the Soviet Union was gone. The White House was, for the first time since Jimmy Carter, occupied by a Democrat whose declared intention – manifest in that one line defining Clinton’s 1992 campaign: “it’s the economy, stupid” – was “to elevate economics in foreign policy” (Destler, 1998: 89). Clinton’s pillars of foreign policy, announced only eight months into his administration, were to be the expansion of free markets, support for democratization and the

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4 I group here various sections from the three speeches by President Bush Snr. See also Mayall, 1991: 427.
5 As Michael Heazle shows, the main tenets of what would be known as the “Washington Consensus” were already formulated in 1989 and permeated from the beginning the vision of the “new world order” (Heazle, 2007: 7).
6 The concept of “human security” is associated with the 1994 UNDP Human Development Report, but the terminology entered earlier the international arena lexicon – and in particular development and security studies. See in particular Rotschild 1995. The concepts of “freedom from want” and “freedom from fear” are associated with Roosevelt’s 1941 State of the Union Speech (“Four Freedoms”) and they were actually incorporated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, being thus part of the “vision of the UN’s founders” to which Bush’s New World Order refers to (Boyle and Simonsen, 2004: 6)
promotion of multilateralism. In the words of Anthony Lake, the Clinton doctrine was to be one of “enlargement”: “[T]o the extent democracy and market economics hold sway in other nations, our own nation will be more secure, prosperous and influential, while the broader world will be more humane and peaceful. . . . The successor to a doctrine of containment must be a strategy of enlargement—enlargement of the world’s free community of market democracies” (quoted in Logan and Preble, 2006: 2).

The “Coming Anarchy” and humanitarian intervention

However, from the beginning of his mandate, the world with which Clinton was confronted was a far cry from the optimism of the new world envisaged by his predecessor. By the end of the Bush Sr’s Administration, the political, social and economic situation had degraded in numerous places, bringing with it humanitarian disasters, growing violence and civil wars. In response, the UN and powerful actors in the system radically increased the numbers of peacekeeping and humanitarian relief missions and recalibrated the nature of peacekeeping itself through the introduction of the concept of peace-building associated with Boutros-Ghali’s “Agenda for Peace” (1992). By 1993, UN peacekeeping or peace-enforcing missions were present in Angola, Cyprus, El Salvador, Iraq, Israel, Kuwait, Lebanon, Pakistan, Syria and Western Sahara; the most substantial operations responded to the crises in Cambodia, Somalia and former Yugoslavia (Holmes, 1993: 328). By December 1992, US troops were sent to strengthen the humanitarian relief mission of the UN in Somalia, a country mired in a violent civil war since the demise of its long-term dictator Siad Barre in early 1991. The relative success of Operation Restore Hope was overshadowed by the disastrous confrontation with the local militias in the Battle of Mogadishu (1993) leading to the withdrawal first of the US (1994), and later of the UN troops (1995). The horrors of ethnic conflict, lawlessness and breakdown of order culminated with the Rwandan genocide of 1994. With it, the illusion of an “End of History” and the vision of a “New World Order” were replaced with an image of “the Coming Anarchy” (Kaplan, 1994) defining the “new World Disorder” (Goodhand and Hulme, 1999) - a world in which the fulfillment of the promised “peace dividend” could only be expanded to the entire humanity on the short term by humanitarian
interventions in what was already described as the realm of “failed states”. According to this logic, humanitarian intervention was required as a short-term solution to overwhelming challenges. In turn, a successful humanitarian intervention was expected to create conditions for the promotion of democratization. Finally, democratization in tandem with the transition to the market economy inspired by the so-called Washington Consensus, were seen as long-term mechanisms for the creation of a long-term, sustainable peace and development.\(^7\)

Certainly, humanitarian intervention itself is not the exclusive child of the 1990s. As was shown at the time, there were several precedents that opened the path for the “decade of humanitarian interventions”, as Kaldor labeled the period (2007): the pressure on the strict principle of non-intervention in the 1970s in the case of wide atrocities against the local population with the invasion of East Pakistan by India in 1971, of Cambodia by Vietnam in 1978, or of Uganda by Tanzania in 1979; the increase in the provision of humanitarian aid/assistance in the 1980s, the successes of the human rights doctrines and finally the gradual transformation in the peacekeeping doctrine culminating with the 1992 Agenda for Peace (Roberts, 1993: 434). However, it is at the intersection of these developments in the early 1990s post-Cold War years that reactions to the various crises in places now designed as constitutive of the “failed states” realm took the form of humanitarian interventions with the purpose of achieving different goals. This started with the establishment of safe havens for the Kurdish population in Northern Iraq – but not in Turkey - under the 1991 Operation Provide Hope, and continued with the UNPROFOR intervention in the former Yugoslavia (Bosnia and Herzegovina) between 1992-1995, the Operation Provide Hope conducted under the US-led UNITAF and UNOSOM II missions between 1992-1993 in response to the drought and famine threatening the Somali population, the US-led Operation Restore Democracy in Haiti (1994) and the series of interventions to restore democratic government in Sierra Leone

\(^7\) Washington Consensus, a package of (ten) macroeconomic and financial management principles, is a term coined by John Williamson in 1990 in reference to what was perceived to be a “universal convergence” in the developmental world of the time towards a shift from state-led to market-oriented policies as the best practices for development and economic growth (Williamson, 1990; Williamson, 2004). For an analysis of the arguments linking democracy with the Washington Consensus’s principles, see Williamson, 1993 and especially Rose, 2006.
between 1994-2000. The practice of humanitarian intervention’s golden age (Wheeler and Bellamy, 2008) seems to have reached its peak with NATO’s intervention in Kosovo to protect the Albanian population (March-July 1999) and the Australian-led intervention in East-Timor to put an end to massive post-independence referendum violence (Kaldor 2007: 18-21).

The centrality of humanitarian motivation for international interventions in places deemed to belong to an ever-expanding category of failed states, implicit in the 1990s Charter of Paris for a New Europe describing a “community of democracies for which humanitarian preoccupations ‘do not belong exclusively to the internal affairs of the state concerned’” (Holm, 2001: 361), is detectable as late as 2001 in Tony Blair’s speech at the Labour Party Conference in Brighton, Oct 2001. In this post 9/11 speech, considered to be “one of the most important — and also most powerful—speeches of his political career” (Abrahamsen, 2005: 55), Blair echoes the 1990s call for an “ethical dimension” of foreign policy when he declares that “the state of Africa is a scar on the conscience of the world. But if the world as a community focused on it, we could heal it ... The world community must show as much its capacity for compassion as for force” (Blair, 2001). The ultimate expression of the normative ethos at the core of policy-driven humanitarian intervention was reached just a couple of months following Blair’s speech, with the release in December 2001 of the ICISS’s report on Responsibility to Protect.9

The main consequence of the re-emergence of the framework in the policy arena is identified by Bueger and Bethke as being the interpretation of the failed states through the spillover argument as a “security, rather than developmental and economic governance problem or the theoretical sovereignty puzzle from earlier works” (2010: 20). While Helman and Ratner’s article which they quote does indeed make reference to the security

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8 From its beginning with the Operation Provide Hope in 1991, the wave of humanitarian interventions was (selectively) embraced by the political elites among other factors as a result of the media’s impact on the public opinion — or, rather, perceived public opinion. The so-called CNN effect figured prominently among the factors influencing the US withdrawal from Somalia following the Battle of Mogadishu debacle (Oct 1993) and was also (partially) responsible for the non-intervention in the crisis leading to the Rwandan genocide (April-July 1994). For a detailed analysis of the “CNN effect” on the humanitarian interventions see Robinson 2002 and Livingston, 1997.

9 For a concise description of the policy-driven evolution of humanitarian intervention up to the adoption of the R2P by the UN Summit Declaration of 2005, see Rice and Loomis, 2007.
dimension, it arguably took a second place position in relation to other considerations, and particularly within discourses dominating the public space.

The 1990s discursive milieu of international interventions

Most importantly as a permissive cause, this period’s scholarly literature is marked by a vigorous renewal of calls to reform the nature of security studies in order to enlarge the scope of items on the security agenda as well as the instruments available to study them. In response to this call, scholars – particularly those working within the framework of the so-called Copenhagen School (Buzan, Weaver and de Wilde, 1998) – complemented the UNDP’s conceptualization of “human security” (see note 6 above) with two interrelated aspects: one, the horizontal widening of the security agenda by supplementing the classical military dimensions to include economic, political, societal and environmental risks; two, the vertical deepening of the concept of security beyond the state-level. Both extend to the level of the individual (human security), and above to global security, with societal and regional security respectively as potential intermediate points (Krause and Williams, 1996: 230). In this context, while not ignoring an incipient securitization, it is more suitable to place the appropriation of the terminology by political elites in the context of the first half of the 1990s’ prominence of discourses on human rights, human security and democratization, with the consequent public pressures in dealing with humanitarian concerns – the so-called CNN effect I mentioned earlier, all of which contributed to an increase in the practice of humanitarian intervention.

In this context, the contemporary incarnation of the “failure” paradigm has its immediate/direct origin in the spirit to which Kaplan’s 1994 article on the Coming Anarchy is a journalistic expression. Widely read and extremely influential, his dystopian analysis resonated with the public – particularly the Western public’s perception of these humanitarian crises. After all, as Kaplan warns, “disease, overpopulation, unprovoked crime, scarcity of resources, [and] refugee migrations” (46) create a realm in which “many states will ultimately die” (74); a world in which “the withering away of central governments, the rise of tribal and regional domains, the unchecked spread of disease, and the growing pervasiveness of war” (54) unleashes “the
empowerment of private armies, security firms, and international drug cartels” (47).

This image of decay taps into the popularity of the metaphor of “failing”, in a journalistic sense derived from widespread exposure: not long before, pundits were debating the virtues and limitations of the thesis announcing the decline of the US as a world superpower (Kennedy, 1988). More recently, the fall of the communist regimes, the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Soviet Union, created a fertile ground for the popularity of the semantic construction of the failed state. As such, Kaplan’s tale can be interpreted as merely an additional step. Instead of announcing the decline of a(n)other state – as Kennedy does in regard to the waning of the hegemonic power of the US in the 1980s, or as witnessed with the dissolution of the USSR in 1991 – he denounced the failure of the state itself, though admittedly in a more dramatic manner than the complementary narrative of the demise of the state contained in the emerging literature on globalization. However, the appeal of Kaplan’s framework of failure does not reside only in the familiarity that the long exposure to journalistic expressions had created. His vision’s appeal was closely linked with the skillful way in which Kaplan merged elements of two research enterprises in vogue at the time: the “clash of civilizations” and the “transformation of war” theses. As Kaplan himself writes, the dystopic tale of “coming anarchy” results from the blending together of these two themes:

to understand the [coming upheaval in which states collapse], one must understand environmental scarcity, cultural and racial clash, geographic destiny, and the transformation of war ... [of which the last two] are the most important.¹⁰

In the last decade of the twentieth century, the end of the Cold War coupled with an ever-rapid technological (r)evolution fuelled an explosion of literature on the transformation of war, with titles announcing The Transformation of War (van Creveld, 1991), followed by the march Towards Post-heroic Warfare (Luttwak, 1995), claims of a qualitative distinction between New and Old Wars (Kaldor, 1999) or the emergence of a Virtual War (Ignatieff, 2001). The factors that were considered vital to this transformation

¹⁰ By geographic destiny Kaplan refers to what he calls “the lies of mapmakers”, that is the incongruence between the arbitrary nature of the territorially-bounded political units in the postcolonial world and the cultural delineation based on identity – at the end of the day, also part of the culturalist view expounded by Huntington. See Kaplan, 68-70.
and explored either singly or in-group are diverse, covering the political, social, technological and cultural spheres. On the one hand, the research on the transformation of war derives from the older literature on the Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA) in the 1980s, boosted by the performance of US forces in the Gulf War of 1991. When advocates of the RMA talk about transformation of war they usually have as a reference point the image of the final phase in the Second World War, based on platform structures: large aircraft carrier, jet fighter and main battle tank. In contrast, technologically advanced modern warfare was perceived to be centered on precision-guided ammunitions, increased destructive efficiency, electronic warfare and parallel instead of serial attacks (Luttwak 1999, 107). The major changes imposed by the RMA were technological: the reduction in ground and surface naval forces and increased reliance on air and missile forces; the shift in reliance from sunset systems (tanks or aircraft carriers) to sunrise systems (deep precision-strike weapons and information infrastructure) and the organizational metamorphosis into less hierarchical and more interconnected entities (Biddle, 1998, 5).

Simultaneously, complementing the declamation of a “New World Order”, the end of the Cold War led to a hotly debated competition of ideas around the hypothesis of the decline of violent conflict as an overriding organizing principle in relations among advanced industrialized states (Mueller, 1989; Kaysen, 1990, Mandelbaum 1998). The argument, in its different forms, postulated that “as a result of a change in mental habits through social-cultural evolution, not [only as] a change in the terms of calculations... war among western modernized nations has become sub-rationally unthinkable” (Kaysen, 1990, 43). This hypothesis did not envisage the disappearance of war as a strategic instrument of foreign policy, nor the impossibility of a major war between the great powers. It only posited that, with the convergence of several factors, among which the rise of warlessness industrial democracies and the destructiveness of nuclear weapons, major war became improbable in the post-modern world (Cooper, 2000; Mandelbaum, 1999).

In this context, given the increase in the number of intrastate (civil) wars, the story of war in the contemporary world was in fact written as a tale of two worlds. On the one hand, there was “the great powers’ society” (core)
in which, according to the New World Order, rule of law would replace if not eliminate major wars by means of the “security community” – multilateral institutions and international regimes. On the other hand, the periphery, emerging as less transformed from the classical “security dilemma”: still considering the significance of military solutions (both interstate and, most of all, intrastate), assigning an important role to geographical territory as a criterion for wealth, less interdependent and so forth (Goldgeier and McFaul, 1992). The cumulative effect of the disappearance of the bipolar competition between superpowers and the complex process of globalization appeared to be responsible for the birth in the postcolonial world of what Luttwak called a “new season of bellicosity” (1999, 110). Together they diminished the restraints for war, thus becoming a permissive cause for the coming anarchy in the postcolonial world. Freed from the fears of nuclear attack, confronted with a drastic reduction in western military forces and budgets for the first half of the 1990s, as well as the lack of incentives for the superpower or regional powers’ military intervention in an epoch dominated by the rhetoric of “peace dividends”, there were few mechanisms to control the aggressive pursuit of personal interests by leaders in the Third World (Hirst, 2001, 81).

Not only was it said that in the new geopolitical context war had suffered a geographical limitation to the periphery of the international system, but it was also maintained that it had undergone a qualitative transformation, from the dominance of conventional conflicts toward a de facto preponderance of Low Intensity Conflicts (van Creveld, 1991; Kaldor, 1999). Creveld, for instance, argued that, as “future wars will be low-intensity conflicts waged by non-state actors against whom the ‘modern regular forces of states like Israel, Britain, Russia, and the United States are ‘all but useless,”’ ... large-scale, conventional warfare on the Clausewitzian, “trinitarian” model [people, government and army], appears to be "at its last gasp" (quoted in Watts, 1996: 129). Building on this idea of transformation of war, analysts introduced a novel category, that of “wars of a third kind” (Holsti, 1996), or simply “new wars” (Kaldor, 1999).

Not long after Kaplan’s article, the notion received its consecrated scholarly formulation. Mary Kaldor equated the “new war” with a new type of organized violence that blurred the distinctions between war, organized crime and large scale violation of human rights on the one hand, and localized
versus globalized war on the other (Kaldor, 1999: 2). As she admitted, the concept of "new wars" drew on three separate research avenues: the strategic studies research focused on the decline of the Clausewitzian view of war and decisive battle; the developmental and economic-oriented research underpinning, particularly in the African context, the (re)emergence of privatized military actors and predominance of economic agendas; and, finally, that political science research which emphasized a return to the age of nationalism, primordial sources of identity and ethnic conflict (Kaldor, 2009). These new wars, in a context characterized by a decentralization of the monopoly on violence and the multiplication of actors (militias, criminal bands, regular forces, warlords or Private Military Companies), are to be distinguished from the classical, "trinitarian warfare" by: their goals - identity politics in contrast with geo-political or ideological war; the methods and instruments of warfare - guerilla warfare, low-tech weapons, counter-insurgency techniques and decentralization; and the means of financing - a "global war economy" (Kaldor, 1999, 8). In effect, the presence of the "new wars" shattered the "binary distinctions characteristic of the modern state - between internal and external, civil and international, public and private, civilian and combatant, political and economic, and even war and peace" being simultaneously "the cause and consequence of what today are variously called 'weak', 'fragile', 'failed', 'failing' or 'collapsing' states" (Kaldor, 2009).

Turning to the second component encapsulated into Kaplan's metaphor, the equally influential Huntingtonian thesis of a Clash of Civilizations rejects the alternative visions of the new world order - from Fukuyama's End of History (1989) to Mearsheimer's return to the Great Powers' confrontations scenario (1990a and 1990b) and the decline of the nation-state - not as much as erroneous as incomplete. As he puts it, "the fundamental source of conflict in this new world will not be primarily ideological or primarily economic ... [but] cultural. Nation states will remain the most powerful actors in world affairs, but ... the clash of civilizations will dominate global politics" (Huntington, 1993: 22). To be sure, the concept of

11 Later on, Kaldor problematizes the conceptualization of these conflicts as war as she argues that they "are a mixture of war (political conflict), human rights violations (political repression) and crime (economically motivated violence)" (2009)
"civilization" as Huntington uses it remains ambiguous, and rather ill-defined. However, as Gilman shows, "civilization" is not reduced to its technological dimension, as, for instance, "late developers could adopt the technical advances first generated in the West without emulating the cultural particularities of the West" (Gilman, 2003: 269). Instead, civilization is defined implicitly as a function of identity among which rest, fundamentally, the components of ethnicity and religion. "A civilization", Huntington writes, "is the broadest cultural identity (sic!) people have, defined both by common objective elements such as language, history, religion, customs, institutions and by-subjective self-identification of people" (Huntington, 1993: 24). Observing how instead of the "withering away of religion", one side-effect of modernization, what Kapel called "the revenge of God", was leading to a "revitalization of religion throughout much of the world", he ultimately circumscribes the concept of civilization with that of religion in anything but name (Laustsen and Weaver, 2003: 147).\(^\text{12}\)

Additionally, as Fox and Sandler observe, Huntington's reference to "subjective self-identification" bears a striking similarity to the definition of ethnicity as "based on ascriptive traits that build the perception among a group that they are a group", in the way Tedd Gurr's "key for identifying communal groups — also referred to as ethnic groups, is not the presence of a particular trait or a combination of traits but rather in the shared perception that the defining trait, whatever they are, set the group apart" (Fox and Sandler, 2004: 117). If they are correct, Huntington's thesis is compatible with the vision of the "new wars" in which political leaders belonging to corrupt elites in decomposing states utilize a predatory type of identity politics. The cumulative effect of these strategies is a (re-)ethnicization of war in the periphery ("banality of ethnic war") with fear of the "other" as its prime motivator (Mueller, 2000). But the "return to ethnicity" so dear to the primordialist characterizations of the "new wars" described by Kaplan as a "re-primitivization [of] men ... at a time of unprecedented resource scarcity and planetary overcrowding" (Kaplan, 1994: 73), is itself a double failure. It

\(^\text{12}\) Despite the critical role religion plays in the definition of his "civilizations", Huntington is inconsistent in the way he employs religious differences within his civilizations. While sensitive to various denominations in Christianity — after all the Western, Slavic-Orthodox and Latin American correspond by and large to the spread of Protestantism, Orthodoxy and Catholicism respectively, he refuses similar distinctions within, for instance, Islamic Civilization (Fox and Sandler, 2004: 118).
is, of course, a failure to rise to the expectations of the New World Order. Additionally, it is also a failure to modernize, to "remake the identities of traditional people" – even if it rarely has been described as a failure of modernization itself.

The impact of the literatures on "new wars" and "clash of civilizations" upon the emerging paradigm of "state failure" can be measured along two dimensions. Firstly, most of the features associated with the "new wars" are directly translated in the description if not the definition of the failed states, starting with the privatization of actors in particular in the security field, the radical economization of motives for collective action, a brutalization of political and economic strategies, and the criminalization of the war economies (Heupel, 2009: 61). Secondly, the "new wars" thesis and the emphasis on "primordial identities" implicit in the Huntingtonian thesis facilitate the depoliticization of the domestic dynamics in the case of the "failed states". One of the most prolific writers on this topic, David Chandler, shows how Holsti’s portrayal of the economic and identity-based "wars of the third kind" (1996) as departing from the classical paradigm of wars fought for social and political purposes echoes "a growing tendency ... to perceive internal conflicts in the non-Western world as crimes to be judged and righted rather than as [legitimate] political conflicts to be mediated" (Chandler, 2007c: 76-77).

Echoing the success of Kaplan’s article, the concept of state failure/collapse spread like a wildfire throughout the world of international politics. From its first scholarly use – attributed to a 1993 Foreign Policy article by two former senior officers in the US State Department (Helman and Ratner, 1992), it soon extended from journalism to policy circles – a crucial role in the popularization of the concept being attributed to its use by then-US Ambassador to the UN, M. Albright in the context of the Somali crisis (Gros, 1996: 445; Nijman, 1998: 273). Very quickly, journalists, politicians and analysts alike were gathering under the new label of state failure a wide variety of crises in states that "hardly function (e.g. the Central African Republic), states characterized by a high level of corruption (e.g. Nigeria) or by a very repressive regime (e.g. Sudan), and states that are in a post-conflict situation (e.g. DR Congo, Afghanistan, Burundi, Ivory Coast)" (Vlassenroot
and Hoebcke, 2009: 1). By 1996 the widespread use of the concept in often non-discriminatory ways, had already given birth to calls for analytical clarity, with scholars starting the race to organize different categories of states in a taxonomy of dysfunctionality (Gros, 1996).

By that time, particularly in the light of the central role played by debates on human rights, democracy and humanitarianism, a shift was taking place in relation to attitudes towards the states in conflict. Moving away from the strict precepts of sovereignty as non-intervention, with the UN’s peacebuilding concept at helm, “under the conditions of the post-Cold War consensus, humanitarian disasters or internal conflicts manifest in these states were considered grounds for legitimate international intervention” (Cotton, 2007: 457).

Expansion of the state-failure concept

Driven by the increased demand of advisory projects for the policy arena, the concept of state-failure was reincorporated in academic circles. Buoyed by the newly gained policy relevance, the framework of state-failure slowly but steadily permeated different dimensions of research. To begin with, despite references to individual cases of states in crisis in areas such as the Balkans, Middle East (Gongora, 1997), Latin America, Central Asia and South Caucasus (Malek, 2006) or Oceania (Reilly, 2000), the literature of this third phase remains by and large focused on and influenced by the characteristics of the postcolonial African state. Evocatively, not only do the most popular articles on the subject - measured in terms of quotations - refer to African case

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13 The examples refer to situations of the first decade of the twentieth century, but the label remains relevant for the diversity of cases seen as failed from its beginning.

14 The first to make this attempt, Gros distinguishes between different categories of state dysfunctionality, such as a) anachic states defined as states with no centralized government, which he exemplified with Somalia; b) phantom or mirage states defined as those states with only a semblance of authority such as Zaire/Democratic Republic of Congo; c) anemic states defined as states whose capacity has been exhausted, either by counterinsurgency groups or by the absence of modernization of, for example, economics or democratic principles, such as Haiti; d) captured states: states that are centrally controlled by an insecure elite trying to frustrate or eradicate the rival elite, such as Rwanda and finally, e) in vitro failures, such as Bosnia (Gros, 1996: 458-461).

15 Maybe the most notable exception is the Balkan crisis of the 1990s, particularly with the case of the former Yugoslavia strongly influencing the literature on “new wars” and in particular the emphasis on the role played in the disintegration of the states by nationalism and the “primordial, ancient ethnic hatred”, or the “war economy”.
studies (Bayart, 1993, 2000; Bayart et al. 1999; Widner, 1995; Mazrui, 1995; Ayoob, 1995; Herbst, 1996/7; Clapham, 1998a), but the first edited volume devoted entirely to the concept is constituted exclusively by contributions from Africanist scholars, with the stated goal “not merely to learn about Africa ... but to learn from Africa” (Zartman, 1995: 2, emphasis added). The long-term consequence of this dominance refers to the distinctiveness of the “failed state” as a collection of features such as instability, corruption, or economic crises leading to famines, civil wars, refugee movements or environmental decay.

Also owing to its policy-oriented nature, the failed-state literature in this stage is characterized less by a theoretical or analytical focus and more by a strong tendency towards description of particular case studies — candidates for humanitarian interventions - and increasingly oriented towards prediction. The two single most important projects dedicated to the issue in the 1990s reflect this durable characteristic of the literature on state-failure. The dominance of the descriptive, case-study based contributions is reflected in Zartman’s collection of essays on the African “collapsed” states (1995). The C.I.A. funded State Failure Task Force (Esty & all, 1995, Goldstone et al. 2000), with its cross-disciplinary and multiyear focus remains even today representative of the quantifying tendency of identifying particular variables as essential in predicting cases of state failure (Goldstone & all, 2010). At least three characteristics of this wave of state-failure literature can be explained as a consequence of this descriptive-predictive orientation. First, rather than being constructed around a solid theoretical core, the failed-states framework was constituted from the amalgamation of contributions from different research programs in an attempt to identify consequences of state dysfunctionality for the local populations as well as for the architecture of the international system. In regards to the former, Luke and Toal show how

defined by an intellectual community of non-governmental relief organisations, United Nations officials, and worried Western security analysts, the idea of the ‘failed state’ emerged as all these interests grappled with the problems posed by ethnic cleansing in the former Yugoslavia, narco-capitalism in Latin America, widespread famine in warravaged Somalia, state-organised mass genocide in Rwanda, and massive refugee flight from Iraq, Afghanistan, and Sudan (1998: 16).
In regard to the latter, the preoccupation with the “failed states” re-entered the academic field in general by continuing the line of investigation opened up by Jackson’s approach and evaluating the impact humanitarian intervention has on the norm of sovereignty (Ayoob, 1995), on UN and the intra-state conflict (Duke, 1994), or on peacekeeping and after 1992 on peacebuilding (Wedgwood, 1995). Following the release of Clinton’s National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement in July 1994, this preoccupation was placed in the particular context of democratization (Ottaway, 1995; Dorff, 1996) opening the path for the crystallization of liberal institutionalism as the dominant peace-building paradigm working on “the assumption that the surest foundation for peace, both within and between states, is market democracy, that is, a liberal democratic polity and a market-oriented economy” (Paris, 1997: 56).

Second, despite the rising popularity of the framework within the different constituencies of policy-making, academic and developmental circles, the preeminence of the descriptive rather than analytical perspective explains to a large extent the absence of a widely accepted definition of what constitutes failure as well as the lack of a consensus about the parameters needed to measure it. Instead of an autonomous concept able to exist on its own, “state-failure” is defined in opposition with or as “deviancy, aberration and breakdown from the norms of statehood” (Morton, 2005: 372). Thus, if successful states are seen as those that “control defined territories and populations, conduct diplomatic relations with other states, monopolize legitimate violence within their territories and succeed in providing adequate social goods to their populations” (Brooks, 2005: 1160), the situations calling up for international (humanitarian) interventions are those of “breakdown of political, economic and social institutions; loss of territorial control; civil unrest; mass population displacement and violent internal conflict” (Morton, 2005: 372). Indeed, in a paragraph worthy to be quoted at length, Zartman portrays an image of state collapse conceptualized as a breakdown of the social contract between the state and its people defined predominantly in functional terms:16

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16 Zartman refers to “collapse”, but neither him nor his fellow scholars introduce any substantial specific differentiation between the “failure” and collapse”. The distinction
The basic functions of the state are no longer performed ... As the decision making center of government, the state is paralysed and inoperative: laws are not made, order is not preserved, and societal cohesion is not enhanced. As a symbol of identity, it has lost its power of conferring a name on its people and a meaning to their social action. As a territory, it is no longer assured security and provisionment by a central sovereign organization. As the authoritative political institution, it has lost its legitimacy, which is therefore up for grabs ... As a system of socio-economic organization, its functional balance of inputs and outputs is destroyed, it no longer receives support from nor exercises controls over its people, and it is no longer even the target of demands, because its people know that it is incapable of providing supplies (1995: 5, emphasis added). 17

While dramatic in its formulation, this description of state failure has a much reduced analytical value. First of all, this conceptualization – which, as will be shown below, by and large remains the approach guiding policy-oriented analysis today, assumes the existence of a single, homogenous and universal form of “successful” state against which failure is measured. Second, prioritizing description in the construction of the category of failed states around various functions to be (mis)performed – particularly when little attention is paid to the relations and the hierarchy between these functions – leads to the amassing of a wide variety of cases from “states with 2 million persons like Liberia or 200 millions (Indonesia); strong states with small areas out of control (Colombia) as much as to weak and legitimate states with low capacity but high legitimacy (East Timor) or predatory states deliberately looting the state for personal or corrupt ends (Liberia)” (Call 2006: 7). Again, the issue continues to plague the current literature on state failure, particularly as it transpires from the various attempts at index constructions (see in chapter three, pages 101-103).

between the two is introduced, as I am aware, only in the post 9/11 years (Milliken and Krause, 2002; Rotberg, 2003) to refer to the state’s dysfunctionality as a process rather than a static moment.

17 In a curious twist, there is a different standard applied to “collapsed states” compared to the one applied to “successful” states. If in the later the state is judged by the degree to which it performs certain functions demanded/expected by its citizens (Migdal, 2001: 16), in the former the relation is reversed, the citizens’ expectations - or in Migdal’s terms “images of the state” are shaped by what the state can – or rather cannot deliver. This double standard dominates the perspective on failed states in the very rare cases in which the issue of citizens’ expectations towards the state is even investigated – most of the times these are in fact the expectations of the ambiguously defined “international community” towards what the functions of the state must be. One remarkable exception remains the “state-in-society” perspective. Based on the research of the Solomon Islands case, Douvenge for instance emphasized the way in which “weak administrative states may remain intact in part because people expect little from the state and do not depend on the state for their survival … because non-state organizations – church, land owners and big men – provide many typical state services and because the services that the state does provide have been poor for so long” (1998: 4).
Finally, deriving both from the observable common characteristics of these cases and the conceptualization of the failed state as a “degenerative disease” (Zartman, 1995: 8) affecting the successful state, the most salient element setting apart the category of failed state is the persistent preoccupation with domestic political violence and internal armed conflict. Indeed, in lieu of a definition, the Task Force project delineates the problem of failed state by reference to cases defined by the presence of “a wide range of civil conflicts, political crises, and massive human-rights violations that are typically associated with state breakdown” allowing the identification of four categories of crises associated with failure which they label as revolutionary wars, ethnic wars, adverse regime change and genocides and *politicide* (Goldstone et al. 2000: 4). In this sense, the emerging literature on state failure for which “the internal conflict is a ‘normal’ aspect of a weak state” (Jackson, 2001: 65) converges with and is deeply influenced by the literature on intra-state conflict, defined variably as “small” or “limited” (Snyder and Malik, 1999), “ethnic” (Kaufman, 1996) or “post-modern”/ “new war” (Kaldor, 1999). By the end of the decade the state-failure framework fused with both the “economy of war” research (Reno, 1997; Berdal and Keen, 1997; Keen, 1998; Berdal and Malone, 2000; le Billon, 2000) and the literature on warlordism (Olson, 1993; Hills, 1997; Duffield, 1998; Reno, 1998; Rich, 1999; Elwert, 1999; Jung and Schlichte, 1999). It is only at this confluence that the image of the successful state against which the “failure” is to be measured was enduringly linked with the Weberian definition of the modern state as “a compulsory political association with continuous organization whose administrative staff successfully upholds a claim to the monopoly of the legitimate use of force in enforcement of its order in a given territorial unit” (Weber, 1947: 154).18

To sum up, the development of the failed state framework during the period between the end of the Cold War and the 9/11 attack was marked by the initial appropriation of the concept by policy-makers engaged in the

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18 Prior to the interaction with the literature on inter-state conflict and in particular with the emerging research on “economies of war” and “warlordism”, the reference to the Weberian understanding in the state-failure network is rather limited, indirect and peripheral. As shown above, the prior literature was more interested in identifying the *effects* of the state failure – judged particularly through the impact on the human security including the issue of human rights and democracy.
practice of humanitarian intervention. The enrollment of new academic segments in this context conferred an instrumental character to the new concept, responsible for its descriptive rather than analytical character. However, by the end of the period, the convergence with various branches of intra-state conflict and conflict resolution research agendas pushed the state-failure analysis in new more analytical directions particularly under the impulse of ordering the diversity of cases under various typologies and identifying the main factors causing the phenomenon in the first place. Thus, by 1999, the description of functional characteristics starts to be accompanied by efforts to identify generic causes for failure (Alao, 1999). This was reflected in turn in the policy arena with the development during the Clinton Administrations of a reactive approach constructed around multilateralism, preventive diplomacy and the promotion of collective security aiming to “attack the root causes of conflict within fragile states [leading] to policies that stressed open markets and the development of economic links, the promotion of democracy and human rights, the development of infrastructures, and the strengthening of government to enable states to resolve their own conflicts” (Stohl, 2001: 2). By and large, for scholars and policy-makers alike the issue of state-failure occupied a somehow peripheral position. Indeed, as Wolf shows:

> the issue as a whole was primarily not seen in terms of posing a risk to international security, but merely as an ‘unfortunate’ regional phenomenon of either temporary significance (Central and Eastern Europe and former Soviet Union) or of a more endemic yet not particularly threatening nature (especially Africa) (2010: 3).

This perception changed radically in light of the events of 9/11 2001.
Chapter 3

Following the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the subsequent invasion on the part of political radicals in the context of "the global war on terror" and "war against terrorism," the new strategies emerged. According to Kegan and Shelly (2002: 211), in the post-9/11 world, "state failure" was placed once again in a different context. As we have seen above, in the 1990s, the question of deconstruction was not taken through the ideological lenses of postmodernization theories. In the following, the historical context and theoretical criticisms of the theories emerge. The dominant paradigm for the postcolonial context in the study of "state failure" has been that of deconstruction. In the 1990s and 2000s, a crisis was corresponding to Huntington's "Third Wave of Democratization." A discourse emerged, "the problem of state dysfunctionality, not as a form of liberal rationalism, but as a form of "state failure,"" emerged. This was a conceptual shift governed by political determinism, globalization, and my assertion on the expansion of the germs of globality, and the struggle of human rights activists and transforms the interventions. In this new world, after 9/11, in the context and, therefore, the performance of state failure was being viewed in a different context of state intervention hierarchy.

To be sure, the phenomenon of what policy is called in academic as "state failure" in a security context is not in itself a phenomenon unique to the post-9/11 world. The globalization paradigm and "War on Terror" programs implemented during the Cold War were shown in the policies of unstable and dependable oil-rich economies in the Third World. However, the concept of bipolarity this year was subordinated in the geopolitical strategy of "striving security for the First World" (Cecil, 2006: 90). In the view of some scholars described the ways in which "nation-building" during the Cold War constituted a Western strategy for containing Marxism in the "Third World" (Hippler, 2005: 3). With the world security displaced by the dominant type of development became another type of geopolitical intervention in which, as illustrated brilliantly by Kagan's description of Afghanistan, "states became the American citizens in the 21st century local religion" (2002: 523). In his comprehensive study, Michael Latham the.
Chapter 3. 9/11 and the securitization of failure

Following the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the subsequent reaction on the part of political leaders in the context of “the Global War on Terror emerging as the new strategic major narrative” (Buerger and Bethke, 2010: 21), the failed-state framework was placed once again in a different context. As we have seen above, in the 1950s the problem of dysfunctional political units was seen through the ideological lenses of modernization theories. In the following two decades, under intense criticism of these theories, the dominant theoretical paradigm for the postcolonial context of late-comers to the statute of “modern statehood” was that of development. In the 1980s and 1990s wave (roughly corresponding to Huntington’s “third wave of democratization”), a different understanding of the problem of state disfunctionality, this time labeled as “state failure”, emerged. This was a conceptual milieu governed by political democratization, globalization – with its emphasis on the expansion of the principles of free markets – and the triumph of human rights doctrines and humanitarian interventions. In this latest wave, with 9/11 as the main catalyst, the problematic of state-failure was solidly pushed into a different realm, that of international security.

To be sure, the placement of what today is labeled as state-failure in a security context is not in itself a feature unique to the post 9/11 world. The modernization paradigm and later developmental programs implemented during the Cold War were aimed at the building of “stable and dependable market economies in the Third World”, but in the context of bipolarity this goal was subordinated to the geostrategic objective of “ensuring security for the First World” (Coelho, 2008: 80). In this sense, various scholars described the ways in which “nation-building” during the Cold War “constituted a Western strategy for containing socialism and the Soviet Union in the Third World” (Hippler, 2005a: 5). With the same strategy replicated by the communist camp, development became another tool for geopolitical competition in which, as illustrated brilliantly by Cullather’s depiction of Afghanistan, “dams became the American alternative to the Communist land reforms” (2002: 523). In his comprehensive study, Michael Latham also
“placed the Kennedy programs [of modernization in the Third World] in the context of a ‘flexible response to communism’” (2000: 10). The security threat in that context was coming not from the newly independent states themselves, but from the possibility of the rival bloc’s expansion if its own model of development and organization of political communities became more attractive. As such, the modernization and development programs were aimed at maintaining the status quo, that is, the balanced coexistence of opposing models. By contrast, state-failure in the post 9/11 era is securitized in a manner in which the referent object of security becomes not just a region (or its corresponding bloc), but the Westphalian system of states itself, and in which the only solution offered is the universalization of a single, homogenous model of the state. The objective of this section is to investigate the way in which this securitization emerged and developed, as well as the consequences deriving from this process.

The remainder of the chapter deals with this transformation in the state-failure framework starting from a succinct presentation of the paradigm of securitization developed by the Copenhagen School. This presentation will assist in understanding the processes through which failed states were presented as a security threat. In particular, the securitization of state-failure was achieved by placing it in the arenas of terrorism, underdevelopment and poverty, global health and environmental degradation. The second subsection touches on the consequences of this securitization on the expansion of the state-failure framework in terms of the network’s membership as well as its qualitative and quantitative re-conceptualization. The chapter will close by identifying the main consequence of securitizing state-failure in the post 9/11 era as that of allowing a change in the referent object from the individual or local communities to that of the international system of states. The conclusion argues that this change is made possible by the identification of the (liberal) state – to be reconstituted or “built” – as the only solution to the threats to human security brought about by conflict, underdevelopment and political collapse.
State-failure as a threat

The issue of states unable or unwilling to control their territory was slowly but steadily becoming an important one in the 1990s international relations. Yet it was a series of humanitarian catastrophes combined with terrorist attacks initiated from such places, and in particularly the 9/11 attack in 2001, that radically magnified the importance decision-makers attributed to a phenomenon defined only in general terms and on an ad-hoc basis. To understand how and why such a change took place, it is important to turn our attention to the “securitization” paradigm developed by the Copenhagen School around the work of scholars such as Ole Weaver, Barry Buzan and their collaborators. With its gestation period stretching across the final decade of the Cold War – elements of the theory can be identified in Buzan, 1991 – and the first decade following the end of the Cold War – it was first exposed as a substantial paradigm in Buzan, Weaver and Wilde, 1998 – the “securitization” theory starts from the expansion of the security agenda in two directions. On the one hand, in the dying days of the Cold War, proponents of the “horizontal widening” of the security agenda were preoccupied with the consequences of expanding the focus beyond the strictly military domain towards other security sectors including the political, economic, societal and environmental. On the other hand, calls were made for a “vertical” expansion, or “deepening” of the re-conceptualization of security moving the center of gravity from the state to the human, from the national to the local, regional and ultimately global levels.

Confronted with the resulting multiplicity of levels and dimensions, the scholars working within what became known as the Copenhagen School, had to deal with the issue of how one selects between these elements in deciding what constitutes security. As such, the assumption on which the school works is that, far from being an objective “reality”, what constitutes a “security” issue is in fact inter-subjectively constructed through what – inspired from linguistics – they called a “speech act”. As a result, a “securitization move” refers to a speech act “through which an inter-subjective understanding is constructed within a political community to treat something as an existential threat to a valued referent object, and to enable a call for urgent and exceptional measures to deal with the threat” (Buzan and Wæver, 2003: 491).
Through this, the Copenhagen School’s understanding of security is constructed around the constitutive elements (the speech act, the securitizing actor and the audience – to which one may add the referent object) and the degree of success for the securitizing move – analyzed in terms of “facilitating conditions” (Strzel, 2007: 358). While this brief description does no justice to the complex debates raised by the “securitization” framework, it does provide the explicative elements to explore the manner in which the phenomenon of failed-state has been treated as a security issue and the consequences of this treatment.

While ever since the promotion of the “quasi-state” concept in the 1980s the category of dysfunctional states was treated as a “public bad” (from either a humanitarian, developmental or economic perspective), the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks precipitated the treatment of state-failure as an international security challenge. The move to securitize state-failure as an international threat is visible first and most importantly in the national security strategy documents of the developed countries and the international organizations. The tone on this litany of documents is captured in the oft-quoted US 2002 National Security Strategy in which the Bush administration stated its belief that “America is now threatened less by conquering states than we are by failing ones” (NSS, 2002: 1). In short time, this mantra then became a leitmotif reproduced in other significant documents.¹ Very shortly, the first European Security Strategy (2003) describes the “alarming phenomenon” of state failure as one of the main threats to the E.U. The United Kingdom follows suit with the Prime Minister’s Strategy Unit (PMSU) suggesting in 2005 urgent and sustained measures to fight the effects of state failure. Similar positions were expressed in the security documents of Canada – through its 2005 International Policy Statement, or Australia – through AusAid 2006 White Paper. This threat assessment is maintained across the political divide as demonstrated in the case of Australia where the change from a Liberal to a Labour government did nothing to alter the perspective of state failure expressed in terms of a Pacific “arc of instability” as “deepening the challenges to Australia’s national security” (Fry, 2008: 14).

¹ The collection that follows is taken from Stewart 2007: 646.
Individual governments’ strategic documents share the identification of state-failure as global security threat, with major international organizations such as “major donors of the OECD (2005) [pursuing] a so-called ‘Fragile States’ initiative, in partnership with the World Bank (2006) Low Income Countries under Stress (LICUS) program”, or the UN – as illustrated by the creation of the Peacebuilding Commission aimed at fighting the security threats coming from failed states (Stewart, 2007). Individual departments within states also share this vision. In the military, for instance, the US Army’s Field Manual (3-07, Stability Operations) reflects the same logic of identifying failed states as a security threat, with the claim that “the greatest threat to our national security comes not in the form of terrorism or ambitious powers but from fragile states either unable or unwilling to provide for the basic needs of their people” (Logan and Preble, 2010: 22).

What this brief and by no means complete list of documents shows is that the main impulse in the securitization of state-failure comes from powerful Western states and the main institutions of the international system. However, even if the creation may have originated in the West, it would be a mistake to reduce the actors active in the perpetuation of the failed-state paradigm as a security issue to the Western world. Indeed, as mentioned at the beginning of Chapter 2, elites in the non-Western world have proven eager to capitalize on the fears of instability resulting from state-failure to strengthen their own credentials in relation to both their own domestic audiences, as well as to their Western backers (see Jourde, 2007; see also note four in Chapter 1 above). But states and international organizations are not the only actors involved in the securitization move; academics and security commentators are just as engaged in the process. Preble and Logan recently collected a series of declarations of this kind, out of which they single out the cases of Francis Fukuyama’s famous endorsement of the opinion that weak and failed states represent “the single most critical threat to US national security” and that of Lawrence Korb and Robert Boorstin from the conservative Center for American Progress with their allegation that “weak and failing states pose as great a danger to the American people and international stability as do potential conflicts among the great powers” (2010: 20).
The list of actors involved in proposing a securitization move is much longer, but for the purpose of this section it is sufficient to show that such a move was made by influential states, international organizations and individuals. The next important element to approach is the mechanics or the logic of the speech act. Why have failed states appeared to have become, almost overnight, such a threat? In order to support this securitization move, a plethora of connections between state-failure and various processes threatening global security were made. Indeed, as Gourevitch noted already in 2004, “this phenomenon was held responsible for just about every threat to international peace and security that existed: civil wars, mass migration, ethnic conflict, environmental degradation, drug smuggling, arms trafficking and terrorism” (2004: 255). In a similar vein, discussing the local, regional and ultimately international consequences of state-fragility, Torres and Anderson refer to a series of diverse issues: conflict and the humanitarian consequences deriving from conflict, ranging from human rights abuses to poverty and famine; global security threats, ranging from organized crime, drugs and human trafficking, as well as the risks associated with the disruption of major communication routes and reduced global prosperity; finally, the disruption of the cooperative nature of the international systems when confronted with controversial issues such as international interventions (2004:8).

But none of the other correlations had a more intense influence on the securitization of state-failure than the alleged association with terrorism. Under the impact of the terrorist attacks on the US on September 11, 2001, officials in government departments and security analysts substituted the perception of failed states as a humanitarian matter with a perception of failed states as a source of insecurity at a regional and global scale. Ever since, the association between Afghanistan – classified as a “failed state” – and the Taliban planners and executors of the 9/11 attack had constituted the bedrock of the thesis that failed states provide “ungoverned spaces” which constitute “breeding grounds” for terrorist activities. The fundamental assumption of this thesis is that “in a vacuum of public authority—with no functioning or effective institutions of police enforcement or justice—terrorist groups can actively recruit, train, and plan attacks which target either local or foreign interests ... free from detection, interference, or interdiction” (Newmann,
2007: 467). Despite some incongruence, the archetypal case of the thesis remains Afghanistan – to the extent that some authors accuse the proponents of the failed-states – terrorism link of “seizing on an important single data point and using it to justify a focus on failed states more broadly” (Logan and Preble, 2010: 27; also Stewart, 2007: 644 or Hannan and Besada, 2007: 7).\(^2\) However, besides Afghanistan, recent cases brought forward as instances supporting the case for a correlation between state weakness/failure and terrorism include Pakistan, Sudan, Palestine, Lebanon, Yemen, as well as peripheral areas with a weak control from the states of Philippines and Indonesia where terrorist groups such as Abu Sayyaf and respectively Jemaah Islamiya operate; and, most ironically, Iraq following the removal of Saddam Hussein’s regime. Together with Afghanistan, Somalia perfectly illustrates the radical change in the perception of the threat represented by failed states in the new millennium. While today there is an already immense literature on the link between state-failure and Somali piracy (Nincic 2008, Sørensen, 2008; Gilpin, 2009; Stevenson, 2010), despite its long history as the paradigmatic case of state failure, the presentation of Somalia as a threat to regional and indeed international security is rather recent. As Doornbos noted, “while Somalia’s disappearance from the international map as of 1991 may have caused some unease and concern to the international community for the precedent it signified, its disintegration hardly posed a source of worry to its neighbors” (2006: 7, emphasis added).\(^3\)

While the territorial base and the absence of control and interdiction occupies a central role in the “breeding grounds” argument linking terrorism

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\(^2\) The case of Afghanistan in 2001 is more complex than the superficial imagine projected implicitly by the proponents of this thesis. Not only were Taliban controlling a vast majority of its territory – thus eliminating a core criteria for the label of “failed state”, but the relation between Al Qaeda and the Taliban leadership was far from being conflictual – thus the thesis that Al Qaeda was out of reach for Taliban stays on shaky grounds. In fact, as it was pointed out, the situation may have been closer to the classical image of a state-sponsored terrorism (Newmann, 2007: 468).

\(^3\) In recent years the coming to prominence of the piracy issue changed the assessment of Somalia’s threat at the international level. But at the same time, the change in attitude was also noted in terms of its neighbors, particularly as a result of the 2007 Ethiopian intervention. However, the context of the intervention – against the consolidation in power of the Union of Islamic Courts – confirms Doornbos’ verdict that [the neighbors and particularly Ethiopia] had little motivation to help resurrect a united Somali state framework except on terms favorable to its own strategic goals” (2006: 7) and, as the 2007 intervention shows, may in fact have had incentives to prevent the strengthening of the Somali state in conditions it perceived as unfavorable. Similar concerns were raised in terms of Pakistan’s position towards Afghanistan.
with the issue of failed states, they are by no means the only ones. Other linkages were recently identified by Menkhaus: the risk of “takeover by a radical movement of a failed state with nuclear weapons [Pakistan] or critical economic assets [Saudi Arabia]; “safe haven” – as opposed to the use of the failed state for launching attacks; targeting the so-called “soft targets” within the failed state – such as international hotels, global economic assets, embassies and so on; financing in the context of lootable resources ranging from drugs to diamonds, timber and the like; and, last but not least, the provision of fertile ground for terrorist recruiting, particularly in the context of predatory and repressive states (2010: 93-94).

The relation between terrorism and the failed-state is now increasingly under attack with several scholars questioning at least the direct relation between the danger of international terrorism and the failed state. Edward Newmann, for instance, emphasizes correctly the fact that while not all “failed or weak states” host terrorist groups, many of these groups are active in the more stable and prosperous states, either in the Middle East or the Western world (2007). In a similar vein, Patrick Stewart remarks that while the direct link between terrorism and the failed state is at worst just anecdotal, terrorists are likely to find weak but functioning states like Pakistan or Kenya more congenial bases of operations” (Stewart, 2007: 653, emphasis added). While the critique these and other authors bring is rather persuasive, it does not eliminate the dominant view linking failed states to terrorism, a security threat of global proportions with consequences that will be elaborated upon shortly. Moreover, while terrorism brought home this “reality” of state-failure as a global security threat, it also forced scholars and politicians alike to concentrate on “a range of [other] pathologies that have been associated with the condition of weak and failed states, some of [whom] are claimed to have an international or even global impact” (Newmann, 2009: 429).

Indeed, beyond the issue of terrorism, it is generally agreed that the effects of state-failure become evident beyond the boundaries of the respective political community through contagion and spillover at both regional and international level. Thus, immediately affected are the “neighboring states [which] bear a heavy brunt of state failure, in the form of arms races, refugee flows, the spread of disease and lowered economic growth” (Francois and
Sud, 2006: 14). All these criteria are associated with indicators of state-
failure. In terms of armed conflict – one of the fundamental characteristics of
the failed state being the inability to exercise a monopoly over the means of
violence –, numerous studies have repeatedly confirmed what was defined as a
“neighborhood effect” of armed conflict, that is, the tendency of armed
conflicts to cluster in certain regions such as the Balkans or the African Great
Lakes (Braithwaite, 2006; Buhaug and Gledisch, 2008).4 One important factor
in the construction of this clustering of conflicts is the ease with which armed
groups cross the permeable borders of “failed states”: such is the case of the
decline of the Democratic Republic of Congo as a result of the Rwandan
genocide in the mid 1990s, or of the collapse of Sierra Leone to which the
civil war in neighboring Liberia clearly contributed (Howard, 2008: 131).

The other crucial factor – simultaneously an enabling cause for the
phenomenon of conflict clustering and a result of the conflict itself –, is
represented by the flow of forced migration (refugees) associated with the
failed state. With very few exceptions, processes associated with state-failure
– conflict, lack of adequate health and education services, systematic killings
and other large scale abuses of human rights among them, produce large
waves of refugees, the vast majority of whom end up for long periods in
neighboring countries. Under the label of “refugee warriors”, Zolberg, Suhrke,
and Aguayo pointed to the recruitment of soldiers from among the refugees as
a major factor contributing to the perpetuation of war in the country of origin
and the spread of conflict to the neighboring host countries (1989). The
literature on the militarization of refugee camps added other mechanisms such
as the diversion of aid for military purposes or the trafficking of guns, drugs
and people (Lisher, 2002; Tanner and Stedman, 2003; Grare, 2003). Besides
the already mentioned case of the African Great Lakes region in the wake of
the Rwandan conflict, abundant evidence has been gathered in recent years on
the destabilizing effects of the huge flows of Afghan refugees – numbering
around 4 million people – on neighboring countries such as Iran and Pakistan.
Palestinian refugees played a similar role in destabilizing the fragile
equilibrium of Lebanon in the 1970s and contributing to the country’s

4 For more detailed analysis of the neighborhood effect in the context of state-failure, see
plunging into a long civil war. Other examples include the exploitation of refugee camps by military groups such as the Lord’s Resistance Army to destabilize Uganda and Sudan, or the actions of the Sudanese People’s Liberation Army taking advantage of the waves of refugees in both Uganda and Chad (Nahm, 2007).

Economic development, environmental degradation and global health represent three other areas of interest in securitizing the issue of state-failure. In the context of widening the concept of security, increased attention is paid to the problem of global health. The history of what can be called the security-health nexus has a rather long pedigree. It starts at least with the fourteenth century destruction brought forward across Europe by the bubonic plague (Black Death), and continues with the social and political consequences of health catastrophes such as the 1830s cholera epidemic linked by some to the revolutionary movements around 1848, or the pandemic influenza ravaging a Europe fighting the final months of the First World War (Price-Smith, 2010: 2). The health issue became an important aspect of international politics already in the 1990s in the context of the spread of HIV/AIDS. However, the 9/11 attacks in 2001 and the emphasis they placed on non-traditional security threats constitute a decisive impulse towards an intensified “securitization of health” paralleling the anxiety produced by the spread not only of HIV/AIDS, but also of SARS (2002-3), Avian Influenza (H5N1), and the 2009 H1N1 “swine flu” (Elbe, 2006; Fidler, 2007; McInnes and Lee, 2006).

In this context, the issue of health was increasingly perceived as a (global) security issue, as proven by its inclusion in the 2004 UN Report of the High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change or the US Department of Defense position, according to which “emerging infectious diseases are a significant threat to global and US national security” (quoted in Maclean, 2008: 482). The pressure exercised by acute health problems on the development of weak states was well documented – particularly in the context of HIV/AIDS in the African region. However, increasingly attention was paid to the ways in which state failure itself – through the absence of services in the area of health care in terms both of prevention and treatment – can contribute to the emergence and the spread of infectious diseases. Thus, in the absence of adequate resources and medical infrastructure, of prime concern is the
existence of failed states as a “breeding ground” for the development of new diseases (Ebola, HIV/AIDS, West Nile viruses are all considered to originate in such states), or the reappearance with devastating effects of diseases such as polio, Tuberculosis or Dengue Fever (Bruntland, 2002). Moreover, the lack of adequate infrastructure to fight diseases combined with the porous nature of the failed states’ borders, the creation of massive waves of refugees, and the presence of international peacekeeping troops led to serious concerns regarding the uncontrollable spread of infectious diseases to regional and global levels (Francois and Sud, 2006: 145; Stewart, 2007: 656-7; Newmann, 2009: 431).

In a similar manner, failed states are seen to increase the threats to the natural environment, both as producers of environmental catastrophes (the desertification in Darfur or deforestation in Pakistan as a result of the uncontrolled fight over resources), or because they lack the means and capacity to act for correcting these unbalances (Newmann, 2009: 430). As a result, the “contagiousness” of state-failure leading to the spread of armed conflicts or infectious diseases and environmental degradation is complemented by the spillover effect of underdevelopment. Most arguments in this direction refer to the series of studies initiated by Chauvet, Collier and their colleagues (2005, 2007a; 2007b) pointing to high economic costs suffered by a state as a result of being in the neighborhood of a “failed state”. These costs include the diversion of investment from productive sectors of the economy towards the military sectors, capital flight and the loss of foreign direct and indirect investment, the rise of transaction costs, loss of export markets or loss of tourism (Lambach, 2007a: 36). According to this line of investigation, the rates of economic growth are on average “1.5 percentage points lower than those in states which are not neighboring a failed state”, but as an aggregate – with the average failed state having three neighbors –, regional consequences are much magnified (Chauvet et al. 2007b: 16). While the exact calculations should be seen as controversial, the conclusions of such analyses are relevant for the securitization of state-failure. In their own words, “the combined total cost of failing states is around $276bn per year - double what would be generated were the OECD to raise aid to the UN target level of 0.7 percent of GDP” (2007a: 18). Additionally, the bulk of these costs are
disproportionately carried by the region as such: "the largest component of the cost of failing states is the effects on their neighbors: 86 per cent of the total cost of failing states are costs which are inflicted on other countries" (Chauvet et al. 2007b: 2).

Little surprise then that this perspective translates into an argument for international interventions, not only as a "case for over-riding sovereignty in order to overcome the free-rider problem in aid provision ... roughly commensurate with that for inducing reform in failing states", but as "an ethical case for over-riding the sovereignty of the governments of failing states based on the rights of other governments to protect their own citizens, rather than the duty of other governments to protect the citizens of failing states" (2007a: 18-19). In the language of the Copenhagen School, the deployment of a label such as "failed state" in the context of a securitization move linking it with threats such as terrorism or/and underdevelopment justifies international intervention as an exceptional measure against the principle of sovereignty.

As a result of this securitization move, the dominant perception in policy-making circles after 2001, as reflected in the Failed States Index commentary, was that in an increasingly interdependent world

the weakest states aren’t just a danger to themselves [anymore]. They can threaten the progress and stability of countries half a world away ... [and can lead to] a universal crisis by swallowing apparently unrelated peoples into a single "instability" vortex of worldwide ‘contagion’ (quoted in Borg and Figuerra-Holland, 2010: 10).

With state-failure elevated to a strategic position, the 1990s policy of containment and selective (humanitarian) intervention was considered ineffective and insufficient as an approach for dealing with the issue of failed states in the new century. In order to prevent and counter the threats deriving from state-failure, a new strategy required the targeting of the permissive causes of these threats or, as expressed in the US National Strategy for

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5 Until recently the securitization of state-failure concentrated on the role such states play in creating the conditions that enable different threats to the national, regional and global security to actualize. Recently, however, some voices bring back a more traditional (realist) perspective on the issue of state-failure, claiming that while these spaces may constitute arenas in which Great Powers would cooperate for the reduction of common threats (terrorism, underdevelopment, health pandemics or environmental degradation), they may/will also constitute arenas of competition between Great Powers for filling the vacuum that weakness creates. The examples brought in support of this thesis are Russia’s invasion of Georgia in 2008 and the 1982 war between Syria and Israel in Lebanon (Grygiel, 2009).
Combating Terrorism, "diminishing the underlying conditions that terrorists seek to exploit" (Stewart, 2007: 653). Given that the "international architecture for economic political and developmental cooperation is based on assumptions about state" (Whaites, 2008: 3), the post-9/11 solution to a range of threats associated with state-failure, from terrorism to civil wars, from underdevelopment and poverty to environmental degradation and global health, presented itself as identifying and strengthening vulnerable states by bolstering their capacities and promoting (imposing?) liberal principles of good governance. In this way, the securitization of state-failure became in effect an argument in favor of strengthening the position of the modern, liberal state as the main unit of the International System and through this, an argument for the strengthening of the International Society of states. At the same time, however, it also re-shaped the state-failure framework of analysis, an issue which the next subsection will deal with in greater detail.

Re-conceptualization of the state-failure framework

The securitization of state-failure by associating it with global terrorism, underdevelopment, environmental degradation and global health – either as an enabling condition or as a direct cause – changed the way the phenomenon was perceived. This had important effects on the entire framework of analysis. As already suggested, state-failure has moved from being seen from a perspective of humanitarian emergency and (under)development in the past to one in which security is the main focus for policy makers and largely for scholars as well. This in turn led to a change in the scope of analysis. In the context of intense globalization, the securitization of state-failure is now discussed not only at the national and occasionally regional level, as in the previous stage, but as a major – if not the major – threat to international security and global stability. This double expansion of the framework (in scope and arena) was conducive to a further incorporation of various actors expanding the network to include International Organizations, think-tanks and an explosion of academic research in various disciplines.

The impact of this renewed interest in the concept of state-failure as well as the manner in which it is studied was deeply consequential, in the
sense of also leading to new, more refined conceptualizations. In response to the growing policy-oriented demand, the attention of post 9/11 analyses moved away from the description of the effects of this phenomenon - or “symptoms”, as they were (are) often presented in the literature of state-failure - towards attempts to identify its causes – often in search of “root causes” to be directly corrected (ICISS, 2001; Rotberg, 2003; Carment, 2003; Weinstein et al. 2004). In turn, and again with an instrumental drive, this new focus led to an increased complexity of qualitative analysis – from the re-conceptualization of state failure as a gradual process of decay (Rotberg 2004) to the differentiation between the functional and institutional nature of the decay (Milliken and Krause, 2002; Clement, 2005; Hameiri, 2007). On the quantitative side of the analysis, it led to an abundant production of various indexes of failure – from the Failed State Index to the Ibrahim Index of African Governance or the Global Peace Index –, paralleled by an increasing degree of sophistication in the attempt at modeling the causes of state-failure by a new generation of scholarship (Clement, 2005; Carment et al. 2009; Howard, 2008).

With regard to the incorporation of new actors in the state-failure network, monitoring the publications on the subject for the 1990-2009 period on Social Science Citation Index (SSCI) and the Google Scholar databases,\(^6\) Bueger and Bethke are able to offer a graphic expression of this exponential increase:

\begin{center}
\textbf{Fig. 3 Publications on state-failure recorded in Google scholar, 1990-2009}
\end{center}

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\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{fig3.png}
\end{center}

\textit{(Source: Bueger and Bethke, 2010: 26).}

\(^{6}\) The SSCI database measures articles published in peer-reviewed journals while Google Scholar includes the wider “grey literature” of government and policy reports, conference proceedings or working papers.
Driven by policy-considerations, this wave of academic research has "generally been undertaken by policy-oriented scholars and think-tanks, and it is often funded by public sources or government-related agencies" (Newman, 2009: 426). This expansion did not only affect the academic fields. Numerous national development agencies - of which the US (USAID), Australia (AusAID), Sweden (SIDA), or the Dutch, German and Canadian ones are the most active - became closely involved in the design of new strategies for dealing with the issue of state-failure - or "fragility", in the industry's evolving vernacular. Likewise, international financial institutions brought their own contribution and individual perspective: the World Bank's LICUS initiative with the associated analytical framework presented in the report "Engaging with Fragile States" (2006); OECD/DAC with its report on "Principles for Good International Engagement in Fragile States and Situations" (2005/7), IMF's Policy Report on "The Fund's Engagement with Fragile States and Post-conflict Countries" (2008), Asian Development Bank's "Achieving Development Effectiveness in Weak Performing Countries" (2007) or African Development Bank's "Strategy for Enhanced Engagement in Fragile States" (2008).

Other international organizations are putting this preoccupation at the forefront of their strategic documents. In addition to the already mentioned 2003 Security Strategy, E.U.'s position towards failed states is reflected in his report "Towards an EU response to situations of fragility" (2007). Similarly, in preparations for its New Strategic Concept to be released later in 2010 - the first in the post-9/11 era -, there are numerous calls for the transformation of NATO to address, among other things, the issue of failed states (Chivvis, 2009; Gates, 2010). Finally, a plethora of think-tanks and research institutes commission dozens of reports on the issue of state-failure and best strategies to cope with it. The list is too large to be comprehensive here, but among the most productive ones in the field one can count prominent US-based organizations (RAND, Carnegie, Centre for Global Development, Institute for Peace, Brookings), the UK-based Overseas Development Institute, the Crisis States Research Centre at the London School of Economics, the Danish Institute for International Studies, the Brussels-based International Crisis Group, Clingendael Institute in the Netherlands, and Spain's FRIDE.
The competition between the different actors for authoritative control of the network has led to the usage of different categories: while the category of “failed-state” continues to be appropriated by foreign policy circles and policy-oriented IR scholars, a new, broader category is introduced by development agencies and the affiliated think tanks, that of “fragility” (Buenger and Bethke, 2010: 30). Using the term “fragility” to cover “a broad range of failing, failed and recovering states” (USAID), development agencies share to a certain extent the UK’s DFID perspective which includes in this category “states where the government cannot or will not deliver core functions to the majority of its people, including the poor” (quoted in Hannan and Besada, 2007: 4). The relation between these categories is not always clear, but in general it seems to be agreed that the concept of “fragility” promoted in and by the international donor community tends to be inclusive of the related concepts as shown in Fig. 4.

Fig. 4 State dysfunctionality: a possible relation between terminologies.

(Source: adapted by author from Carment et al, 2009: 7).

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7 With the intention of attaching an economic, quantifiable meaning to the framework, the World Bank adopts the terminology of “fragility” starting with January 2006 (Carvalho, 2006: vii) to replace its own concept of Low-Income Countries under Stress - LICUS which from its inception (2002) was applied to states characterized by “weak policies, institutions and governance” to the extent that “[economic] growth is highly unlikely” (Hannan and Besada, 2007: 3). From then onwards the term was adopted by international agencies such as the British Department for International Development (DFID, 2005); USAID (2005); OECD’s Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC, 2007) or EU. For a good review on the use of the term, see Cammack et al. (2006); Hannan and Besada (2007).

8 Within the category of “fragility” there are introduced some variations such as the World Bank’s inclusion of a certain economic dimension in terms of the (low) income and the level of poverty (Chauvet and Collier, 2007).
Within the category of fragility itself, the “World Bank’s LICUS system divides states into ‘policy-poor but resource rich’, ‘weak government capacity’ and ‘emerging from conflict’ categories ... while OECD-DAC distinguishes between types of fragile state context using the categories of ‘post-conflict/crisis or political transitions situations’, ‘deteriorating governance environments’, gradual improvement’ and ‘prolonged crisis or impasse’” (Scott, 2008: 10). It is important to note that different agencies and institutions have marked preferences for one or another of these terminologies, often in accordance with their own different agendas and focus. Thus, for instance, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) was mostly interested in identifying the path (and rate) of state failure and recovery as well as the sub-state and regional conditions affecting these failures; UK’s Department for International Development (DFID) was and is interested primarily in the cases and causes of the failure to deliver critical services and focused primarily on livelihoods and poverty; the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) focuses on the connection with trans-national threats, legitimate political institutions, and economic management; while the World Bank programs target the inability to provide services, control corruption, and accountable political institutions (Barnet et al. 2007; Carment et al. 2009, especially Chapter 2; Scott, 2008).

With more prominent actors involved in the state-failure network, the demand for analysis and advice led to sustained efforts to refine the conceptual parameters of the field. The starting point in these efforts came from the need to provide a better definition of what constitutes failure. Albeit a decade and a half after the introduction of the term there is still no consensual agreement on the best definition of state failure, most efforts revolve around various combinations between functional and institutional dimensions (Raeymaekers, 2005; Clement, 2005; Krause and Jutersonke, 2007; Hameiri, 2007). On the functional dimension, the starting point is represented by Zartman’s early conceptualization of state failure as a situation in which “the functions of the state are no longer performed” (1995: 5). However, the difficulty confronting the proponents of this perspective was – and continues to be – the selection of particular functions deemed “essential”. Numerous authors presented a different set and a different hierarchy of tasks deemed essential for the
functioning of the state, on a range from "the ability to extract resources (material and immaterial such as legitimacy), [to] the capacity to manage these resources, [to] provision of political accommodation and delivery of basic services and infrastructure" (Clement, 2005: 2).

Essentially a "society-oriented" approach (Raeymaekers, 2005: 1), functionalist theories of state-failure base their analysis in what ultimately represents a prescriptive selection of the core functions "the government of all strong, stable states [must] perform" (Eizenstat et al, 2005: 134). Within these parameters the minimal common denominator refers to a collection of functions corresponding to "the three intertwined narrative of the state": the historical sociology tradition of "war making and state-making" with its corresponding security function; the liberal tradition of political thought with its function of representation and the protection of civil freedoms; and finally the political economy tradition with its alleged welfare function (Milliken and Krause, 2002: 756; Eizenstat et al, 2005: 134; Reisinger, 2009b).

Confronted with the task of analyzing state-failure in the post-9/11 era, Rotberg also starts from the functions of the state, but he takes a different direction by arguing that some of the functions are more important than others, and that identifying the hierarchy of these functions and the extent to which they are performed allows policy-makers to rank the magnitude of state-failure and thus prioritize the interventions. In this hierarchy the central position is occupied by the security function in the absence of which other functions cannot be properly performed:

The state’s prime function is to provide that political good of security—to prevent cross-border invasions and infiltrations, and any loss of territory; to eliminate domestic threats to or attacks upon the national order and social structure; to prevent crime and any related dangers to domestic human security; and to enable citizens to resolve their disputes with the state and with their fellow inhabitants without recourse to arms or other forms of physical coercion (2003: 3).

As a result, di John is correct to note Rotberg’s distancing from the "social contract" tradition - reflected in the previous era’s formulations - and his alignment with a "Machiavellian/Weberian understanding of state-failure", reflected in his association of state failure with the "loss [by the central government of] the monopoly of the means of violence" (2008: 4).
Furthermore though, by situating the phenomenon in a “state-centrist” tradition (Raeymaekers, 2005: 1), Rotberg places the decline of functional performances in the context of the state’s institutional decay. In turn, this move allows him to emphasize failed states’ characteristics of institutional breakdown in relation to “weak or flawed institutions … inefficient bureaucracy … non-independent judiciary … as well as a highly politicized military” (Hanan and Besada, 2007: 13). Combining the two dimensions imposes a prescriptive analysis of the state not only against the criteria of what a state is supposed to do (functions), but also in regards to how these functions should be performed (institutions). One can observe these consequences in the institutionalist accounts of state-failure, one of which (“neoliberal institutionalism”) is identified by Hameiri as being constituted by “those approaches that combine the normative preference, associated with neoliberalism, for extending the market relations into all social, economic and political spheres, with an emphasis on creating and building the capacity of institutions to provide conditions for the effective functioning of the markets” (2007: 126).\(^9\)

Distinguishing between the institutional and functional understanding of state-failure is important for the development of the analytical framework in several additional ways. Starting from the observation that “state institutions can persist even while the state fails to fulfill what we understand as its key attributes” (Milliken and Krause, 2002: 757), it introduces the distinction between functional failure and institutional collapse. As Clement noted, the consequence is that the concept of state-failure then covers cases in which “all core functions have ceased to be performed – on a continuous bas[is] and over the entire territory – but where some institutional structures may still exist”; state-collapse then includes “both a functional failure – inability to perform core functions – and an institutional failure – the political superstructure has ceased to exist on a continuous base and as a part of [an] overarching integrative framework” (Clement, 2005: 2). Thus differentiated, the framework is pushed beyond a static dimension – observing instances of failure at a given point, towards the identification of failure as a gradual and

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\(^9\) Hameiri reproduces within the institutionalist camp Raeymaekers’ distinction between the state- and society-centric paradigms by differentiating between a neoliberal institutionalist and a neo-Weberian institutionalist perspective on state-failure (Hameiri, 2007).
dynamic process. As a process, state dysfunctionality could be now perceived in relative terms on a continuum in which the collapsed state – a relative rarity – becomes an extreme instance of state-failure (Rotberg, 2003; Milliken and Krause, 2002). Finally, with “failure” defined as a gradual process of decay, the identification of different causes for different stages “helps define what types of international actions are possible” or needed to correct that process (Francois and Sud, 2006: 144). Thus, at the end of the day, conceptual modulations such as these are fundamentally instrumental in their nature, for their primary role is to inform international interventions with the aim of correcting such “deviances”.

The differentiation between types or/and degrees of state dysfunctionality constituted only a first step in the re-orientation of the state-failure agenda. Once the securitization of “state-failure” as a contagious and invasive illness threatening the entire body of the international system was firmly entrenched in the global policy discourse, the need for international interventions – presented as the “cure” to these pathologies – required not only to distinguish between different forms/stages of decay, but, more fundamentally, the identification of the root causes of the “degenerative disease”. A crucial role in moving state-failure agenda from identifying symptoms to identifying “causes and indicators” - as announced from the title of his first chapter - is played once more by Robert Rotberg. The drive towards this development is clearly instrumental as “understanding exactly why weak states slide toward failure will help policymakers to design methods to prevent failure and, in the cases of states that nevertheless fail (or collapse), to revive them and assist in the rebuilding process” (2003: 2).

His call quickly lead to an inflation of qualitative studies, with numerous think-tanks and research institutes close to Western governments taking on board the task of operationalizing state-failure and identifying

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10 Ever since the “Sick Man of Europe” syntagm was used in the nineteenth century, the issue of “failed states” was approached with predilection in terms of medical metaphors. This remains the case in the post-Cold War era, where Zartman for instance describes “state collapse as a long-term degenerative disease”, for which “cure and remission are possible” (1995: 8). The “securitization move” placed this predilection in a context dominated by increased interconnectedness (globalization) which made possible the reactivation of the “domino theory” fears of contagion thus enhancing the need for treatment - read intervention in the form of “state-building” (Bilgin and Morton, 2007: 24). For a more detailed analysis of this metaphor in the state-failure framework see Manjikian, (2008) or Borg and Figureoa-Helland (2010).
indicators intended to predict cases of states at risk. The earliest example of a
database was put together in the wake of Somalia's debacle, with the US’s
Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) sponsoring in 1994 a comprehensive
research on state instability. Known as “State Failure Task Force” the project
referred to state failure as an “implosion of the state ... characterized by the
transformation of the state in[to] an instrument of predation” in the context of
“a loss of the monopoly over the means of coercion” (Bates, 2008a: 2). Led by
prominent scholars including Tedd Gurr, Jack Goldstone and Robert H Bates,
the project is still active today, as the Political Instability Task Force, recently
releasing a publication on its Phase V (Goldstone et al, 2010). Defining state
failure as instances of “outbreak of ethnic war, revolutionary war, and
genocide, as well as ‘adverse regime changes’”, it is directly admitted that,
from the beginning, the “Task Force’s analysis focuses on prediction rather
than explanation” (Bates, 2008a: 2-3).

Equally well-known and sharing the same predictive nature, the
collaborative program between the Fund for Peace and Foreign Policy
magazine publishes from 2005 the yearly updated Failed State Index (FSI).
Developed on the basis of the Conflict Assessment System Tool (CAST), the
Index assesses the risk of state failure for 177 countries worldwide on the
basis of twelve social, economic and political indicators interpreted as drivers
of pressure on the state, by evaluating their impact on five key state
institutions - police, military, civil service, system of justice and
executive/legislative leadership (Baker, 2007: 90-91). According to their
results, the entire world is ranked according to the danger of collapse in four
categories, as shown in Fig. 5. This index is particularly illustrative for the
geographical shift in the discourse of state-failure between the periods
preceding and succeeding the 9/11 moment. Thus, if following the end of the
Cold War, the “coming anarchy” (Kaplan, 1994) was restricted geographically
to the “pre-modern” world (Cooper, 2000) characterized as a “zone of war”
(Golgeier and McFaul, 1992: Singer and Wildawsky, 1993), the “totalizing
ambition” of the FSI - and its peers - maps state-failure at the level of the

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11 The last report was Political Instability Task Force Report, Phase IV Findings (Bates & all, 2006).
12 Foreign Policy uses the same indicators to distinguish between five categories of states
according to their risk of failure: critical, in danger, borderline, stable and most stable (Foreign
Policy, Jul/August 2009: 82)
entire world, thus “portray[ing] a world without an outside-of-the-system of states” (Borg and Figureoa, 2010: 25).

Fig. 5 Ranking of the states according to the risk of state-failure

![Failed States Index 2009](Image)


Following the same quantitative methodology, the major international donor organizations have built their own measurements of defining what they refer to as “fragile” states. For instance, based on its LICUS scores, the World Bank used its internal, unpublished rating of the country’s institutions and policies – *Country Policy and Institutional Assessment (CPIA)* – and considered 26 countries as fragile in 2006. In addition, the World Bank sponsors the Worldwide Governance project measuring state fragility on six dimensions of governance, including voice and accountability, political stability and absence of violence, government effectiveness, regulatory quality, rule of law and control of corruption (Newmann, 2009: 428). An alternative database was constructed in 2006 by USAID in its report on Measuring Fragility: Indicators and Measures for Rating State Performances” (Stewart, 2007: 649). UK’s own DfID identified 46 such countries, while the Center for Global Development’s Commission for Weak States and the US National Security estimated no less than 50 states as fragile (Francois and Sud, 2006: 148). The German Development Institute (DIE) recently joined the list publishing its own “Guide of Measuring Fragility” (2009). Although not explicitly dedicated to failed states, the donor community uses other measures
of specific issues of governance, such as the Human Development Index of the UNDP measuring public service delivery or Transparency International’s Corruption Perception Index (Menkhause, 2010: 87).

Other, increasingly complexindexes were presented by universities, think-tanks and prominent individuals. Outstanding among them are Carlton University’s comprehensive project on Country Indicators for Foreign Policy (CIFP) measuring the functions of governance on no less than 10 dimensions using 74 indicators (Carment et al. 2009), and the Index on State Fragility put together by the University of Maryland and the Center for Systemic Peace, monitoring the “effectiveness and legitimacy across four dimensions – security, governance, economic and social development” (Newmann, 2009: 425). Also four indicators – this time on safety and rule of law, participation and human rights, sustainable economic opportunity and human development is used by another ranking exercise, that of the Mo Ibrahim Index of African Governance. With the contribution of Susan Rice – currently US Ambassador to the UN –, Brookings Institution published its own Index of State Weakness in the Developing World (Rice and Stewart2008) organizing 20 indicators in four “sets of critical government functions” in the security, political economic and social welfare areas (Stewart, 2007). Finally, the Institute for State Effectiveness promotes the constitution of a “sovereignty index” to address the “sovereignty gap” by supporting ten vital functions of the state identified by Ghani et al. starting with the “legitimate monopoly on the means of violence” (2005, 2008).

With different methodologies, the aggregation of competing indicators results in a mapping exercise that only imperfectly overlaps across all the indexes, although the bottom of the list does tend to include a certain number of identical names (Somalia, Afghanistan, Sudan or the Democratic Republic of Congo). Second, the combination of different indicators does not tell much about the individual characteristics of the countries thus ranked – their particular circumstances, history, or composition of crises they are facing. As one scholar concluded, “the consequence of such agglomeration of diverse criteria is to throw a monolithic cloak over disparate problems that require tailored solutions” (Call, 2008: 1495). Nor does such an aggregation allow for distinguishing between the relative impact of one factor against the other.
Indeed, many of the countries presented on the resulting rankings suffer from poor performance on one – or more – of the list of indicators. However, not all of them “collapse”, and the “degenerative process” allegedly characterizing all of them does not follow the same path. Given that “precipitating causes [for decline and ultimately collapse] are highly situational and context specific”, this limits the predictive quality of such indexes (Menkhaus, 2010: 89).

In response to such limitations, the process of securitization led to an intensification of the search for identifying the causes that may trigger the process of state-failure. In search of such explanations, the first generation of state-failure analysis (Zartman, 1995; Rotberg, 2003, 2004; Fukuyama, 2004) operated within the parameters of a limited causality, restricting their research to the description of either domestic or, infrequently, external factors. Confronted with the inadequacy of such descriptions in guiding potential interventions, a second generation of scholars sought to refine the analysis by modeling the causes of state-failure (Clement, 2005; Howard, 2008). What distinguishes the latter generation is their description of state-collapse as happening at the intersection of “inside-out and outside-in processes” (Hentz, 2004: 143).

Even when acknowledging the importance of structural (external) factors – as in Zartman’s identification of different waves of state collapse in correlation with international events such as the end of the Cold War –, the earlier generation discussed preponderantly causes of a domestic nature in a state’s crisis. For instance when Gross suggests some of the potential factors leading to state-failure, he refers to the role of poor management leading to “low economic performances, lack of social synergies, authoritarianism and militarism or environmental degradation caused by very rapid population growth” (Francois and Sud, 2006: 145). Similarly, often in an African context, state collapse was associated with the persistence of “traditional” forms of collective organization such as clans or tribes acting against the central state. However, as Englebert showed in the case of Somalia, “by uniting Somalis in a single mythic genealogy” the clans – always a constant presence in the region – “exist in a constant competitive dynamic that was functional in an environment of extreme resource scarcity” (2007: 137).
In search of alternative – though still domestic – factors precipitating the collapse of the state, other scholars turned their attention to the domestic or external predatory behavior of the local elites described by Bayart as the “politics of the belly” (Bayart, 1993) and “extraversion” (Bayard, 2000). The “greed” paradigm, famously popularized by Paul Collier and his collaborators, explained the “emergence of civil wars and endemic violence primarily [through] the pursuit of economic gain by the key combatants” (diJohn, 2008: 11). This greed – fueled by competition for the possession of natural resources – was found to contribute to the collapse of the state regardless of whether it happens in conditions of scarcity (Homer-Dixon, 2001) or resource abundance (Richani, 2001). Analyzing the cases of Siyaad Barre (Somalia) and Najibullah (Afghanistan), Englebert introduces a different variant of the local elite argument. This “self-destructive despotism” describes the process through which ruling elements of the state contribute intently to its weakening in order to “give themselves greater freedom of actions, to generate resources for supporters or to weaken potential centers of resistance” (Englebert, 2007: 148).

While certainly important, this line of investigation, together with the quantitative collection of early warning indicators – all of which refer to the internal characteristics of the state – runs the risk of identifying the source of state dysfunctionality strictly or largely at the domestic level. In consequence, these perspectives result in accepting, if not inviting, external intervention in various forms – from sanctions, aid, political interference in the form of democracy or good governance promotion, or outright military intervention – as a corrective agent. However, the nature of the state at the Westphalian Periphery was shaped not simply by domestic factors. Numerous authors identify the origin of modern failure of the state at the Westphalian periphery in the experience of colonialism.

This link with the long history of external intervention was extensively explored in the case of Africa where colonialism was used as a main explanation for the poor economic performance, chronic levels of violence, or the style of politics variable defined as “neo-patrimonialism” (Clapham, 2000), “prebendalism” or simply “personalized rule”. Thus, Mamdani for instance explores the impact of colonialism in the creation of what he calls a
“bifurcated state”, opposing the centre (characterized by formal institutions of the imported state located in urbanized areas) to the informal periphery weakly penetrated by the state’s institutions (Mamdani, 1997; Herbst, 2000). Others are exploring the issue of “warlord politics” in connection with the existence of parallel political (and military) authorities, themselves a legacy of the indirect rule of colonialism (Lockwood, 2005: 70; Reno). Oriented as it was towards exploitation rather than development, particularly in what Maroya defined as the “colonial frontier” (2003), colonial rule failed to replace the traditional relationships and structures of power which it undermined, with the institutions of the “modern state”. Indeed, in many cases the source of contemporary fragility of the state’s institutions can be traced back to this historical experience as “colonial rule corrupted [local] politics and prevented the construction of a rational centralized bureaucracy” (Vu, 2010: 158).13 Besides the role of colonialisation, other external factors listed included the “legacy of interference and subsequent abandonment by foreign powers” during and respectively after the Cold War, or the “worsening terms of trade that adversely affected the poor” (Ignatieff quoted in Francois and Sud, 2006: 145).

Once securitised as a threat of global proportions, such limited descriptions of characteristics and causes of state-failure became utterly insufficient for the purpose of international interventions. Carment’s distinction between correlation and causality and his call for a general model of the latter marked the beginning of a different stage in the analysis of the factors leading to state-failure (2003). Scholars such as Cathy Clement (2005) or Tiffany Howard (2008) proposed new frameworks for analyzing the causal mechanisms resulting in state failure not just as attributes but as processes set in motion by an accumulation of several contingent variables merging both internal and external dimensions. Clement for instance, identifies four core causes of state collapse, “an economic crisis or swift growth”, the “mobilisation of advanced groups”, “poor reciprocal assimilation of the elite” and “an inconsistent external environment” (2005: 8-11). Her model

13 Other authors explore the incapacity of central authorities to expand their powers to the periphery in terms of difficulties associated with population density and territorial difficulties more so than just colonial legacy (Herbst, 2000). Pointing to the case of the “Korean effective bureaucracy ... attributed to the work of Japanese colonialists”, Vu also notices that the result of colonialism is not always institutional weaknesses (Vu, 2010: 158).
conceptualizes the decay as a sequential, regressive movement between the stages of strength/stability and crisis and collapse, noting that "it takes the interplay of all four variables for a state to collapse ... [as] a single factor is aptly dealt with by a relatively strong state ... [while] the presence of two or three destabilizing variables [leads to the occurrence of] a crisis" (2005: 8). Of the four factors, Clement warns that collapse does not happen in the absence of a destabilizing external environment, destabilization derived not so much from its type (interventionist or not) but from its inconsistency, that is a shift between interventionist and non-interventionist environments or between support and disengagement (2005: 8, 32). Roughly corresponding to the different interventionist moments in the evolution of the "failed states" framework identified in my thesis, Clement supports her argument by noting that each wave of state collapse followed significant transitions in the nature of the international system marked by decolonization, détente and the end of the Cold War (2005: 8).

In a similar manner, the model proposed by Howard (2008) shares the vision of state-failure as a process of gradual deterioration of a state's capacity to respond to an accumulation of internal and external challenges. Additionally, Howard distinguishes as well between three stages in the process of state decay, marking the transformation of a "stable" state into a "failing" one before reaching the "failed" stage. Compatible with Clement's core causes, he considers four sets of variables and their impact on the transition between the three stages (see Fig.6 below): "polity features", including the democratic/autocratic nature of the regimes, the level of corruption and the difficult history of the state; "protest and dissident behavior"; "proximity to a state in crisis" and "economic decline" (2008: 128-132). With a relatively different methodology and set of variables, Howard's proposed model leads to the similar conclusion that "state failure is a process of two stages and a discrete set of factors increases the probability of entering one stage as opposed to the other" (2008: 142).

Beyond the undeniable qualitative and quantitative increased refinement in relation to the previous generation of scholarship in the field, both models share with their predecessors the policy-driven orientation. It is not only the fact that the instrumental nature of such analytical enterprises can
be identified by looking at their critique of the previous generation’s work which they believe, “though instructive and insightful driven by anecdotal and ad-hoc empirical evidence ... are not suited to policy development and application” (Carment et al, 2009: 83). More tellingly, what both models have in common is the message that the policies aimed at preventing the descent of states on the slope towards collapse must be calibrated in relation to the stage on which the respective state is situated at a given time. Indeed, that is reflected in Clement’s differentiations between, on the one hand, prevention, stabilization and reconstruction; and, on the other hand demarcation between the weight her variables play at different points of transition between stages – and which have to be accordingly prioritized by the international community’s policies towards the failed states. Howard’s model leads to similar conclusions given that the impact of the same factor varies in function of the stage at which the state is situated (Fig. 6). In common with the ubiquitous quantitative exercise of numerous rankings of state-failure, these models too assume collapse to be the end-point of a gradual disintegration of the state, ignoring the fact that numerous cases thus labeled “were ‘failed’ at their inception, have remained so, and do not belong on a continuum at all” (Halvorson, 2010: 5).

**Fig. 6** Impact of various factors on different stages of state-failure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Stable to Failing</th>
<th>Stable to Failed</th>
<th>Failing to Failed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dissident behavior</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-violent protest</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic regime</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autocratic regime</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proximity to a state in crisis</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corrupt state authority</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficult history of state</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic decline</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Howard, 2008: 142.*

The same logic and policy recommendations permeate the most recent analytical frameworks proposing to redefine state fragility as a tri-dimensional complex including the functions of capacity, legitimacy and authority (Carment et al. 2009) or capacity, legitimacy and security (Call, 2010). Recognizing that there is a potential tension between the logic of policies

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14 Invariably, implicit in the case of Howard or explicit in the case of Clement as well as the alternative frameworks introduced by Carment et al. (2009) or Call (2010), the corrective policies are to be devised by the international community.
devised to answer to disfunctionalities on each of the three dimensions, both models aim at raising awareness of the potential convergence and divergence and as a result to increase the effectiveness of the processes of state-building. In the words of Call, his goal is “to dislodge policy from a one-dimensional and over-aggregated analytic framework … [in the believe that] balancing the imperatives of responding to these three gaps may be the crux of formulating policies that can meet short-term and long-term objectives” (2010: 20). But, however welcomed developments on this line of research might be, they continue to be aimed at increasing the efficiency of the project to address the cluster of problems through the same silver bullet strategy, which is, building states. Criticizing the recent contributions to this literature is not to deny the existence of the phenomena that their indicators are measuring, but to question the assumptions behind their analytical frameworks as well as the nature, scope and ultimate goals of the interventions the models invite to.

Indeed, there are sometimes substantial differences within the models of analysis developed by the second generation in regards to the mechanics of implementation or the best strategies and blueprints to build the states. Despite these differences there is little doubt permeating all these models that the cure to the illnesses of under-development, poverty, terrorism, global health or environmental degradation – seen as closely linked in a cluster of dependencies - can be found only through building modern states. As Juan Linz, the prominent scholar on the issue of democratization noted, “the real question is the consolidation and stability of the state under whatever political regime, preventing what could be cold chaocracy” (quoted in Jourde, 2007: 488). It is a view shared with policy-makers such as Barack Obama whose position during the 2007 presidential campaign was that “since extremely poor societies and weak states provide optimal breeding grounds for disease, terrorism and conflict”, the only solution remains “invest[ing] in building capable, democratic states that can establish healthy and educated communities, develop markets and generate wealth” (quoted in Logan and Preble. 2010: 20).
Building states to save the (International) System.

Thus, beyond all these various developments at both qualitative and quantitative level, my main proposition here is that, in the context of the Global War on Terrorism, the securitization move comes full circle, in effect marginalizing decades-long efforts to place the individual at the center of an expanded concept of security. Indeed, one perverse consequence of the securitization of state-failure following the 9/11 attacks is that it led effectively to a transfer in the referent object of securitization, from the individual – dominating the 1990s framework of humanitarian interventions, to the international system itself, an international system organized on principles having the modern, Western liberal version of the state as its main unit. Presented as a multidimensional threat of global reach through the medical metaphor of the a highly contagious lethal virus, the presence of dysfunctional states is perceived as constituting not only a threat to the individual but also a “challenge to the idealized Westphalian system of Weberian states [by] undermin[ing] the constitutive order of the international system” (Newmann, 2009: 437).

The confrontation with what can be perceived as challenges to the ontological primacy of its constitutive unit – the modern state – leads to “an assertive drive of the sovereign states-system to reproduce itself” along the lines of what Wendt defined as a “state-centric project” (Halvorson, 2010b, 591 -592). In the process, to borrow from the English School’s terminology, the international interventions build up not only on the solidarist vision emphasizing cosmopolitan values and universal norms as implied in the 1990s discourses of “democratization”, “humanitarian intervention” and ultimately “responsibility to protect”; as a result of the successful securitization of state-failure, the state-building interventions continue to be expressed in a solidarist language but they are guided more by a pluralist logic aiming to maintain, expand and solidify the political and legal centrality of the (truly) sovereign state in the practice of international relations. With the failed state already defined as a quasi-sovereign – some going as far as proposing de-recognition of state as the approach towards failed states (Delaney, 2008), state-building becomes the instrument for dealing not just with the symptoms of
humanitarian crisis but with its cause — identified as the absence of a "real" state.

This transfer in the referent object from individual to the international system was mediated and made possible by the radical u-turn in the way the state was perceived alongside the three dimensions of security, economics and development as well as human rights and democratization. To begin with, in the security realm, theorizing on the process of a "security dilemma" reflected the perception that existential threats rise from the strength of other states in an anarchic environment rather than from their weaknesses. Similarly, developmental paradigms — reflected in the conditionality packages of international financial institutions until well into the 1990s — identified the sources of poverty and underdevelopment at least partially in the nature of local state institutions. Consistent with its origins in the liberal philosophy tradition, the human rights and democratization paradigms developed in the fight against the abuses of authoritarian and totalitarian states. Finally, the Washington Consensus of the early 1990s marked the triumph of neoliberal policies arguing for a minimal role of the state in the economy, reflected in the structural adjustment programs as the norm of "good governance". Indeed, during the structural agenda of the 1980s and early 1990s, becoming one of the most vilified institutions, the state was seen as "hamper[ing] the quest for development, obstructing the free functioning of markets, consuming a disproportionate share of investible resources, ... over-centralising the development process, and stifling private initiative" (Olukoshi, 2004: 47).

By the beginning of the new millennium however, these attitudes towards states were turned on their head. As we have seen in this chapter, in the realm of security, under the influence of 9/11 terrorist attacks, numerous national security were constructed around the idea that security in general is now threatened less by powerful states and more by decaying ones (NSS, 2002: 1). On the economic front, the succession of numerous financial crises including the 1997-1998 Asian crisis (Wesley, 2008: 372) forced the "realization that markets could not establish and protect themselves". This realization led in turn to the "resurgence of the state ... as the only protector of the market itself" (Hameiri, 2007: 130). The state was also "brought back in" as a solution rather than a threat in the developmental arena, partially in
reaction to the reversal in fortunes of the Washington Consensus (Fukuyama, 2002), partially as recognition in the eyes of major donors that “states are essential for securing difficult reforms” (Hameiri, 2007: 130). Englebert and Tull also chart the change in attitude of the donor community towards the role states play in the area of development. Focused on African development, they noted how major donors alternated between “a Keynesian period in the 1960s and 1970s when the state was perceived as the engine of growth … [to a period in which they] regarded it as an obstacle to development for much of the next two decades … [only to recognize from the late 1990s onwards] that development requires an effective state” (2008: 114). Finally, the lessons drawn by the “international community” of policy-makers and scholars alike in light of the recent humanitarian catastrophes seems to have been that neither markets nor human rights can be protected in the absence of a solid state. As Thurer noted, “failed states clearly show that the protection of human rights is dependent on the proper functioning of the state”, among other things due to the fact that “international humanitarian law relies heavily on the hierarchical structures of the state and above all, on the military order with its chain of command” (2008: 43-44).

In the context of these u-turns, this section identified the main consequence of securitizing state-failure in the post 9/11 decade with the positioning of the (liberal) state – to be reconstituted or “repaired” or “built” through international interventions – as the only solution to the threats to human security brought about by conflict, underdevelopment and political collapse. The search for a preponderantly external solution ignores recent suggestions that “international interventions may well have accelerated state decline” through various mechanisms such as “pressures for [economic] liberalization that undermined elite bargains and neo-patrimonial relations that bought peace in societies” or “pressures to ‘democratize [which] may have contributed to unleashing forces that led to disintegration, war or even genocide” (Hasselbein, 2008: 50). It may also ignore the fact that by presenting the modern state as it developed in the Western world as the institutional solution to violence and underdevelopment in the Westphalian periphery, one runs the risk of creating precisely the conditions that led to failure in the first place. If “‘state-building’ weakens states” as Chandler
(2005) claims by analyzing the case of Bosnia or contributes to “building state failure” as Chopra (2002) concludes was the case of East Timor it may worth asking if state-building works (Payne, 2006), but also if building states is desirable in the first place.\(^{15}\) However, the possibility of investigating potential alternatives in term of organizing political communities beyond the parameters of the idealized Weberian state is very limited in the shadow of the state-failure framework. In search of alternatives one must face an enduring effect of the state-failure process of securitization, that is the “tendency to externalize problems in the developing – ‘other’ – world, and even to demonize the ‘other’” (Newmann, 2009: 438). This is why I turn my attention in a first instance to the conventional – demonized – portrayal of the warlord (Chapter 4) followed by an analysis of warlordism as an alternative form of governance (Chapter 5).

\(^{15}\) In a recent paper Borg and Figueroa-Helland bravely suggest that "it is not ‘state failure’ which causes violence, but the desire for the state and the fear of not attaining it which enables and often triggers them ... it is the attempts to impose a state (often at any cost) that enable and produce violence" (2010: 27, 4), a conclusion compatible with my own analysis of the contemporary warlord as shown in chapter 5.
Chapter 4. The stateless: a state-centric discourse of the “other”

As the political situation stood. Shortly after the end of the Cold War, the
hegemonic dominance of the continent of globalization was contested by a
number of states diminished under the heavy category of the “post合资” (McGonagle), “states” or even “stateless.” To study all cases that

McGonagle’s definition is rather broad and allows for any kind of the
territorial state. In this study, focusing on the international, especially on the
sixth and twentieth, we will examine in detail. As a consequence, if Hong Kong is the one national state that has lost its status of
jurisdictional control at the beginning of the modern state system and has been

integrated into a warlord domain.

The wider concept of a “warlord” means that they should not be perceived as a legal, permanent, and firm ruler of another state-building. Only under such a stateless and self-defined group were “discursively deperceived in the sociopolitical models of the relation of
violent conflict and as “states,” the major characteristic of a successful

integration of state-building processes. However, despite the self-identity and

independent forces, some of the post-state nations, globally labeled as

unions, have proved to enjoy quite a significant legitimacy. The next two

sections will explore these themes in the following sequence: the project

theory and implications of the understanding the concepts of

associated terminology; and its portrayal in various literatures. In

conjunction with these discussions, the following sections makes the case for

exploring the causes of some contemporary processes, such as governance,

empirical evidence in their empirical research in the conflict and society and a

universal network. In an attempt, chapter two will focus on the contemporary

understandings of the stateless phenomenon as a transition stage toward

form of governance. The key topics that will be discussed in section of this

proposition is “warlordism.” Under campaigning in the context of section of

the tasks usually associated with the modern state.

A critical juncture in the literature, who claim that “stateless”' refers to

an area of neglect to deal with the governance of nonstate entities, in
Chapter 4. The warlord: a state-centric demonization of the “other”

As the previous chapters show, shortly after the end of the Cold War, the increased intensity of the processes of globalization was accompanied by a resurgence of cases amalgamated under the blurry category of state “weakness”, “fragility”, “failure” or even “collapse”. In nearly all cases thus labelled, a ghostly character from the past appeared to awake on the ruins of the formal state institutions in the Westphalian Periphery, threatening the international community’s efforts towards state (re)construction. As a consequence, it became part of the conventional wisdom that large parts of territories situated at the periphery of the modern state system are inscribed into a warlord dominion.

The widest conceptual presumption about “warlordism” and/or “militias” is that they should and would be eliminated as a consequence of one form or another of state-building. Under this label, non-state armed groups were indiscriminately depicted in the sensationalist media as the villains of violent conflicts and as “spoilers”, the main obstacle to a successful completion of state-building processes. However, despite these portrayals, and against powerful forces, some of the non-state armed groups labelled as warlords have proved to enjoy quite a significant longevity. The next two chapters will explore these themes in the following sequence. The present chapter deals predominantly with the understanding of the concept of warlord and its associated terminology, as it is portrayed in various literatures. In contrast with these literatures, the following chapter makes the case for explaining the causes of some contemporary non-state armed groups’ longevity in their embeddedness in both the traditional society and a globalized network. In so doing, chapter five looks at the contemporary incarnations of the warlord phenomenon as a (post)modern alternative form of governance. The key aspect that will be discussed in relation to this proposition is warlordism’s limited implication in the performance of some of the tasks usually associated with the modern state.

A critical incursion in the literature dedicated to this phenomenon identifies an area of neglect to do with the provision of some social services in
areas under warlord domination. The simplest (and dominant) way of defining warlords is to merely see them as “persons whose power derives from the gun” (Woodward, 1999), exemplified by the personal command of a private army. As attractive as the simplicity of this approach may be, it is simultaneously too narrow and too large for an operational definition. It is too narrow because it obscures the dynamics of this power; nor is it helpful in the examination of its interactions with other actors in the territory under its control, on the one hand, and with the state and the international system on the other. At the same time it is too large a definition, as it allows for the inclusion of all types of actors whose power derives in one way or another “from the gun”. As such, it would contain not only the usual category of suspects such as Liberia’s Charles Taylor, Afghanistan’s Abdul Rashid Dostum, or Ismail Khan, Somalia’s Mohammad Aideed, Lebanon’s Walid Jumblat, or various leaders of the Medellin Cartel, but, in effect, any leader of an insurgent movement, criminal organization or even an authoritarian/totalitarian state could be subsumed under this definition. The pages that follow will offer a critical investigation of the meaning and the context within which the term “warlord” emerges and is activated. The objective of this inquiry into the conceptual labyrinth of warlord studies is to advance in the direction of a working definition of warlordism. This definition will be used in the next chapter as a basis for exploring the nature of warlordism, not only in opposition to the state order, but as a social order in itself, a social order that also intersects with the state.

For this purpose, the current chapter is organised in several sections. The first section explores the context in which the resurgence of the warlord analysis takes place. This context is defined, on the one hand, by the location of warlordism as a defining element of (some) areas of what I have labelled as a “Westphalian Periphery”. On the other hand, the reintroduction of the concept of warlordism is a reflection of the implicit belief in the possibility of reproducing the historical processes which led to the formation of the modern state – particularly the “taming” of the state’s competitors for the control over violence that occurred during early (European) state-formation. Within this context, the second section opens up the possibility of extracting a definition of the contemporary warlord. What follows is a discussion of successive analyses of the phenomenon, seeking to propose a working definition for the
contemporary warlord by incorporating several of its characteristics. Yet no solidly-grounded definition can be reached in the absence of references to some related concepts. The third section will therefore be dedicated to a comparative-contrastive investigation of related non-state armed groups, in an attempt to singularize the phenomena of contemporary warlordism.

Why Warlordism?

Before proceeding to the exploration of warlordism, a number of caveats must be made in reference to the context in which this debate takes place. First, the recent preoccupation with processes of warlordism is dominated by research that restricts its focus to those political units that have had limited experience of the “modern state” in terms of a centralized, hierarchically organized monopoly over violence. Yet there are, of course, corresponding trends in the developed world referring to the erosion of the state’s monopoly over violence, represented in particular by instances of the “commodification of violence”. While the phenomenon of privatizing security in developed countries has led to a burgeoning literature on Private Military Companies, the corresponding trends affecting the monopoly of violence in the developing countries are either ignored, obscured or analyzed with a bias toward the Weberian image of the modern state.

Thus, it can be said that the issue of warlordism appears to be circumscribed to an area outside the realm of the modern states composing the Westphalian international system reaching its maturity during the twentieth century. In this sense, my understanding of a “Westphalian Periphery” is informed by Michael Atkins’ reference to the (incomplete) expansion of the Westphalian model outside of the European world for which “in general terms, such categories [“Westphalian Core” and “Westphalian Periphery”] may be defined by how successfully a state has mustered together both the outwardly visible [Westphalian] institutions as well as the less evident social norms” (Atkins, 2003a: 2). Atkins clearly situates his perspective on the literature by studying the diffusion of the Westphalian institutional model from the “core” to periphery: “states on the Westphalian Periphery are those whose institutional structures have been imposed from without rather than within, coming relatively late in the history of the state system” (Atkins, 2003b: ii,
footnote 1). Consequently, I will use a narrower understanding of Wallerstein’s core-periphery distinction, to include political units whose recent adherence to the Westphalian system corresponds with differing processes of historical evolution. In this regard, I follow Rolf Schwartz, whose main distinguishing factor between the Westphalian core and its periphery is the internal structure of the political units, including, for instance, “the importance of tribal structures and informal relationships in everyday life and politics” (Schwartz, 2004: 4).

Closely related is the tendency of the literature on warlords to work on the assumption that, as in the past, the phenomenon of warlordism has a transient nature, being merely an episode on the path leading, eventually, to the establishment of modern states. Reflecting this tendency, and despite renewed academic efforts to tackle the issue of warlordism, the international community –dominated culturally by a certain state fetishism – is engaged in a sustained effort to achieve a world where “warlords are disarmed, faction fighters return to their factories, elections are freely and fairly held, and soon after, the troops return home” (MacKinlay, 2000: 78). Continuous debates on the transformation of “roving” warlords into “stationary” state politicians (Olson, 1993) reveal a deep-seated conviction in the possibility of reproducing the strategies of early state-formation.

Against this tendency, I will argue that the most appropriate method of analysis – for both issues of warlordism and state-building - should be informed by a dynamic vision of statehood as an entity which is constantly being constructed and reconstructed in terms of the structure of its organization, goals, functions, instruments and methods of governance. As such, the research needs to be conversant with recent literature that introduces variation in both the forms and functions of the state.1 In this direction, as will be explored in more detail in chapter seven, recent years have witnessed remarkable achievements by authors trying to advance substantial explanations of why violence in the “Westphalian Periphery” is far from

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1 Concerning the variation in states’ forms, see the Cooper- Sørensen -Tanaka typology of pre-modern, modern and post-modern worlds, or Bobbitt’s typology including “princely”, “kingly”, “territorial”, “state-nation”, “nation-state” and “market-state” (Cooper, 2000; Tanaka, 2002, Sørensen, 2001b and Bobbitt, 2002). I am using the idea of variation in the functions of the state in a manner similar to Barry Buzan’s “alteration of the idea of state” (Buzan, 1991). See also Matti Dogan’s formulation on the paternalist or security-oriented vs. maternalist or welfare state (Dogan and Pellassy, 1987).
creating modern institutions with a monopoly over violence. As a result, we
now know that it is not only the alteration in the nature of threat or the sources
of revenues that modifies the relationship between warfare and state-creation,
but also the radical transformation of the nature of warfare itself.

Thus, state-creating wars are said to be those that had an external
orientation and a territorial nature. Conversely, state-destroying wars take
place within a given territoriality and are internally-oriented in an environment
characterized by the spread of cheap small arms, machetes, and so forth
(Sørensen, 2001b: 345- 347). Despite such progress, however, the literature
remains incomplete, as it stops short of investigating which forms of
governance result from contemporary contexts of violence. The logical
extension of investigating the factors that might hinder the monopolization of
violence is to analyse the sustainability of a form of governance in the context
of a state that lacks such monopolization on its territory. The context of
warlordism provides exactly such an opportunity. But, in studying warlordism,
it is necessary to move away from the study of “state” to an examination of
“power” and its micro-politics, and refocus attention on the concept of
“governance”, with a view to placing “polity” as the fundamental unit of study
in IR.

The key reason for the focus on warlords is instrumental, for it has at
its core the rapid expansion in the Westphalian Periphery of a phenomenon
associated with “warlord politics” (Reno, 1998), an illustrative instance of
which is provided by the growing interest in various aspects of warlordism on
the part not only of the mass media, but also of academic literature. Originally
used to describe the characteristics of governance in pre-Communist China,
the concept of warlordism today designates features of (non-)governance in
places such as Liberia, Somalia, Lebanon or Afghanistan, “where the
structure, authority and power of the central government had either decayed or
fragmented altogether” (Peake, 2003: 182). The phenomenon of non-state
armed actors contesting the central state’s attempts to monopolise the control
over violence is therefore far from new: it extracts its conceptual substance
from feudal Europe through its Chinese version at the beginning of the
twentieth century, to the contemporary forms it takes in diverse polities; nor is
it geographically or culturally circumscribed – descriptions of warlordism in
one form or another cover a wide geographical area from China in the early
1920s to contemporary Europe (Serbia), cases in Central Asia (Afghanistan or the former Soviet Union republics), Africa (Somalia, Sierra Leone, Liberia) or South America (Colombia).\(^2\) Despite this multi-dimensional variety, partly explicable by its instrumental nature, the concept of "warlord" has not become any less emotionally charged in its usage, nor has it abandoned its initial pejorative significance, since it continues to signify "purely a phenomenon of disintegration" (Ottaway, 2000: 263).

Secondly, the interest in warlordism fits well into the general change of direction in IR theory toward a concerted effort to deal with units other than the state, be they at the supra- or a sub-state level. While the state – classically defined by Weber as the political unit which successfully claims monopoly over legitimate violence and exclusive authority within territorial boundaries – remains the bedrock of the Westphalian international system, its privileged position in the analysis of international politics has faded in favour of non-state actors, for all but the staunch supporters of (neo)structural realism. These non-exclusive, private or public substitute forms of authority cover a large spectrum, from "institutions of global governance to the trans-national third sector, from religious movements to criminal organizations" (Mason, 2005: 38). In this sense, it is hard to avoid the temptation of analysing present forms of warlordism in the context of the literature on "neo-medievalism", defined as "a system of overlapping authority and multiple loyalties, held together by a duality competing universalistic claims" (Friedrichs, 2001: 482).

Thirdly, a fresh take on the phenomenon of warlordism as a form of governance on its own – against views that regard it as simply a transitional phase or, worse, as an anachronistic projection of an antiquated form of governance in modernity – might shed a new light on issues such as peace-making and state-building or governance promotion in "collapsed" states. I am therefore in agreement with Dietl when I consider that (1) warlordism is neither passé, nor a simple aberration; that (2) it is far from being a unidimensional, homogenous and uniform phenomenon; and, most importantly, that (3) "as the theory of International Relations seeks to come to grip with

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\(^2\) It is essential to note that although the phenomena associated with those disparate regions do exhibit enough commonalities to allow them to be grouped in the same category of warlordism, which is not to say that the latter is a homogenous phenomenon carrying out the same constitutive elements or leading to the same dynamics. Warlordism is in fact embedded in local social, economic, political, cultural or military conditions, and this embeddedness certainly impacts on its forms of manifestation.
non-state actors, the phenomenon of warlord [and militia I may add] deserves a more serious and systematic inquiry" (Dietl, 2004: 64). If Dietl is correct - and I believe he is for reasons to be explored in the next chapter - one way of engaging into a serious and more systematic inquiry is to abandon the strictly negative caricature of the warlord and to treat this character not just as a "spoiler" of state-building process but also as a participant to the process of polity-creation.

Three waves of warlord analysis

Without intending to comprehensively organize an archaeology of the concept in the Foucaultian sense, it is sufficient to say that, in the last century, there have been three major waves in the way in which the concept was used by various scholars writing in and about different circumstances of its occurrence. All three waves were strictly circumscribed to a well-defined geographical area: the European feudal realm of warlordism in the first wave; the Chinese civil war at the beginning of the twentieth century in the second wave; and most recently, the disintegration of formal states in postcolonial Africa during the 1980s. As revealed by Waldron in a series of articles (1990, 1991), the modern concept of "warlord" was coined in the Chinese context following the disintegration of the Qing Empire in 1911. From this context, the term "warlord" as doomed to carry with it continuously the imprint of militarism rising from the ashes of a certain centralized political structure in a transitory manner. Reflecting on his study of the Chinese experience of warlordism in the 1920s, Lucien Pye maintains the military element at the core of his definition: "the basis of warlord politics was the institution of personal armies at the disposal of individual military commanders" (Pye, 1971: 39).

Yet, as noted by Kiril Nourzhanov, he moves towards a functionalist definition in showing that the main warlords "were sovereign over their organisations and in their domains, and there were no formal or legal authorities that could regulate or control their actions" (Nourzhanov, 2005: 110). Pye’s contribution is significant because, in highlighting the missing link

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3 Waldron engages into an interesting etymological investigation, following the term through its German form (Kriegsherr), through its English use and culminating with the Chinese experience, showing how in China the term junfa was gaining currency in the early 1920s, imported from the European context by the intermediation of Japanese militarism (Waldron, 1991)
in the literature on warlordism, it leaves its mark on the study of this phenomenon for the next generation of scholars: while the element of sovereignty could have opened an avenue for active research in the social domain of warlordism, in effect the focus of the research remains squarely the military domain. Pye was aware that, "although their reputation and success or failure in the political field was contingent upon the strength of their armies, these tuchuns [warlords] found it necessary to compete with other like commanders in obtaining political and economic rewards" (Pye, 1971: 42). Substantial parts of his study examine the organizational dynamic of the warlords as a military institution, as well as the nature of their competition in the context of the Chinese state's disintegration and loss of control over the military. However, in Pye's work as well as in the work of his rare followers like Vinci (2007), the attention paid to the nature of sovereign governance on the territories or over the population under the warlords' control is in general sparse and lacks consistency.

The study of warlordism was renewed when the analysis of African postcolonial state decay led some authors to investigate the analytical benefits of using the old concept in order to understand the new realities.¹ Not by accident, this renewal coincided with the emergence of a terminological universe aimed at making sense of the same realities, universe dominated by concepts such as "weak states" (Buzan, 1991 [1983]; Migdal, 1988) or "quasi-states" (Jackson and Rosberg, 1982; Jackson, 1990). In looking at cases like Chad, the concept was resurrected in the late '80s by scholars of Africa who closely followed the classical depiction of the Chinese 1920s' portrayal of the warlords occupying the vacuum behind the collapse of central institutions as "mindless [that is "irrational"] barbarians bent on dragging the population which lived in the areas they controlled back to a dark age of tribalism" (MacKinlay, 2000: 77).

Finally, the 1990s, with their economic focus and the debate on globalization, brought a new context for the study of non-state armed groups and in particular for an analysis of the warlord. By the late 1990s, a qualitative change in the analysis of warlords was taking place, insisting on the (trans-

national) economic dynamics that facilitated their thriving. Within the economy of war literature we can differentiate between the *greed vs. grievance* line of analysis (e.g. Berdal and Malone, 2000; Collier et al. 2001) and one that focuses on the effects of globalization and the networking nature of war (Reno, 1998; Duffield, 1998). Moving beyond the simplistic assumptions of irrationality characterising the previous waves, the literature on the “economy of war” focuses on the motives and rational strategies employed by warlords to promote their personal interests, in due process unveiling the “modern warlord” as an integral part of a contemporary globalized international economy. In the literature of this wave, the favourite definition remains Mark Duffield’s portrayal of the warlord as “a leader of an armed band, possibly numbering up to several thousand fighters, who can hold territory locally and at the same time act financially and politically in the international system without interference from the state in which he is based” (Duffield quoted in MacKinlay, 2000: 71 as well as Jackson, 2003: 132).

The economic perspective, with its focus on the motives and alternative strategies of resource extraction used by warlords, is helpful in moving the analysis beyond the reduction of warlords to the status of irrational figures acting in a chaotic manner characterized by gratuitous violence, anarchy and disorder. The insertion of this particular form of rationality is not, however, the only notable contribution of the “economies of war” perspective on the scholarly study of warlordism. Warlords are no longer depicted as a relic of an uncivilized past; they become, instead, an intrinsic part of modernity (or even post-modernity) by (a) the emphasis placed on the commercial motivations beyond the control of the state institution that forge a connection with international markets; and (b) the de-territorialisation that follows the replacement of bureaucratic rule over a specified territory with control through “selective access to rights to profit from commercial enterprises” (Reno, 1998: 98).\(^5\) William Reno, one of the prominent scholars working within this paradigm, follows the commercial interests of the

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\(^5\) In the same vein in which Olivier Roy describes the Afghan warlord’s control of a collection of unstable territories as opposed to a well-demarcated area, in which “[p]ersonal networks are more important than territory, and it is not unusual to find, in the middle of a warlord’s territory, a solidarity group which has a different affiliation and will not obey the warlord” (Roy, 2003: 6). Significantly, Roy moves beyond Herbst’s depiction of the African state as centered not so much around control over territory as around people, by describing how in Afghanistan the important control was the one referring to relations and access.
warlords as the critical variable in the analysis of conflicts that ravaged parts of the Westphalian Periphery, only to emphasize the radical political innovation of warlords: market control in the absence of centralized institutions, through external extraction of resources and strengthened alliances with outsiders. Thus, warlord politics “marks places ... where political power is pursued almost exclusively through control over markets and accumulation of wealth, and [where] state institutions play little, if any, role in regulating political competition” (Reno, 1998: 8).

The key dimension on which these waves intersect is the absence of a monopoly over violence by a decaying state. We have seen by now how the phenomenon of warlordism was approached in the last century. But what were the explanations offered for its appearance? In a refined summary of the literature on the genesis of warlordism, within the general framework of a weakening and ultimately disintegrating state, Giustozzi identifies several models. Firstly, in what he calls “orphan warlordism”, modelled on the Chinese case, “political power collapses, but the military forces on which it rested survive, at least in part”, filling up the resulting vacuum. Secondly, in a variation of this “fragmented praetorianism”, far from adopting a reactive position by waiting for the central state power to collapse, the would-be warlords actively make their claim for absolute power at the regional level. Alternatively, warlordism could be analysed in terms of disintegration not only of state structures, but also the fragmentation of society, through breaking-up of previous armed movements that contested the regime and attempted to capture the state: “warlordism might be an indirect outcome, as when non-state political organisations, such as armed movements, experience a weakening of the hold of the central leadership over its field commanders, who might then develop into warlords” (Giustozzi, 2005: 15).

A further insight in the debate concerning the rise of warlordism was provided by analyses of the Chinese experience. Arthur Waldron examined a series of articles from the 1920s, especially those of Hu Shi, in which he identifies the origin of warlordism as a reaction to various attempts of political centralization by military means: “warlordism had originated when, instead of understanding that the action of strong local institution would eventually create an enduring union, leaders attempted once again to use force to create unity” (in Waldron, 1990: 123). In numerous cases in today’s world, similar
efforts of centralization through the use of force can be at least partly associated with a reactive rise of armed contestations of the state’s monopoly over organized violence. In Colombia, for instance, the central authorities’ attempt to institutionalize the so-called “war on drugs” had the unintended consequence of destabilizing the state-society relations due to the “virulent reaction by narco-traffickers, who started a terrorist campaign in the 1980s against both state and society … [that ultimately] destabilised the relation of the paramilitary with the state” (Sanín and Barón, 2005: 5). In Sierra Leone, the warlords’ road to power was marked by the attempt of the formal state leaders in the early 1980s to seek a “centralization of power through the mobilization of armed gangs”, which in turn had the effect of strengthening the position of would-be warlords through a militarization of local conflict (Reno, 2003: 82). Similarly, the rise of modern warlordism in Afghanistan can be analyzed in terms of the warlords’ legitimation through their resistance in the face of ideologically-driven military efforts of state-centralisation, either in its Soviet phase (1978-1989) or in its subsequent Islamic one under the Taliban (Roy, 2004).

**What defines an (in)famous actor on the market of violence?**

Partly due to the pejorative connotation associated with the word, “warlord” is essentially a disputed concept, on whose definition there is no substantial consensus among the academic community. At one extreme of the spectrum, John MacKinlay is an eloquent voice among those who refer to warlords exclusively as a negative phenomenon:

> Although his power rested on the possession of military forces, like the baron and the chieftain, the warlord occupied territory in a strictly predatory manner and his social activities seldom enriched the lives of the civilian families in his grasp (2000: 71).

If that is true, it makes the reference to an idealised feudal “lordship” rather misleading. Alternatively, although rare, there are voices that, without ignoring the dire consequences deriving from a power built up on the barrel of the gun, strive to underscore the opportunities opened up by warlordism in emerging under conditions of, and re-enforcing a “modified social structure” (Stuvoy, 2002: 16). Among these isolated voices, Lucien Pye is probably one
of the most prominent, underlying the potential for opening up the public space for a pluralist system, characterized by competition among various centres of political power (Pye, 1971). Despite the definitional maze that continues to plague warlord studies, there appears to be a minimal consensus on the context of its development and some of its main characteristics, a consensus on which it is possible to build on at this stage of the chapter. Thus, the starting point of this analysis is given by two of the most widely-used definitions, out of which will be extracted the constitutive elements, as well as the propitious circumstances governing the emergence of warlordism.

The closest to a minimal and non-pejorative definitional common denominator that we have in current warlord studies is the one quoted above, by Mark Duffield (1998: 18). If Duffield’s definition situates the warlord in the contemporary globalized international system as well as within a state-system, the other robust image is inspired by a military figure dwelling on the ruins of the Roman Empire. In what Giustozzi refers to as “the most advanced theorisation of ... [non-modern] warlordism”, one scholar describes “a process in which officers on active service were becoming increasingly powerful locally, through their attachment to the land in regions in which they served, while state control over the exercise of private patronage was becoming weaker” (Dick Whittacker quoted in Giustozzi, 2005: 1).

From these two approaches one can derive an image of the warlord sharing the following characteristics. First of all, as an actor whose power resides in the gun, he is a leader of a military organization, which can be either of an ad-hoc or a more permanent nature, even if Duffield’s reference to an “armed band” is a clear hint that his troops do not necessarily have a sound military training. Indeed, the “rank and file” of a warlord’s organization is generally constituted by irregular forces, with or without much fighting experience, regardless of the origins of the leadership: the “former officers on active service” from Whittacker’s narrative are associated in the Chinese context with the elite of the former Imperial army. The circumstances differ from case to case in respect to military training. In Africa, as Herbst notes, the rebel forces, including those under the command of various warlords, are rarely stronger than several hundreds, while their “foot soldiers” rarely have much fighting experience (Herbst, 2004). In contrast, the prolonged nature of the conflict in Afghanistan built up a remarkable pool of battle-hardened
fighters. This situation is replicated in other contemporary cases even if generally at a lower level of command in the military structures of the weak host state. Thus, a second characteristic is that the men under the warlord’s command do represent a *locally significant force*, as they number up to the level of thousands.

Thirdly, the command of this significant contingent of irregular force offers the warlord a high degree of *local or regional autonomy*. There is, indeed, a widely shared consensus with regard to the warlord’s autonomy, even if there might be differences between various scholars as to the extent of this autonomy. Lucien Pye, for instance, famously described the Chinese warlords as “sovereign over their organisations and in their domains” (Pye, 1971: 39). The context in which Pye uses the concept of sovereignty indicates primarily the capacity of autonomous control over the decisions of an organization rather than the formal international recognition accorded to the state system. In this regard, modern warlords can be said to have the same degree of autonomy in dealing with the military decisions of the groupings under their command. And yet, their capacity to expand that autonomy to decisions outside the military sphere depends, if my perspective is correct, on their capacity to manoeuvre between various internal and external actors, including international agencies, other states and their own weakened state.

A more radical view is represented by recent efforts toward the conceptualization of warlords as “sovereign non-state actors” (Vinci, 2006). Building on the premises that the warlord’s relationship with the state can be conceived as one of an “empirically sovereign actor to another”, Vinci is forced to describe the warlord organization as “a praetorian political community ... autonomous and independent from other political communities.” (Vinci, 2006: 2). It is obvious that the intention here is to reverse the situation described by Jackson and Rosberg (1982) for quasi-states being defined as those units that enjoy a *de jure*, legal sovereignty in the external realm of the international society of states, while lacking a *de facto*, “empirical” domestic sovereignty. On the contrary, the warlord as a “sovereign non-state actor” possesses a so-called empirical sovereignty

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6 The issue of recognition is more complex. Suffice to say that, while there is rarely any the case for a formal recognition of their sovereignty, there are various forms of informal recognition, such as the dealing with state high-ranking officials, or trans-national NGOs and aid agencies.
(whose universe of application is reduced not to a territorial base, but to its organization), but suffers the lack of external recognition of a legal sovereignty. 7

While appearing in opposition to the central state’s attempt to monopolize the means of violence, warlords are far from acting in conditions defined by a stateless society, as has been persuasively argued recently by Schetter et al. (2006). They oppose vigorously a moral dichotomic understanding of state and warlordism as an opposition between good and evil, stressing that

the relationship between warlords and the state can be described as a situation or process in which the former reduce state order and power due to the take-over of state positions, while simultaneously ignoring the fulfilling of state functions and the obeying of state rules (2006: 3).

Warlords thus emerge within the boundaries of a formal state, albeit bureaucratically weakened, in an environment characterized by “a devolution of power from the centre to the local level as state agents of coercion (army and police) cease to function” (Jackson 2003: 133). For instance, in both models explaining the emergence of warlords examined by Giustozzi, the emphasis falls on their regional nature: either in the case of a so-called “orphan warlordism”, resulting from the collapse of the political power at the centre but the survival of its military structures in a regionalized or rather localized manner; or the disintegration of centralized control of non-state political organizations over their localized armed groups (Giustozzi, 2005: 15)

Thus, warlordism can be described as a form of militarized, regionally fragmented authority, in which the state’s weakened authority does not extend much further from the geographical centre of the national territory - mainly the capital. 8

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7 While I share the views on the warlord’s autonomy, I have doubts on the sovereign dimension attached to his relation to other entities, including its own or other states’. As shown below, I consider Vinci’s use of praetorianism as ambiguous at best. To his credit, he is aware that the warlord organization is “not a true praetorian political community” but derives this conclusion solely from the fact that sometimes the organization is commanded by the collective structure of the clans (Vinci, 2006a: 12).

8 The regional focus of warlords is clearly apparent in the Chinese case (see Diana Lary’s 1980 article for an excellent overview). The same can be said with regard to the current situation in Afghanistan’s Northern provinces, controlled by Dostum, or the Western provinces under the control of Ismail Khan until his replacement as governor of Herat in 2004. A similar story is narrated analysing the regional control of Aideed in the areas surrounding
If cases as diverse as China following the collapse of the Imperial order, Afghanistan following the Soviet invasion in 1979, or Somalia after the collapse of the Barre regime are all paradigmatic cases of warlordism, then it is worth mentioning that the regional dominance of a warlord is accompanied not only by the existence of a weak centre, but also by the existence of other regionally-dominant warlords. As such, warlordism is in fact a polycentric or acephalous politico-military system, whose international boundaries are externally decided. Thus, emphasis should fall on the plurality of localized armed contestation of the centre’s monopoly over violence rather than on the concentration of this contestation around a unique actor. It is a plurality of warlords in a polycentric that give warlordism the measure of its nature.

Furthermore, in opposition to the Weberian ideal type of modern, rational-legal or bureaucratic authority, warlordism is consensually described as a form of person-centred politics, a variety of the “great man theory” (Oberson, 2002: 95-99). Thus, in the particular circumstances of the disintegration of central authority, warlords flourish in “segmented societies”, with political systems based on various solidarity groups, characterized by a strong emphasis on clan or tribal allegiances (Oberson, 2002: 98) but possibly also on religious or sectarian affiliations. Under these conditions, analysts refer to the replacement of formal, hierarchical and impersonal structures with personalized structures. The highly personalized nature of politics and the weakness and marginalization of institutional constraints are placed into what Morten Boas, referring to African states, calls “neo-traditional” clientelistic (neo-patrimonial) relations, [defined as] the simultaneous activation of both patrimonial and bureaucratic logics. On the one hand, there is a “system of patron–client ties that bind leaders and followers in relationships of assistance and support that are built on recognized and accepted inequality between ‘big men’ and ‘smaller men’” (Boas, 2001: 670). On the other hand, though, as a result of its adaptive capacity for interaction with formal political structures, “another important dimension is the exchange relationships between equals, between ‘big men’ in various positions who exchange resources with one

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Mogadishu in Somalia or the Taylorland, wrapping parts of Liberia and Sierra Leone under the military control of Charles Taylor.

7 The reference to the “solidarity group” (qwam) is a direct reference to Afghanistan, where kinship affiliation (clan or tribal based) is just one form of the manifestation of the solidarity group, to which one can add the linguistic, ethnic or, in a qualified manner, religious affiliations (See Roy, 2004: 22)
another” (2001: 670). More than anything, warlords appear in situations in which the neo-patrimonial rule functions under the spectre of the gun to an extent that “warfare in effect becomes politics and politics warfare in a permanently militarized anarchical society where the authority of an effective central state no longer prevails” (Rich, 1999: 6).

In addition, no analysis of warlordism would be complete without reference to the ideological and economic dimensions. Indeed, in both the domestic and the international arena, warlords are described as non-ideological actors, which differentiate them from other forms of non-state armed groups contesting the state or in fact the regime’s supremacy. Referring to this non-ideological nature of contemporary warlordism, Paul Rich, for instance, links it with its emergence in the post-war phase of anti-colonial insurgency as reflecting “the decline of ideological appeals to ‘national liberation’ in the Third World politics since the early 1980s, and the fracturing of a number of post-colonial ‘quasi-states’” (Rich, 1999: 7).

In a similar manner, Giustozzi shows how “the term ‘warlord’ has been in vogue since the late 1980s among Africanists, who used it to indicate regional military rulers or armed politicians who did not display much political ideology nor reformist aims” (Giustozzi, 2005: 5). Noting the absence of an ideological element in warlordism as a phenomenon, referring to politics as “the process of gaining or maintaining support for common actions”, Giustozzi hurries to add that warlordism does nonetheless “require a political attitude, even when ideology is not involved at all” (2005: 5). At the same time, the placement of warlordism along ethnic, tribal (clan) or religious lines of fracture in a segmented society continues to reflect its political mantle, even when the ideological icing is obscured.

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10 Sharing the current belief in the possibility of co-opting warlords in the structures of governance, as well as the analysis of warlords as proto-monarchs, Boas constantly refers to warlords as “would-be-leaders”.

11 The problem with Rich’s politico-military image of the warlord is that it completely ignores the social dimension, which should be supplemented by encapsulating the warlord in a neo-patrimonial system.

12 It is more difficult to make reference to the ideological or non-ideological nature of the medieval European phase of warlordism, given the dangers of projecting modern concepts onto the past. The closer Chinese phase of warlordism offers a mixed picture, with some warlords sharing some ideological commitments (conservative, but mainly nationalists) while ignoring any ideological stance. See Lary 1980 but also McCord, 1993.

13 Not coincidentally, the same scholars at the same time introduce the concept of state weakness for the same political units confronted with the phenomenon of warlordism.
More often than not, in accordance with various forms of the economy of war thesis, ideology is replaced with the pursuit of naked economic interests and thus comfortably conciliated with the constant reference to the prominence of the economic dimension and the predatory nature of warlords. The image of the contemporary warlord as driven in its criminal enterprises exclusively by the pursuit of personal, material profit not only derives from the “greed” side of the “economies of war” perspective (Reno, 1998), but also marks the “market of violence” paradigm (Elwert, 1999). With warlordism thriving in a context of disintegration of central state institutions coupled with extreme poverty and the existence of untapped natural resources, various studies have concluded in one way or another that “the self-stabilised structure of warlord conflicts owes its continuation mainly to a profit-oriented economic system which combines violence and trade as a means of access to commodities” (Elwert, quoted in Oberson, 2002: 78).

It is at this junction of ideological fluidity and economic embeddedness that contemporary globalization acquires its significant role in providing the framework for analysing the interactions with the international system and the prominent role of external actors (be they states, international organization or non-governmental ones) in the rise and evolution of the warlords. Even if the mechanisms, intensity and consequence of intervention differ in the Chinese case and the current situation at the Westphalian periphery, it is safe to say that in both cases there was/is a significant presence of external actors. The Chinese warlords, according to their location and political inclination, were sponsored either by Japan or by the Soviet Union, even if only on a reduced scale (see Lary, 1980: 466; McCord, 1993; Giustozzi, 2005a: 3). Yet Chinese warlordism depended mostly on the domestic extraction of resources or private commercial enterprises. In contemporary cases, there is an extensive literature on the more prominent role of external actors in Afghanistan’s wars, as well as on the regionalised or internationalised economy of war for the African states.

Summing up, from the fusion of various aspects discussed above results a generalized image of warlords that will inform the second part of the research. Thus, warlords can be provisionally defined as those:

Competing, non-ideological military-political actors acting within the parameters of a weak state, whose importance is dictated by the capacity
- enhanced by the sponsorship of external actors - to translate their personal command over a significant number of irregular troops into a de facto, neopatrimonial control of a region under which the authority of the central state's institutions fails to hold.

The advantage of such a definition is that it contains most elements against which the identity of a specific armed group can be judged. On the other hand, it is broad enough to allow for a sufficient degree of variance inside a category whose real life protagonists do, indeed, display a high level of heterogeneity. Within this definition, it is possible, for instance, to emphasize the role of economic interest more than the embeddedness in traditional forms of authority hinted at by their neo-patrimonial nature. Indeed, it seems that the Liberian case reflects more the predatory, economic nature of warlordism, while some cases within Afghanistan mirror the phenomenon of warlordism as rooted or linked to the strength of the traditional social structures.

Warlords and other non-state armed groups

A meaningful analytical use of a concept such as "warlord" requires a clarification of its main attributes by opposing and distinguishing the concept from other forms of militarized groups or organizations contesting the central state's monopoly over violence on a given (national) territory. Before engaging on this path, two comments are needed. While building upon existing literature(s) dealing with the issue of regular or irregular militarized challenges to the state monopoly over violence, this section is not an attempt to compile a taxonomy of various forms, composition and strategies employed by non-state armed groups.\(^{14}\) The (more limited) purpose of this section is to focus on placing and individualizing the amorphous phenomena of warlordism inside a larger category. In engaging with this contested maze of concepts and differentiations, a second caveat reflects the variety of Tolstoy's unhappy family: while it is assumed that the modern state's military organization is based more or less on similar principles, aims and structures, the "unhappiness" of militarized non-state groups is reflected not only in the variety of several categories spanning a large area from bandits and Mafiosi to

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\(^{14}\) There are not very many systematic, not to mention comprehensive attempts at building a typology of various non-state armed groupings. Among recent ones, the present research will draw on the more general taxonomy of Richard Schultz (Schultz et al. 2004; Schultz, 2005) as well as on the typology of insurgencies presented by Christopher Clapham (1998; 2000)
insurgencies, but in an immense variety within each category itself. The same can be said about warlordism, which, far from being a homogenous phenomenon on either the temporal or the spatial scale, shares several characteristics of some armed groups, while differing from others. Yet some broad generalizations on the characteristics of all such armed groups is not only justified for analytical purposes, but could be useful provided we guard against the danger of conceptual ossification.

The re-emergence of both scholarly and sensationalist media interest in warlordism a decade after the end of the Cold War can be placed in the general category of attempts to understand phenomena emerging out of a period of profound societal and systemic transformation, and its accompanying turbulence. In fact, the concept of warlord was always introduced in a context of profound and costly socio-economic and politico-military transformations. To refer only to the academic literature quoted earlier, this is true of all three waves of warlord studies: the literature on late medieval European “lords of war” corresponds to the transformation of a feudal system into a modern, capitalist one; similarly, the Chinese warlords of the first decades of the twentieth century emerged and are consequently analysed in the context of the breakdown of the imperial traditional system and its replacement with the Republican one; finally, the background for the “Africanist” wave of warlord studies is given by the “failure” or even “collapse” of some weak postcolonial African states. The repeated appearance of a phenomenon codified as “warlordism” lead to one of its scholars noting that “warlords have been present for centuries and have periodically emerged whenever centralized political-military control has broken down” (Jackson, 2003: 131).

The uniting thread of all these various strands of warlord literature is the reference to the armed (military) “challenges to center’s right to exclusive ownership and use of coercive power” (Dietl, 2004: 41). It is exactly the armed nature of this organized contestation of the state’s monopoly over the use of violence that inscribes the warlord structure into a vast category of armed groups with which, more often than not, it is confused. From the universe of armed rebels that oppose the centralized state’s monopoly over violence, analyses of the warlord are often accompanied by references to various incarnations of praetorianism as a militarization of political life, or to
the combative actions of groups such as bandits, *caudillo*, mafia organizations, guerrillas or other types of insurgencies.

In the following pages, the purpose is to differentiate between the uses of these categories. No claim is made that the distinctions should be taken in their absolute form. Warlordism, while sharing many features in time as well as across geographical areas, remains a product of local circumstances, which in turn model the forms those shared characteristics take and condition their consequences. By the same token, warlordism can be described as a hybrid form of localized armed contestation of the state’s monopoly over violence. In exploring the nature of warlordism in the light of the characteristics analysed above, my approach is to situate the chosen form of armed organizations, according to its characteristics, on the following axes of analysis: origin/location if not *loci* of operations (rural versus urban; local/peripheral versus central), size, nature of operation (temporary/ *ad-hoc* versus permanent), relations with other state actors (autonomy, cooperation, dependency), nature of objectives (political versus economic), the existence and role of ideology in fomenting support and guiding action, as well as the role of external intervention.

None of these categories is uncontested. For instance, a disputed dichotomy, the rural-urban opposition, might be dismissed as too superficial in light of “the fluidity of the boundaries between those spatial categories” (Mkandawire, 2003: 477), especially in the Westphalian Periphery. Indeed, if referring to the composition of various rebel movements, one can notice the mixture of rural and urban elements. As Stephen Ellis generalized from the experience of African countries, “many rebel groups operating in recent years have been composed of people from both city and village or, more likely, of people who have spent much of their lives in between the two and cannot be easily described as either city people or village people” (Ellis, 2003: 462).

At the same time, the violent nature of the confrontations in war-torn countries has altered their sociological structure, forcing massive displacements of populations, both internal and external, with internal displacement especially contributing to the “drain of population from rural areas towards the urban ones ... particularly the capital ones” (Ellis, 2003: 463). Yet, despite the strength of such a critique, and since it continues to have political consequences, the rural-urban dichotomy can maintain its validity as
an analytical tool if, as Mkandawire stresses, “the character of rebel movements … [does] not refer to the eventual numerical composition of their ‘foot soldiers’, but rather to their origins, leadership and [at least the initial] agenda” (Mkandawire, 2003: 478). Additionally, the classical rural-urban dichotomy can be supplemented with a centre-periphery opposition in relevant cases. Exploring the concept of warlordism on the two axes, I will first refer to the relationship between warlordism and praetorianism. At the other extreme, I will differentiate between warlords and criminal organizations such as bandits, gangs and mafia groups. Finally, this section will deal with the caudillo system before inscribing the warlords into the world of insurgent movements alongside guerrillas and militia groups.

**Warlordism as a form of praetorianism?**

As already hinted above, one concept is constantly re-appearing in scholarly writings on warlords and warlordism. As a radical form of militarization of society, praetorianism is often used as a starting point by various analysts of the phenomenon. Besides the already mentioned reference to Anthony Vinci (2006), “praetorianism” is used as an analytical device by Edward McCord (1993) in reference to the Chinese period of warlordism, by Paul Rich (1999) in reference to mainly African versions, and by Antonio Giustozzi (2005) in his synthesis of the modern faces of warlordism in various geographical and temporal locations. Justifying the employment of the concept in the context of warlordism, McCord refers to the political role of the Praetorian Guard in ancient Rome in the classical manner that defines praetorianism as “a situation where the military class of a given society exercises independent political power within it by virtue of an actual or threatened use of military force” (McCord, 1993: 3, my emphasis).

Similarly, defining praetorianism in a Huntingtonian manner, as “refer[ing] to the intervention of the military into politics and the breakdown of the civil-military relations” (Rich, 1999: 2), offers a reasonable cause for this constant reference to the term in the context of warlordism. Warlordism is indeed accompanied by the militarization of society, and thus refers to the intervention, dominance of the use, or threat of use, of military force into
politics. But how far can this conceptual framework help in the analysis of warlordism?

To answer this question, one needs to return to the development of the "prae-terian perspective" as used by classical proponents such as Samuel Huntington (1968), Amos Perlmutter (1974, 1981) or Eric Nordlinger (1977). This perspective functions primarily as an analytical tool to aid in understanding the common subject of military interventions in unstable, institutionally underdeveloped and transitional societies of Latin America, Africa or Asia. While the fundamental tenets of praetorianism – intervention of the military in the political arena as a fracture of democratic civil-military relations or the weakness of political institutions - are maintained across the spectrum, differences occur in the causal analysis of this intervention. While Huntington and his followers, in line with the thesis of the military as protectors of the state, consider that praetorianism is caused by weak societies lacking legitimate political institutions, Perlmutter (1974) and Nordlinger (1977) "blame praetorianism on the military professionalism" (in Danopolous and Zirker, 2002: 5). But even as there is enough space for controversy around the causes of this particular relationship between armed forces and society, the "prae-terian perspective" is united by its emphasis on the centrality of the state, as "the dominant classes and even institutions e.g. civil-military bureaucracy function within the state and not as state" (Steans and Pettiford, 2005: 55-58, 86-88). From here one can extract an important limitation of the use of praetorianism as a conceptual framework for the analysis of warlord systems.

Most importantly, classical forms of praetorianism refer to the control of a central state by the military as an institution *per se*. As such, it is clearly a form of authoritarianism, and collides with the ideal of a democratically organized state. However, unlike the situation in warlord systems, praetorianism remains defined by the existence of a central state, capable of enforcing its decisions over the national territory, especially as political power is captured by the military class. Even more so, due to its military take-over, the state remains the political organization able to claim a monopoly over violence. Even if its political legitimacy is contested by elements of the civil society, the dominance of the military class radically diminishes the
possibilities for contestation of the monopoly over violence. Some of these points of criticism are not overlooked by the scholars of warlordism.

For instance, none of the authors mentioned above use the concept of \textit{praetorianism} as it was developed in the classical manner. Instead, they use the qualified terminology introduced by Donald Sutton (1980) in reference to the Chinese situation, that of “fragmented praetorianism” (McCord, 1993: 6). To a certain extent, the image of an “orphan warlordism” (Giustozzi, 2005) does refer to a collapse of the political order concomitant to the maintenance of a military one, even if fragmented. The problem remains, though, as the military commanders in a warlord system exercise their control only on a local or regional basis, in contrast with the authoritarian control of the state within its internationally recognized borders, as in the case of \textit{praetorianism}. This reality is not lost when “fragmented praetorianism” is carved so as to denote a situation “which leads not to attempts to control the state but to ‘a permanently militarized anarchical society’ where the authority of a central state no longer prevails—in other words, to warlordism” (Ottaway analyzing Rich. 2000: 263). Yet, the disappearance of the central state’s authority creates such a distance between the canon of \textit{praetorianism} and warlord systems that it makes even a qualified use of the former to describe the latter superfluous.

The same conclusion is supported by the absence in warlordism of any semblance of a unitary class able to bond the contestants of state’s centralized attributes of monopoly over both violence and governance. As Lary shows, not even in the paradigmatic case of “fragmented praetorianism” —early Republican China—, can the hypothesis of belonging to the same social group (military elite) be proven functional. In a comparative analysis of some of the prominent warlords in Afghanistan, such as Ismail Khan, Ahmad Shah Masood, Rashid Dostum and Malik Pahlawan, a persuasive demonstration was given of the variety of social backgrounds, the nature of their organization and their goals, along with the strategies for attaining those goals (Giustozzi, 2003).\footnote{Similarly, an even more recent analysis led the analyst to opt for a typology of warlords, including “feudal warlordism” and “fragmented warlordism” (Schetter et al. 2006).} While some of the prominent warlords of the Chinese period did in fact reflect the military elite of the fragmenting Imperial army, this was not true for all of them. Advancing to the contemporary situation, there continue to be cases of warlords as highly-ranked officers in the collapsing state’s army.
such as the Uzbek Gen Dostum in Afghanistan, or Gen Aideed in Somalia. But for most cases, the military commanders either derive from the lower ranks of the military (Ismail Khan) or are not related to the leadership of the state’s military (Taylor in Liberia). Even more so, while some of the warlords situate themselves at the hierarchical apex of a regular army (usually one of the army corps of the former national army), most of them command in reality rather irregular forces who lack formal military training. Finally, while praetorian systems are organized around the military as an organization, warlordism inclines toward a charismatic regime, founded as it is on the possession of a military force.

**Warlords and organized crime: Mafias and bandits.**

Its constant appeal to violence, its predatory nature as well as its control of local economic activities and its trans-national operation in the grey area of the economy all open up a comparison between Mafia organizations and the warlord system. Pre-eminence of economic profit brings warlords closer to mafia groups than the government, with its strict delineation of the public and private spheres (Reno quoted in Giustozzi, 2003: 1). The commonalities extend further: they are both a form of social hybridization between modern and traditional forms of organization. They share a modus operandi based on one form or another of patronage, solidly entrenched in a charismatic type of authority. For example, the Sicilian mafias were/are defined as a “personality-based form of organization involved in illegal (that is against the claims of the central authority) – organized crime” (Anderson, 1995). Moreover, although their respective life-span as organizations varies considerably, they are both long-term phenomena. Finally, both mafia organizations and warlords are active in the shadow of the state.\(^\text{16}\)

Nonetheless, despite these general similarities, warlords are not to be confused with Mafia group leaders. Arguably the most fundamental differentiation refers to the nature of their organization and control, as well as "\(^{16}\) So much so, that William Reno writes about the “shadow state” (2000). There are a few other characteristics that are common across the entire realm of armed groups, as Schultz’s analysis demonstrate: “all armed groups, to varying degrees, challenge the state’s authority, power and legitimacy; all armed groups, at least in part use violence and force, but in unconventional and asymmetric ways; they operate both locally and globally due to developments of the information age . . . “(2005: 10).
the nature of their relation with the state in which they are active. Concerning the former, the warlord’ military group, of a considerably larger size than a mafia group, represents a clear form of military organization, even if formed by irregulars. At the same time, the warlord, unlike a Mafia boss, is autonomous from the collapsing state institutions. Mafia organizations, even if taking advantage of various state weaknesses, are not necessarily active in a collapsed state. As MacKinlay notes, “the Mafia live as citizens of a free society in most cases, and their freedom to move and communicate is not guaranteed by their own military strength, but by the institutions of their host state” (2000: 78). Not only is the state strong enough to guarantee that freedom but, as Schultz notes, mafias are “organized groups, [which] poses a clandestine hierarchical structure and leadership whose primary purpose is to operate outside the law in a particular criminal enterprise” (2005: 23, my italics).

The separation between the realm of the legal and the realm of the illegal inside the authority of the state conditions the existence and the nature of Mafia group activities. Far from acting in a stateless society, the mafia’s success depends on its capacity to attract officials of the states into the “shadow economy”, hence the importance of corruption in the analysis of Mafia organizations. By comparison, the existence of the state in a situation of warlordism is radically diminished, being limited to the area surrounding the capital. Outside this centre, there is competition between autonomous military commanders whose control over their regions is exercised openly through violence or threats of the use of violence. Unlike the situation characteristic of Mafia activities, the discussion in terms of legality-illegality and corruption is simply irrelevant when attached to the warlord system. Mafias are active on a punctuated equilibrium base, in interstitial spaces between the legal and illegal market. Thus, its military power is explicitly exercised only intermittently and on a very small scale, in opposition to the constant armed contestation of the central state’s monopoly over violence in the case of the warlord system. More importantly, on a state-society axis, the Mafia’s exercise of armed force is directed against the individual or small collectivities, and not against the state’s military forces. Warlords, on the contrary, even when targeting individuals they ultimately challenge the supremacy of the armed forces of the state.
The other figure with which warlords are frequently related is the bandit. We might for instance take Rich’s comments, according to which warlordism [with its structures of hierarchical power, where leadership is based on various forms of patronage, nepotism and political clientelism] tends to be derived more from models of autocratic tribal rule or large-scale gangsterism rather than evolutionary wars of national liberation in which the main basis of support lies in the general civilian population (Rich, 1999: 5, my italics).

The allusion to gangsterism, be it of a large or small scale, once again has to do with the image of warlords as simply predatory armed groups raiding on the territory in search of pillaging and looting. Interestingly enough, the debate on the warlord system in its Chinese phase constantly made reference to the existence of “bandits”, with authorities “manipulat[ing] the word to discredit their political enemies, and there was a widespread tendency to confuse banditry with other forms of association such as secret societies” (Billingsely, 1988: 14).

As with Mafia groups, being predominantly preoccupied by material gains, “bandits did not engage in rebellion per se, for they did not seek or find allies among the peasantry or elites interested in challenging the state” (Barkey, 1994: x). Of the literature on the subject, one dimension in particular has aroused the interest of the social scientist in the analysis of bandits and banditry, i.e. the problematic of banditry as a marginal form of resistance. This usually refers, critically or sympathetically, to the classic work of Eric Hobsbawm in which he manifestly refers to one particular type of banditry as “a form of individual or minority rebellion within peasant societies ... [of] those who are not regarded as simple criminals by public opinion” (1969: 13).

As is generally the case with the rise of warlords on the ruins of a collapsing social structure, Hobsbawm’s investigation of the romanticized “social bandit” is placed in “transitional societies where tribal and kinship

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17 In the narrative of European state-formation, but also in the one regarding the reconstruction of the Chinese state on the ruins of Imperial decay, the process of centralization is associated with the collision between state and non-state controllers of organized violence, and with the gradual elimination of non-state elements, as a route to the state accessing the monopoly over violence. What makes Barkey’s study interesting is that she analyzes the process of centralization or re-centralization in the Ottoman Empire as following an alternative path: “the power of the [Ottoman Empire] state necessarily grew not only at the expense of societal groups but also because the state incorporated or legitimized these groups [including bandits] and linked them to itself” (1994: 1)
organization is disintegrating prior to the development of agrarian capitalism" (Mayaram 2003: 336). In a decisively exploitative environment, the “social bandit”, strongly anchored on the side of the rural inhabitants, constitutes a “pre-political … primitive form of social protest” (2003: 336). Although its social nature is given by the rural support of peasantry, banditry in this sense is characterized as representing “a state of supposedly absent, or near absent, political consciousness or organization … devoid of any explicit ideology, organization or programme” (Hobsbawm, quoted in Mayaram, 2003: 336).

Reflecting his main sources - that is, poems and ballads in the tradition of the Robin Hood myth, the social bandit is indeed guilty of robberies and thus part of the universe of “organized crime”. But this criminality is transformed into a form of resistance through the selectivity of its victims from among the oppressors – “rich and privileged” - in an attempt to re-establish a just equilibrium. As a result, unlike warlords, such bandits are clearly embedded in a social niche - peasantry in Hobsbawm’s case. What the warlord shares with this mythical figure are the armed forms of resistance – although with a higher degree of military organization, and the lack of an ideological clout. But, unlike the social bandit whose resistance is aimed against the local oppressor, the regional warlord’s organized challenge, far from being marginal, is directed equally against the expansion of the state’s military capacity beyond the capital region as it is against an external invasion. More so, and again in opposition with the “social bandit”, the warlord’s contestation becomes possible due to substantial external support, support that further erodes the warlords’ dependency on any particular social class. There are various types of what Skaperdas calls “forms of rent extraction” which constitute external instruments of patronage, of which he mentions “the subsidization of some, if not all contestants, foreign investment in [licit or illicit] natural resource extraction, various forms of foreign aid” (2002: 440).

As various analyses of the situation in Afghanistan point out, the bulk of the

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18 Interestingly enough, while accepting the lack of any revolutionary ethos for the bandit, it was possible to reject Hobsbawm’s explanation in accordance with which this absence of an ideological feature is due to “modest ambition or a lack of appropriate organization and propaganda”, and instead showing how “their social ties extended not only to the powerless peasants, but also to the powerful overlords” … the only parties capable of “carving out avenues of upward [social] mobility” (Anion Blok quoted in Billingsley, 1988: xii). This perspective not only opens up a space for understanding Barkey’s thesis on the centralization of the Ottoman Empire through inclusion rather than elimination, but it also provides a window towards an analysis of contemporary warlords as situated in a nodal position in the social network.
income for military commanders is obtained by the subsidising of military hardware, taxation of the trade routes, traffic of illicit products, and only lastly international aid.

**Caudillismo and the warlord system**

A fascinating enterprise results from a discussion of warlordism in terms of a widespread analytical tool used in Latin American historiography, that of the *caudillo* and *caudillo* politics.¹⁹ There are, hardly surprisingly, numerous similarities between the circumstances in which both caudillo and warlord politics emerged. Thinking of the *caudillo* "as a military man, almost literally a man on a horseback who is at the same time the political boss and absolute ruler of a ... district within a country" (Chapman, 1932: 282) can only appeal to the scholar of warlord politics. Even more so, like warlord politics, coloured by the nuances of personalism combined with localism, *caudillaje* is in essence a hybrid institution, "half feudal, half "capitalist", caught between past and future, [which] exhibited characteristics of both ways of life, as well as their inherent contradictions" (Hansen and Wolf, 1967: 170).²⁰

Sometimes described as an "agrarian warlord" (Andkerson, 1984), the *caudillo* had a "virtually independent power base and acted as a power broker between the central government and the local population" (Salamini, 1986: 767). In the context of the establishment of a capitalist agriculture, the *caudillo*’s independence is guaranteed by his ownership of an expanded agricultural land mass (*hacienda*) and his location at the heart of the financial upper class. Fundamentally an economic enterprise able to flourish under the anarchic conditions of the post-Independence era of the weakly centralized Latin American states, Wolf and Hansen describe the *caudillo* system in terms applicable to that of warlordism, as being characterized by "(1) the repeated emergence of armed patron-client sets, cemented by personal ties of dominance and submission, and by a common desire to obtain wealth by force of arms; (2) the lack of institutionalized means for succession to offices; (3)

¹⁹ According to Giustozzi, it was M. Riekenberg’s work that introduced the study of warlordism to the parallel with the caudillo system (2005a: 2). While I did not have access to the German work, my own parallel draws heavily on Hansen and Wolf’s 1967 article.
²⁰ As Wolf and Hansen shows, the *caudillo* can be described as a "chieftain", while *caudillo* politics (or "caudillaje") refers to the condition of *caudillo* competition and rule (1967: 169)
the use of violence in political competition” (1967: 169). Like the warlord, the caudillo is the beneficiary of institutional decomposition: following the victorious Wars of Independence, land-owners quickly gained control of disbanded armed troops, reviving a situation in which they “maintained armed retainers on their own territories” (Hansen and Wolf, 1967: 168). The private nature of these armies, coupled with the territorial dimension of the ownership of the haciendas, were the twin instruments further used for promoting the economic interests of the caudillo.

Despite the numerous similarities above, for the purpose of analytical clarity, the warlord system should be differentiated from that of a caudillo. First and most prominently, the concept of caudillo was designed for the comprehension of power relations in the particular context of Latin American history. Secondly, unlike the warlord, whose power derives directly from his command over an armed band, the caudillo’s power ultimately rests in his private ownership of the hacienda. Thirdly, there is the question of the relations of those two actors with the external arena. While the caudillo’s dependence on the pillaging of “free” resources on his labour-intensive, autarchic hacienda was given the final and lethal blow by external competition and the opening up of the markets, the warlord’s existence itself is dependent on his capacity to interact with the regional, if not global environment. Finally, in opposition with the non-ideological nature of the warlord, the caudillo, defined as a political entrepreneur, made use not only of force, but also of a conservative ideology to further his economic interests (Rouquie, 1987: 153).

**Warlord and the insurgent groups: guerrilla and militias**

Most substantially and constantly, warlords appear in the literature as a particular form of an insurgency movement. Thus, warlords occupy a prominent place in at least one important attempt to build up a typology of modern insurgency movements in Africa (Clapham, 1998b). For Clapham, such modern insurgencies could be framed into one of the four general groupings: liberation, separatist, reform(ist) and warlord insurgencies. Constructed around cases such as Algeria, Angola, Mozambique and Zimbabwe, liberation insurgencies are defined as those “set out to achieve independence from colonial or minority rule” (1998: 6). Fitting the cases of
Sudan and Eritrea, *separatist insurgencies* "seek to represent the aspirations and identities of particular ethnicities or regions within an existing state, either by seceding from that state altogether, or else by pressing for some special autonomous status" (Clapham, 1998b: 6)

Working towards establishing the state on new functional lines, *reform insurgencies* seek "radical reform of the national government", as shown by the cases of the National Resistance Army in Uganda, and the People's Revolutionary Democratic Front in Ethiopia. Finally, the disposition towards state authority seems to differentiate the fourth category, that of *warlord insurgencies*. This, Clapham argues, "arise[s] in cases where the insurgency is erected towards a change of leadership which does not entail the creation of a state different from that which it seeks to overthrow, and which may involve the creation [within the boundaries of that weakened state] of a personal territorial fiefdom separate from existing state structures and boundaries" (1998b: 6).21

It is worth noting that, while sometimes using them in an interchangeable manner, Clapham classifies the "guerilla" as a part of the wider concept of "insurgency". Thus, he defines "guerillas" as "armed movements, usually originating in the countryside and often attacking across state frontiers, which have sought to contest the power of [African] states, and have frequently established their own forms of rule, in territories from which the control of established states has disappeared" (1998b: 1). In this context, the warlord appears as a sub-species of the guerilla variety of insurgency. But what, then, is an insurgency?

Reflecting the CIA's 1980s *Guide to the Analysis of Insurgency*, Schultz proposed a definition of insurgency as a:

> protracted political and military set of activities with the goal of partially or completely gaining control over the territory of a country, involving the use of irregular military forces and illegal organizations, designed to weaken or destroy the power and legitimacy of a ruling government, while at the same time increasing the power and legitimacy of the armed insurgent group (Schultz, 2005: 11).

Since most of the common characteristics of guerrillas and warlords are obvious (armed contestation of the state's military, hierarchical nature of its

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21 In addition to these four categories, Cilliers advocates for the addition of a fifth, hybrid category, that of a "resource-based insurgency", an insurgency that "is in part a development of liberation insurgency after de-colonialisation and the end of the Cold War, and overlaps and subsumes within it warlords insurgencies" (Cilliers, 2000, 4+)
organization, the charismatic forms of authority, the role of external support and so on), here I will focus on the differences. At the wider (or maximal) end of the definition, insurgent movements are protracted politico-military activities designed to operate in the direction of capturing the state. The protracted nature, the aspect of legitimacy, as well as the combination of (irregular) military and political aspects (to which one may add the rural origin) all feature highly in classical version of guerrillas, as described in their Maoist codification in particular. In this model, the gradual increase of the organizational and military capabilities of the insurgency serves the ultimate aim of revolutionizing the state.\textsuperscript{22} In this sense, Mkandawire touched a vital point when showing how “ideologies and organizational capacities have played an important role in guerrilla warfare, and how they have affected its nature even within similar cultural contexts” (Mkandawire, 2003: 479). Thus popular support, and with it the “battle to win the hearts and minds” of the population, becomes one of the most crucial aspects of an insurgency using guerrilla tactics.

In stark contrast, even if control over the capital is more often sought by powerful warlords for benefits associated with the nature of sovereignty in the international system, conquering the state is not essential. This is not to say that there are not various attempts of institutionalizing power in a warlord system. As the case of Afghanistan shows, major warlords are often attracted by the perspective of occupying important functions not only in local government – the position of governor is often the key official position of the warlord, but also in the central government itself (Massoud, Fahim, Dostum, Hekmatyar and more recently Ismail Khan have all occupied positions at the highest echelons of various Afghan governments). At the most extreme case, Charles Taylor had himself even elected President. Yet there are rather few cases in which the co-optation in the central government is accompanied by an abandonment of the control of private military forces.

Given the localized and non-ideological nature of the warlord, the organization of the state on the revolutionary principles of an ideology is

\textsuperscript{22} There is naturally a good variety of models, referring to the tactical level, also targeting the number of stages which this protracted effort has to go through, depending on the version chosen – Mao, Giap, Guevarra.
another point of disjunction between the warlords and guerrilla movements. The coordinates of guerrilla warfare in its classical formulation of course starts from the initial stage of a localized form of resistance, but essentially it envisages an expansion in the following stages, finalized with a direct confrontation of the state’s military forces – thus the transformation from irregular to regular forces and the corresponding transformation in tactics. Again with a few exceptions, nothing like these transformations is envisaged in a warlord realm. Finally, numerous analysts of warlordism make reference to what could be called “the detachment from population”, as a result of the warlord's lack of dependency on support from the population. MacKinlay refers to this “detachment” in describing how “the Chinese warlord ... had established himself from the power base of a former provincial leader, and thus endowed, could afford to take a rapine attitude towards the local population in the short term ... in stark contrast with Mao’s forces who ... had to rely on widespread popular support” (MacKinlay, 2000: 73).

At the minimal end of insurgency’s definition, there are irregular armed forces operating within a weak state whose total control they may or may not seek to obtain. Those groupings, often associated with ethnic, tribal or clan linkages, could be clustered under the generic name of militias. Of all forms of insurgencies, militias are the closest to the armed organization of a warlord, leading numerous authors to use the terms almost synonymously. As shown by Jackson, Alice Hills, for instance, uses the term “militia” as an alternative to “warlord” in a manner that has since been followed by others (Jackson, 2003). For other sophisticated analysts, warlords appear as a subspecies of militia armed groups. Jackson, for instance, creates a tripartite

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23 Given the fact that by definition the warlord system is a polycentric contestation of the central state’s monopoly over violence, it is worth investigating the acephalous nature of warlord politics by contrast with the contestation of a state (not necessarily a collapsing one) by guerrilla insurgencies.

24 My own position tries to depart from the “detachment from population” thesis towards an alternative of “indirect attachment”.

25 Both positions reflect an idealization of the situations. While there were numerous cases in which Chinese warlords were actively involved in the provision of some public goods, Mao didn’t hesitate to use mass killings to obtain fear-induced compliance rather than “widespread popular support” (Chang and Halliday, 2006).

26 I have intentionally used elements of Schultz’ definition of a militia as it makes reference to just a small minimal number of their characteristics. About militias, Schultz writes: “in today's context, is a recognizable irregular armed force operating within the territory of a weak or failing state ... militias represent specific ethnic, religious tribal, clan or other communal groups ...[with] an impact beyond the borders of the states within which they operate” (2005: 17-20).
typology of militias as a function of their loyalties and organizational structures: *freelance militias*, the least disciplined and trained of all militia types, defined as “bandits who are not tied to specific geographical area and are frequently present in small groups” (Jackson, 2003: 142); *clan militias* whose “loyalties [are directed towards] specific areas and peoples, shared history and enmities, etc”; and finally *personal militias* as “relatively well-armed [groups of] men acting on behalf of a recognized individual, ideology or ethnic group” (2003: 142). Similarly, in Schultz’s typology, the warlord is the leader of an organized militia group, exercising an organized even if charismatic command, in opposition to the clan militias which “function under decentralized collective leaderships that seek to protect or advance the interests of the clan, in the absence of an identifiable leader” (2005: 18). In opposition with the insurgencies using guerrilla tactics, the concept of “militia” neither superimposes an ideological stance, nor does it require the aim of conquering state power.

**Warlordism as a social order**

What this incursion into the literature shows is the prominence of the military and economic dimensions of the complex phenomenon of warlordism to the detriment of its broader socio-political one. One way of moving beyond the superficial pejorative labelling of “warlordism” toward a more refined analysis of its nature and attributes is to follow Antonio Giustozzi’s call for a detailed examination of the processes through which the ‘warlords’ acquire a certain type of legitimacy that transforms them into ‘rulers’ (2003: 2). Indeed, following the path opened by Reno, he suggests an analysis of current “warlord politics” as representative of a new “logic of organization” (Reno, 1998: 79). Although this novel social order is based on a personal, profit-driven control over the means of organized violence, it does nonetheless involve a social dimension. In the process of attempting to legitimize their existence and to achieve a minimal level of political allegiance, warlords substitute for an absent or dysfunctional state in the sphere of public security and protection, but also in various forms of job provision and even social
welfare (Oberson, 2002: 89). In this context, the central conclusion of this chapter is that we need to develop a conceptual framework that moves beyond the teleological project of building a modern state by recognizing modern warlordism as a sample of adaptative social innovation to conditions of intense economic globalization.

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27 In conditions of war, and the consequential devastation of the local rural economy, the advantages of membership in a private militia outweigh the advantages of civilian occupations. The tasks of those military groups should not be limited to their combatant status: as Conrad Schetter noticed in studying Afghanistan, their main tasks are “to collect taxes from the inhabitants in return for ensuing security and to take tolls from foreigners crossing their checkpoints” (2004: 8).
Chapter 5. Warlord governance and the State

Building on the findings of the previous section, the fifth chapter has at its core the objective of identifying a governance space within the particular social context of warlordism. In so doing, it seeks to contour an alternative form of organising political communities beyond the classical state’s centralized monopoly over violence. To this end, the chapter is structured in a number of parts. The first section develops an argument for moving beyond the “state-building” perspective in the study of non-state armed groups. Previous such studies, as I have shown, only allowed for a politicisation of “naming” what a “warlord” or “militia” is. Instead, my proposition here is that one can analyse (and, later, theorize) the structural forms of governance in areas under the control of such non-state armed and violent groups. Second, I argue that, given its under-theorized status, a conceptualization of warlords in terms of governance might offer a first step toward the identification of an alternative polity. This section therefore substantiates the claims that, under certain circumstances, some of the warlords are indeed involved in the provision of social services. Examples from both historical (China) and more recent cases (Afghanistan) support this position. Beyond the instances of social service provision, the following section investigates the circumstances that allow the warlord to be involved – directly or indirectly – in this form of governance. My argument here is that, that far from being isolated from the state or society, the position of the warlord is enhanced by the links with, indeed, dependency on both.

Certainly, mine is not the first attempt to look at contemporary varieties of warlordism in these terms. Most significantly, Stephen Lindberg analyses warlordism in terms of a:

pluralist governance, characterized by open and relatively unregulated competition between social groups and actors for influence over the state ... presumes a multitude of social groups counter-weighing state institutions and acting as checks and balances ... [in which] the state performs only basic functions that take fewer resources and will therefore not have to rely heavily on coercion for extraction of resources (2001: 186-187).

However, the novelty of my approach consists in identifying that recognizing that there are public goods provided in a warlord’s realm, even if
they are modest, discontinuous and provided on a selective base. Whatever the nature of these provisions, it is important to acknowledge that the warlord constitute a significant actor in the distribution of these goods in a situation that goes beyond the static asymmetry between a “strong society” and a “weak state” (Migdal, 1988). This is not to ignore the fact that the absence of a state’s monopoly over organised violence is, most of the time, destructive, with dire consequences for large parts of the population. All the analyses of warlords and warlord politics stress this aspect to the extent that the phenomenon has been treated in a one-dimensional way, completely disregarding the functions of violent actors for social order. Trying to fill a gap, this chapter will mainly address the modest amount and quality of social services still provided under a warlord order, without proposing an abandonment of scholarly work focused on the negative impact of the absence of a monopoly over violence.

In the context of a “failed” or, for that matter even of a “strong” state, organized violence outside the control of the state characterizes contemporary life in a significant number of societies.\(^{28}\) The necessity of dealing with failed states, dysfunctional institutions and a lack of “good governance” at the periphery of the international system has pushed the process of “state-building” to the core of current scholarly interest, and even more so to the attention of decision-makers, as shown in Chapter 3. The burgeoning literature on “state failure”, however, is founded on a “negative” logic triggered by the analyses of what is missing in politics at the Westphalian Periphery – in particular the absence of the centralized monopoly over violence. Building on this negative logic, the solutions widely offered revolve around the (re)centralization of the control over organized violence in a manner reminiscent of early state-formation theories. In opposition, by acknowledging the provision of social services such as infrastructural networks, health care and education in areas outside the central government’s control over violence, my research is informed by a “positive” inductive logic centred on identifying what is already in place in those political units.

\(^{28}\) Most of the literature on “privatizing security” refers to cases belonging to the family of “failed states”, but to a certain extent it also affects the category usually associated with “strong states”. See, for instance, in the literature on privatizing security the sub-domain of partially “contracting out” security functions of the military, as well as the literature on gated communities and the implications of the commodification of security services.
The acceptance of "governance without government" (Rosenau and Czempiel, 1992) derives from the rich literature on international regimes further supported by the emergence of private authority in the international system (Hall and Biersteker, 2002). Conceptually, this triggers a separation between the institution of government and the functions of governance. Thus, "government refers to formal institutions that enjoy national sovereignty, possess a monopoly of power over a particular territory and are not answerable to an external authority" while "governance is a social function such as the regulation of economic affairs" (Wolfgang Reinicke quoted in Gilpin, 2002: 240). Similarly, Kooiman draws the important conclusion that, while the process of governing refers to a "goal-directed [public] intervention ... governance is the result - or the total effect of social-political-administrative interventions and interactions, across public and private, beyond markets and hierarchies" (my italics, Kooiman quoted in Rhodes, 1996: 657). As such, the classic public-private distinction becomes loose not only in economic, political and social areas, but also in the military one, as illustrated in a form of 'labour-division' among central institutions, local warlords and domestic or international NGOs.

**Warlords: between economic interests and the social arena**

As seen in the previous chapter, most analysts of the phenomenon of warlordism share MacKinlay’s view that the warlord is conceptually opposed not only to the virtuous form of governance characteristic of the modern state, but also to its feudal predecessors whose status in the local community depended on both the extent of their military prowess, as well as on their social responsibility toward the community under their control. This could have been a good comparative platform to start from, if the conceptual distinction offered was not charged with a strictly negative connotation. But for MacKinlay, although both the modern warlord and the feudal ruler derived their power from the possession of military force, the warlord who "occupied territory in a strictly predatory manner ... was a negative phenomenon", in contrast with local rulers who "performed important social functions, supporting religion, culture and encouraging some aspects of a primitive form of civil society" (2000: 71). Against this view, there are examples in which
warlords attempt to substitute both state and traditional elites in mediating between various social functions, especially in the realm of infrastructure (road construction) and health and education provision. The following discussion goes some way towards offering an explanation of why such provision is possible by situating the warlord as an actor in a particular economic and social environment. This it does by focusing on various services being provided in different contexts such as the historical case of China before the communist victory, or the most recent case of Afghanistan.

Predictably, the description of non-state armed groups in the process of "building authority directly through commerce" in a violent environment, most often ignores the dimension of social service provision. The positioning of the warlord in strict opposition with the institutions and functions of the state partly justifies this tendency. As Reno observed, "...this strategy obviates the need to build bureaucracies, since warlord political authority that fails to replace the state would make no pretension of carrying out state-like functions" (1998: 94). On the other hand, it is suggested that the warlord's reluctance to carry out state-like functions derives from systemic constraints, warlords risking losing their comparative advantage over their competitors in the market of violence if they were to consume scarce resources in the process of providing social services.

However, based on his extensive research on modern Afghanistan, Antonio Giustozzi stresses the limitations of a perspective depicting warlords as driven strictly by the pursuit of their economic interests and reluctant to perform any social functions. On the contrary, he argues, at least in the particular case of Afghanistan in which "social status derives from the control of security rather than of money, ... these warlords are more akin to politicians than to businessmen, in that what they are looking for is power rather than money as an end in itself" (2003: 3).29 The limits of too rigid a separation between the social and economic realms are even more visible if one considers that power in the Afghan context is defined by the capacity to secure and re-distribute externally extracted resources (aid) (Saikal, 2004; Rubin, 2002).

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29 One of the methods of legitimizing their control remains the involvement in the provision of social services. Even the infamous Osama bin Laden's financial contribution to the Mujahidin's resistance appears not to be limited to the acquisition of military equipment, but also to extend to the building of a hospital and the importing of agricultural machines (Davies, quoted in Schetter, 2004: 9).
The analysis of non-state armed groups’ involvement in the realm of social services can by no means be limited to Afghanistan. A recent investigation of the tripartite interaction between the paramilitary, their social constituency, and the state in Colombia, and particularly the social content of this confrontation, also militates against too strict an interpretation of the conflict as fuelled solely by economic considerations, concluding that it “cannot be reduced to rent-seeking” (Sanín and Barón, 2005: 27). Not only did Columbian armed groups try to legitimize their control by providing some social functions, offering for instance security against small thieves, but, due to a complex relation with the state, “they [were] intent on inviting both state agencies, and investment, and on guaranteeing a stable economic environment” (Sanín and Barón, 2005: 26). In yet another case, this time drawn from the Chinese past, it was noted that the warlord of the Shansi and Suiyuan provinces until 1937, Marshall Yen His-Shan attempted to strengthen the local infrastructure, in particular the roads network, even if in doing this he did act in a predatory manner by successfully taxing his constituency (Bloch, 1938: 696).

Regardless of the position one takes in identifying the structural causes underlying the appearance of the “markets for violence” (economic or non-economic in nature), it is hard to deny that “continuation of violence is based on economic motives or unconscious economic behaviour” (Elwert, quoted in Oberson, 2002: 86). Underscoring the importance of the economic dimension should not impede the recognition that warlords, deliberately or simply as an unintended consequence of their newly-acquired status, can play a significant role in supplementing those social functions under-performed by an atrophied central state. This move corresponds to the ambitious research program unveiled by Steve Chan in his definition of warlords as:

those prepared and able, by force or its threat, to deny ideological and operational space to a state and who put forward to the population under their control, an articulated alternative to citizenship and who secure allegiance through a combination of that force and articulation, allied sometimes with charisma or claims to certain ancestries more compelling to their adherents than affiliation to a state (1999: 164).

The virtue of such a conceptualization is that, it does not reduce warlordism to existent consensual features, such as the foundation of power and authority on the use of force and the absence of the state’s capacity to
monopolize this use of violence. In addition, it also allows for the analysis of warlords’ actions in terms of the social context of their operation, by emphasizing the sources of their legitimacy.\textsuperscript{30} This altered form of governance is defined by a lack of monopoly over means of violence and by decentralization, leading to the formation of “localized political authorities” (Reno, 2004b: 607). At the same time, Chan’s definition is intentionally rather vague, allowing for the inclusion of not only warlords, but all other types of non-state armed groups, a weakness which the argument of the previous chapter hopefully corrected.

As the third chapter has shown, when discussing the nature of public services in the context of the so-called “weak states”, Robert Rotberg refers to a hierarchy of political goods. In the Hobbesian tradition, he places at the top of this hierarchy the supply of security: the state’s prime function is “to provide that political good of security: ... to prevent cross-border invasions, infiltrations and any loss of territory ... to eliminate domestic threats ... to prevent crime and any related dangers to domestic human security ... and to enable citizens to resolve their disputes with the state and with their fellow inhabitants without recourse to arms or other forms of physical coercion” (Rotberg, 2003: 3). As such, the provision of security, health care, education, transport or communication infrastructure, together with the rule of law and political participation, constitute the bulk of public goods expected to be provided by the state structures (Rotberg, 2003: 3). However, in the context of warlordism, the state is obviously incapable of providing these goods. In the worst case, the state even becomes the most dangerous threat to the lives and security of its citizens. And yet, if the distinction between bandits and organized criminals on the one hand, and warlords on the other, is to have any meaning, it is important to stress that, in order to enhance its resilience, warlordism requires “the development and maintenance of a [certain] social order” (Chan, 1999: 165). It is therefore only legitimate to ask how that social order could be constituted under warlord-controlled violence.

\textsuperscript{30} Similarly, Paul Jackson situates warlords and warlordism itself in an analytical framework characterized by: the collapse of centralized power, the use of violence to re-assert local power, replacement of formal structures with more personalized structures of governance in which the warlords perform some functions of the government, such as tax and infrastructure works, and finally the linkages with, and dependence on, the structures of international trade, both legal – such as primary resources – and illegal – such as drugs (2003: 137).
As with the state, the prime social function that armed groups take upon themselves to provide is in the area of protection. On contemporary Colombia, Sanín and Barón show how paramilitary units and guerrilla insurgents are in fact the only agents that have both the capability and the will to limit the spread of some forms of local crime and violence by repressing petty criminals: “FARC’s legitimacy seems to have been related to the ‘cleaning off’ of small-time offenders and the establishment of social order in a territory devoid of effective mechanisms of social regulation” (Sanín and Barón 2005: 9). Evidence about similar activities in the “establishment and maintenance of basic law and order, and re-enforcement of mechanisms of survival in a particular area or among a particular section of the populace” (Nourzhanov, 2005: 110) are reported from research on the Central Asian former Soviet Republic of Tajikistan (Nourzhanov) as well as Sierra Leone where, at least initially, the Kamajors militias were “providing security to communities and enforcing social norms that most people considered legitimate” (Reno, 2003b: 61).

A few analyses move away from approaching warlordism as simply violent predation or a primitive form of “racketeering” to emphasize the potential, though by no means ubiquitous dimension of some forms of social services provision. Giustozzi, for instance, warned about the existence of “political complexes” in which military aspects are intrinsically linked with economic, political and social dimensions: “a more sophisticated type of warlord may develop some form of partial legitimacy and transform his dominion into a ‘proto-state’, ... a structure featuring some sort of civilian administration and providing at least some services, such as education, policing, electricity and other supplies, public transport, etc” (2003: 2). While the most compelling evidence of these aspects are the fresh insights on the Chinese case of the 1920s and 1930s, contemporary cases among which Afghanistan figures prominently, also contain elements that justify his remarks.

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31 These services appear under conditions of war due to the necessity of supplying war factions. For instance, in areas otherwise far too remote from the government control to benefit from infrastructural works, war was the environment that led to the development of a new infrastructure: Nouristan or Hazarajat witnessed the development of a “new infrastructure including roads, hotels and bazaars due to the need for secure supply routes for the resistance” (Schetter, 2004: 6).
In an analysis of the state-society relationship in China under warlords, Alfred Lin concludes that “care and control made up the two sides of a warlord’s strategy of governance: care laid the foundation of stable rule, whereas control served as the means to safeguard this foundation” (2004: 151). The causes of this combination were threefold. First, for reasons that had to do more with the construction of legitimacy and maintenance of this control over a long-term period, the warlord had to expand his activities beyond simple military control. In Lin’s words, “[the] warlord could not afford to ignore the needs of society, for satisfying such needs (or at least making attempts to satisfying such needs) was vital to the credibility and survival of its regime” (Lin, 2004: 1). Secondly, as a permissive cause, unlike the state that was limited in its enterprises by the scope of its shrinking budgetary revenues, “a warlord would have little problems funding some social welfare projects, for he always had recourse to extra-budgetary sources of revenues to finance desired undertakings” (Lin, 2004: 1). Thirdly, competition with the central state’s provisions forced warlords to act directly in the arena of social services as “the administration of welfare and philanthropy by a warlord was an integral part of his drive toward total control of the society” (Lin 2004: 1).

Lin also mentions other studies to support the hypothesis that “residual [Chinese] warlords” did contribute to the efforts of economic development: he highlights the “Shanxi warlord[s] Yan Xishan’s ambitious program of rapid industrialization in the 1930s [to show how] ... in order to provide their armies with the latest weapons and other necessities, warlords were compelled to build factories and otherwise develop the productive resources of their domains” (Donald Gilpin in Lin, 2002: 178); Diana Lary’s similarly observed that “many of the most serious attempts to modernize and reconstruct took place in the independent regions such as Kwangtung, Shansi, Shantung and Kwangsi” (in Lin, 2002: 179). Even if such efforts were dominated by the need to remain competitive on the market of violence, the result did nevertheless impact not only on the military, but also on the civil population. However, the focus of Lin’s research is the activity of Guangdong’s “residual warlord” Chen Jitang between 1929 and 1936. Admitting the serious limitations of what could be achieved by society under warlords, Lin mentions nevertheless some accomplishments, among which the relative security provided by the suppression of petty banditry or the vigorous highway
constructions, neither of which the central state was able or willing to undertake (2002: 179). Specific to Chinese warlordism seems to be the heavy investment in industrial development, as in Chen Jitang’s promotion and protection of the cement or sugar industries (Lin, 2002: 200).

The involvement of local military strongmen in the day-to-day governance of areas of violence and turmoil is not exclusive to the Chinese case. In the break-up of the former Yugoslavian state in the 1990s, as the relief agencies were soon to discover, militia leaders “assumed the role of indispensable service-providers rather than cross-border smugglers” (Dietl, 2004: 64). Similarly, in the case of Colombia, ACDEGAM-MAS in its process of expansion was involved not only in the recruitment of soldiers and the military control of territory, but also in an organizational build-up founded on a system of patronage that covered the building of local drug stores, clinics, running of various health campaigns and even the provision of educational services (Sanín and Barón, 2005: 13). From Somalia to Sudan, from Sierra Leone to Afghanistan, humanitarian organizations have worked with and through local warlords who positioned themselves as guarantors of relief and used their local networks in re-distributing those external resources ranging from food aid to basic medical services.

Afghanistan is a powerful illustration of a case in which, not being able to penetrate society beyond a strong control of the capital, the structures of the modern state were and still are complemented by traditional “networks of solidarities”. In such a social configuration, traditional clan-based khans and warlords that benefit from the additional apparatus of armed forces function in a similar way as a surrogate for the state in “feeding the people” by “re-distribution of wealth through patronage” and by using the accumulated

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32 Chen Jitang’s success in constructing road infrastructure is quite impressive: according to Lin’s data, if before his taking up of leadership in 1929, Guandong had only 3,661 kilometres of highways, at the end of his rule in 1935, the province was leading all provinces in the realm of highway networks with a staggering 17,857 kilometres completed (Lin, 2002: 179). Investing in the building-up of roads and highways that serve primarily military goals is a feature often met in the literature dedicated to non-state actors controlling the means of organized violence. The fact that their construction was due to private, military interests should not obscure their dual use, nor should it lead observers to ignore the incapacity of the local state to efficiently engage in those projects.

33 Olivier Roy defines the “group of solidarity” in terms of the feeling of “belonging to a local primary group, to which one is attached through birth and which determines an informal network of loyalties and solidarity … which can be itself hierarchically organized” (Roy, 2004: 22). While kinship affiliation plays a significant role in the definition of the solidarity group referred to in Afghanistan as gwam, it is not the only form of its manifestation. To the clan or tribal affiliations of the gwam one might add ethnic or linguistic affiliations (Roy, 22.)
wealth to create “public goods like irrigation, influence with or protection from outside powers” (Rubin, 2002: 43). Thus, in some of the provinces under warlords’ control, the conventional depiction of warlords acting in an environment void of any form of governance does not correspond to the reality on the ground.

In 1992, at the end of Najibullah’s grip on power, it was commonly estimated that warlords controlled the majority of provinces in Afghanistan (Saikal, 2004: 207). Among them, the most substantial substitute systems of governance in face of the atrophy of central authority were the ones founded by Ahmad Shah Massoud and Ismail Khan. In the Eastern provinces under his control, due to energetic support from a mixture of sources such as USAID or NGOs such as the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan and the UK’s Afghan AID, Massoud was involved in social provision ranging from engineering projects to health projects (building clinics and attracting doctors) and education (Rubin, 2002: 220). Working toward the creating what Barnett Rubin considers to be “the most extensive proto-state in Afghanistan” (2002: 234), Massoud’s Shura-yi Nazar-i Shamali grew as an administrative system that incorporated committees dealing with “judicial and military affairs, civil administration, finances and economy, culture and education, health, political affairs, intelligence and Kabul affairs” (Rubin, 2002: 235). Similar reports show that, while the northern province of Bakh was run “almost totally separated from the central government, … basic services such as schools and health centres [were] funded by a combination of resources from regional leaders and international aid” (Peake, 2003: 188).

Another spectacular case is that of the self-titled “Amir of Western Afghanistan”, Ismail Khan. Situated in Western Afghanistan and bordering Iran, the province of Herat was dominated by the charismatic military commander Ismail Khan for about twenty years until his replacement as governor by President Hamid Karzai a few years ago. Under his tight control, far from conforming to the apocalyptic image associated with the presence of a warlord, the province of Herat and its eponymous capital were transformed into what can arguably be seen as the best administered, most secure and least corrupt in war-torn Afghanistan. In this sense, it was estimated, for instance that its people were “enjoying better living standards, higher literacy and more responsive administration” (Dietl, 2004: 62). Not only did essential public
services worked in Herat unlike the vast majority of Afghanistan’s other provinces, but relatively large numbers of women had access to education (George, 2002) and opium cultivation maintained a low profile. The reconstruction boom that took place in Herat under Khan’s leadership was funded partially through his international connections in Pakistan, and, most importantly, Iran, but most of it was funded through the custom taxes that often Khan refused to share with what he saw as a weak central authority in Kabul. This significant domestic extraction allowed him to maintain, in opposition to all other warlords in Afghanistan, a high degree of autonomy in relation with its patrons, but also to finance the largest personal army.\textsuperscript{34}

A large part of these tax revenues was spent on public projects, once again privileging infrastructural works. Thus, following agreements at the highest level with officials from Pakistan, he was actively involved in the regional project to open a secure route from Quetta to Kandahar to Herat reaching Ashkhabad in Turkmenistan (Dietl, 2004: 48).\textsuperscript{35} The rise of the Taliban and the success of their centralising project as a result of the successive military victories they registered blocked the scheme. It is not unjustified to speculate that, in absence of the centralising movement of the Taliban, the trade growth on that route would have significantly increased the revenues of Khan’s system and would have propelled Herat even more towards being a region trade hub. What is illustrative of the diversity of his financial and political sources is that he started work – with Iranian support – on re-building the road linking Herat with the Iranian border city of Qala at the same time as he initiated works to restore important regional irrigation canals to functionality (Marsden, 2003). In a fundamentally traditional, patronimial manner, Ismail Khan was active in the market of social services: in the field of justice – “by holding weekly audiences where he dispense[d] money, advice, divorce and decisions on family disputes” or in the area of health and education, “by setting up schools and hospitals” (Dietl, 2004: 54). Anecdotally, his cultural administration seems to have gone as far as

\textsuperscript{34} As in all research on Afghanistan, reliable numbers are difficult to provide. Yet most reports centre around the amount of in between 60 and 80 million USD a year, as a result of his taxing the highly circulated route to Iran and Turkmenistan through Herat, while the numbers of the soldiers in his army allegedly rose to 10 000.

\textsuperscript{35} According to Dietl, Khan had meetings with the Minister of the Interior Naseerullah Babar, and even Prime Minister Benazhir Bhutto in 1993. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld also met Khan in Herat on April 27, 2002.
authorising and protecting a team of archaeologists in their regional research (Roy, 2004: 35). Without stepping out of his military capacity, under the clout provided by his incontestable legitimacy gained as a fighter against the Soviet occupation and later Taliban rule, Khan was heavily involved in the provision of public goods funded through a skilfully maintained balance between domestic extraction and a variety of external sources ranging from states to NGOs and international organizations. As a result, an astute Afghan observer like Ahmed Rashid could write that “under his authoritarian control, Herat became the most peaceful and cleanest Afghan city, a place where western aid workers can work without fear, 75 per cent of children now go to school and … the business of rebuilding homes and shops is booming” (2002: 13-14).

As a result of his military prowess coupled with his administrative skills, Khan’s career survived several regimes, from the communist one to that of the mujahidin, from Taliban to Karzai. To understand the longevity of warlords like Ismail Khan, as well as the mechanisms of the provision of some public goods, one needs to look at the nature of Afghan political culture; its patrimonial dynamic of interaction measures power by the ability to create and maintain political adherence inside the networks of solidarity through the over-present aspect of redistribution in a system of “asymmetric reciprocity” (Rubin, 2002). In my view, the crux of the matter is the process through which the power and authority of the warlords depends not only on their military prowess, but also on their ability to interact and cooperate with the traditional forms of authority underlying Afghanistan’s micro-societies in re-distributing resources.

To the extent that it refers to direct means of delivery, it may very well be true that “warlords did not re-distribute part of the resources accumulated to the population in the territory they control” (Roy, 2004: 39). The channels of the networks of solidarity were, and continued for a long time to be more open to the traditional bearers of authority, be they clan or village elders (“white beards”), khans, mullahs or pirs. Yet the comparative advantage of the warlord whose authority – founded as it is on military force – extends beyond one particular group of solidarity, resided precisely in aspects that are an intrinsic part of its modernity: its connectivity to the globalized markets and its de-territorialised nature. It is this global connectivity that Duffield has in mind when he writes that warlords “act locally but think globally” (in Goodhand,
A clear expression of this connectivity is provided by the numerous linkages that the top military commanders have with “institutions beyond the traditional localized continuum: [transnational] Islamic parties, foreign countries, [NGOs] and international organizations” (Saikal, 2004: 208). The centrality of warlords in contemporary Afghanistan clearly originates in their military strength, but this strength is maintained and reinforced by their capacity to attract resources to be redistributed through patronage via traditional groups of solidarity.

Access to this variety of sources by virtue of his prominence in the economy of war allows the warlord to surpass and, in many cases, to replace the traditional local leadership in his capacity to attract resources. In a sense, the warlord comes to occupy a position in the tradition of the local notable “who not only is able to secure its group’s autonomy in relation with the state, but one who can attract and canalize the maximum aid from the state or other sources towards its own group, simultaneous with the capacity to maintain a certain degree of autonomy in its domestic affairs” (Roy, 2004: 24). But as his power is based neither on a given territory, nor on direct administration, he needs the cooperation of various solidarity groups, be they secular (tribal or clan-dominated), or religious. Warlordism, as developed in Afghanistan, is definitely a form of patrimonialism sharing with the Weberian ideal type the fundamentally personal nature of power. Yet it departs from the ideal type in that the power of the military leader, beyond its charismatic element and its foundation in the control over the means of organized violence, depends on a dynamic process of bargaining with various incarnations of local solidarity networks whose channels are vitally important for the distribution of resources. This is essentially a different configuration of social control than the one imagined by a patrimonial leader controlling the military means in isolation from other social forces.36 This is also the perspective that informs

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36 Olivier Roy distinguishes between warlords and military local commanders as a qualitatively differentiated and supra-ordinated form of military commanders. While both are non-territorial entities whose power originate in their military prowess, the local military commander is “soluble” in the traditional society, without exercising a civil role and without delegating its powers. In contrast, a warlord has to expand his authority beyond the local incarnations of the solidarity group to reach a regional leadership and create a larger degree of autonomy in relation with those groups. Thus, a warlord is “a military commander [that] builds up a local power based on a private army but who maintains a proto-stately administration” (Roy, 2004: 34; 2003: 5-6).
the following section, which will look at warlordism in its relationship with
the state.

**Warlord, state and society**

While it is hard to avoid the conclusion that warlordism’s most propitious
environment is the shrivelling of the state’s functional ability to maintain its
monopoly over organized violence, the relationship between warlordism and
an arguably weakened state is far more complex than that depicted in a crude
zero-sum view. It is obvious that warlord systems do not develop in a fully
detached manner from the wider social system. We have seen how the
“economy of war” literature places warlordism in a global economic system.
What about the political, social and cultural context in which it develops?

Without exception, all the samples of warlordism examined are
circumscribed to a political context defined by the formal existence of a state
with limited capacity in all arenas of governance including the military,
political, economic and social spheres. Is this evidence enough to conclude
that warlords indiscriminately “seek to overthrow [the state] in order to secure
their own form of military autocratic rule” (Rich, 1999: xv), as the
conventional view on warlordism seems to assume? The Chinese warlord
period after the disintegration of the Manchu Empire in 1911, and particularly
between the 1920s and 1930s, should constitute the starting point of a solidly-
argued answer. There seems to be a general consensus that supports and
extends Lin’s assertion that Chen Jitang and other military leaders did not
have ambitions to expand their rule beyond the provinces under their own
control, and definitely no ambitions to overtake the state (Lin, 2002: 183).
While the warlords had no intention of expanding their power to the entire
state, they did seize power in the provinces out of state control and organized a
*de facto* autonomous governance serving their own private interests with little
or no contact with the central government.

In the post-Cold War era, however one could refer to the challenges to
central authority in collapsed states in terms of “several battles [that] take
place *within* the state, not against it” (Rotberg, 2003: 15). Nourzhanov is one
of the rare voices to introduce a radical departure from the traditional view on
warlordism as viscerally opposed to the state when he mentions the rise of a
particular category of warlords ‘who not so much confront or tolerate the state, but work in partnership with it’ (2005: 111). Cases as diverse as Sierra Leone, Columbia and Afghanistan point in the same direction since local warlords, while involved in a military confrontation against the central authorities’ attempt to bring their fiefdoms under control, do benefit from the existence of the state in its weakened condition. Thus, for instance, Colombia contains a complex relationship between the state and the paramilitary, who are tied together through a multitude of contradictory relationships, being simultaneously linked ‘as all[ies], as competitor[s] in an oligopolistic market for the provision of security, as parasite[s], and as military adversar[ies]’ (Sanín and Barón, 2005: 25).

The cases examined by William Reno in Africa tend to emphasize the importance for warlords of capturing the state, or at least of being able to use its globally recognized sovereignty in order to increase their ability to secure external patronage (Reno, 1998). In Afghanistan, in line with traditional political forces, the warlords have in fact ‘a need for a distant and benevolent state, whose existence they do not challenge’ (Roy, 2003: 2). An expression of this connection between the warlord and an unobtrusive state is the ease with which the government of President Karzai was able to incorporate into its structures powerful regional controllers of organized violence, such as generals Fahim or Dostum, as well as Ismail Khan.

Under a condition of transformation from the Westphalian attribute of the centralized state monopoly over violence toward a situation of marked oligopoly of violence, Afghanistan seems indeed to reflect Giustozzi’s warning that ‘over time, a line will increasingly be drawn between those warlords who succeeded in being integrated within the state structure on their own terms, maintaining their autonomous sources of power, and those who will by contrast be weakened by their inclusion in the state structure’ (2003: 16, italics added). The concept of an oligopoly of violence that was introduced by Andreas Mehler in the African context is applicable to various crisis regions in which the European model of a state monopoly over violence has limited empirical value. Inspired by the economists’ understanding of an oligopoly as an imperfect form of competition in which there are only a few providers of a product or a service in opposition with multiple buyers, Mehler describes an oligopoly of violence as the particular arrangement between
security providers, comprising “a fluctuating number of partly competing, partly co-operating actors of violence of different quality” (2004: 540-541). Acknowledging the variety in oligopolies of violence, the specific characteristic of this particular structure of the “market of violence” is given exactly by “the mixture of competition and complementarities of rules, claims and authorities” (Mehler, 2004: 541).

Warlordism thus described emerges as a form of governance defined by “oligopolies of violence”, in which the state remains an actor on the market of violence, but is not alone any more. Warlords are autonomous actors whose power and autonomy is based in their possession of an efficient military force, but can they truly be taken in isolation from both state and society? As shown repeatedly so far, the warlord is a significant actor in a situation characterized by an asymmetry between a previously “strong society” and a “weak state” (Migdal, 1988). He is autonomous in the sense that, although active on the territory (or territories) nominally under the control of a state, there is no higher authority (including the state) capable of regulating or dictating his actions. Thus the warlord co-exists with both the state and various communal networks of the society, but is not within the military reach of any of them. However, the warlord’s autonomy, while derived from the strength of his military force, is maintained and perpetuated not by ignoring the society or the state, but by positioning himself in a nodal relationship not only with the targeted state and society, but with other actors such as states, international organizations, international non-governmental organizations, transnational corporations and the like.

Far from being cut off from relations with either state or society, the autonomy of the warlord, founded as it is on his military strength, depends on

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37 Mehler distinguishes between territorial oligopoly of violence (as clusters of relatively stable arrangements based on various monopolies over violence within borders of specific areas), functional oligopolies of violence (where “different violence actors/protectors provide security for different kinds of threats, from different kinds of aggressors or for specific social categories), and temporal oligopolies of violence (2004: 542). See also Lambach, 2007c.

38 There are numerous instances in which those actors cooperated in one way or another with various warlords: the US support for the warlords-to-be in the Afghan-Soviet war, for instance, and their co-operation in the anti-Taliban campaign. In another example, Liberia under the control of Charles Taylor’s NPFL became France’s “third largest African supplier of logs” (Reno, 1998: 97); both Pakistan, but most of all Iran are allegedly heavily involved in supporting one or another of the Afghan warlords. There are also religious groups involved in cooperation with warlords in varying parts of the world. Multinational corporations such as Shell Oil in Nigeria, Executive Outcomes and the like; non-governmental organizations such as the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan, Oxfam, etc.
his successful bid for a central place in a network with most of these actors. In this way, he maintains a parasitic relation with both state and society, while breaking from a unique dependency on either of them. As long as the warlord is capable of manipulating the flow of resources within the weak institutional edifice of the state, he has no incentive in the further development of state structures. In a sense, the warlord does not govern, as most of the time he is not directly involved in the provision of public goods. If Afghanistan is to serve as an example, the functions of governance in areas as diverse as education, training, agriculture, irrigation systems and the like, were transferred/outsourced to various NGOs, by both central government (like the Taliban) and the local warlords (Schetter, 2004: 12). The warlord, though, is active in attracting resources to allow public goods to be provided as well as in setting up the conditions under which NGOs or other external actors are allowed to operate. Accordingly, the nature of governance for the communities under his control does depend on his actions, and on his positioning in the network of actors capable to govern.

Understanding warlordism from a governance perspective

From the above analysis, we can summarise a few characteristics of warlords and warlord polities. First of all, the warlord appears in those parts of the Westphalian Periphery in which formal state institutions crumble under the combined pressures of traditional loci of political authority and the melting down of Cold War support for the central authorities. Undoubtedly, the warlord’s primary source of power is located in his private possession of military might, which he is forced to exhibit periodically and to eagerly defend against any attempt of dispossession coming either from a central authority, fellow warlords or external intervention. To compensate for the weak political authority deriving from his autonomous use of violence, the warlord becomes a central player on the market of violence, using his position in the global economy of war to attract various resources while at the same time avoiding locking himself into dependency on a single source. While the central asset that raises the interest of the warlord is procurement of guns, these resources

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39 Another reason why the warlord does not find many incentives to govern directly is the absence of qualified civil servants in his own ranks, as the case of Afghanistan after the expulsion of the PDPA regime’s bureaucrats shows (see Schetter, 2004: 6)
cover a wider range, from canalising aid to attracting foreign NGOs in the provision of basic services such as food, health or education. His political position depends not only on his military prowess, but also on his ability in securing those resources, as well as on the extent to which he is embedded in various solidarity networks capable of re-distributing those resources in his name.

Far from being a homogenous phenomenon, warlordism is highly heterogeneous. Although it may be possible that some of its existing forms will develop into stable alternative forms of governance in an oligopoly of violence framework, this is likely to occur in only a few instances. Once again Tolstoy’s opening lines of Anna Karenina may be useful in saying that while modern states might be alike in their happiness, or like units in Waltz’s famous coinage, alternative forms of governance at the Westphalian Periphery would be alternative in their own way. When taking this path it is impossible to avoid the fact that the provision of social services is only sometimes characteristic of the warlord order. In relation to this, it appears legitimate to investigate the circumstances under which warlords move from the purely predatory behaviour of ordinary thugs and advance towards less extensive forms of governance in both scope and intensity, in the absence of efficient state mechanisms of re-distribution.

From within the field of rational choice theory a powerful mechanism for this explanation is offered by Mancur Olson’s perspective summarized in the transition from “roving” to “stationary” bandits (Olson, 1993). Olson deals with exactly this problematic, trying to rationalize the conditions under which the negative consequences of a roving, extortionist bandit can be tamed by inducing incentives for provision of some social services. Under the inspiration of Sheridan’s 1966 pioneering work on Chinese warlords, as he himself confesses, Olson’s response uses insights from the “logic of collective action”, permeated by assumptions of rationality and long- versus short-term perspectives. The question Olson asks is how the extortionist practices of pillaging and robbing in which the roving bandit is involved are transformed into acceptable practices exhibited by the behavior of the stationary bandit.

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40 Tolstoy’s formulation can be found in numerous works dedicated to the issue of failed states. As will be shown in chapter seven in the context of the IR theory, not only do states “fail” in different ways, but they also succeed in different manners.
The answer to this question he identifies in the provision of a modicum of social services in exchange for taxation, which in turn is appropriated by the stationary bandit. In Olson’s words,

if a roving bandit rationally settles down and takes his theft in the form of regular taxation and at the same time maintains a monopoly on theft in his domain, then those from whom he exacts taxes will have an incentive to produce … The rational stationary bandit will take only a part of income in taxes because he will be able to exact a larger total amount of income from his subjects if he leaves them with an incentive to generate income that he can tax (1993: 568).

In other words, the transition from “roving” to “stationary” bandit, deriving from the rationality of the actor, is due to the potential for increasing on the longevity of the rent extracted. Establishing an autocratic rule over a defined territory,

because of his monopoly on crime and taxation, [the stationary bandit transformed into an autocratic king] has an encompassing interest in his domain that makes him limit his predations because he bears a substantial share of the social losses resulting from these predations (…) the second way in which the encompassing interest of the stationary bandit changes his incentives is that it gives him an incentive to provide public goods that benefit his domain ( Olson quoted in Mair, 2003: 14).

This explanation works on the assumption that the provision of public goods increases the productivity of the domain under which the bandit-cum-king exercises a monopoly over both violence and taxation, which in turn maximizes the source of [taxable] income for the stationary bandit.41

As attractive as the model may be, due to the simplicity and elegance of Olson’s solution, a number of weaknesses can nonetheless be identified. Like many of the proponents of a "security first" option - that is, the building of a "classical" state in which the monopoly over violence is centrally controlled, Olson doesn’t seem to address the cost problem of first establishing the kind of monopoly over violence intrinsic to the transition from a “roving” to a “stationary” rebel; nor does he address the cost problem of maintaining it. In solving the first problem, the Tilly/Spruyt narrative, for instance, appeals to

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41 There are numerous authors who underline the absence of provision of any kind of social service in a warlord-dominated system. For Mair, for example, “warlordism differs from neopatrimonial clientelism in one important point: Warlords do not have to reward political loyalty by development projects, posts and privileges, they obtain loyalty from their subjects by the use or threat of force. This means that warlords do not even partly reinvest their revenues in the territory under their control” (2003: 12). While it may be true that some of the warlords do not themselves take the burden of directly providing any public goods – reinforced by Reno’s argument that this will be equated with a loss of comparative advantage in relation with other warlords (Reno 1998 – some others attract external actors for the provision of essential services in areas under their control. See below.
the idea of a social class - bourgeoisie or capitalist entrepreneurs. Similarly, as was shown by the case of the Taliban in Afghanistan, the alliance with the transport mafia structures might be a surrogate. In relation to this, I suggest that perhaps Olson's theory could be supplemented with some aspects of Norbert Elias's theory of the progressive monopolization of violence (1994). Whether progressive monopolization is possible or even desirable under the conditions of oligopolies of violence is a question that should be addressed by further analysis within the warlordism framework.

However, Olson's thesis opens up other interesting questions. First of all, drawing on his African scholarship, Mkandawire warns that even if "rebel movements would, of course, like to occupy some 'liberated zone'" (2003: 479), this would not completely reflect Olson's scenario as, "for many reasons few rebel movements in Africa have enjoyed over a long period of time and a large territory the kind of 'stationarity' that UNITA enjoyed in Angola" (Mkandawire, 2003: 479). This makes the assumptions of long-term rationality questionable, but it also requires a critical investigation of the circumstances under which "stationarity" becomes possible. Second, the same author emphasizes the fluidity of the situation, in manifest contradiction with the generalizations involved in operating a clear delineation between the "roving" and the "stationary" bandit – the latter being associated with the warlord. Thus, writes Mkandawire, "even the most disciplined rebel groups may at times roam the countryside and become predatory, while, by the same token, even essentially roving groups may at times stay in one place and develop some sort of relationship with the peasants they live among" (2002: 200).42

Like attempts at replicating early state-formation processes in the contemporary era, Olson's framework neglects the capacity of armed groups' leaders to externalize the social costs of their domination. The result of external extraction of military resources was written to a certain degree in relation to the Latin American case of late state-making, or more recently to the African postcolonial case (Centeno. 1997; Sørensen, 2001b). In the Cold

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42 This element of the critique could also be associated with the de-territorialization or weak territorialization often mentioned in connection with warlord systems. If weak territorialization is analyzed in terms of the transition from the control over territory to control over resources (Reno, 1998, 2002), I use "weak territorialization" to denote the situation developed in the Afghan context in which the control is not homogenously distributed over a territory, but rather constituted by fluid patchy units within other territories.
War era, the system of patronage under which the superpowers were able to pursue their proxy wars and avoid the start of an all-out hot war offered the warlords and their fellow rebel groups a perfect opportunity for exactly such an externalization. With the end of the Cold War, though, “patronage has been replaced by the exploitation of easily accessible natural resources … the exploitation of diamonds, cobalt, hardwood and the like” (Cilliers, 2000: 5).

Even more interestingly, several authors have noticed the increased emphasis not so much on the control of a territory, as on the control of a population. Inspired by his study of African cases, MacKinlay, for instance, notes that “to a much greater extent than before, the control of the civilian population was a primary objective of the warlord” (2000: 75-76). The transformation into a stationary bandit is based in Olson’s version on the capacity of domestic extraction of resources. Now, this might be possible in some cases, and it is quite possible that Herat under Ismail Khan’s might be exactly such a case. The desire to control the population for the purpose of increasing its productivity, and thus the income generated through taxation, seems perfectly rational in Olson’s scenario. The puzzling fact, though, is the generalized poverty of the areas under warlords’ control. Taxing what is already a pauper population does not make much sense, and even less so investing in social services for this purpose, especially when income from trade, smuggling and subsidized weaponry is significantly higher. Why, then, are there the conscious efforts to control the population?

If the presumption of rationality so much emphasized in the “economy of war” perspective and by various scholars of the rational choice theory is to be maintained, the poverty of the local populations forces the predator towards alternative sources: either natural resources (diamonds, oil, and so forth) or ransom practices. A scenario may be imagined in which the warlord “captures” the population in the region under his control, not so much for extracting his revenue from the population itself, but for building up his external legitimacy. After all, as Mair puts it, “if development assistance balances the social losses of warlordism and provides social services, warlords are able to continue maximising the economic exploitation of the territory under their control” (2003: 14).

Furthermore, it is hard to ignore the gigantic quantitative increase in the contribution of international aid and development agencies in situations of
conflict. For Afghanistan, this situation forced every rebel group to open up offices in Peshawar or another capital to coordinate the aid to be received for areas under their control. Similarly, in other geographical locations "[warlords acted] in a way that encouraged the flow of relief to continue ... in the Horn of Africa [for example] warlords even organized subunits of their factions to interface with the aid communities, which were ... versed in the aid-speak of empowerment, capacity building and civil society" (MacKinlay, 2000: 76). It may thus be argued that the contemporary warlord, given the circumstances in which he acts (globalised economies - both legal and illegal –, state and non-state competitive actors), is not dependent on domestic extraction. He does not "control" the population, as much as he keeps it "captive". The participation of foreign humanitarian intervention (NGOs, IGOs and the like) might be thus explored as a form of "ransom". Some of existent public services (such as health and education) are not performed by warlords; they are performed by external actors from which the warlord extracts its resources. In this way, we may have a semblance of an answer as to why some services are performed, as the warlord is interested not in his domestic "legitimation" function deriving from this performance, but in negotiatiating with the actors interested in performing those functions.

So, even if only tentatively, the answer to the question investigating the conditions under which there is a modicum of social services provided under or despite the existence of a warlord order should consider at least three factors. The first refers to the sources of wealth on which the warlord can draw. If these are predominantly extracted from the domestic arena - territory under the control of a warlord, then it is highly probable that Olson's scenario applies. If these, in turn, comprise natural resources (mines, oil, timber etc), drug trafficking or taxing trade, a better analysis might be offered from within the economy of war paradigm. Yet if the main source of income is extracted from external sources - such as the scenario of capturing the population, then a focus on the role of humanitarianism should be emphasized, as it is the role played by various sponsors including states, development agencies or even diasporas and individual actors. Secondly, attention should be paid to the nature (structure, functions and dynamics) of the traditional politico-social authorities and their sources of strength. An analysis following this path should include an investigation of the initial balance between central and
local/traditional authority; it should draw on the neo-patrimonial literature underlying the role of traditional structures of social power acting in a globalized environment and would emphasize the roles and strengths of various solidarity groups, including trans-national, religious networks. Finally, it is essential to identify the various strategies of the international community in “warlord management” (van Grieken, 2005), as well as the role of humanitarian aid, NGOs and other external actors.
Amongst the many concepts 0.5 in the analysis of modern political and social structures, none are more difficult than to talk about both the empirical and analytical perspectives. Often meaning more is the "state," a key element in any map of the post-industrial world, or the "world order" in the current international system. Having emerged in the post-war period, perhaps as the term "state" is traditionally called "the modern state," the "state" has assumed a special form "to both modern domestic political systems and the modern international system," as in both the "area within which no authority other than that of the state is acknowledged" and "an actor in its own right" (Grosfog, 1995: 995). This chapter makes the concepts both indispensable and slightly vaporous. One cannot proceed with an analysis of structural and institutional projects on the international stage without defining one's underlying concept of "state" and boundaries of the state. Yet the world stage has changed considerably since the concept of the modern state emerged and acquired dominance. In high conditions, one is forced to work with a concept which — even though indispensable — might turn out to be less precise to define. On the one hand, the complex nature of global politics today. Alternatively — and this is what I have set out to do in this chapter — one can redefine the concept of the modern state in order to respond to current challenges.

However, before we can embark on this conceptual intervention, the problem remains exactly what it is that needs to be subject to redefinition. This chapter seeks therefore to outline the "institutional history" of the modern state and follow its development trajectory through the culmination of nation-states as the underlying factor-formation, state formation, state-making and state-building in the course of its conceptual and geographical variations. The main aim of this chapter is to reconcile two apparently inextricable, as well as to establish the analytical differences, but in forming the network from which alternative actors of varying types develop. For this purpose, this chapter is composed in two parts.

The aim of the first part is to show that, original general definitions of the state, to the extent that they are utilized at all, are a consequence of the dual framework.
Chapter 6. From “state” to “polity”

Amongst the many conceptual tools in the analysis of modern political and social structures, there are very few that can claim both ubiquity and analytical persistence. Chief among them is the “state”, a key element in any map of the post-medieval world and the major actor in the current global system. Having emerged in its contemporary form at the dawn of what is usually called “the modern age”, the “state” has since gained a central locus “in both modern domestic political systems and the modern international system”, as both the “arena within which collective action has been situated and undertaken” and “an actor in its own right” (Cerny, 1995: 595). This status makes the concept both indispensable and highly fraught. One cannot proceed to an analysis of structural and relational powers on the international stage without defining one’s understanding of the role and functions of this entity, yet the world stage has changed considerably since the concept of the modern state emerged and acquired dominance. In such conditions, one is forced to work with a concept which – even though indispensable – might have become inadequate to define, by itself, the complex arena of global politics today. Alternatively – and this is what I have set out to do in this thesis – one can redefine the contours of the main unit of analysis in International Relations, re-draw its boundaries and re-assess its functions in order to respond to current challenges.

However, before one can embark on this conceptual re-evaluation, one must establish exactly what it is that needs to be subject to re-assessment. This chapter seeks therefore to outline the “coming-into-being” of the modern state and follow its theoretical trajectory through the numerous metamorphoses it has undergone (state-formation, state re-formation, state-making and state-building) in the course of its temporal and geographical variations. The main aim of this chapter is to identify the commonalities in these variations, as well as to establish the salient differences, the latter forming the bedrock from which alternative forms of polity may eventually develop. For this purpose, this chapter is organized in two parts.

The aim of the first part is to show that, beyond general definitions of the state, there is minimal consensus on what the state really is. One consequence of this conceptual elusiveness is a need for a more critical
perspective into the forms and functions of the state, a perspective that could be adapted to particular frameworks on both temporal and spatial dimensions. As such, led by the weaknesses signaled in the first part, the second part of the chapter argues that the contested concept of "modern state" is more usefully replaced by the wider notion of "polity". The usefulness of this change will be demonstrated in the subsequent chapter. Indeed, reflecting the privileged role that war and the control over the means of violence has in the definition of the modern state and contemporary geopolitical units, the seventh chapter will analyze various trajectories through which "war made" state not only within the European core, but also in expanding the concept of state beyond European borders. In so doing, it will explore the manner in which "war made states" in different contexts with the intention of showing how different forms of war waged in different temporal and spatial circumstances led to the formation of different polities, of which the ideal-type of the modern state is only one possibility. Thus, in line with the conclusions reached in this chapter, the final part of this research will suggest a re-orientation in the analysis of contemporary geopolitical units towards a consideration of acts of governance rather than the illusory continued emphasis on the monopoly over violence. With this objective in mind, the purpose of this chapter is to suggest that the best way to maximize the analytical value of the concept of "polity" in order to understand the contemporary forms it takes in the Westphalian Periphery is to focus on acts of governance in various configurations of control over violence, from monopoly to oligopoly of violence.

This objective will be reached in several steps. First, the chapter will question the Realist assumption that states - both successful and unsuccessful - operate as "like-units" (Waltz, 1979). If states are not like-units, it is important to be able to define what a state is. Thus, the second section, following an incursion into the semantic history of the concept, will set out to definite the contours of the state by discussing the "institutionalist" school of IR, particularly in conjunction with the insights of the recent historical sociology literature. Finally, the concluding section argues that, at the intersection between the "institutionalist turn" and historical sociology, it is possible to move the focus of analysis from the "state" towards the "polity" as a broader central unit in the study of international relations. Inspired by the image of the warlord as a particular social order, the chapter moves beyond the
Waltzian conception of states as like-units and argues that International Relations’ analytical unit should not solely be state-like.

**Beyond “like-unit” status of the “state” in International Relations**

Unlike scholars writing in the discipline of political science or comparative politics, mainstream International Relations theorists have not subjected the notion of the state to critical inquiry until quite recently. Aside from certain themes explored at the edges of the discipline, IR has generally favored “the dominance of the international domain (that is, between the international system and states acting within that system), and the need to bracket off micro-level causes, especially the state level and below” (Mabee, 2007: 434). However, this assertion is not meant to ignore the existence of alternative views in the larger IR literature. The ‘level of analysis’ model, closely following the divide between the individual level, the realm of the state and finally the international system (sometimes mediated by attention to the regional and sub-regional level) is one such alternative mode of theorization (Waltz, 1959; Singer 1961; Hollis and Smith, 1990). A welcome change can also be perceived particularly after the end of the Cold War in, for instance, a developing stream of recent works by Ned Lebow (2007), Michael C. Williams (2005) as well as neo-classical realists like Randal Schweller, (1994) or William Wohlforth, (1993, 1994/5) (see also Rose, 1998) who try to recuperate the “classical” versions of realist thought. Other important area of research where the (domestic) analysis of the state features prominently includes work on the democratic peace thesis. Yet the focus of both the democratic peace thesis and of “neo-classical” realism is less on problematising the concept of the state itself as the main unit of analysis in the IR, and more on contesting the primacy of the neo-realists’ third image, as well as emphasizing the ways in which domestic explanations for the nature of a particular foreign policy could substitute and/or supplement structural explanations. Those works belong in the tradition dealing with links among

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1 For instance, recent voices are pointing to the distinction between the works of classical realists like E. H. Carr and Hans Morgenthau which emphasize either the processes through which changes in the nature of domestic units contribute to changes in the structure of the international system (Hobson, 2000: 45-60) or the importance attributed to adherence to ethical norms contributing to the maintenance of communal bonds (Lebow, 2007).
the various levels and originated in Gourevich's path-breaking study Second Image Reversed (1978) or Putnam's Logic of Two Level's Game (1988)\(^2\). The impact of these research efforts is reflected in IR theory by the conversion of most scholars, including neo-realists, to a new orthodoxy accepting the need for including second image (unit-level) factors in the explanations of systemic outcomes. However, if Stephen van Evera's work on the causes of war (1999) is illustrative of this new orthodoxy, while it does take into consideration domestic factors in a wide range of political units, it implicitly treats those as similar units (Kahler, 2002).

Nonetheless, IR scholars have recently started paying more attention to a research agenda situated at the confluence of political economy, historical sociology and institutional analysis, disciplines less tempted to take the state for granted. Thus, historical sociological analyses, including works by Theda Skocpol (1979, et al. 1985), Charles Tilly (1975, 1990) and Michael Mann (1986, 1993b) have increasingly attracted the attention of IR specialists. Yet IR at large continues to remain in a situation that Hobden characterized as one in which, "beyond scattered references to their work on state formation, there have been few serious engagements with [those authors'] work" (2001: 281). The recent explosive growth in the research of state variability within the discipline of sociology or comparative politics is yet to be translated into IR theoretical discussions, and even more so, in the practice of "state-building".

Even as late as the 1980s' dialogue between neo-realism and neo-liberal institutionalism, IR analyses of the modern state continued to depict it as a hierarchical, unitary, rational and above all uniform actor located at the heart of the international system (Baldwin, 1993; Wæver, 1996). In the most authoritative expression of structural (or "neo-") realism, Kenneth Waltz explicitly rejects the "reductionist" approach of both the first and second image accounts for bellicose behavior in the international arena, approaches focused on human nature and domestic structures of the state, respectively (Waltz, 1959; 1979). Consequently, dominant structural theories of IR preferred to either ignore altogether (Waltz's neorealism), or at least to downplay (Wendt's structural constructivism), the domestic constitution of states, hiding behind various conceptual devices such as either the

\(^2\) For an excellent review of the literature on the domestic-international interactions see Sørensen, 2001a, particularly Chapter 1.
objectification of an “acting” state and the identification of the states’ macro-level regularities (Wendt, 1999) or the assumption that, as “long as anarchy endures, states remain like units” (Waltz, 1979: 93). Not only is the state assumed to be homogenously a “like-unit” across geographical lines, but the same homogeneity is projected across temporal dimensions, too. This trans-historical theoretical position is problematic in at least two respects. First, it chooses to disregard objective conditions (both internal and external) which have shaped the nature and functions of the state from its modern inception to its contemporary forms. Secondly, it does not allow for geographical variation and cultural conditioning. As a result, in the words of Brian Mabee, “in International Relations … the contemporary state is seen as unchanged from its ‘emergence’ in 1648 or, perhaps better put, the modern state is seen as the same as the contemporary state” (Mabee, 2003: 137). Thus, a paradox arises: aside from, on the one hand, the exceptional incursions into the conceptual territory relating to what a state really is and, on the other hand, the repeated pronouncements on the demise of the state as the fundamental unit of the international system, it remains true that “the career of the state in international relations research has been a peculiar one-central as a matter of faith, but often taken for granted, a theoretical sideshow” (Kahler, 2000: 2).

While it does allow for the variation in relative power capabilities between states, the “like-units” assumption in neo-realism fails to take account of more discreet or constantly evolving variables, allowing the conclusion that “each state is like all other states in being an autonomous political unit … another way of saying that states are sovereign” (Waltz, 1979: 95). This logic of homogeneity derives from, and makes sense only in, the context of the distinction between the ordering principles allegedly characterizing domestic and international structures: hierarchy and anarchy, respectively. Building on a particular if not controversial interpretation of Durkheim’s concepts of “organic” (associated with hierarchy) and “mechanic” (associated with anarchy) solidarity, for Waltz the hierarchically organized domestic society comprises differentiated units, whilst the international system ordered along

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3 As the constructivist program aims at building a social theory to IR in opposition with the mainstream rational choice inflections, various constructivist lines of inquiry do allow a richer avenue for the study of state, without muddling this by a structural perspective as Wendt does. See for instance Katzenstein, 1996 or Reus-Smit, 1999.
anarchic lines leads to the existence of functionally undifferentiated units. In this context, variety is presumed to exist only in regard to relative power capability or functional performance, but is not extended to the analysis of the functions themselves. Thus, the assumption goes, “under international anarchy, states ... are minimally differentiated in terms of functions ... [while sharing a structure defined by] a centralized political system with a legitimate monopoly of violence and rule-making and [without being] subject to a higher political authority either domestically or internationally” (Hobson, 2000: 22; Hobson and Sharman, 2005: 67). Within this framework, then, an appreciable number of entities are placed under the generic heading of “the state”. In other words, this framework allows for, if not directly leading to, the (in)famous conception of “a state is a state is a state”.

One potential justification for this particular use of the concept of “state” in IR theory is to do with the methodological artifice of the “ideal-type”. After all, the notion of the state that IR uses predominantly is taken, as will be shown below, in a truncated fashion from Max Weber, the first prominent sociologist to use the concept of ideal-type. While there are important insights to be gained from the use of a theoretical model that takes an “ideal-type” as its primary object of analysis, there are also methodological shortcomings, chief among which being the artificial imposition of unity and coherence on elements that, in actual fact, are diverse and heterogeneous: “in spite of Max Weber’s careful construction of that notion, the general tendency is to posit the ideal type as a construction and then proceed as if that caveat solved the problem of the object of observation once and for all” (Trouillot, 2001: 136). Another pitfall that this thesis seeks to unmask is reflected in contemporary debates on the practice of “state-building” which fail to allow for salient variables in both the form and nature of the state to be built. Reflecting on the applicability of the ideal-type concept of the state, Trouillot aptly remarks that “even in Weber, ideal types function better when the relation between the two objects — the historical particulars ‘out there’ and the object to be theorized — is assumed to be known and, therefore, not subject to profound changes” (2001: 136). The ideal-type methodology is

4 For an in-depth critique of Waltz’s interpretation of Durkheim’s concepts, see in the field of sociology Barkdull, 1995, but also Spruyt, 1994 and Teschke, 1998: 380. In IR, the classical reference to the critique of Waltz’s treatment of the problem of differentiation and his interpretation of Durkheim remains Ruggie, 1986.
therefore useful with respect to historical analysis (that is, placing a particular state-form in a particular historical epoch, for instance), but is liable to gross over-generalization when applied uncritically across different eras, or to a period of substantial, ongoing, and not yet fully assessed transformations, such as during the post-Cold War period.

Besides the (ab)use of the ideal-type methodology, another potential explanation for the absence of an analysis of the state in the general theory of IR can be identified in the predominance of structural paradigms, be they of a realist or Marxist inspiration. According to these paradigms, state behavior is fully determined by the structure of the international system, whether geopolitical in realism or the international capitalist system in Marxism, thus precluding any need for a theory of the state (Spruyt, 2002: 128). Yet, the emergence of a “Third World” as a result of the decolonising movement was bound to press towards the recognition of qualitative differences between states and thus push the analysis beyond the mere distribution of capabilities and towards variability among degrees of stateness (Clapham, 1998a). Indeed, Jackson’s concept of quasi-state (Jackson and Rosberg, 1982; Jackson, 1990) drew attention to some of the issues discussed above, but the field of research only fully came into its own with the end of the Cold War, even though the “failed states” agenda – as discussed in Chapter three, continues to reflect the old paradigm which seems to have acquired a debatable centrality. Thus, it is only by the end of the Cold War, with IR moving beyond the paradigmatic hegemony of structural realism, that its theoretical model became more flexible, allowing for the inclusion of change and the correction of certain “blind spots”, chief among which is the lack of a theory of the state and the a-historical nature of its approach (see Hobson, 2000: 174).

In what follows, the central line of argumentation will start from the premise that, contrary to the alleged homogeneity of polities mirroring the image of a fictitious modern state, there is a variety of political entities grouped under this banner. To be sure, this project is clearly not the first scholarly initiative to rise against the “state is a state is a state” mantra. Writing in the discipline of political science back in 1968, Nettl’s article was an extraordinarily inspiring text, paving the way for many of the iconic works on the state in the past thirty years in history, sociology and political science, including the early works of historical sociology. What made studies such as
Nettl’s exceptional, and what ultimately distinguishes it from most of the IR literature is that, instead of analyzing the state, and ultimately the modern state as the teleological and unavoidable result of the increased complexity of social relations, he problematized its subject by depicting the state as simply one possible outcome: “one possible concretization of structures, one political dimension, or even one system of social bonds – but not the only one” (Nettl 1968: 559). In that article, Nettl voices the need to move beyond the temptation of taking the state for granted to allow for an analysis of the “state as a conceptual variable”, as his title makes it clear. Thus, even if at one level Nettl continues to depict the state as “the basic, irreducible unit” of international relations (1968: 563), the invariability of its function in the external realm is accompanied by the “domestic” variability of the concept (see Kahler, 2002).

In the field of IR, Robert Cox for instance, famously denounced the “state is a state is a state” mantra as far back as 1986, insisting on a move beyond state-centrism towards a more percussive analysis of state-society complexes (Cox, 1986: 206; also Halliday, 1987). Cox’s perspective, anchored as it is in the Marxist tradition, exposes the state, viewed as an institutional apparatus of government, to the analysis of its relation with society at large. It is this that allows Cox to turn the analysis towards the “plurality of forms of state, expressing different configurations of state/society complexes” (quoted in Sørensen, 2001a: 19). This line of inquiry was successfully taken up by scholars working within the parameters of the “state-in-society” perspective originating in the work of Joel Migdal (1988, 2001). As a result, two decades following Cox’s initial critique, writing from the point of view of the English School with the added advantage of a series of important works in historical sociology, Andrew Hurrell was justified to note that “the history of regional state formation has helped to produce regional international societies that may have elective affinities with their allegedly universal Westphalian original but also have important distinctive features” (2007: 133). Finally, the turn of the century witnessed, in the words of Kahler, a “growing awareness that the state has too often been defined as the modern European state, a species delimited in both time and space” (2000: 5). Be it in terms of Clapham’s (1998a) distinguishing between “degrees of statehood”, or Sørensen’s (1998) qualitative difference in types of states, various scholars studying the fate of
political units outside the European core of the Westphalian system have shown variation not only in the relations between these units but also, more importantly, within the state-unit itself. It is this last line of research that next chapter purports to investigate, in light of the relationship between violence and the construction of a modern polity in geographical and temporal contexts different from the original ‘core’ European. This will be done chiefly by analyzing the role played by violence in the formation of states beyond European boundaries. But before we can properly examine the construction of the state, we must first explore the theoretical understanding of what constitutes a state. For that, we first turn our attention to the re-conceptualization of the state in the IR institutionalist tradition, after which we are looking at alternative disciplines that may offer a more useful conceptualization.

As John Hobson has noted, the lines of thinking about the state fall roughly within two generic frameworks: one, inspired by the Aristotelian search for the best form of government, is constituted by normative theories of the state whose objective is to “consider what the most desirable or appropriate form of state and political community might be”; the other groups together offer various explanatory theories of the state, whose objective is to consider not only “who controls, or what forces shape, the state and its behavior”, but also various avenues of state-formation (Hobson, 2000: 2). Explanatory theories of the state in sociology and political science can be further classified into two categories: functionalist models - emphasizing the functions the state allegedly performs; and structural (or institutionalist) accounts of the state - focused not so much on functions as on the administrative institutions through which these functions are performed. In sociology, defining the state has shifted from the dominance of 1960s functionalist perspectives embraced by scholars like David Easton or Talcott Parson with the “claim that the important things to study were the functions and not the structures ... processes and not institutions” (Abrams, 1988 [1977]: 64), to the institutionalist perspective embraced by historical sociology, marked by the 1980s move to “bring the state back in”. However, the mere acknowledgment of these distinctions obscures the fact that at their basis lays the conflation of the two frameworks identified above. As is shown in Chapter three, the normative aspect of the state, itself deriving from the
European historical experiences of state-formation, consciously or unconsciously dominates current discourses on state-failure. Ultimately, as Abrams himself has noted, the functionalist-structuralist divide is, in fact, a false one, as inevitably within the state most "functions became institutionalized" (1988/1977, 72).

In contemporary IR, the connotations of the institutionalist discourse differ from its understanding in related social sciences. Following a brief interest with international organizations dating back to the time of the League of Nations in the interwar period, as a result of the "institutionalist turn" stimulated by the events of the 1970s (including the oil crises, the important role of OPEC, and the changes that affected the Breton Woods institutional design), the study of institutions was re-integrated into the study of IR. Today one can identify no less than three such directions of study within the discipline (Jonsson and Tallberg, 2001: 4-5). First, "rational choice institutionalism" – in which, by starting from the assumption of the individual actor (that is, the state) defined as a rational utility-maximizer, the formation of international institutions is associated with their function of reducing transaction costs and thus encouraging cooperation.5 A second direction is represented by historical institutionalism, which studies the persistence as well as the change of institutions, under the signs of path dependency and "punctuated equilibrium" – choices being indeed "constrained by prior institutional arrangements" (Spruyt, 2002: 138). Third, "normative institutionalism" which, using March and Olson’s terminology (March and Olsen, 1989), substitutes the assumption of rationality at the core of the "logic of instrumentality" with a focus on norms and values corresponding to a "logic of appropriateness". Between scholars such as Robert Keohane (1984, 1989), Oran Young (1989) and John Ruggie (1998), the definition of institutions varies from "persistent [or durable] and connected set of rules [and, one may add, norms] (formal and informal) that prescribe behavioral rules, constrain activity, and shape expectations" (Keohane, 1989: 3) to "social practices consisting in easily recognized roles [coupled with clusters of rules or

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5 Indeed this parallel the perspective according to which "the new institutionalism sees institutions as means to resolve cooperation and coordination problems (Moe, quoted in Spruyt, 2002: 138).
conventions] among the occupants of these roles” (Young, quoted in Onuf, 2002: 225).

Yet insofar as the analysis of the state is concerned, IR has integrated the study of institutions into its discipline in a selective manner (which can be explained by the “institutionalist turn” in IR taking place under the aegis of the emerging field of International Political Economy), and was mostly developed by scholars working within the parameters of neo-liberal institutionalism. The main consequences are still perceptible in that the institutionalist agenda in IR has for a long time been dominated by its emergence as a reaction to, and in debate with, the neo-realist paradigm. As such, initial energies were consumed with showing that institutions do matter, but their importance was to be measured almost exclusively by the extent of their impact on state behavior. Consequently, the institutionalist research in IR was open to only four categories of investigation in the areas of institution formation: institution persistence or change; their influence; and, finally, the forms and causes of particular institutional designs (Jonsson and Tallberg, 2001: 3). Yet, in all these areas of investigation, the reference point remains the state and a dialogue with, or rather, against, neo-realist assumptions of states’ behavior. Under the need to engage in a debate with neo-realist assumptions, the referent point of what gets to be analyzed through institutionalist lenses remains the state. Thus, the issue of institution formation/persistence explores only the causes and conditions under which sovereign states decide to establish international organizations and why or how some of those associations of states persist or change; similarly, even when expanding the area of research beyond formal organizations, the problem of institutional influence becomes prominent not in itself, but as long as it measures the institutions’ impact on state behavior (Jonsson and Tallberg, 2001: 3). As such, research was initiated in the area of international regimes (prominent among which being those of trade and finance) and gradually expanded to include nuclear non-proliferation, the ban on the use of chemical weapons, mine-banning and so on. It also dealt with issues of state socialization reflected in discussions of “International Society” within the English School tradition or in various works studying the effect of international norms on state behavior as in the constructivist framework. Finally, it also included the study of a state’s main
attribute (that is, sovereignty) or that of integration into a supra-national organization (EU).

Of interest to this thesis is the fact that, in all these areas of investigation, the institutionalist analysis in IR was strangely rather shy of treating its central unit, the “state” itself, as an “institutionalized organization”.

This trend is by no means universal or uncontested: great promise is shown in the work of constructivist scholars, or those writing in the tradition of historical sociology and comparative politics for instance, who tend not to conform to this “rule of shyness” in their definition of the state itself as an institution. Such is Alexander Wendt’s work, which attempts a synthesis of Weberian and Marxist insights, and which defines the state as “an organizational actor possessing sovereignty and a territorial monopoly on organized violence, whose form is constituted in relation to the society it governs by a structure of political authority” (Wendt, 1999: 243). The substantial treatment of the state as an institution would allow the possibility of moving beyond a restrictive attention to the exclusive form of polity monopolising the control over violence, rule-making and taxation over a given territory. Having as its referent institutionalized organizations mediating between intra-societal and extra-societal flows of actions (Nettl, 1968: 563), IR would then be able to discuss other forms of polities as well, including the “states-within-states” or “warlord realms”, thus better reflecting the diverse situations of the contemporary world.

It is worth noting that, even when treated as an “institutionalized organization”, the concept of the state continues to be the object of what some call an “ambiguity” (Giddens, 1985: 17), and others a “paradox” (Jessop, 2001: 167), as the “state” is simultaneously part of society, and distinct from it. In Jessop’s words, “on the one hand, it is just one institutional ensemble among others within a social formation; on the other, it is peculiarly charged with overall responsibility for maintaining the cohesion of the social formation

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5 “State” is in this regard an organization whose attributes are expressed by its prominent position in the management of several attributes and events, including sovereignty and war. For the distinction between “institutions” and “organizations”, as well as the term of “institutionalized organization”, see Albert and Hildemeier (2001: 7). Jonsson and Tallberg on whom my discussion on institutionalism in IR is based, operate with Young’s definition of “organization” as “material entities possessing physical locations (or seats), offices, personnel, equipment and budgets”, which, when corroborated with his definition of institutions, leads to the designation of the market, marriage or sovereignty as institutions with their organizational manifestations in firms, family and state respectively (2001: 2).
of which it is a part" (2001: 167). Similarly, as Giddens notes, the notion of "state" refers sometimes to the institutionalization of power in government, while at other times it denotes by and large the social system subject to that government or power (Giddens quoted by Erickson, 2001). Moreover, as useful as this definition could be in liberating IR from the spell of a static concept of the state, its potentially positive effects are undermined by the unconditional embrace of nothing less than a "monopoly" over violence as a sine-qua-non condition of "stateness", the predisposition to reify and personify (anthropomorphizing) its object of analysis, as well as the structural bias of its proponent. Being neither an accidental, nor an incidental feature to be linked with a particular author, the dangers of reifying and anthropomorphizing the state do indeed permeate the IR discipline as a whole, particularly as it tends to favor defining not so much the state on its own, but the state within a state-system context.\footnote{Anticipating the section in which I deal with efforts to "recover" Max Weber’s context from the simplified form that IR takes in defining the state, it is worth noting that, as Neumann reminds us quoting Max Weber’s position on the capacity of states to “act”, “there is no such thing as a collective personality which ‘acts’ [. . . the state is . . .] only a certain kind of development of actual or possible social actions of individual persons” (in Neumann, 2004: 260).}

Before exploring other attempts at defining the state in related disciplines, it is worth investigating – albeit briefly – the birth of the modern political use of the term. In the theoretical context sketched above, one important observation needs to be made: in all these models, the "state" subject to analysis is a particular form of polity which has emerged in Europe at the dawn of the modern era, and has been in a constant process of transformation and change ever since. It is not simply “the state” that is in question; it is the “modern state” which features in all these analyses, comprising as it does a number of attributes and characteristics which all share one common denominator – their “modernity”. Without these attributes, the “state” would no longer warrant its particular name – it would be a different polity or power-structure altogether. It is therefore imperative to look at the way in which the state acquired its “modern stateness”, as it were. In the next section, given the importance that “monopolizing of violence” has in IR definitions of the modern state, this issue will be addressed from both a semantic and a conceptual approach. This line of inquiry will continue in the next chapter by exploring the link between violence and various state-
construction processes, the ways in which “war made states”, with the purpose of emphasizing the variety of modern polities masked by the notion of “a modern state”. In other words, it will investigate how various power-structures have evolved, under certain internal and external pressures, and in particular historical circumstances, into the organizational form that we now call “[modern] state”.

A semantics of becoming “modern”: the state’s coming-into-being

In tracing the usage of the concept of “state” in the semantic history of [Western] political thought, Quentin Skinner identifies its modern use with the intention to denote “an impersonal structure of political authority instituted as a distinctively modern form of public power … to be separated from both the ruler and the ruled” (Saunders and Hunter, 2003: 221; Harding, 1994: 57), detachable if not entirely distinguished “from the society that it governs as well as from the leaders who exercise power” (Bobbit, 2002: 81). In contrast with what today constitutes the preferred mechanism of defining the modern state, none of the analytical dichotomies such as those between “state” and “market”, “state” and ”society”, “domestic” and “international”, “public” and “private”, or “politics” and “religion” are useful in analyzing medieval Europe (Teschke, 1998: 353). This modern use of the “state” is in clear opposition to the multiple connotations of its medieval predecessor, with one historian of medieval political thought reminding us that before the fifteenth century “the common sense usage of the term ‘status’ covered a variety of governmental forms” (A. P. d’Entreves quoted in Davies, 2003: 283). It was only gradually that these multiple connotations were restricted, allowing it to become the “master noun” of modern political discourse by the eighteenth century (Skinner, quoted in Davies, 2003: 292).

As most accepted narratives go, in the process of transformation that European polities underwent in order to achieve their distinctly modern incarnation, power was first concentrated in the hands of the monarch as an expression, one may presume, of the “Copernican model of celestial mechanics … which centralized the sun’s location and demoted our earth from its former primacy” (Taylor, 2002: 299). In the absolutist state, it was the monarch that had his – or more rarely her - subjects (including the nobility and
the city's bourgeoisie) gravitating around him, as was the case with the French
Louis XIV, "le Roi Soleil" (Creveld, 1999: 120). By that time, even if not fully
satisfying Skinner's condition of separation from both ruled and ruler which
will eventually be fulfilled later on by vesting authority in the office rather
than the individual holding it, an essential move had already taken place in the
perception of the state: from the passive object of the ruler's action as depicted
up to Machiavelli's time, the state became increasingly depicted as an agential
actor in itself. As Harding tells us, the use of the concept of "state" by
Machiavelli suggests that "he meant by it [first of all that the] power be
grapsed vigorously and exercised with finesse: only in the second place the
community over which the power was exercised" (1994: 61). Thus, in a classic
investigation of the use of "lo stato" in Il Principe (1513), Jack Hexter
counted only eight out of a hundred and ten instances in which the use is
undoubtedly an active one: outside of those exceptions, "lo stato is never
worked for, helped, served, revered, admired, feared, loved; [instead we find
it] added to, assaulted, possessed, occupied, seized, taken, acquired, kept or
lost" (quoted in Kharkhordin, 2001: 208).

In contrast with the late medieval use of the concept, Jean Bodin
(1576) is among the first of the political philosophers to give the state the
modern significance of an apparatus of governance. In so doing, he
distinguishes between the "state in itself" (l'estat en soi) and the various styles
or forms of government through which its sovereignty, defined as the supreme
"capacity for political decision and action ... might be exercised in particular
circumstances" (Saunders and Hunter 2003: 224). Thus, the concept of a
modern state is intrinsically linked to the re-location of these powers in a
supreme, unified and impersonal political authority, a process ultimately
involving the removal of political power from the universalist projects of both
the church and empire, as well as from the interests of the feudal estates, and,

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8 The conventional narrative traces the evolution of sovereign authority from medieval theory,
for which it was vested in the person of the king by the grace of God, to the modern theory of
popular sovereignty. Echoing this narrative, Cynthia Weber shows how beginning with the
French Revolution in 1789, the "idea that sovereign authority flowed from God and was
invested in a monarch" was being replaced by the "idea that sovereign authority flowed from
the citizens of the nation-state and was invested in its leaders" (quoted in Opello, 2004: 14).
9 By different forms of government, Saunders and Hunter refer to the Aristotelian tradition of
distinguishing between "monarchia", "aristocratia", "oligarchia" and "democratia" as various
forms of government. See also Harding, 1994: 58-61.

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ultimately, the absolutist monarchs (Creveld, 1999, especially Chapter 2). It was Hobbes (1651) who, in the context of the devastations wrought by the religious wars of the first half of the seventeenth century, famously described the state as “that great Leviathan called Common-wealth or State (called in Latin Civiitas) which is but an Artificial Man; though of greater stature and strength than the Natural for whose protection and defense it was intended” (quoted in Saunders and Hunter, 2003: 223). Thus, by the middle of the seventeenth century, the modern concept of the state as an impersonal (“Artificial”) governing entity separated from both ruled and rulers was consecrated. From this time on, the state was well on its way to modern crystallization along the classical Weberian lines characterized by “a strong central authority, operated by a bureaucracy on the basis of a uniform set of laws, [which] exercises exclusive control over a well-defined and contiguous territory, enjoying a monopoly over the legitimate use of force” (Teschke, 2003: 19). Still, it is only towards the nineteenth century that European states, at a different pace and in different forms, completed the now familiar stage of institutionalizing the use of power, whether the control over coercion, the capacity to tax or the supremacy in regulating (the rule of law) in a process dominated by bureaucratization (Zurn and Leibfried, 2005: 5).

Yet, Skinner’s account of the modern coinage of the concept of the state runs the risk of becoming not only too static but also deterministic, without allowing for internal variation in the forms and functions of the modern state it describes. Bearing in mind that Skinner’s intention was limited to contextualizing the semantic birth of the concept of the modern state, it is worth quoting in detail Bartelson’s comments:

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10 With regard to the control over the means of violence, it is worth mentioning the medieval doctrine of a tripartite nature of social order functionally divided between those who fought (knights), those who prayed (priests) and those who labored (peasants) as developed by George Duby in his 1980’s The Three Orders (see also Spruyt’s discussion, 1994: 69-73). Within this organization, “the control over violence was not monopolized by the state but oligopolistically shared by a landed nobility” (Teschke, 1998: 326); given the absence of a state-church separation, even this control over violence oligopolistically exercised by a class was limited/balanced by what in the Weberian tradition Teschke referred to as the priesthood, and ultimately the church’s “monopoly over [the legitimate manipulation of] the means of salvation” (1998, 348). For a fascinating treatment of the Medieval Church through an economic model of monopoly and rent-seeking, see Ekelund et al. 1989.

11 As van Creveld puts it, “between Hobbes and Locke [though crystallized through Hume and Montesquieu] the theoretical structure of the [European] modern state was substantially completed” (van Creveld, 1999: 165, my addition).
whereas (Quentin) Skinner and other contextualists have accounted for the emergence of the modern state concept, they have had very little, if anything, to say about its changing place and function within modern political discourse. Indeed, it could be argued that their accounts of the state concept are themselves inherently statist, since they have posited a modern notion of the state as the end towards which early modern political reflection evolved through a delicate blend of necessity and accident. It is as though all roads in the past led to Weber but none further beyond (p. 9). (quoted in Thomas, 2004: 3)

Thus, the modernity of the state was from the beginning linked with one particular form of organizing political communities, today associated with the Weberian/Hobbesian heritage. Having now outlined the semantic birth of the notion of the state modern state, the next section places the state in its historical and sociological context.

**Defining the “state” – a historical sociology perspective**

Reviewing the different modes in which the “state” was defined by the various disciplines constructed around it (that is, political science, sociology), one can easily notice the elusiveness of a concept associated in turn with the institution of government, with the concept of the nation, the country or even with a given type of political regime:

particularly in the Anglo-Saxon tradition, the state is often viewed as a synonym of government. In the European tradition, the national state or country is frequently identified with the state. Expressions like "liberal state" or "bureaucratic state" are usually an indication that "state" is being utilized as a synonym for a political regime. Finally, expressions like "capitalist state" or "socialist state" identify the state with an economic and political system or with the total political superstructure of a given mode of production" (Brasser-Pereira, 1995: 86(2)).

Furthermore, the modernity of the concept of state has been variously associated by scholars working in the institutionalist tradition with the centralization of power and the transition from indirect to direct rule, and, while those working in a functionalist tradition emphasized the differentiation in a state’s functions and the proliferation and rationalization of state organizations (Waldner, 1999: 21). To make things even more complicated,

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12 I have used Waldner discussion on “state-building” to emphasize the various meanings of the modern state. He also uses the terminology of mediated and unmediated state to designate the indirect and direct rule respectively (Waldner, 1999).
an additional difficulty in grasping one consensual definition of the state is due to its dynamic nature. Thus, writing against theorists proclaiming the demise of the state, Stuart Bremer warns that those embracing this position “ignore the fact that the state is not a fixed form of political organization, [but is] showing itself a very adaptive institution” (Bremer with Ghosn, 2003: 21, my emphasis). Charles Tilly’s definition of the state as a “coercion-wielding organization that is distinct from households and kinship groups and exercises a clear priority in some respects over all other organizations within substantial territories” is, as the author himself admits, wide enough to include “city-states, empires, theocracies and many other forms of government” (1990: 1-2, my emphasis). Similarly depicting the state as “one of the most persistent pattern of social organization”, Thomas Pfister notes the high dynamism resulting in a multitude of forms ranging from the Greek polis to the Roman Empire, medieval Italian city states or the absolutist regimes of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (2004: 1).

In this context, one solution to avoid the pitfalls of both over-generalization and inordinate staticism and reification would be to “take account of the historical and contingent circumstances of a state’s existence and power” (Kelly, 1999: 109). This is indeed the path chosen by a number of scholars in defining not only different forms of statehood of which the modern state is simply one manifestation, but different forms that the modern state itself took in the course of European history. Referring to the same modern form of political organization, classical realists, for instance, talked about the “monarchical nation”, the “bourgeois state” or the “socialized nation” as being finally replaced by a “social service state” (Carr quoted in Hobson, 2000: 55-60). More recently, in line with the bellicist view deriving the transformation of the state from the “changing demands of the war”, Phillip Bobbit distinguishes between various forms of state formed as a result of various types of war, or directly depending on the nature and legitimacy of the administrative mechanisms that manage them and the parameters of the international settlements that endorse them. He thus defines the state as “a permanent infrastructure [with the aim] to gather the revenue, organize the logistical support and determine the command arrangements required for the armies that would protect the realm” (Bobbit, 2002: 80): the “princely states” of the first half of the sixteenth century, followed by the “kingly states” of the
seventeenth century, the "territorial states" like England in the eighteenth century, Netherlands under Wilhelmi III or Prussia under Frederick the Great, the "state-nation" personified by Napoleonic France or the British Empire, as well as the latter day "nation-states", are all seen as variations of the same modern state. It is as a reflection of these traditions and a recognition of variation in the outcomes of war in the creation of modern polities that my investigation in the following chapter distinguishes between the early *state-formation* processes in the European context, the *re-formation* of political entities in a Latin American context, the *state-making* processes in East Asia and Middle East, and ultimately the state *deformation* in the African continent.

More rigorous definitions, however, come from the discipline of political science and the sociological tradition. There, in an initial phase, political philosophers engaged in an effort to define the modern state by reference to a unique, essential feature. In this tradition, Zurn and Leibfried work under the heritage of Hobbes when emphasizing the delivery of security services, as "the state's purpose is to overcome the natural tendency towards a warre, as if of every man against every man"; of Max Weber, who, in his 1918 speech published as "Politics as a Vocation," deemed the control over violence as the crucial element of state famously defining the latter as "a human community that (successfully) claims the *monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force* within a given territory"; or of Carl Schmidt's defining the vital characteristic of the state as "the power to rule in a state of emergency or other exceptional circumstance" (Zurn and Leibfried, 2005: 2). In contrast with the attempt of reducing the state to one function or characteristic, the complexity of contemporary states is taken on board by Michael Mann's concept of a "polymorphous" state. In his words, "a polymorph is a substance that crystallizes in two or more different forms, usually belonging to different systems. The term conveys the way states crystallize as the center – but in each case a different center – of a number of power networks" (Mann, 1993b: 75). In the light of the polymorphous nature of the state, Mann operates with a distinction between, on the one hand, the "despotic power" of the rather uni-dimensional state, whose function, up to the French Revolution, remained primarily rooted in the military and geopolitical arena (Mann, 1993b: 511); and, on the other hand, the infrastructural power of the "polymorphous" state, whose development in the nineteenth century was characterized by "the
capacity of the state to actually penetrate civil society, and to implement logistically political decisions throughout the realm (1988: 5). “Polymorphous” in his use thus refers to the expansion of both the scope and functions of a state whose sources of powers are to be identified in four areas: ideological, economic, military and political (Mann, 1988).

Beyond the mere sophistication of analytical power, there is an additional advantage in treating the state as a composite: that of “providing international relations and comparative politics with a common vocabulary and methodology” (Kahler, 2000: 42). Yet Benno Teschke cautions against the translation of Mann’s refinement of the modern sources of social power to medieval polities. Given the absence of a differentiation between various social domains, he criticizes Mann’s sources of social power as meaningless when applied to medieval societies where the main source of social power remained the possession of the means of violence: “Mann’s argument that each society is codetermined by autonomous ideological, economic, military, and political spheres is virtually meaningless in its significance for the Middle Ages” (Teschke, 1998: 337, footnote 56). Yet, while Teschke’s point is quite persuasive when referring to the (European) Middle Age, Mann’s theoretical frame can be applied to contemporary polities at the Westphalian Periphery.

Building on these insights, after exposing IR’s narrow idea of the state as reflected in the literature on state-failure and “state-building”, one can explore two dimensions of the polities in the contemporary Westphalian Periphery. On the one hand, the nature of control over violence must be analysed in a manner not prejudging in favor of a monopoly over violence. On the other hand, the provision of social services – such as in the areas of health and education – must also be investigated for the case of polities under the control of non-state armed groups.

As mentioned above, one of the paths chosen by scholars writing in the literature on state theory is to define the modern state by means of analytically separating various spheres of social interaction (Lim, 2005: 3). In this direction, political science as a discipline was shaped by its interest in exploring various “boundaries”, such as those between state and society, state and economy or state and the international system. Joel Migdal captures this interest by showing how the state has “two sorts of boundaries: (1) territorial boundaries between the state and other states, and (2) social boundaries
between the state - its (public) actors and agencies - and those subject to its rule (private)” (Migdal, 2001: 17). Of the two, the discipline of IR was more prone to take on board the first line of separation, by conceptualizing “stateness” alongside the internal/external divide. Within the internal dimension, the reference to a “state’s capacity to exercise authority over society” (or positive sovereignty) implicitly leads to a definition of the state by way of its administrative functions, especially “those rooted in its capacities to produce and enforce collectively binding decisions within a centrally organized, territorially bounded society” (Jessop, 2001: 153). Within the external dimension, through reference to the state’s place in the international system, attention is given to issues such as (external or “negative”) sovereignty or recognition, as well as patterns of interaction and interdependence (Jessop, 2001: 164; Bremer with Ghosn, 2003: 21). 13 Thus, the debate on stateness, to the extent that it exists in IR, followed the same lines as those in the discipline of political science that distinguished between state and society, focusing on the degree of the state’s autonomy from societal forces in the two spheres, domestic and international.

Developing this line of inquiry further than anyone else in IR theory, in his *State in International Relations* (2000) Hobson offers the most comprehensive analysis of the state seen through the lens of the agential power that each of these theories inscribes in its definition. In this enterprise, Hobson follows the distinction between “internal” and “external” spheres, and defines the *domestic* agential power of the state as the “ability of the state to make domestic or foreign policy, and shape the domestic realm, free of domestic social-structural requirements or the interests of non-state actors”. Similarly, the *international* agential power of the state is defined as “the ability of the state to make foreign policy and shape the international realm free of international structural requirements or the interests of international non-state actors” (Hobson, 2000: 7). Taking this particular analytical framework into account, one can then infer that Waltz’s neo-realism postulates a high level

13 On “positive” and “negative” sovereignty see in particular Jackson and Roseberg (1982) or Jackson (1990). In taking the analyses of sovereignty to a higher level of sophistication, Krasner also distinguished “Westphalian sovereignty” as domestic political autonomy with the exclusion of external actors from domestic configurations of authority, from “international legal authority” as given by the recognition by other sovereigns (Krasner, 1999). On the other hand, the state-society distinction from the domestic level is in turn replicated at the international level in the form of distinguishing between the International System and the English School’s International Society of states.
(absolute) of domestic, but no international agential power, with other versions of realism relaxing the notion of absolute domestic agential power by introducing element of variation in the economic, technical and social dimensions (Hobson, 2000, 31-38) or even positing a high degree of international agential power as do classical realists like Carr and Morgenthau (Hobson, 2000, 45-60). On the other hand, Hobson, in the analysis of classical liberalism, new liberalism and neo-liberal institutionalism characterizes the liberal tradition of theorizing in IR as envisaging a state with a high international agential power but with a variability from low to medium, and, respectively high domestic agential power (2000, 65). Despite a more sophisticated theory of state than the one used by the realist and in particular neo-realist school, what Hobson calls the first wave of Weberian historical sociology, including the works of Charles Tilly and Theda Skocpol, makes the same error of reducing the state to the anarchic structure of the international system and, as a consequence, effectively denies the state's international agential power (Hobson, 2000, 175-190).

Nonetheless, the divide between state and society on which the theories above are premised is not always as clear-cut and evident as neatly packaged analyses appear to project. One fundamental (and controversial) issue is to do with the state's autonomy from society. The state-centered move to "bring the state back in" has developed as a reaction to what was perceived as an overemphasis on "society-centered" perspectives, used by post-war theories – liberal and Marxist alike – in order "to explain the form, functions and impact of the state in terms of factors rooted in the organization, needs or interests of society" (Jessop, 2001: 152). Risking a reductionist simplification, one may conclude that, in defining the state, scholars alternate between Weberian and Marxist conceptions, respectively. Those of a "state-centered" orientation writing in a Weberian tradition emphasize the association of the state with the "monopolistic control of coercive power", defining it as "a compulsory political organization with continuous operations", in which an "administrative staff successfully upholds the claim to the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force" within a "given territorial area" (quoted in Thornton, 2007: 2). Those of a "society-centered" orientation either postulate the regulative role of the state for the benefit of society, culminating in the "night watchman" liberal tradition of the minimal state, or emphasize the
nature of the state as an instrument of domination, either in the interests of the ruling class or in the interest of capital (see Kelly’s analysis of Jessop’s work, 1999: 109). This latter view is upheld in the Marxist tradition, in which the state is seen as “the political organization that constitutes the juridical-institutional superstructure of every society” (Brasser-Pereira, 1995: 88-89 [4-5]). Although it may not immediately appear so, this tradition may indeed be treated as belonging to the “societal” camp of the “state-society” divide to the extent that the state, with its permanent bureaucracy, coercive apparatus and the capacity (if not outward monopoly) to tax and legislate, serves the interests of a political elite, which in turn is part of the larger society.

Despite the variety of different emphases in the definition of the concept of “state” within the broader category of social science, John Hall reassures us that there is some general consensus regarding an ideal-type of state. For Hall, following the path opened by Mann’s analysis of the polymorphous state, this minimalist definition would be of a composite nature including, in a classical Weberian tradition: “the state as a [centralized and differentiated] set of institutions which possess the means of violence and coercion (1); in principle control[ling] a geographically bounded territory, usually referred to as a society (2); with the state monopolizing rule-making within its territory (3) (Hall, 2001: 802). But centralization by itself could not and should not be equated with the modern state. As defined by a pleiad of authors, in accordance with both Weber’s use of the term and Skinner’s

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14 I added in Hall’s definition the characteristic of “centralized and differentiated” in light of Mann’s treatment of the state. Similarly, the issue of differentiated functions should sound familiar to IR scholars, particularly its place in the Waltzian neo-realist construction. The tendency in social sciences, probably with the exception of IR, is to prefer the composite definition of the state rather than to essentialise a unique function or attribute. Thus, beyond the already mentioned polymorphism introduced by Mann, Zurn and Leibfried express a wider tendency in social science when they define the twentieth century state through the development of “national constellations” of institutions in the four intersecting dimensions of resources (including force and revenues), law (rule of law or constitutional state), legitimacy (incorporating the issue of democracy) and finally welfare (marking the expansion of the state’s function in the social arena). See Zurn and Leibfried, 2005. Samuel Finer follows the same composite definition of the state along the line of several characteristics, also taking into consideration the expansion of its functions. Thus, the state is characterized by the presence of territorially defined populations each recognizing a paramount organ of government (1), served by specialized personnel (both administrative and military) (2), recognized [as a state] by other similarly constituted states as independent in its action on its territorially defined — and hence confined — population, that is, on its subjects (or what is commonly defined as “sovereignty (3); to these characteristics he adds the specifically modern attributes by which “the population of the state forms a community of feeling — a Gemeinschaft based on a self-consciousness of a common nationality” (4), whose members “members mutually participate in distributing and sharing duties and benefits” (Finer, 1997: 2-3).
conceptualization of a modern state, the impersonal nature of governance reflected in the rise of rational-bureaucratic structures must accompany state centralization. Thus, in the words of van Creveld, "the real story about the absolute state is not so much about despotism *per se* as about the way in which, between 1648 and 1789, the person of the ruler and his ‘state’ were separated from each other until the first became almost entirely unimportant in comparison with the second" (1999: 127). The second element in Hall’s definition is a clear reference to the state’s autonomy vis-à-vis society. But how far does the search for a state’s autonomy in relation with its society go in defining a state in the Weberian tradition and what do I mean when positing a “truncated”, incomplete Weberian heritage?

A useful point of inception for the recovery of a more holistic heritage in Weberian sociology is represented by Seabrooke and Hobson’s efforts of “bringing legitimacy back” in the definition of the state and with it re-emphasizing the co-constitutive relationship between state and society in the work of the German sociologist (Hobson, 1998; Hobson and Seabrooke, 2001; Seabrooke, 2002). In their analysis of the neo-Weberian school of historical sociology, Hobson and Seabrooke distinguish between their approach of “social embeddedness” and a first wave of scholars still writing in the tradition of the state’s autonomy from society. Thus, Seabrooke differentiates between various analyses of the state in the same historical sociology vein: the “isolated autonomy” school represented by writers in the tradition of Theda Skocpol, a tradition which “equates state autonomy with a situation in which the state must ‘isolate’ itself from domestic sources in order to push through its policies ... free of societal constraint”; the “embedded autonomy” school represented in the works of Peter Evans, according to which, in order to improve its effectiveness, the state’s bureaucrats must be embedded in societal networks “while retaining a formal degree of ‘institutional autonomy’”; finally, their own “social embeddedness” analysis constituting a “second wave of historical sociology” is associated with a state “deeply embedded within the whole of society”, in which the state’s search for legitimacy is not oriented solely towards a particular, dominant class of society (Seabrooke, 2002: 4). By bringing society back, this perspective recovers the vision of the state as a reflection of, rather than separated from, the larger social order. In this way, Seabrooke persuasively reveals how “a wider reading of Weber’s work
demonstrates his study of the state’s need to be broadly embedded in socioeconomic structures to attain legitimacy, rather than the mechanics of modern bureaucracy or naked power politics" (Seabrooke, 2002: 8). The result of this recovered Weberianism is a perspective allowing for the mutual influence of state and society, in a manner reminiscent of Giddens’ “structurationist” theory.

Similar results derive from placing the state’s monopoly over violence in the more general framework of Weber’s “sociology of authority”, showing, as Pfsiter does, that for Weber “all forms of authority are at first social relations ... contradicting the neo-Weberian emphasis on state autonomy and pointing to a more comprehensive image of social relations between the state and its citizens (2004: 17). Yet there are two additional ways in which the vision of the modern state reduced to a simple monopoly over the means of violence distorts the Weberian understanding. Dissecting the role of violence in Weber’s work, Richard Maguire has reminded us that, while the German sociologist clearly considered the use of force as one of the important functions of the state, he did not do so with the intention of diminishing other functions: “he argued that the state had many roles, in areas such as hygiene, welfare and culture, and not only in the areas dominated by the military and policing arms ... force only became efficacious when used within a context constructed, and constrained, by other factors, which were not built upon the threat of violence” (2006: 304). In contextualizing the truncated Weberian definition of the state, it is important to go back to the issue of diversity in forms and functions taken by the polymorphous modern state. As Rees Davies points out, “we may notice that in the original, Weber prefaces his statement with the word today; he is not claiming universal validity for his definition” (2003: 291). Davies was making this specification as a precautionary measure against the temptation of projecting concepts from the present onto the reality of the past. Almost a century since the great German sociologist formulated

15 In fact, Maguire goes a step forward in identifying the association of the modern state with violence with a different line of thought, deriving instead from Hans Delbruck’s identification of the main source of power in the possession of the means of coercion (2006: 304). In his excellent article, Maguire reminds that, in spite of the prevalence of defining the state through its control over the means of coercion in the past three decades or so, for most of the history of social thought “all accepted that violence and coercion were not characteristics of the state itself, but of the failings of the social order. It was the failure to create forms of governance that reflected social needs, and the distortion of correct modes of conduct, that led to the use of force” (Maguire, 2006: 297).
his thesis, Davies' point may serve as a useful warning against the temptation of uncritically generalizing a concept coined for explaining a particular context in the past, and using it not only to explain, but also to build realities in the present.

**From “state” back to “polity”**

Although one may note a tendency among sociologists to soften (if not altogether eliminate) the element of a “successful claim of a monopoly of legitimate use of physical force” from the Weberian definition, to my knowledge this is not yet the case in the discipline of IR. As Hobson noted, Mann had already modified by 1993 the classic Weberian definition of the state by “softening” the condition of the monopoly over violence, while simultaneously recognizing the influence of social forces on the state (as opposed to a uni-directional state-towards-society influence): “[the state is] a differentiated set of institutions and personnel embodying centrality in the sense that political relations radiate to and from a center, holding a territorially demarcated area over which it exercises a monopoly of authoritative binding rule-making backed up by a monopoly of the means of physical violence” (Hobson, 2000: 200).\(^{16}\) Not only is coercion not the sole basis of governance (a view underlying the truncated conception of the modern state as the entity that monopolizes the means of coercion in a given territory insufficient to describe the complex nature of contemporary polities); there simply are other polities in addition to the state (Walby, 2004: 1035). Thus, if we are to move beyond the fetishism of the modern state and be open to diverse forms of contemporary social organization, one effective strategy is to continue associating the idea of the monopoly over violence in a given territory with a particular form of a modern state, while returning for the general analysis to the wider concept of “polity”.\(^{17}\)

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\(^{16}\) If one goes back to the definition representing a generalized consensus of what a state is, the mention of the coercive function is not crafted in the widely circulated form of “monopoly” over the means of coercion, but is mostly reduced to a mere “possession”, which I am inclined to interpret as not necessarily exclusionary.

\(^{17}\) Writing more than thirty years ago, Abrams criticized the analytical usefulness of the concept of “polity” in the functionalist tradition as leading not to an explanation of the state but rather to “explaining the state away”, as the former concept “absorbed the notion of the state” (1988 [1977]: 64). The processes underlined by Abrams are indeed regrettable for a clear definition of the state, but if the purpose is to include as many relevant phenomena in the
Relating to the state as an ephemeral construction, its variability allows continuing to use of the idea of “modern” state defined by its territorial monopoly over the means of violence, but it does so only as a particular type of contemporary polities. In turn, enlarging the concept would allow for the inclusion of other institutionalized organizations such as the warlord and militias. While the concept of polity as developed for instance by Sylvia Walby is wider than the concept of “modern state”, it continues to refer to structures of governance defined by a significant temporal and spatial scale, as well as institutional range enough to differentiate them from other specialized institutions of governance of a smaller scale or other political institutions “unable to enforce deference to its rules from its members” (2003: 534).

Within this framework, a polity can be defined as:

a form of governance involving one or more of a series of forms of power including coercion, economic, legal and symbolic forms that are coordinated in a range of ways, which is significant over a range of institutions and commands deference (Walby, 2004: 1036).18

The move towards introducing other units beyond the ideal-type of the modern state does respond to calls made in recent years by some scholars of IR. Thus, a comprehensive review of alternative sets of criteria for defining the state, used by scholars working within the quantitative framework of the Correlates of War Project, led Stuart Bremer to condemn the tendency of applying arbitrary “filter[s] before we know very much about the geopolitical units being examined” and to correct the limits of this approach by a focus on “developing multi-dimensional measures of ‘stateness’ rather than simple measure of statehood” (Bremer and Ghosn, 2003: 31).19 Along parallel lines,
against the “standard IR research practice ignore[ing] a great deal of
‘international’ activity in the developing world”, Douglas Lemke prefers the
concept of “autonomous political units” as “any political actor in independent
control of a definable territory and possessing its own military capabilities is
relevant for analyses in international relations” (2005: 5). This conceptual
refinement allows states, which are now defined as those “autonomous
political units not only [to] control their own territory in a positive manner, but
also [to] enjoy international legal recognition of their sovereign rights to
control that territory” (Lemke, 2005: 5-6). But at the same time, the expansion
of the realm of research in IR permits the inclusion of “de-facto states”
referring to “actors which may be in control of territories and may govern
them independently, lacking only legal recognition of their sovereignty”;
“quasi-states” in reference to those actors who, while benefiting from the
externally sanctioned recognition of their sovereignty, “may enjoy
independence within a territory, but govern it poorly” (Lemke, 2005: 6);
finally, as shown in Chapters 4 and 5, it also allows an inclusion of non-state
military actors in control over a given territory engaged in the direct or
indirect provision of social services despite lacking the external legitimacy,
actors variously labeled as “militias” or “warlords”.

The distinction between de-facto states, quasi-states, warlords or
militias should not obscure the fact that, unlike the rigid definition of the
modern state, the concept of “polity” to be applied to contemporary
autonomous political units rejects the requirement of exclusive territorial
authority. Different polities exert their governance authority not only in
different areas of social life (Walby, 2003: 539), but also in different territories
formally subscribed to one “state”, sometimes or in some domains, by
cooperation with each other while at other times engaged in a fierce

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category of the state included the control over a certain territory, the existence of an
autonomous military organization, the external formal recognition by other similar units and
the existence of a minimal population within its territory. As Bremer (2003) shows, the issue
of recognition of the status of “statehood” vary from “two major powers” (Russet et al. 1968),
to membership to the League of Nations or United Nations (Singer and Small, 1972) or other
forms of diplomatic recognition raging from receipt of diplomatic missions at the charge
d’affaires level (and higher) to the conclusion of a treaty of commerce, alliance, or navigation
(Fazal, 2001). Similarly the population threshold varies from 10 000 (Russett et al. 1968) to
250 000 (Gleditsch and Ward, 1999) or 500 000 (Fazal, 2001). For Bremer, if “statehood”
thus reflects the relations between “geopolitical units” and hence, includes the issue of
external recognition, “stateness” looks inside the organization of the geopolitical unit
including aspects of size (population, area and density), autonomy and cohesion (2003: 31)
competition. By following Walby in her conclusion that "it is rare for one polity to politically saturate any given territory", the subsequent chapters aim to describe different dynamics in which states, militias and warlords contesting or accommodating their authorities on different areas of social life do interact among each other as well as with other external actors within the structural pressures of a globalized international system. Yet, before engaging in the study of contemporary polities situated at the Westphalian Periphery of the modern world, it is useful to explore the ways in which war, and the attempts to monopolize the instruments of coercion in both internal and external affairs contributed to the emergence of one particular form of polity, that of the modern state. Not only is this exploration necessary given the prominence of coercion in the definition of both modern state and contemporary polities, but an analysis of the ways in which "war made state" demonstrates that even within the category of modern state, contrary to its assumed homogeneity, there is a high degree of variation in the forms and functions the state assumed across temporal and spatial lines.
Chapter 7. "State-building" in the Westphalian and post-Westphalian Contexts

As shown in previous chapters, the concept of state-building involving "state-building" involves a combination of state-building and state-building leading to the transformation of governance with monopoly over violence and bureaucratic control. Against this concept of state-building, according to Anne哮喘 (2006, cited in Smith, 2006), the absence of a centralized authority of state-building exposed the state to the influence of non-state agents.

At the same time, I propose that in the analysis of power dynamics in the Westphalian context, the conventional idea of the state should be replaced with the more flexible concept of power. The purpose of this chapter is to contribute to the reconstruction of the administrative framework of state-building in which state-building can be understood as the redefinition of the Westphalian concept. Such an administrative framework would allow for a more flexible state-building that is more adaptable to the local circumstances to which they are supposed to respond. In building such an alternative framework, I argue that the international community's efforts to build modern states ignore the fact that efforts at "state-building" are accompanied by a process which corresponds to what I define as state-building and state-building.

This model distinguishes between the early formation of the (Westphalian) modern state and the idea of post-Westphalian politics in the early state-formation recovery. The appearance of the modern state for the sake of the late European Middle Ages as a result of various political, economic, and social actors is not only described as "state-building", but also as the incremental character of a transient new process. This stage is followed by another phase, the Charlemagne period (1017-1375), showing how "state-building" continued. Notwithstanding, during this period, the state-building process, according to Van Quist (1994), is accompanied by a process of "state-building" characterized by the absence of state-building and state-building that involves the transformation of the state and its interaction with non-state agents. The interaction of state-building and state-building is not only characterized by the desired form of state-building, but also by the incremental nature of the state-building process.
Chapter 7. The (un)bearable lightness of ... polity construction

As shown in previous chapters, the concept of state-failure informing “state-building” missions is dominated by an explicit or/and implicit state-centrism leading to the association of governance with monopoly over violence and bureaucratic centralism. Against the supposition of “non-governed spaces” (Groh, 2006; Rabasa et al. 2007), I suggested that an absence of a centralized monopoly of violence should not be equated with an absence of governance. At the same time, I proposed that in the analysis of power dynamics in the Westphalian Periphery, the conventional idea of the state should be replaced with the more flexible concept of polity. The purpose of this chapter is to contribute to the construction of an alternative framework to that of state-failure/building, one that is better suited to the understanding of the contemporary dynamics between violence and governance in what constitutes the Westphalian Periphery. Such an alternative framework would serve as a heuristic exercise contributing to the formulation of policies better adapted to the local circumstances to which they are supposed to respond. In building such an alternative framework I argue that the international community’s appetite to build modern states ignores the fact that efforts at “state-building” are accompanied by a process which corresponds to what I define as state-formation and state-making.

This model distinguishes between the early formation of the (European) modern state and the fate of peripheral polities in the early twenty-first century. The appearance of the modern state on the ruins of the late European Middle Ages as a result of violent collisions between various actors is usually described in terms of “state-formation”, underlining the unintentional character of a centuries-old process. This usage is favored by authors like Charles Tilly (1975) showing how “war made state”; Norbert Elias (1994) preoccupied with the “civilising process” resulting in centralization of a public monopoly over violence; or Hendrik Spruyt (1994) studying the comparative advantage and ultimately the victory of the modern state in confrontation with its competitors. In contrast, the processes of late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries are approached from the perspective of state-building, in reference to the intentional character of designing the desired form of state as well as the predominantly “external” character of the
enterprise. Recent book-length works such as Waldner’s (1999), Fukuyama (2004), or Chesterman at al. (2004), accompanied by numerous articles, consciously use the term “state-building” or complements such as “capacity-building” and “nation-building”, rather than “state-formation” (Kwon, 2003; Migdal, 2004; Thies, 2004; Eizenstat et al. 2005). Leander (2004) herself, building on Tilly’s terminology, uses the term “external state-building” to refer to current efforts to consolidate African states. Thus, while not always explicitly formulated, this distinction is justified by a more or less regular use in the literature.

But these distinctions are deeper than a matter of usage. Distinguishing between “state-formation” and “state-building” implies further dissimilarity between early and late efforts directed towards the construction of modern, institutionally complex polities. Lateness produces variation in outcomes, that is, of forms and functions of the institutions of governance, thus substituting the “logic of homogeneity” with a “logic of heterogeneity” (Sørensen, 2001a: 25-32). Heterogeneity as an adaptive strategy to a changed environment may better explain the absence of a monopoly over violence in certain areas of the “Westphalian periphery” than its teleologically biased alternative built around the “failed state”.

The idea of lateness as an analytical device derives from Gerschenkron’s concept of “late industrialization” (1962). The Gerschenkronian logic of “late-comer” revolves around ideas of institutional innovation and “catching-up” through “burning stages of development”. This becomes possible by borrowing “the most modern and efficient” institutional techniques adapted to local circumstance through a process that hinders “a privilege of historic backwardness ... [as] latecomers could draw on technological and other advances made by the frontrunners” (Sørensen, 2001a: 31). Gerschenkron’s model of “early” vs. “late” industrialization is essential for correcting the unilinear and teleological assumption of institutional development by allowing for qualitative variations in the forms and functions of the state. Placing the process of polity-creation on a diachronic axis inspired by the logic of late-comers, the literature on state-formation can be enriched through introducing the aspect of institutional adaptation and innovation.¹

¹ The only references to Gershenkron I have found in the literature are Ertman (1997), and Lustik (1997) and indirectly Sørensen (2001a).
Furthermore, while neither earlier state-formation nor later state-building processes take place in a vacuum, there are qualitative differences in the international context between the two waves of polity-creation. Most prominent is the international society’s contemporary strength relative to the weakness of international society in early-modern Europe, leading to a change in the nature of threat. While historically states that lost their capacity to perform certain functions disappeared, today’s “dysfunctional” states continue to exist and, recently are reconstructed. Thus, war loses the role of catalyst in forcing the state to increase revenues and centralize loyalty around itself, leading to weak centralized structures, and inefficient fiscal bureaucracies and tax systems (Herbst, 2000; Thies, 2004). Availability of external assistance for “legitimate” parties convinces leaders of the redundancy of mobilizing their people or building up state institutions.

Tilly himself warned about the difficulties of applying his model of state-formation to contemporary units,

The extension of European-based state-making process to the rest of the world, however, did not result in the creation of states in the strict European image … on the whole, states elsewhere developed differently… the most telling feature of that difference appears in military organization … European states built up their military apparatuses through sustained struggles with their subject populations and by means of selective extension of protection to different classes … States that came into being recently … have acquired their military organizations from outside, without the same internal forging of mutual constraints between rulers and ruled (1985: 185).

His comments point towards a shift in the late creation of state institutions. The first modern states resulted from innovations in domestic extractive and administrative techniques imposed under pressure from external competition. In contrast, today the relationship is reversed given the possibility of external extraction of military, financial and legitimacy resources, in response to predominantly internal security threats. Closely related, the drift toward “external” state-building takes place within externally sanctioned formal boundaries – after all, the state-building missions aim to strengthen the “failed state” within the recognized boundaries.2 The immovability of territorial

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2 The RAND Corporation studies refer to US-led nation-building including missions in Germany, Japan, Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia I, Kosovo, Afghanistan and Iraq (Dobbins et al. 2003; 2008c); UN-led missions in Belgian Congo, Namibia, El Salvador, Cambodia, Mozambique, Eastern Slavonia and East Timor (Dobbins et al. 2005); and post-Cold War European-led
boundaries in its turn softens the intensity of the outer competition for controlling coercion. Consequently, the rush for capital has an external focus rather than domestic taxation and mobilization (Leander, 2004). In this “outward” process, rather than relying on internal processes of state formation, external assistance is used as a “short-cut” to the Weberian state.

However, it is not only the alteration in the nature of threat or the sources of revenues changing the relationship between warfare and state-creation. As a result of the internal-external shift, the nature of warfare itself has radically changed. Military historians were the first to recognize that variety in the type of war is correlated with variation in institutional forms (Thompson, 1995). This logic of the state’s development as a “fiscal entity directly related to the type of military activity in which it is engaged” is employed by scholars who emphasize the nature of warfare as a significant element in understanding the role of violence in contemporary “failed-states”. Sørensen, for instance, argues that institutional underdevelopment at the periphery is due to the fact that Third World political units were engaged in “the wrong kind of war” (Sørensen, 2001b: 345-347). While state-creating wars had an external orientation and a territorial objective, state-destroying wars are internally-oriented in an environment characterized by the spread of cheap small arms, machetes, and the likes. Described as “bottom-up” warfare (Clapham, 2002) these wars were fought for the control of population rather than territory (Herbst, 2000).

Finally, the change affected the ideology of state power itself, as increased demands on the state widened the gap between promised/expected and achievable performance. Thus, social welfare and economic development functions burdened most peripheral states from their inception while for early state-formation the impact of the same functions has been negligible. Tilly’s model of European state-formation includes them as significant in the third stage of state development, but for contemporary polities, the construction of a centralized political structure is accompanied by the expansion of political

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nation-building missions to Albania, Macedonia, Bosnia II, Congo, Sierra Leone and Côte d’Ivoire (Dobbins et al. 2008a; 2008b). Even when adding cases such as Angola, Central Africa, Chad, Liberia Rwanda, Tajikistan (Zuercher, 2006) or Solomon Islands (Dinnen, 2008a; 2008b; Hameiri, 2009a; 2009b; Fukuyama, 2006b), the state-building missions respect the territorial status-quo rather than accommodating territorial revisionism. This remains the case for new states such as the ones resulting from the break-up of Yugoslavia (Bosnia or Kosovo), the Soviet Union or East Timor’s independence from Indonesia.
rights and by rising expectations of social services delivery. Thus, the "paternalist" nature of the social contract dominating the birth of the early-modern state focused on security functions was doubled by the "maternalist" social contract in the case of the late-comers (Dogan and Pellasy, 1987). Moreover, the implementation of welfare functions imposed on the late, postcolonial states differed from methods characterising the early, industrial state model. For Milliken and Krause, "the industrial welfare state model [was] loosely based on a redistributive mechanism and a (relatively) efficient taxation system ... [while] post-colonial welfare functions often assumed the form of price subsidies on core commodities or other indirect subsidies and often paid for by external or internal rents" (2002: 761).

As a result, the reference to Kundera's novel (1984) becomes less surprising in the context of a chapter concerned with contemporary polity creation. The chapter's title refers to the Czech author's understanding of the duality 'weight-lightness', by which he expresses the impossibility of adequately capturing the past and, hence, the difficulty of resorting to its models and explanations in light of the present. Similarly, current processes of polity creation cannot be expected to reproduce the result or be analysed within the framework of modern state-formation theories. In the light of the last decade's proliferation of non-state armed groups it is necessary to relinquish the 'weight' of established theories which maintain a direct connection between war and the formation of a particular modern statehood. Instead, the focus should be on identifying a novel analytical framework explaining the emergence of contemporary polities.

State-formation, state-building and state-making

In developing an alternative framework of analysis I propose to distinguish state-formation and state-building as already mentioned. I also distinguish between them and the process of state-making. I differentiate between these waves of polity creation by isolating two dimensions from the literature sparked by Charles Tilly's work on state-formation and the expansion of the state system outside its European core. The first dimension of this polity-construction matrix revolves around the element of intentionality in the design of the polity to be created: absent in the case of the initial processes of state-
formation; present in subsequent waves. The second dimension refers to the preponderance of either internal or external agents in the process of polityconstruction. The intentionality axis separates the first wave of polity-creation, that is state-formation (lacking a preconceived grand design), from the following waves, that of state-making and state-building having different models establishing (different) parameters of the desired polity. Acknowledging the dynamic interplay between exogenous and endogenous factors the model distinguishes on a second axis between the preponderance of internal and respectively external agents responsible for carrying out the processes of polity-creation. Accordingly, I refer to the process(es) of state-formation and state-making as predominantly internally-led, even when the stimulating factors or the template may well be external. By contrast, the process(es) of state-building are conceptualized as being predominantly externally-led.

Fig. 7 Delineating between state-formation, state-making and state-building
Following the formation of early European modern states, a second wave of polity creation - state-(re)making – covers the expansion of the modern system of states between the eighteenth and the twentieth century. It includes the emergence of modern states in Central and Eastern Europe, Latin America and during the postcolonial era, in Asia and Africa. This categorization is justified by the existence of a certain model to emulate in a competitive environment, that of the Western state. The project of creating states in the image of the modern template was arguably carried predominantly by local elites. This was the case in a first instance under the banner of nationalism, with proclamations of independence (South and Central America and later Central and Eastern Europe) and national unifications (Italy and Germany). It remained the case in a second instance under the banners of national independence and modernization in the twentieth century during de-colonization.

It is important to note that in this view, the transformation of Germany and Japan in the post 1945 era as well as the confrontation between the two ideological blocs led by the US and the USSR respectively are all part of the same wave of state-making and re-making, even though the template under which both blocs operated differed substantially. Take for instance the successful cases of state reformation in the twentieth century, that of Japan and Germany in the post World War II era. The existence of a particularly strong template according to which the reformation was to take place (democracy, market capitalism and above all de-militarization), together with the existence of a preceding, strongly centralized and essentially “modern” state, disqualifies the labeling of these two cases as instances of state reformation. It is true that the origins of the respective new templates may be considered external (and clearly so), as may the rather generous financial support received from the Allies, although both Germany and Japan had substantial previous experience with these templates. Germany went through the Weimar Republic experience, while Japan had encountered the Western framework of modern polity (albeit in an adaptation to its own tradition) ever since the landing of Commodore Perry inaugurated the Meiji Era. Both these characteristics would explain why some scholars discuss the two cases as instances of state-building. However, in my framework, the pre-existence of a strong and ultimately “modern” state, coupled with the crucial role played by
local political elites, justify their placement in a sub-category of the second wave, that is, state re-making.³

In this sense, the Cold War is also part of the state-(re)making wave, even though the template under which the blocs operated differed substantially. In the Soviet-dominated bloc, communism can be envisaged as an authoritarian if not totalitarian form of state re-making dominated by the existence of an external (communist or Soviet) template of the state (centralized, authoritarian, single party); the predominance of a largely local elite in a (re)interpretation of the communist ideology and format, often with strident nationalist overtones; and, particularly in the Eastern European case, the pre-existence of a centralized state with its corresponding bureaucracies. The state was also transformed in the American-dominated bloc, albeit in accordance with a different template, that of democracy, market economy and, sometimes, de-militarization.⁴

What distinguishes the later waves of polity-creation from the initial wave of state-formation is the cumulative overlapping of the waves in a sequential manner, including – against the current assumption of “starting from scratch” – the consequences of the previous attempts of polity construction. Thus, constituting the second element of my proposed model stands the recognition that, far from operating as discreet and isolated processes, these waves of polity-creation can be visualized in a process of “sequential overlapping” resembling a Matrioshka doll mechanism. As such, the current projects of state-building can, and most often – although by no means always – do take place simultaneously with alternative state-making efforts by local elites which in some cases can also be accompanied by violent confrontations among entrepreneurs of violence mirroring state-formation dynamics, as it will be speculated in the case of Afghanistan.⁵ In the same manner, the expansion of the state marking the second wave happened side by

³ As it is consensually agreed, it is clear that rather large parts of the pre-war bureaucracies in both cases were integrated in the “new”, reformed post-war states of the Federal Republic of Germany and Japan, respectively. See for instance, Fukuyama (2004a) and Dobbins et al. (2003).
⁴ The same can be said about the Afghan case, in which one can describe the period from the mid 1970s to the late 1980s as an attempt of communist state-(re)making.
⁵ Note that while I argue that currently in Afghanistan, processes belonging to all three waves can be identified, the model does not imply the necessity of this complete overlapping happening everywhere in the Westphalian Periphery.
side with the processes of violent contestation among local power-holders characteristic of the first wave of polity construction.

Fig. 8 “Sequential overlapping”

This reconceptualization of contemporary polity creation allows for the integration and expansion of several arguments. First of all, the various regulatory powers and the builder’s policies may have resulted in some, but by no means all, cases in the establishment of polities not always possessing the institutional capacity or the level of domestic legitimacy required for a sustainable functionality – regardless of their status and recognition as members of an international society (of states). Thus it is of course pertinent to note that “failure”, when applicable, refers not so much to the failure of a state per se, as it refers to the failure of a particular project to construct a polity, either in its internal (the first and second wave of state-formation and state-making) or external (the third wave or the state-(re)building) versions (Bilgin and Morton, 2002; Eriksen, 2006, 2010). Second, in this process of construction, the “traditional” pattern of social relations is inevitably affected, sometimes to the level of disruption, in which case the vacuum was/is filled by novel social formations, as is obviously the case in Afghanistan and Lebanon. It is precisely against these new actors, embedded as they are within the local social arena, that the proponents of the latest construction projects, whether within the same or different wave, are competing. Third, this framework is in fact in harmony with the idea that the creation of a polity is never a finished product but is instead an organic process that always adapts to the changes in the external (international context and particularly international norms), as well as internal (societal needs or/and expectations), environments (Painter,
Finally, the image of sequential overlapping challenges the presumption that the state-building process starts *ex nihilo* and that it takes place in isolation from local social dynamics. Within this framework it is indeed possible to reject the ideologically-driven tendency to simply portray non-state armed actors as strictly negative actors and to move beyond dominant versions of the state as the only acceptable form of "civilized" organization of political communities.

The nature, character and functionality of any polity project is thus the result of the competition between various projects and is, in turn, by necessity a hybrid. Thus reconceptualized, I argue that this model can better preserve the Tillyan logic of "unintended consequences" as, beyond the desires, interests and actions of each set of actors, the construction of the respective polity results from the intersection of different projects. The following sections investigate the rise of the modern state and its expansion in several regions in accordance with this model. This incursion – which can only be schematic in this thesis – demonstrates the value of such a model as an alternative framework of analyzing the organization of political communities in a way that includes the modern state but is not limited to it.

**First wave of modern polity-creation: early European state-formation**

To support this proposed model, I review significant scholarly works dealing with the historical construction of modern states, with the aim to highlight the variation in the end-result of different types of war in distinct regional/global circumstances. The general consensus regarding the European context is that ever larger scale war-waging during the late phase of the Middle Ages was unintentionally conducive to state-formation. This discussion provides a foray into the modes of thinking on the creation of modern polities through the prism of what Teschke calls the two "grand macro-sociological paradigms of the emergence of the modern state" in the sociological-historical perspectives: the "military techno-determinism" and the "commercial-development" theses.

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6 In opposition with this perspective, the *ad-litteram* acceptance of the architectural understanding of building as a construction site, permeating the technocratic approach to state-building, leads to an illusory expectation of a finished product – which then becomes a subject of evaluations dominated by a metric of elections, centralization of the control over violence, rule of a particular law, and so on.
(Teschke, 2003: 27). This analysis serves the purpose of recapitulating a series of intellectual takes on an issue which is of acute contemporary relevance, thus making a re-evaluation of these in light of present-day political processes both imperative and subtly informed by previous experiences.

The issue of when and why the transformation of medieval institutions took place has been dealt with in the field of military history. The general answer is that between the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries, in response to transformation in the mechanisms and instruments of war, the nature of the European institutional matrix changed, resulting in the birth of the modern state as the most successful adaptation to the new context (Roberts, 1956; Parker, 1988; Parrott, 1992; Rogers, 1995). However, the question of how the modern state’s institutions appeared led to the development of state-formation theorising, most substantially within the domain of political (historical) sociology inspired by the works of Marx, Weber, Elias and Hintze (Poggi, 1978; Giddens, 1985; Mann, 1993a, 1993b; Downing, 1992). The first line of inquiry, indebted to the neo-Marxist moment of the late 1960s, emphasizes socio-economic factors. Anderson, for instance, focuses on class struggle as the most significant factor in the birth of the modern state, by analysing how the “control over peasantry was exchanged for control over the structures of the incipient state … [through] extraction in form of taxes and mobilization for external wars” (1974). Wallerstein’s “world system” theory highlights the importance of the nature of “exchange relations” that were born together with the capitalist system in the sixteenth century. The common denominator of a second perspective is provided by Hintze’s shift from Marx towards an emphasis on external, military competition, leading to his conclusion that “all state organization was originally military organization, organization for war” (1975: 181). This line of investigation considers war as the powerful catalyst of state-formation, stimulating the creation of increasingly sophisticated administrative institutions as innovations increasing the coercive and extractive capacities of the nascent modern state.

Finally, more recent contributions in the literature try to shift the structural emphasis of the previous waves. The “culturalist turn” of theorising about early-modern state-formation challenges previous theories in two major
ways. It tries to undermine structural/universal assumptions, focusing instead on particular contexts and local factors. Arguing that “there is more to state power than coercion and extraction and more to state formation than economics and geopolitics” (Gorski, 2001: 851), these ‘revisionist’ scholars make a strong case for the inclusion of cultural and ideological factors, contingency and particularism in the analysis of early-modern state-formation.

These contributions notwithstanding, the classical expression of the inquiry into the early formation of the European modern state is represented by Charles Tilly’s model (1975; 1985; 1990) and his followers. In line with the neo-realist picture of an international system whose structure derives from the self-interested actions of its main actors in an anarchic environment, Tilly articulates a perspective in which the modern state was created as the unintended consequence of the local rulers’ actions. These rulers, “in response to war and preparations for war (...), sought to monopolize political power in order to gain exclusive control over foreign, military and financial policy” (Ertman, 1997: 317). As Tilly’s narrative goes, in the process of eliminating, neutralising or subordinating their rivals, powerful rulers advanced in the process of concentrating their control over the means of coercion and taxation. Concentration over the means of violence together with increasing financial resources necessary to wage external war and domestic pacification imposed, and in turn was the consequence of, the development of an institutional bureaucratic apparatus whose function was to administer (extract and distribute) those resources. Simultaneously, administration constituted an accepted justification/legitimation of the rising involvement of state agents in both the economy and social life.

Driven by the need to acquire the means of waging wars, the centralising monarchs were often forced to bargain with those controlling or owning the capital or the means of violence (Leander, 2004). Defined by Tilly as a process of “civiliansization of government”, this aspect alludes to the embeddedness of the emerging polity into the surrounding society. It is within the social contract framework that this stage in the building of the modern polity is described in terms of “the reciprocal nature of political and social

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obligations that take shape in the process of preparing for and making war, leading under certain specific conditions … to new commitments and new levels of accountability for those who rule” (Heydemann, 2000: 18). From here, in response to the need for a “stable politico-legal framework to foster economic growth and development” the modern state was formed as “an institutional form suited to the development of modern capitalism”, including its welfare dimension (Milliken and Krause, 2002: 760). In a highly competitive, violent and anarchic environment, rulers who, in search of instruments that would allow a stronger extractive capacity to serve their bellicose purposes, have innovatively built the state’s “physical and social infrastructure”, were advantaged (Lemke, 2004: 3). Through these processes, war contributed (in an European context) to the creation of an innovative set of institutions, among which one counts the development of administrative capacity to enhance the extraction of resources from the domestic population; the creation of centralized specialized institutions monopolizing the coercive function on the given territory; and in a later stage, the formation of “national identities” (Botea and Taylor, 2006: 2).

Fig. 9 Charles Tilly’s narrative of early European state-formation

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Source: adapted by author from Tilly, 1985, 1990

However, the relationship among levels of this narrative of modern state-formation is not simply unilinear, and Tilly’s later efforts to accommodate variation in domestic configuration of power point to dissimilarity in developmental paths. In his later model which rests at the core
of the fiscal sociology paradigm of state-formation, the relation between war and state-formation is mediated by the variable of coercion-capital interplay. While all above-mentioned processes were present in the creation of European modern states, the local context of violence and the relative strength of the coercion and, respectively, of capital factors, varied. To consider the impact this variation had on institution-building, Tilly noted three different “modes” of state-formation, namely the coercive intensive – based on the power of armed landlords; the capital intensive – where “rulers relied on capitalists to rent or purchase military force”; and the intermediate capitalized coercion – where “holders of capital and coercion interacted on terms of relative equality”.

Fig. 10. Coercion-capital nexus and diversity of developmental paths

Source: Adapted by author from Tilly (1990)

The relative strength and the degree of autonomy of the owners of financial and coercive means shaped the structures of the modern state differently. The result of the interplay between the coercive-intensive, capital-intensive and capitalized-coercion modes is held responsible for the variation in the forms and functions of the early-modern states (Tilly, 1990: esp. 30). These three paths thus resulted in distinct state forms: tribute-taking empires, city-states and national states respectively (Baldwin, 2004: 276). Over time, as

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8 The literature on “state-failure” and “state-building” is an outshoot of the fiscal sociology paradigm, particularly as the state power is measured by its extractive capacity or level of taxation.

9 About the role of additional factors he notes, “variations in the difficulty of collecting taxes [like the pool of resources, degree of economy’s commercialization], in the expense of a particular kind of armed forces adopted, in the amount of war making required to hold off competitors and so on, resulted in principal variations in the forms of European states” (Tilly, 1985)
a result of competition in an anarchic milieu, this variation in state formation was replaced by the preponderance of one particular form of state, due to the adaptive “convergence on different variants of the national state” (Tilly, 1990: 32). Born as an unintended consequence of the scramble for power on the eve of the military revolution, the modern state ultimately converged towards the form of national state through processes compliant with the neo-realist structural logic during the state-making wave. The processes conducive to the dominance of one particular form of modern state, that is Tilly’s “national state”, formed via the capitalized-coercion path, to the detriment of its institutional competitors, are taken on board and explained by Hendrik Spruyt’s evolutionary historical sociology as reflecting the competitive advantage of hierarchically organized polities over contemporary political units of territorial rule among which he deals with city-states and city-leagues in particular (1994). “The crucial point”, writes Hobson, “[was] that in the long run it is the logic of the anarchic international system that explains [via either emulation or death] why states eventually converge[d] on the (capitalized-coercive) national state form” (2000: 190). In contrast, the state-building missions, particularly following the 9/11 moment, are dominated by an explicit aspiration of expanding a particular, Western liberal model of the state.

**Second wave of modern polity-creation: state-making**

Delving into the factors responsible for the variety in forms and functions resulting from the expansion of the modern state to other European areas, Ertman corrects the blind spots of Tilly’s model by integrating three domestic variables: the patterns of local governance influenced by divergent previous historical experiences; the structure, strength and impact of the representative assemblies; and most importantly, the timing of geopolitical competition in relation with the other factors.\(^{10}\) Introducing the perspective of time-induced variation in the process of state-formation, Ertman is indebted to Gershenkron in his belief that beyond similarities, “variations in outcome could only be

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\(^{10}\) Ertman contends that Tilly could not satisfactorily unlock either the Hungarian-Polish case which, “lacking in commercial resources – should have become absolutist and bureaucratic, but remained constitutional and non-bureaucratic”, nor the Spain-Portugal case of “external” revenues (Ertman, 1997: 15).
explained by the timing of the onset of that process in a given state relative to all other states” (Ertman, 1997: 26-28). In opposition to earlier state-formation, state-making took place in a context marked primarily by a ready availability of institutional models at the disposal of domestic elites, a larger pool of qualified administrative personnel, and a better developed capitalist commercial economy. This refinement allows for explaining variance in the forms of state by distinguishing for instance between “institutional logics differentiating the historically predominant Western polities” (Jepperson, 2000: 3). As such, it shows that even when emulating a model the local elites are indeed conditioned by the nature of the domestic factors – which explains in itself the diversity of end-results.

Spruyt’s analysis explores the conditions in which the new modes of organization based on the institutional logic of the national state successfully expanded in this second wave of polity-creation within the European boundaries. In this, he emphasizes the role of dominant social group coalitions as the catalyst for institutional transformation. Instead of changes in the nature of warfare which explained early state-formation, Spruyt’s independent variable in explaining the success of state-making by “governments structured on the principles of sovereignty and territoriality” is the extension of trade and the expansion of the monetary economy which in turn lead to the development of new social groups beyond the structures of the feudal order (Spruyt, 1994: 78). The presence of “burghers” possessing capital allowed for an increased maneuvering space for the centralising kings of the late medieval age who were able to use their access to those economic and social resources to engage in the politically innovative process of “claiming final authority territorially defined and centralization” (1994: 63). Thus, it is the proliferation of social groups and the institutional innovation of hierarchically organising the authority over large territories that allowed the centralising kings to create “uniform, centrally-administered, territorially-wide systems of law, taxation, weights and measures, coinage, tariffs, etc. which regulated economic life and

11 On a matrix combining two axes (the continuum between “statist” and “societal” models of institutionalization of authority; and the “corporate” vs. “associational” models), Jepperson distinguished between four “predominant institutionalized models of polities” as derivatives of the European system of states, and he labels them as Anglo/liberal, Nordic/social corporatist, Germanic/state-corporatist and Latin/state-nation (Jepperson, 2000: 9).
made possible the efficient extraction of the human and material resources necessary to make war” (Opello, 2004: 3).

In Spruyt’s “neo-evolutionary historical sociology”, the emergence of new institutions and social coalitions was followed by a selective phase in which the competitive advantage of the modern, territorial state resulted in the elimination of its early-modern competitors like city-states or city-leagues. This process of selection operating as a Darwinian mechanism of the survival of the fittest (economic and military superiority), was strengthened by mutual recognition between territorial states to the disadvantage of other types of institutions, and was completed by institutional imitation, “deliberate mimicry and exit” (Spruyt, 1994: 158; Teschke, 2003: 33). Spruyt’s contribution carries some important advantages. First, in relation to the emergence of new institutions, he emphasizes the importance of analysing novel forms of organization and contextualising organized violence in terms of social coalitions and modes of production. Second, studying mechanisms of institutional selection, he investigates the role of regional and international system’s norms of recognition and interaction with new polities. Finally, the “selection-by-competition” framework can help moving beyond the “failed-state” framework in exploring these cases as forms of institutional adaptation to local circumstances.

While both Ertman and Spruyt refined Tilly’s analysis by introducing new factors to be considered, they accepted the current orthodoxy that links war with the formation of the European modern state defined by its sovereign centralization of authority and ultimately by its monopoly over the means of coercion. However, they do not explore the emergence of modern states outside the European region. Aware of the risk of sweeping generalizations that might misrepresent the history of individual states, the following sections explore the story of state-making within a regional framework. As Heydemann noted, a comprehensive study of the lessons to be learned from attempts at applying the European experience of state formation to the outside world would have to contain at least three projects: a comparison along temporal lines between the European and each of the other regions; an intra-regional analysis emphasising the “variation in patterns of state institutional design, state-society relations, and the organization of the political economy within this one region”; and finally, an inter-regional analysis of the impact of war in
various contemporary regions (2004: 20). Such a study goes well beyond the purposes of this thesis. Instead, my intention is to use some examples to underline the range of trajectories of polity-construction as state-making in various geographical and temporal contexts.

The possibility of expanding Tilly’s framework outside European spatial and temporal boundaries is contested. Some scholars insist that it is an appropriate enterprise if local circumstances distinguishing non-European areas are accounted for. Thus, it is possible to argue that state weakness in the developing world is attributable to the lack of an intense external threat. Desch (1996) for instance, argues that external military threats make states domestically more cohesive by reducing both the “exit” and the “voice”, in favor of the “loyalty” option (Hirschmann, 1970). For Ayoob (1995) too, strong states emerged in times of high external military competition, while the Westphalian Periphery’s weakest states developed under conditions in which internal rather than external threats were and remain the most compelling security challenges. Consequently, regardless of the local elites’ intentions, the institutional structure that newer states acquired was less solid than that of the original, western states. Exceptions in this sense are states like South Korea, Taiwan, India or Israel, formed in a period of great external instability (Desch, 1996; Stubbs, 2005).

These scholars augment the appropriateness of generalizing Tilly’s model outside the European experience by considering distinctive circumstances for state-making, and in particular the diminished presence of external (interstate) confrontation and predominance of internal (intrasate) armed violence, as reflected in the study of African states. Additionally, they note the propensity towards external rather than domestic extraction of resources, particularly as a consequence of the expansion of the capitalist system, as reflected in Latin America’s debt (Centeno, 2002) and the rise of mercenaries in Africa. Finally, due to “rising expectations and limited opportunities or social mobility in developing countries”, with few exceptions, non-European state-making took place simultaneously with mass political inclusion (Waldner, 1999: 26-27). Complementing the contextualization strategy, other scholars switch the focus of research from direct war to the threat and preparations for war, analysing their impact on state-making (Barnett, 1992; Centeno, 2002; Schwartz, 2004). Focusing on “the more
general phenomenon of interstate rivalry, alongside the consideration of intrastate rivals” arguably offers a better chance to “account for the impact of both external and internal forces on the development of the state” (Thies, 2004: 1; 2006: 1264).

Other scholars questioned the wisdom of generalizing the European experience of state-formation as an explicative model for state-making outside Europe. Besides Tilly’s own warnings mentioned above, analyses of the Ottoman Empire’s administrative system (Barkey, 1994), studies on the state-making paths in China (Kiser and Cai, 2003, Hui, 2004), or Latin America (Centeno, 1997, 2002; Lopez-Alvez, 2000), all warn against applying one theoretical causal mechanism in different contexts. These studies suggest that processes giving birth to modern states took a different shape outside Europe, and that these differences marked the nature of the consequent institutional arrangements of the non-European modern state. A powerful example refers to the specificity of factors defining the African continent: the social consequences of extended family structures; the role of informal political authorities paralleling the formal structures, despite the later benefiting directly and/or indirectly from the international community’s support; accessibility of cheap, small weapons; existence of an international aid regime and, importantly, increased significance of “exit” factors such as migration and general mobility (Widner quoted by Lemke, 2004: 4). Thus, the best strategy is to follow Heydemann’s call: “[instead of being concerned with] figuring out why the contemporary developing world deviates from what is assumed to be the model historical trajectory established by [European states, the analyst should be] interested in explaining trajectories of state and social formation in the [respective region]” (Heydemann, 2004: 3).

It has been argued that of all non-European regions, the early case of Latin America would offer the most attractive test against the “bellicist” theory of state-formation. For some, the attractiveness of these cases derives from its alleged close “alignment to state formation with the European patterns due to colonial influence from the fifteenth century to independence” (Tedesco, 2007: 3).12 Nineteenth century Latin America seems to formally

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12 Following independence wars between 1810-1824 under the leadership of Simon Bolivar (Northern part) and Miguel San Martin (Southern part), by the 1820s most of Latin America had gained its independence from the Portuguese (Brazil) and Spanish imperial powers shattered by the Napoleonic wars in Europe. However, for at least fifty years the continent
replicate the European period of state-formation, given the *prevalence of warfare*, and the (military) *expenditure patterns*. Additionally, as a "second generation of state-makers", the Latin American leaders borrowed from the practices of the "first generations of [European] state rulers", adopting similar strategies, mostly of a capitalized-coercion orientation in the process of centralization of the state (Lopes-Alvez, 2000).

Yet, due to the type of wars, the nature of social coalitions and the rural-urban balance, prominence of the military class, and scarcity of domestic resources and access to external ones, "in no case did the political institutions of nations emerging in the early twentieth century remain similar to either the colonial period or the republicanism that triggered independence" (Lopes-Alvez, 2000: 1). Thus, in his study of Uruguay, Colombia and Argentina, together with Paraguay and Venezuela, Lopez-Alvez argues that "in agrarian postcolonial societies, types of war and the type and scope of mobilization of the rural poor during state-making shaped institutions, civil-military relations and regime outcomes" (2000: 46).\textsuperscript{13} In terms of the monopoly over violence, his research shows those factors to have directly and indirectly influence in cases where the state succeeded in monopolizing coercion, as in Chile, Argentina and Mexico, or where the state developed in an atrophied manner, with a "feeble presence in the countryside" as in Uruguay, Colombia or Venezuela (2000: 2). In this regard, despite sometimes exhibiting a sophisticated bureaucratic apparatus, most states were hardly able to reach, not to mention control their periphery, for example resulting in the description of late nineteenth-century Brazil as "all head, with neither arms nor legs" (Uruguay, quoted by Waldner, 1999: 31).

Similarly, Miguel Centeno accepts the influential role of war in shaping the forms of the modern state, but challenges the causal mechanism modelled on the European "extraction-coercion" cycle through a comparative study of eleven political units during the period of state-making between 1810

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\textsuperscript{13} The emphasis is on the internal nature of the violent confrontations given that "internal violence overwhelmed the Latin American state in the absence of countervailing pressure that would typically be supplied by the fear of external violence" (Thies, 2004: 2).
and the 1880s. He refines the theoretical model by introducing three intermediate variables to connect war and state-making: the source of revenue (internal or external), the timing of warfare as related to the maturity of pre-existent institutions, and again, the existence of social actors to support state centralization as a consequence of war. According to those findings, the Latin American cases suggest several prerequisites for institutional development in the direction of a modern state. First, the relevant states must turn inward in terms of extractive mechanisms in order to meet the financial challenges of war. Second, adequate administrative mechanisms must already be in place to manage the explosion in both revenues and expenditures. Third, the central state must already have established sovereignty over its territory and must be supported by enough local actors as to make domestic extraction profitable (Centeno, 1997: 1569).

In Latin America, the absence of the state’s penetration of society, responsible for the “civilianization” phase in Tilly’s model, or what constitutes the “infrastructural power” for Mann, led to institutional weakness and the frailty of state-society relations. Centeno explains this as a consequence of a low level of attainment on several dimensions. First, the effects of domestic resource scarcity were exacerbated by the region-wide incapacity to efficiently tax them, as illustrated by the emphasis on custom taxes – a facile fiscal solution, given its vulnerability to disruptions and fluctuations in the prices of exports and imports. Furthermore, the availability of alternative (external) resources such as borrowing on international financial markets or selling access to a particular commodity, contributed to the absence or underdevelopment of domestic institutional mechanisms for resource extraction (Centeno, 1997: 1584-1589). The availability of external capital and heavy reliance on foreign debt isolated emerging central governments from society at large. Finally, the timing of the war-dominated competition was disadvantageous, with the proto-administrative system in place characterized by “institutional dwarfism” (Centeno, 1997: 1589-1591).

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14 His sample of Latin America excludes the Central American states. Central American cases consistent with the picture depicted by Centeno and Lopez-Alvez, especially insofar as the negative impact of internal wars on the central’s state extractive capacity is concerned, are found in Holden (2004) and Thies (2006). The (later) independence of Central American states dates from the collapse of República Federal de Centro América in 1838.
In contrast with the early European state-formation, border wars notwithstanding, Latin America witnessed a prevalence of domestic war. Thus, "internal violence overwhelmed the Latin American state in the absence of countervailing pressure that would typically be supplied by the fear of external violence" (Thies, 2004: 2). But there is more to state-making than the internal/external division captures, and that is the intensity of war. In Europe, state centralization and strengthening of extractive capabilities was stimulated by intensive warfare whose "total" nature led to the mobilization of vast parts of society and the "transformation of state's subjects into citizens" (Thies, 2006: 1266). Historically the Napoleonic levée en masse sanctioned the possession of political rights defining the status of modern citizenry and in turn connected the fate of the nation with that of the modern state. In contrast, as Centeno (2002: 20-23) and Thies (2006: 1265) show, although frequent and bloody, the Latin American wars were limited in aims, scope and duration. Not only did limited wars lead to a "thinner" centralization of the state than in the case of their early European counterparts, the relative absence of external wars denied the Latin American states the function of mitigating internal local conflicts and disputes. Furthermore, like the Central American "armies without nations" (Holden, 2004), the wars in Latin America continued for a long time "to be fought by professional soldiers instead of the conscripts that helped to meld European peoples into nations" (Thies, 2006: 1265). Thus, state-making on Blood and Debt – Centeno's book title – resulted in the construction of a modern polity, but of a different nature than the early modern European states. What Holden calls "improvisational" and Letner (1993) describes as "truncated" states in Central and South America, despite their centralization, remained characterized by the persistence of public violence whose origins were identified in the long tradition of patrimonial institutions emerging as a result of the colonial occupation (Holden, 2004: 10).

Moving away from the Latin American trajectory, it is impossible to give justice to all the specific local characteristics of state-making which set apart what, at the risk of over-simplifying, can be called an "eastern" set of models. Out of this richness of cases, I focus on two in particular. First, the construction of a modern polity by heirs of the Ottoman Empire exemplifies the strategy of incorporation and cooptation of various local power holders in the process of strengthening the central authority. Second, as Boyd and Ngo
argue, the move “to ‘bring the state back in’ assumes in [the East] Asian context the guise of the developmental state theory” (Boyd and Ngo, 2006: 6). As a result, I succinctly describe the (re)-creation of modern state institutions along developmental lines with reference to Richard Stubbs’s analysis of Asian “miracle economies” (Stubbs, 1999; 2005). Both elements are useful not only due to their intrinsic value as specific regional elements, but also as they touch on aspects present in the processes of state-building currently unfolding in the developing world.

In contrast, scholars of East Asian development have attributed the recent successes of the strong “Asian tiger” states precisely to the autonomous nature of their bureaucracies. The emergence of the modern state in the East and Southeast Asian region followed a different trajectory from that in the European, Latin American or Ottoman regions. As argued by Boyd and Ngo, for some of the old political units such as China and Japan, “early state [construction] was completed ... before their entry upon a [modern] world stage” and, in the case of insular Japan “in the absence of boundary-defining enemies” (2006: 13). In both countries, the long history of the state left its imprint on the development of a venerable administrative tradition with a strong, centralized bureaucracy already in place on the eve of their entrance into the modern era. And yet, both states engaged in a period of tremendous social, economic and politico-institutional transformation as the result of their contact with the European colonial powers. Following the collapse of the Shogunate after the opening of its ports under the pressure of Commodore Perry’s 1853 naval incursion, the Japanese Meiji period was described as “an outstanding example of the modern state in Asia as the product of imitation, indigenous traditions, and invention”, with state institutions modelled after the European ones “hav[ing] meshed with local practices of governance to produce the appearance of seemingly universal institutions but which are actually endowed with local meanings” (Boyd and Ngo, 2006: 20-21). Thus, the ruins of the ancient state, and especially their administrative-bureaucratic tradition, constituted the foundation on which the modern state would be consolidated by local elites in the midst of wars, be they domestic as in the case of the Chinese civil war, regional like the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-1905, or global such as the first and second world conflagrations.
The emergence of strong states that constitute the Asian “miracle” economies – South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia, and Thailand – came to represent the paradigmatic case of the successful developmental trajectory in the construction of the modern state. The societies of all those states experienced colonial domination of various kinds, colonial domination which started to fade after the end of the World War II. The possible examples include the Chinese imperial occupation of Taiwan up to the Chinese defeat in the Sino-Japanese war of 1895. The Japanese imperial occupation was initially exercised in Taiwan from 1895, followed by the annexation of Korea in 1910, and culminating in the Japanese expansion in the region under the banner of the infamous slogan of Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. Another example included British colonialism exercised in both Singapore (1819-1959) and Malaysia following the Anglo-Dutch treaty of 1824. The role of war in forging the modern state in the region was analyzed by Stubbs in his conclusion that the “strong states of East and Southeast Asia emerged as a result of a series of wars that swept through the region beginning with the Second World War and including the Chinese Civil War, the Korean War, the many regional guerrilla wars and the overarching Cold War” (Stubbs, 2005: 1).\(^\text{15}\) Complementing the impact of the direct interstate military confrontation on the formation of the modern state, Stubbs’s analysis includes a series of factors such as the social, political and economic mobilization resulting from the threat of war and, in particular in the regional context, the “fear of communist subversion destroying the society from within” (2005: 9)\(^\text{16}\). It also incorporates references to the social dislocation of the old leadership and compromised organizations corroborated with the survival of an autonomous bureaucratic apparatus (Stubbs, 2005: 12; Waldner, 1999: 41). Finally, in includes the massive influx of resources which took two forms. On the one hand, it took the form of direct aid – special procurements and foreign direct investments as was the case of the US support of Japan, Taiwan or South Korea. On the other hand, the influx of external resources

\(^\text{15}\) For a detailed analysis on the impact of war on the economic development and the rapid industrialization of the region, see Stubbs, 1999. For the role of counter-insurgency in strengthening the nascent states, see Rich and Stubbs (1997).

\(^\text{16}\) Not only did the threat of a communist takeover determine an increased strengthening of the coercive apparatus including the army and the police, but in addition it was a significant ideological tool in the fight against local armed challengers as shown by the case of Malayan counter-insurgency strategy (Stubbs, 1997).

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was delivered in an indirect manner, either as a result of the turmoil created by war in the neighboring countries (as was the case with the exodus of skilled Chinese fleeing the horrors of the Civil War to build the foundation of various industries in the neighboring states), or the increase in the price of war materials encouraging the development of local industries, as in the case of Malaya and Singapore (Stubbs, 2005: 10-11, and in more details, Stubbs, 1999: 344-349).

An important conclusion to be drawn from this brief and general incursion into the literature of state-making in East Asia is that direct war or the intense threat of war had a significant impact on the structuration of social, political and economic institutions of the states in this region, but that this impact produced outcomes different from both those present in the early European state-formation and the second generation of state-makers in Latin America or the Ottoman Empire. Firstly, besides the external recognition of sovereignty, intense external war was followed by a massive influx of external resources in terms of capital – in the form of aid, procurements, loans or direct foreign investment as well as skilled migration. Secondly, the (re-)articulation of the state along modern lines consisted in fact in hybrid forms of external institutions integrated with local practices of governance including the persistence of well-developed administrative structures. Thirdly, in terms of the timing of state (re-)making, the developmental state of the Asian tigers achieved substantial industrial development prior to the political incorporation of its popular masses (Waldner, 1999: 50-51).

In reviewing the studies of state-making in the Middle East, Rolf Schwartz notes what he describes as “counter-intuitive” features. Echoing the traditional bellicist model, Desch’s study validates in the Middle East context the correlation between a state’s birth in the midst of an intense external war and the strength of that state, defined in terms of its social cohesiveness (Desch, 1996). Against these findings, Schwartz’s analysis shows how, even when state-making was forged in the context of war, it generally resulted in a regional decline of state strength (Schwartz, 2004: 22). Deriving from his

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17 Schwartz’s definition of state strength combines two elements. The first is Mann’s concept of “infrastructural power” emphasizing the state’s capacity of extracting material and human resources complementing the function of representation. The second element, in the fiscal sociology tradition, is the percentage of tax revenues in the state’s budget. As a result, the only
interpretation of infrastructural power, his findings are nevertheless consistent with findings of other influential studies on the emergence of a weakened modern state in the Middle East. Focusing on Egypt for instance, Barnett showed that the success of the process through which “war makes state” is dependent on the local leaders’ strategies and in particular on the integration of local economic elites in the process of institutional centralization (Barnett, 1992; Botea and Taylor, 2006: 8). However, the period of most intense war-like activities in Egypt (1967-1973) is not associated with an expansion of the state’s domestic extractive capacities. Similar evidence gathered for the cases of Iraq and Iran following their long war between 1980-1988 as well as for Syrian war-making in the 1980s points to the same direction: declining revenues extracted by the central state, a dilution of the state’s control over national economic resources, most visible in the case of Iraq, as well as a downsizing of the public sector and a shrinking of the bureaucratic apparatus (Gongora, 1997: 326-330).

Three intermediate variables were held responsible for the inverse relation between war-making and the centralized state’s strength in the Middle East: the postcolonial nature of state-making in conditions of a strong international system, the “transnationalization of war”, and the “emergence of domestic political economies organized around the [domestic], regional and international pursuit of strategic rents” (Heydemann, 2004: 13). In reference to the first point, the “wrong kind of war” thesis takes a new form in the Middle East. Instead of referring solely to the external/internal dichotomy, the wars that plagued the region prior to political decolonization were fought principally as proxy wars. Thus, noting that only after 1948 the states in the region “engaged one another directly in war as sovereign political units”,

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18 But initial wars like the 1948/9 Palestine war and the 1956 Suez War did in the short run increase the Egyptian state’s taxation capacity (Gongora, 1997: 335; Barnett, 1992). Gongora’s explanation that in the contemporary international system “when a war or war-preparation effort becomes prolonged and is conducted with advanced weapons, the effect of war-making on infrastructural power has been negative” (1997: 335) directly challenges Tilly’s logic of early European state formation.

19 The decrease of taxation capacity during the war was followed by a reduction of the central state’s public expenditure. For Iran, the data provided shows a decrease of taxation from 36.9% of GDP in 1977, to 21.6% in 1980 and only 18.1 % of GDP in 1990; the decrease in public expenditure was even sharper from 41.6% in 1980 to 19.3% of GDP in 1988, mirroring a cut in civilian production and consumption and re-location to war needs and postwar re-armament (Gongora, 1997:327).
Heydemann shows how before decolonization, “war-making was an enterprise that had immediate, often deadly effects and consequences for local populations, but was nonetheless indirect with respect to local states, driven by the aims and interests of external colonial powers rather than local actors” (2004: 10). This suggests that the prominence of external actor involvement in bellicose activities has an important influence on the form the polity takes. Given the fact that most of the non-state armed groups currently challenging the state’s monopoly over violence at the periphery of the international system are heavily supported by regional and international actors, the analysis of “failed states” could not be complete without exploring the role of their external supporters. The way in which Hizbullah’s activities shape the form and nature of the Lebanese polity cannot be understood in the absence of an analysis of the Syrian, Iranian or Israeli interventions. Similarly, the presence of Afghan military commanders or “warlords” is incomprehensible without introducing the study of external forces, be they American, Pakistani or other regional powers.

“Transnationalisation” of war is the term by which Heydemann emphasizes the globalised nature of most facets of war in the region, a phenomenon that can be applied to most of the Westphalian Periphery. Some scholars use “internationalization of war” in reference to the expansion of international military missions in the form of external interventions, peacekeeping and peace enforcing operations, as well as formation of supranational military forces of the UN blue helmets type (Wulf, 2006: 3). For Heydemann though, the “transnationalisation” of Middle East conflict refers to the transformation of the local conflict into “everybody’s war”, the material, financial or even ideological resources, the military technology, and the global norms under which the conflict takes place being the creation, as well as affecting the interests, of foreign powers. In Heydemann’s words, “preparation or war is funded by foreign military assistance or rents of one form or another; war-making is undertaken with imported weapons; global strategic networks and global norms of sovereignty and nonintervention are mobilized to secure local military advantage, and peace settlements are negotiated and guaranteed by external powers” (Heydemann, 2004: 12). Considering all the advantages, it comes as no surprise that “transnationalization” of conflict became an
“explicit and conscious strategy of the elites”, be they state or non-state armed groups (2004:12).

The case of Middle Eastern state-making serves important lessons for the understanding of current polities-in-the-making by pointing to another factor to be considered in the contemporary context, namely that of “rentierism”. In the footsteps of Luciani (1987) and Gongora (1997), Schwartz uses the impact of oil-related rent for explaining the deviation of the Middle Eastern state from the state-formation wave. As an intermediary variable between war and the formation of a Middle Eastern state weak in terms of its infrastructural power, it is the elite’s possibility of exploiting the oil-related rents that explains the region’s paradox of war contributing to the creation of centralized nation-states with large bureaucracies but suffering from both a substantial crisis of legitimacy in relation to their societies, and a substantial incapacity of domestic extraction of resources (Schwartz, 2004: 12). According to this view, the possibility of earning petrodollars from abroad in a rentier manner dislodges the polity from the Tillyan path to modern statehood by reducing the need for central bureaucracy to extract resources from the society at large and thus protecting it from the “civilianization” processes. Furthermore, rentierism impacts on the institutional format of the resulting state, as it hypothetically contributes to the “conservation of socio-political norms in Arab societies and polities, such as the patrimonial nature of social interactions and primordial loyalties” (Schwartz, 2004: 27).

Some of the lessons from the Middle East state-formation are applicable to the analysis of the polities at the Westphalian Periphery too. A closer look at Luciani’s analysis shows that he has a most sophisticated perception of rentierism. Firstly, oil or other natural resources are far from being the only sources of revenues stimulating rentier behavior; other sources include communication infrastructures and even – or perhaps mostly – the aid industry (Luciani, 1987: 70). Additionally, Luciani draws the distinction between rentier state and rentier economy: “some important flows of income containing a rent component do not accrue directly to the state – thus, not a rentier state although a rentier economy” (1987: 68). Significantly, this distinction permeated the scrutiny of non-state armed actors in the form of the “economy of war” literature. Finally, given the high visibility of the non-state armed group flourishing in the region as a result of the state’s weaknesses
(from secular groups like Fatah to religious ones such as the Palestinian Hamas or the Shi’a Hizballah), the Middle East experience offers an opportunity to enrich the research by looking not exclusively at the deviation of modern peripheral polities from the idealized model of the European state, but to focus also on its modern competitors in the contest over the control over the means of violence. This would help correct one of the major deficiencies of current analyses of state-making, which are “perhaps fatally flawed by their exclusion of ... the political entities that failed in the process of creating modern states” (Lemke, 2005: 13).

Given its central position in the literature on state-failure, it is important to look in some detail at the fate of modern African states. Crucially, the rise of states between the “Scramble for Africa” in the nineteenth century and the contemporary appetite for “fixing failed states” can be analyzed as a product of a succession of waves in polity-creation. In this sense, the imposition by colonial powers of alien institutions resulting in the creation of African colonial states within artificially-drawn boundaries illustrates the process of “state-building” defined by the pre-existence of a template and the predominance of an external agency in the implementation of this template. The main agents of this imposition changed between different phases of the colonial epoch, the military personnel of the initial period being replaced by an increasingly professionalized administrative service towards the late period of colonialism.\(^\text{20}\) In contrast, the creation of independent “new states” by indigenizing colonial institutions under the leadership of nationalistic local elites illustrates the processes of state-making defined by the pre-existence of a blueprint (institutions and functions), carried out predominantly by domestic agents.\(^\text{21}\)

\(^{20}\) Both Bayart (2009) and Young (1994) divide the colonial epoch into three distinctive periods. For Young, the main objective of the first era (ending with the First World War) was to “construct an apparatus of domination that would transform military (sometimes political) subordination into permanent rule”; the interwar period was one of consolidation, when “the superstructure of colonial domination was institutionalized, rationalized and routinized”; finally, the third era, from the 1930s onwards was a “more intensive phase of colonial occupation” as a result of the acceptance of the transfer of sovereignty (Young, 1994: 11; Bayart, 2009: xv).  

\(^{21}\) The wave of independence began in the 1950s with the independence of Libya (1951), Morocco, Sudan and Tunisia (1956), Ghana (1957) and Guinea (1958). The majority of African states gained their independence in the 1960s, with later dates for Portuguese (mid-1970s) and settler-governed colonies of southern Africa such as Zimbabwe (1980) and Namibia (1990). See Thomson (2000: 32-33) and Clapham (2000: 34).
Once again, emphasising the predominance of external or internal agency in the implementation of a certain image of the state is not to ignore the dynamic interplay of internal and external factors. As such, the creation of the African colonial state – and the variety of its results – is tributary to a variety of factors, some of which are external, while some derive from local conditions. Externally, the nature of the colonial – and indeed, postcolonial – African state was strongly influenced by “whether colonization drew its administrative and political inspiration from British ideas of monarchy and government, from French notions of the Republic and the Jacobin State, or from the Portuguese model of corporatism” (Bayart, 2009: xv).\textsuperscript{22} In this sense, much can, and has been said about the impact on postcolonial states of the distinct colonial policies of, for instance, British “indirect rule” and French “association” (assimilation and integration). However, domestic factors also played a significant role in the development of a particular model of colonial statehood. As Mazrui noted, amongst them one can count the comparative size, the degree of ethnic homogeneity, or the nature of cultural variables – such as the presence of Islam (Mazrui and Tiday, 1984: 375-378).\textsuperscript{23} Herbst’s work on the African state emphasizes geographical factors and population density as fundamental challenges to the projection of the colonial or postcolonial state’s authority from the centre to the periphery (2000). More important, as the colonial state was always defined as a historical process placed in a localized context (Mamdani, 1997: 16), “the adoption by Africans of the new ‘ways of life’ on offer always resulted in a reinterpretation or reinvention of these modes of experiencing the world” (Bayart, 2009: li).\textsuperscript{24}

Despite the heterogeneity arising from this dynamic interplay of factors, the end result of colonialism is that it created “African states of a kind that had never existed before, and endow[ed] them with economies and

\textsuperscript{22} In fact, in Africa colonialism was marked by the involvement of eight different colonial powers including, besides the three already mentioned, Belgium, Germany, Italy, Spain and South Africa – the latter displacing Germany in Namibia (Clapham, 2000: 33). For a more detailed analysis of different legacies, see Glifford and Roger Louis (1982).

\textsuperscript{23} Mazrui quotes Lord Hailey’s analysis of Northern Nigeria to emphasize the role of Islam, “under which [the Hausa Kingdoms] developed a well-organized fiscal system, a definite code of land tenure, a regular scheme of local rule and a trained judiciary administering the tenets of Mahommedan Law” (1984: 378).

\textsuperscript{24} The network of (external) actors playing crucial roles in the building of the colonial state could not be reduced to the military and administrative bureaucracies of the metropolitan state, but include organizations and practices – “social institutions” in Weberian terminology - such as the trading post, the business place, the plantation, the mine, the school, the hospital and the Christian mission outpost (Bayart, 2009: xlvii).
structures of government which were inherently external” (Clapham, 2000: 33). Many of the fundamental features of the imported state – above all, what Mamdani calls the “legacy of the colonial state as a legal/institutional complex that reproduced particular political identities” (2005: 3) – constituted the template which the makers of the postcolonial states preserved, expanded and “indigenized”. With various degrees of success in its implementation, the template of the colonial state revolving around the project of political centralization was doubled in the postcolonial phase of state-making by the project of cultural homogenization corresponding to statehood and nationhood, respectively (Mazrui, 1984: 373). In relation to statehood, the parameters of the state’s template (or “idea of a state”) inherited from the colonial experience and reproduced by the postcolonial state include the structure (in terms of teritorialization and specialized administration or bureaucracy) as well as functions, extending beyond imposing law and order (prioritized by the early colonial state) to include “development” (at the centre of the late, intensive phase of colonialism).25 Thus, despite their exogenous nature, their artificiality, or relative novelty, the designation of colonial boundaries was not only perpetuated after independence, but strengthened by the African elite’s support of the norm against territorial revisionism; the strongest expression of this support comes from the 1963 reunion of the Organization of African Unity at the end of which all inherited colonial boundaries are declared legitimate, definitive and immutable (Buzan and Weaver, 2003: 222; Young, 1994: 238).26 The establishment of centralized bureaucracies was the second element of the postcolonial state template inherited from its colonial predecessor. As Tilly noted, “a majority of newly-independent states began their careers with formal organizations traced on Western lines and incorporating significant parts of the colonial apparatus. Western-educated state leaders sought to install administrations, parliaments, parties, armies and public services of western inspiration” (quoted in Kirby and Ward, 1991: 116).

25 As Young noted, “developmentalism, which first appeared in the 1920s as state discourse, became central to the legitimation imperative of the terminal colonial state, now subject to an increasingly hostile international environment and a rising torrent of nationalist criticism” (2004: 27).
26 That is not to say there were not challenges (particularly domestic ones) to the territoriality of African states as the secessionist movements in Katanga, Togoland, Biafra, Souther Sudan or Eritrea demonstrate (Clapham, 2000: 49; Thomson, 2000: 45).
Unlike the forceful imposition by external powers of the project of state-building resulting in the colonial state, the project of the postcolonial African state was carried out by the local elite dominated by the leaders of the independence movements: Kwame Nkrumah (Ghana), Ahmed Sékou Touré (Guinea), Julius Nyerere (Tanzania), Jomo Kenyatta (Kenya) and Léopold Sédar Senghor (Senegal). The constituency of this indigenous elite was diverse, some members being the descendants of the pre-colonial trading class, others the product of colonial administration - law, education, health, trade or missionarism. What defined this new elite “formed in the interstices of the colonial order” was, in the words of Crawford Young, “its capacity to enter the new roles defined by colonial encounter” (1994: 227). The logic of political struggle compelled the new leaders to embrace the territorial boundaries of the existing colonial states, while the demands of governing the independent states forced them to maintain many of the administrative structures put in place during colonial rule. Instead of rejecting the inherited machinery of government, the local elites sought to adapt and indigenize it, “turning it into the foundation for a ‘nationalism’ which was presented as authentically African” (Clapham, 2000: 35). In this sense, indigenization efforts took different expressions, from the inclusiveness of Pan-Africanism (Nkrumah) whose principles complement the philosophy of négritude (Senghor) or humanism (Kaunda), to the exclusiveness doctrine of authenticité masking the political and economic hypercentralism of Mobutism (Ajulu, 2001). Nationalism, itself a Western-derived, post-Enlightenment project, thus became the ideological ferment of the state-formation process in postcolonial Africa, serving simultaneously the functions of liberation (as a discourse of protest) and integration (as an instrument of mobilization). It also represented a transformation of the state template, from the territorial-state at

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27 In this sense, it is relevant that the leaders of the nationalist movements for independence had links of a variable intensity with the Western world. Some - particularly within French colonies - occupied high positions in the politics of the metropole: Senghor, Sékou-Touré and Félix Houphouët-Boigny (Ivory Cost) were elected in the French national assembly, with the latter even serving in different ministerial positions. Many of them gained a university education in France (Senghor), and the UK (Kenyatta, Nyerere or Nkrumah). Finally, many in the generation of the military rulers ousting the nationalist leaders through coups d’etat from the mid-1960s followed officer training courses in the same countries.

28 Mazrui uses the distinction in the context of the movement of Pan-Africanism promoted by leaders like Nkrumah or Haile Sellasie, which “as a movement of liberation had greater success than as a movement of integration” (1984: xii).
the heart of the colonial state-building project, to that of the nation-state at the core of the postcolonial state-making project (Herbst, 2000: 94).

In light of this functional synergy, the institutional basis of the new elites’ efforts to indigenize and expand the authority of the colonial state was given by the existence of a single dominant party. The single party quickly became the expression of the distrust of organized factionalism, be it ethnic, regionalist or political. Thus, African multi-ethnic nationalism promoted by the party was a response to the colonial practice of “inventing traditions” by “encouraging expressions of regionalist and ethnic feelings and practices” (Mazrui, 1984: 85).29 Thus, in the context of what Julius Nyerere defined as a “patriotic struggle for freedom from colonialism which leaves no room for differences and unites all elements of the country” (quoted in Mazrui, 1984: 286), the duty of the nationalist party was to ensure the conversion of “multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, multi-religious and even multi-racial societies into single unitary nations” that would inhabit “the political space delineated by the borders of the already existing state” (Thomson, 2000: 35). On the political front, the consequence of the search for unity was to alter the relatively solid legislatures away from multi-party system. From Kenyatta’s perspective, the “reject[ion] of a blueprint of the Western model of a two-party system of government” was justified by the fact that nationalist leaders “do not subscribe to the notion of the government and the governed in opposition to one another” (quoted in Mazrui, 1984: 284).

Through the ideology of nationalism and the instrument of the single-state, African state-makers shaped the contours of a postcolonial state characterized by centralism not only at the political, but at the economic and social levels as well. If at the political level the expression of this centralism was the single party, in the economic sphere the African postcolonial state was dominated by the socialist doctrines inspired from the Keynesian economic principles supporting the Western and in particular the Nordic welfare states. The central role of the state in economic and social development is obvious in the writing of nationalist leaders such as Nkrumah, for which “most of our

29 In regard to the invention of traditions, Apthorpe observed 40 years ago that “what happened [in Africa] was the colonial regime administratively created tribes as we think of them today” (quoted in Young, 1994: 233). The publication of the eponymously titled book by Hobsbawn and Ranger (1983) led to a great outpouring of writings in the "invention of..." genre" complemented by the "related genre pioneered by Benedict Anderson’s ‘imagining of...’" (Doornbos, 2006: 13).
development so far has had to be carried out by the Government itself. There is no other way out” (quoted in Young, 2004: 30). State centralism and nationalism thus dominated the developmental path of the way in which “Africa has taken possession of the alien intruder” (van der Veen, 2004: 9), despite the differences among the varieties of Socialism pursued in Senghor’s Senegal, Nyerere’s Tanzania, Kaunda’s Zambia and Touré’s Guinea; scientific socialism pursued in Machel’s Mozambique, Neto’s Angola and Mengistu’s Ethiopia; or state-capitalism introduced in Houphouët-Boigny’s Côte d’Ivoire, Kenyatta’s Kenya, and Nigeria (Thomson, 2000: 34-44).

Whatever initial degree of success of postcolonial African states following the 1960s wave of independence, this was compromised first by the series of military coups displacing the first generation of nationalist leaders in the 1970s and then, from the 1980s, by the economic liberalization resulting from what Bayart describes as the Holy Trinity of Reforms – that is structural adjustment, democratization and good governance policies (Bayart, 2009: xxvii). The imposition of neoliberal reforms in line with the Washington Consensus including decentralization and privatization corroborated with the loss of support from their superpower allies during the Cold War, further undermined the capacity of numerous local regimes to “effectively control the territories, gain legitimacy through service delivery, and uphold patronage networks and alliances through strategic redistribution of state resources” (Andersen et al. 2007: 9). The extreme negative version of the compromised postcolonial African state was described, as we have seen in the earlier chapters, as ‘state-collapse’. In line with the framework proposed here, however, it is possible to agree with Mamdani’s diagnosis:

There is a state collapse. But … it is not just any state that is collapsing; it is specifically what remains of the colonial state in Africa that is collapsing … If we look at the crisis closely, we will recognize at its heart the institutional legacy of colonial rule, particularly the political institutions of colonial rule (2005: 3).

An additional insight to be gained from investigating the fate of African polities within the framework I propose is not simply that different waves of

30 However, as confirming Bayart’s definition of “extraversion”, the mechanisms for the delivery if not the functions of the welfare-cum-development assumed by postcolonial states – “based on price subsidies on core commodities and other, indirect subsidies paid by external or internal rents”, differed from the “industrial welfare state model – loosely based on a redistributive mechanism and (relatively) efficient taxation system” (Milliken and Krause, 2002: 761).
polity-creation are connected; they also do not necessarily proceed in a chronological order from state-formation, to state-making and state-building. On the African continent more than anywhere else, the process of external state-building preceded the indigenous project of state-making. And, after the end of the Cold War, with a particular intensification in the post-9/11 era, the project of state-making was succeeded – in some places – by a different round of state-building.

**Third wave of modern polity-creation: contemporary state-building**

There is a rapidly expanding literature dedicated to contemporary state-building missions, ranging from conceptual analysis (Fukuyama, 2004; Hippler, 2005a and 2005b; Hehir and Robinson; 2007; Whaites, 2008; Paris and Sisk, 2009; Raue and Sutter, 2009) to prescriptions towards the best methods to be used (Ghani and Lockhard, 2008) or even a “beginner’s guide” (Dobbins et al. 2007). This has taken the form of collections of case studies (Chesterman, 2005; Call and Wyeth, 2008); comparative analyses bringing together missions undertaken by particular actors (Doyle and Sambanis, 2006; Dobbins et al. 2003; 2005; 2008b); or individual case studies, such as those on Kosovo (Dempsey, 2002; Yannis, 2004; Montanaro; 2009; Ante, 2010); Afghanistan (Cramer and Goodhand, 2002; Lister and Wilder, 2005; Rubin, 2006; Angstrom, 2008; Schmeidl and Karokhail, 2009); Iraq (Dodge, 2006; Rear, 2008); East Timor (Hohe, 2002; Chopra 2002; Philpott, 2006; Cabasset-Semedo and Durand, 2009) or Solomon Islands (see footnote 2, this chapter).

This section cannot and does not intend to offer a comprehensive review of all the elements explored in this ever-expanding literature. Instead, it will approach the issue of state-building from the perspective of the model of polity-creation I have proposed, alongside the two dimensions on which I focus: the existence of a template of the polity to be constructed and the dynamic interplay between internal and external agencies in carrying out that template.

In this sense, the objective of this section is to show how in the post Cold War era the process of polity-creation is dominated by what was variably defined as “third party state-building” (Caplan, 2004: 4), “foreign-led state-
building” (Brownlee, 2005) or “external nation-building” (Hopp and Klocke-Lesch, 2005). In this sense, state-building is strongly related to the conceptual development marking the transition from peace-keeping to peace-making and peacebuilding introduced in the early 1990s (Boutros-Ghali, 1992). Thus, peacebuilding is in general defined as “those actions undertaken by international or national actors to institutionalize peace, understood as the absence of armed conflict - ‘negative peace’ - and a modicum of participatory politics - as a component of ‘positive peace’” (Call and Cousens, 2007: 2). The institutionalization of peace, however, takes the form of the process of state-building defined as “an intentional effort by external actors to intervene in the domestic affairs of other states with the aim of transforming their political, economic and social structures based on a certain vision of an ideal end-point” (Reisinger, 2009a).

Beyond the fact that these forms of intervention are carried out preponderantly by external actors, there is ample evidence that there is no systematization of interventions. To begin with, there is little consistency with regard to the location of interventions for state-building – the “international community” intervenes in some areas of concern, but not in others. Furthermore, there is a lack of coherence in the international interventions, expressed through a dysfunctional coordination between different actors (states and different agencies within states, NGOs, IGOs) and the absence of a consensus on prioritizing the sequence of the objective (Paris, 2009). In this sense, the field of international state-building is marked by a competition between the early strategy of “liberalization first” and the later insistence on “institutionalization first”: the former (echoing the “democratic peace theory”) was embraced by developmental agencies as pacification through expanding the realm of democracy (in the political field) and free-market principles (economic field); the latter was supported, particularly after 9/11, by scholars who argued that “public administration and managerial engineering are the principal tools” (Bendana, 2005: 8). Finally, there is variety with regard to the methods through which external state-building missions are to be carried out. Differentiating the “degree of intrusiveness in the domestic affairs of the

31 On the distinction between “liberalization” and “institutionalization first” strategies for “state-building”, see Paris (2004); Fukuyama (2005); Chandler (2006b); and Coelho (2008). On the critique of the lack of harmonization in the international community’s policies of state-building see also Rubin (2006); Scott (2008); Ghani and Lockhard (2008).
host state” as a reflection of “the size of the international presence [mainly troops, but also advisors, consultants etc], the scope of the tasks that external actors take on and the assertiveness of the external actors in pursuing these tasks” (Paris and Sisk, 2007: 3), the main distinction drawn in the literature is that between the so-called “light” vs. “heavy footprint”. At the “light” end of the international interventions continuum, maintaining their neutrality, external actors serve as “mediators between conflict parties and supply humanitarian and financial aid” (Lambach, 2007b: 4), relying on “reforms or power sharing within existing government and state” (Légaré, 2008: 3). In a more intense form of intervention, the external actors take the side of the local (transitional) government – including through military interventions – by supporting the reconstruction and reform of state institutions and infrastructure in particular through the “mainstream” programs of SSR and DDR in addition to technical assistance. At the “heavy” end of state-building’s footprint stands the establishment of more or less transitional international administrations.\(^{32}\)

However, while there are significant discrepancies with regard to where, when and how these international interventions take place, there appears to be a relative homogeneity with regard to what the main elements are of the template of the state to be built. Securitized or not, the phenomenon of the failed state is defined as deviancy from the norms of successful statehood: breakdown of political, economic and social institutions; loss of territorial control; civil unrest; mass population displacement; and violent internal conflict (Morton, 2005: 372). In this context, the state to be built through international interventions reflects the envisaged attributes of the “normal state” capable to “control defined territories and populations, conduct diplomatic relations with other states, monopolize legitimate violence within their territories, and succeed in providing adequate social goods to their

\(^{32}\) As examples of the first category, Lambach mentions Guatemala, while Légaré adds Angola, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Mozambique, Haiti, Tajikistan, Central African Republic or Sierra Leone; for the second category, Lambach considers the case of Afghanistan and Liberia, while Légaré adds the cases of Congo and Somalia; finally, international administrations include the cases of Namibia, Cambodia, Croatia / Slavonia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo and East Timor. With the caveat that they all represent “ideal-types” in the Weberian tradition, the “light footprint” end of the continuum is close to what I have labeled “state-formation”, given the primary role of the endogenous agency in carrying out an internal or external project of state. The “heavy footprint” and in particular the International Administrations represent the strongest version of what I define as state-building. For the study of these see Höhne (2002); Caplan (2004, 2005 and 2007); Chesterman (2005); Zaum (2007); and Wilde (2008).
populations”. As a result, Wesley noted the emergence of a pattern in which, “with minor variations in emphasis, state-building frameworks concentrate on what are argued to be the key themes of state function: security and the rule of law; transparent and efficient bureaucratic institutions; the provision of essential services to the population; the operation of democratic processes and norms; and the fostering of the conditions for market-led development” (2008: 373). In this sense, state-building continues to be defined as “an externally driven, or facilitated, attempt to form or consolidate a stable, and sometimes democratic, government over an internationally recognized national territory” (Berger, 2006: 6). The template of this state – the “ideal end-point” in Reisinger’s definition – is constructed by incorporating the features of the ideal Weberian state as it was allegedly developed in the Western world. Thus, “post-conflict state-building”, Heupel concludes, aims at constructing or restoring public institutions through which to exercise “the governmental monopoly on force, strengthening the capacities of the state to provide urgently needed basic welfare services and reconstituting the legitimacy of governmental institutions” (2009: 59).

To a large extent, the template of the state underlying the process of state-building is an expression of the belief at the heart of modernization theory that “all good things go together”. 33 Indeed, both modernization theories of the 1950s-1960s and state-building approaches of the 1990 onwards “view Western styles of political (democracy) and economic (market capitalism) organization as the highest point of development and as morally and politically superior to alternative systems” (Coelho, 2008: 84). 34 In the state-building perspective, the modern state represents the fusion of three distinctive agendas – that of peace and security, development and political liberalization (democratization). With the assumption that sustainable peace

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33 For a treatment of this assumption in the context of a general critique of the state-building enterprise as a technocratic exercise, see Bhuta (2009). In the context of IR theories and international interventions in fragile states, see Andersen (2007). In the context of modernization theory see Jahn (2007a and 2007b) and note 32, chapter 1 in this thesis.

34 In my view, the distinctive element between the modernization-fueled state-making wave and the current wave of state-building resides not so much in the nature of the template of the state – after all they both envisaged the Western model of a state, although currently the security function and the monopolization of violence is more emphasized that in the essentially developmentalist model of the 1960s – as it does in the role of the external agency. In the state-making wave, the transition from “tradition” to “modernity” was by and large the result of the work undertaken by the domestic, modernizing elite, even though stimulated with external support in the “take-off” stage. In opposition, the state-building model, most strongly in the case of international administrations, gives a central role to the external agency.
depends on the successful democratization inherited from the early post-Cold War years, Andersen et al. observed how the contemporary template of state building is constructed on the premise that "the state’s administrative capacity as well as its ability to uphold a monopoly of violence are thus closely linked to its capacity to raise revenues from society, which in turn is linked to its legitimacy in the eyes of the population, which in turn is linked to the state’s capacity to provide services for which it needs both administrative capacity and a monopoly of violence" (2007: 8, emphasis added).\textsuperscript{35} However, despite this premise, there is no agreement on the correlation between the three agendas. As di John noted, "there is little evidence that economic liberalisation, democratisation, low corruption or even a modern Weberian state have been inputs into long-term economic development" (2008: 31). Similarly, Francois and Sud’s review points to the absence of a consensus on the correlation between “democracy and development, either as a cause or as an effect” ((2006: 147). Furthermore, in addition to the observation that democratization may lead to an increase in violence and conflict (Mansfield and Snyder, 2005; Karsted, 2007), the relationship between state- and peace-building is not without ambiguities: if some authors point to the sometime antagonistic nature of the goals and strategies of peace- and state-building (Call, 2008b; Eriksen, 2009; Richmond and Franks, 2009), others considers state-building as being part of the wider process of peace-building (for a good review see d’Costa and Ford, 2009).\textsuperscript{36}

Seen from this perspective, one of the often heard critiques of state-building as currently practiced by the international community is that, despite the debates on “local ownership” (Donais, 2009; Sending, 2009), the processes of state-building – which again, in my framework, are externally-led, appear as “an attempt to (re-)built statehood according to a liberal blueprint wherever it is not present, and to reshape it such that it fits the liberal agenda where

\textsuperscript{35} While situated at the intersection of the three agendas, contemporary “state-building” clearly prioritizes the security function. One expression of this prioritization is Beginner’s Guide “rough hierarchy of nation-building functions” running from security to humanitarian and relief efforts, governance economic stabilization democratization and development and infrastructure (Dobbins et al. 2007). Similarly, of the “core five institutions [to which state-builders pay attention] three – military, the police and justice system – directly reflect a concern for order and stability” (Call, 2006: 8).

\textsuperscript{36} More cynically, quoting the work of Mark Duffield, Andersen et al. describes a potential disjuncture between the “pursuit of ‘their’ development and ‘our’ security as explaining the rise of an “unusual consensus on a common agenda of promoting democracy, good governance and human rights” (2007: 3).
some form of statehood is already present” (Reisinger, 2009a: 2). Thus, the external construction of centralized institutions reflecting foreign norms of “good governance” run the risk of marginalizing – when not demonizing or ignoring altogether – the local, formal or informal systems of governance. Indeed, portraying local, non-state or informal entities as “sources of instability, disorder and insecurity”, analysts and policy-makers alike contribute to delegitimizing and depoliticising local forms of governance through “the rejection of the domestic political sphere as a constitutive sphere, in which social and political bonds are constituted and strengthened and the re-representation of this sphere as purely one of division and conflict” (Chandler, 2007: 79). An alternative framework of analysis based on understanding the process of polity-creation as a dynamic interplay between state-formation, state-making and state-building, corroborated with the study of governance as a replacement to the current dominance of state-centrism, would go a long way towards correcting some of the limitations of the present framework.

Polity-creation and the study of governance

Any analysis of polity-creation must therefore start by acknowledging that, whatever the nature of the template or of the forces carrying out its project, it neither begins with a tabula rasa, nor does it have a clear-cut, final end-point. Indeed, a recent DFID working paper goes as far as admitting that “states are never ‘finally’ built, they change and adapt over time”; even more, it accepts that “state-building is an iterative process … shaped by elite interaction, and by state-society relations” (Whaites, 2008: 5). If one takes the case of Afghanistan in the twentieth century, one can identify repeated attempts of state-making. Astrid Suhrke (2007), for instance, under the label of “early modernizers”, identifies at least three attempts characteristic of the second wave – King Amanullah’s attempts in the 1920s, those led by Mohammed

37 Most of the international actors – be they states, INGOs or NGOs – are taking into consideration at least, but not always only at the declaratory level, the issue of “local ownership”. However, some analysts have critiqued the lack of substantial local ownership in the “state-building” projects. Discussing the case of Afghanistan for instance, Zuercher noted the widespread belief that “Afghans may be in the driver’s seat but the car is remotely controlled” (2006: 8). However, the principle of “local ownership” is contested by advocates of “shared sovereignty” (Krasner, 2004, 2005), “neotrusteeship” (Fearon and Laitin, 2004). Rather provocatively, stating that “ownership is over-rated”, one scholar claims that “some societies are unable to take ownership of their affairs without violence, hence the need for dispassionate outsiders to assert their authority” (Joseph, 2007: 110).
Daoud in the 1970s, and finally those of a Soviet inspiration led by the People’s Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) in the 1980s. In this way, the new framework recognizes that this succession of unfinished attempts at creating modern versions of the state certainly impacts on the attitudes of both the population at large and of the elites towards the image of the state thus projected – in the sense of past experiences with statehood, expectations, and general legitimacy. Moreover, the specific experiences are expected to have an impact not only at the identity level, but also at the institutional level: looking at the constitutional models currently used in both Afghanistan and Lebanon for instance, one cannot ignore the fact that they are inspired by (if not replicating) previous attempts. This can be seen, for example, in previous Afghan constitutions, or the Taif Agreement in Lebanon representing a de-facto institutionalization of the 1940s National Pact. Particularly important in this sense is an acknowledgment that what is seen as deviant in current polities – “tradition” versus modernity, warlords versus national states, and tribes versus nations – can be the result of modernity’s unfinished projects in the previous wave. Thus, what is perceived as “tradition” in the depiction of warlords or tribal militias as belonging to the backwardness of traditional societies, becomes fundamentally a constructed image in the tradition of Hobsbawm’s “invention of tradition” or Anderson’s “imagined communities”, reflecting the legacy of previous attempts at “modernization” (for Afghanistan, see Kuntzsch, 2008: 29).

But the iterative attempts at modernization – in this case, of state-making – may not only be sandwiched between historical processes of state-formation and contemporary processes of state-building. As we have seen in the case of state-development in Africa, the sequence between these processes is not always linear. Similarly, it is possible to identify cases in which the processes of state-formation, state-making and state-building take place simultaneously – all or only two of them, carried out by different actors. Looking again at the case of Afghanistan, it could be argued that while the state-building project is carried out by various actors within the “international community” (International Security Assistance Force – ISAF or US), this project is simultaneously accompanied and sometimes challenged by a state-making project carried out by various local elites (including but not limited to the Karzai administration on the one hand, and the Taliban project on the
other) opposing a third one, that of a decentralized oligopoly of power carried out by various local strongmen, including warlords, rebels, and insurgents.

Finally, the general picture offered by our incursion into the various ways in which war and preparations for war determined the transformation of traditional political structures into different forms of modern polities, coupled with the model of polity-creation, urges a critical re-evaluation of the usefulness of operating strictly with a rigid concept of the state. In this sense, pointing out the variety of contemporary “entities functioning as organized and autonomous (“sovereign”) political communities”, has justifiably led a prominent anthropologist to declare that “the standard characterization of a ‘state’ as (in Max Weber’s formulation) a vested authority possessing a monopoly of legitimate violence in a territory ... seems increasingly difficult of application to such tangled conglomerations” (Geertz, 2004: 579). Maybe it is time to allow the “narcissism of small differences” (Freud, 1917), to replace Cassirer’s “myth of the state” (1946). For this to happen, it is not enough to simply re-focus attention from the illusory search for a particular form of modern state towards an acceptance of various embodiments of contemporary polities; the “small differences” could be better served by placing at the core of the analysis the study of various modes of governance. The study of complex modern polities by “bringing in less Hobbes and more Machiavelli” imposes an analysis that doesn’t aim at identifying the state’s formal characteristics in its monopolies, but instead attempts to investigate a polity’s performances in various dimensions: “less the imposition of sovereign monopoly, more the cultivation of the higher expediency; less the exercise of abstract will, more the pursuit of visible advantage” (Geertz, 2004: 580).

Analyzing acts of governance rather then focusing on an illusory monopoly over violence as the core definition of contemporary polities brings a series of advantages. First of all, governance refers to “a set of institutions and actors that are drawn from, but also beyond government” (Stoker, 1998: 19). Thus defined, the analysis of governance allows for a consideration not only of the institution of the standing national army, but also of actors outside

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38 Remarkably, the state-making project carried out by the Taliban has an externally-inspired template which is neither Western, nor communist, but reflects an idealized pan-Islamic emirate.
state control, such as "warlords" or other entrepreneurs of violence like private corporate providers of security services. In this context, the distinction between "states" and "warlords" may be read as one between "collective and private interests" (Reno) or the "triumph of informal networks to the near exclusion of state bureaucracies" (in Giustozzi, 2003: 1). The alternative form of governance is dominated by a lack of monopolization over the means of violence as well as decentralization, or "localized political authority" (Reno, 2004: 607). Jackson himself concedes that current warlords "are inheriting a power vacuum once inhabited by a [formal] state ... [whose] agents of coercion (army and police) cease to function" and in which there is a process of "devolution of power from the centre to the local level" (Jackson, 2003: 132). Viewed from this perspective, the starting point of Tilly's model of state-formation could be visualized as a phase of late medieval warlordism: he acknowledges that, in the early stages, "many parties shared the right to use violence, in actual employment, or both at once" (Tilly, 1990: 29). Consequently, the non-centralised control over the means of organized violence by actors other than the state, a phenomenon found in the so-called "weak" or "failed states", may resemble the first stage of a longer process of polity-creation. From here though, two paths for further research are opening. The most facile one is to devise analytical apparatuses for investigating how or why the current situation in the Westphalian Periphery differs from the historical trajectory followed by the early European modern states, with the purpose of identifying strategies for correcting this "deviation", thus straitjacketing contemporary polities in resembling the modern state of the past. This path, taken by the "state-failure" and "state-building" frameworks, has become a blind alley. The alternative is to analyze those contemporary polities as political units in themselves by concentrating the efforts on the study of acts of governance beyond a monopoly over violence.

The other advantage offered by this alternative path is that the concept of governance also "identifies the blurring of boundaries and responsibilities for tackling social and economic issues" (Stoker, 1998: 21). As such, the classic public-private distinction becomes loose not only in the economic, political and social arenas, but also in the military one, as illustrated in a form of 'labour-division' among central institutions, local warlords and domestic or international NGOs. Lindberg describes this as:
pluralist governance, characterized by open and relatively unregulated competition between social groups and actors for influence over the state … presumes a multitude of social groups counterweighing state institutions and acting as checks and balances … [in which] the [formal] state performs only basic functions that take fewer resources and will therefore not have to rely heavily on coercion for extraction of resources. (2001: 186-187, my emphasis).

In such a pluralist model of governance – which Lindberg explicitly connects to warlordism – the competitive division of labour may also mirror Osborne and Gaebler’s distinction between “steering” as a mode of control which involves setting a norm and correcting deviations from it, and “rowing” as a mode of direct service delivery (in Rhodes, 1996: 655). The advantage of a governance framework as that developed by Stoker is that it may supersede the artificial inverse proportionality between the strength of state and that of society (Migdal, 1988) by analysing the issue of legitimacy through the “social capital” lenses (Stoker, 1998: 21).

On the other hand, the concept of governance also “identifies the power-dependence involved in the relationship between institutions engaged in collective action” (Stoker, 1998: 22). This not only strengthens the interactive nature of governance, but also stresses the various forms of partnership, from the principle-agent form of partnership to the systemic coordination through inter-organizational forms, with the “formation of self-governing networks as the ultimate form of partnership” (Stoker, 1998: 23). Focusing on governance can blur, even dissolve, the distinction between state and civil society: “the state becomes a collection of inter-organizational networks made up of governmental and societal actors with no sovereign actor able to steer or regulate” (Rhodes, 1996: 666). It can also affect the distinction between public and private areas, enabling the recognition of “the interdependence of public, private and voluntary sectors” (Stoker, 1998: 18). At the same time however, it can better inform a theoretical framework built on the increased heteronomy of states in IR.
Conclusions

This study critically engages with the literature on state-failure, whose assumptions constitute the foundation for current international interventions aimed at strengthening states where they are perceived to have been weakened and building new states altogether where they have never really existed before. The prominence of “state-building” in the contemporary practice of international relations is hard to overstate, “having risen to the top of the global agenda” (Fukuyama, 2004: ix–xi) to constitute “the dominant framework for the international regulation of non-Western states” (Chandler, 2005: 2). Designed in the 1990s as a reactive strategy of interventions on humanitarian or conflict reconstruction grounds, state-building became, after 9/11, “the preventive solution to a wide range of economic, social and political problems facing … weak or failing states” (Chandler, 2010: 1). However, the gap between ambitions of exporting Western templates of “good governance” and the reality on the ground can at best be said to be only modestly bridged; indeed the gap is frequently seen as widening through “building state-failure” (Chopra, 2002). Despite undeniable progress on the quantitative analytical dimension, the frameworks of state-failure and “state-building” remain conceptually underdeveloped.

Investigating some of the causes responsible for this situation, my thesis has suggested a set of ideas that can form the starting point for their (re)conceptualization in an alternative framework of analysis. At the core of this framework is the conviction that, by naturalizing an idealized Weberian model of the state (based on the centralization and bureaucratization of political institutions monopolizing the means of violence), the concepts of state-failure and “state-building” are not so much wrong or false as they are incomplete. As a concept based on a ”negative logic”, the narrative of state-failure tells the story of what the respective units are not – to use the metaphor preferred in the literature, these are not states in the way Denmark is. Besides this superfluous observation however, the state-failure framework is incapable of analyzing the existing political and social relations on their own terms. Indeed, substantial doubts were raised about the analytical purchase of the framework. Noting for instance the “unduly superficial” nature of the concept
of state-failure, Tedesco denounced it as “ultimately [just] a label, encouraging cosmetic solutions to the pathologies of public policy” (2007: 2). Sharing this conclusion, Call warns that, given its ingrained “culturally-specific assumptions about what a ‘successful’ state should look like”, the state-failure framework “clouds, even misleads clear analysis”, leading to “narrow and univalent policy prescriptions that obscure other important conceptual issues and practical challenges” (Call, 2006: 6). In turn, “state-building”, itself defined conceptually as the palliative to state-failure, preserves this incompleteness. Although an important process which cannot be ignored by analysts as long as it remains a strategic option for policy-makers, state-building can best be conceptualized as only one element of the dynamic construction of local political communities and institutions of governance.

To correct these limitations, this study engaged in “unthinking” the state-centric approach of “state-building”. As Wallerstein argued, “it is quite normal for scholars and scientists to rethink issues. When important new evidence undermines old theories and predictions do not hold, we are pressed to rethink our premises” (1991: 1, emphasis added). In relation to the analysis of states, substantial efforts for rethinking its condition in an era of globalization resulted in an expanded literature on the “transformation of state” (Sørensen, 2003) in response to calls for studying the “transcendence of the state-centric configuration of capitalist territorial organization and the production of new configurations of territoriality, on both sub- and supranational geographical scales” (Brenner, 1999: 41). However, as Wallerstein added in reference to the nineteenth century social science,

in addition to rethinking, which is 'normal,' I believe we need to 'unthink' … because many of its presumptions - which still have far too strong a hold on our mentalities - once considered liberating of the spirit, serve today as the central intellectual barrier to useful analysis of the social world (1991: 1, emphasis added).

To the extent that “unthinking” refers to the process of a radical revising and discarding of assumptions constituting the foundation of dominant frameworks of inquiry, one needs to move beyond the state-centrism of state-failure/building as an inertial prolongation of a particular mode of thinking. In this sense, “we can no longer take the modern state for granted, as either a construct that exists or must exist as part of a seemingly ‘natural’ order of things, or as one that will necessarily be realized as the end-product of
integrative processes of modernization (Doornbos, 2006: 5). To transcend this mode of thinking, one needs on the one hand to appropriately place variable forms of organising political communities in a historical context for the local social and political space; on the other hand, this placement should be able to re-conceptualize the political communities beyond - but including - the state as a "result of complex networks of prosaic practices of making, unmaking and remaking by actors within and outside state institutions" (Painter, 2006: 769).1

With this in mind, the framework I put forward advances unthinking both the state and "state-building" as teleological projects by conceptualizing the former as a particular instantiation of the open-ended concept of polity and the latter as just one element of the process of polity-creation. To investigate the "ways in which history matters" in terms of building institutions of governance, I found inspiration in Thelen’s efforts to conceptualize the problem of institutional evolution. Thelen’s research is located in the more general methodological camp of the path-dependence perspective, but she refines this model by advocating an approach able to “distinguish more clearly at both an empirical and analytical level between the mechanisms of reproduction and the logic of change at work in particular instances” (Thelen, 2003: 221).2 In doing so, she introduces the twin concepts of institutional layering – defined as the process of institutional evolution consisting of a “partial renegotiation of some elements of a given set of institutions while leaving others in place”, and institutional conversion – defined as the process of institutional evolution whereby the performance and/or functions of existing institutions are redirected to play different roles (Thelen, 2003: 225-229).3 In a similar manner, I analyze the process of polity-creation in the

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1 Influenced by the work of the Russian literary theorist Mikhail Bakhtin, through his concept of prosaics Painter emphasizes the “importance of the mundane and the everyday in the constitution of social life . . . [with] the mundane and the ordinary [day to day practices] as key sources of social change and creativity” (2006: 759-760).

2 The broad definition of the path-dependence methodology was summarized by William Sewell as the idea that “what has happened at earlier points in time will affect the possible outcomes of a sequence of events occurring at a later point in time”. Further explaining the path-dependence logic and the balance between contingency and determinism in this view, Thelen adds that “what political scientists have taken from this is the intuitively attractive idea that politics, like technology, involves some elements of chance (agency, choice), but that once a path is taken, once-viable alternatives become increasingly remote, as all the relevant actors adjust their strategies to accommodate the prevailing pattern” (Thelen, 2003: 218-219).

3 Viewed in this light, Thelen’s methodology bears significant resemblance with Campbell’s technique of “bricolage”, as Thelen is quick to admit (Thelen, 2003: 227; Campbell, 1997).
Westphalian periphery by underlining the layering among local traditions of governance and various centralising projects. Recuperating the Tillyan logic of unintended consequences in a framework enabling the analyst to explore local forms of governance in their own terms—both in terms of the historical context and of the prosaic, day to day practices, the Westphalian Periphery could thus be analyzed as the result of a dynamic interaction between three waves of polity-creation—labeled here as state-formation, state-making and state-building—carried out by different actors with different, sometimes compatible but mostly incompatible objectives.

For this purpose, the inquiry moved through several steps. To reiterate the argument the first section of the thesis followed the trajectory of the concept of state-failure tracing its transformation along three periods. The first chapter, dedicated to the predecessors of the concept, canvassed the nineteenth century debates on the fate of the “sick man of Europe” or “dying nations” and the determinist logic of “modernization theory” in the first half of the twentieth century. The second chapter introduced the reader to the emergence of a descriptive concept of state-failure following the end of the Cold War and the spread of the practice of humanitarian intervention in the 1990s. Finally, the third chapter explored the securitization of the emerging state-failure framework as a result of the 9/11 terrorist attacks. This genealogy emphasized the gradual naturalization of the “modern” state as the only viable and/or acceptable form of organizing political communities. It also explained the lack of analytical conceptualization of “state-failure” as deriving from its descriptive and respectively, instrumental functions served in the post-Cold War eras.

The second section analyzed the consequences of the hegemonic position occupied by the concept of state, with chapter four exploring the historical portrayal of the warlord, demonized in the long shadow cast by the image of a Weberian state. By contrast, chapter five argued that the absence of a (state) monopoly over the means of violence is not paralleled by the lack of governance, as the (minimal) provision of social services in the “ungoverned territories” shows. To explain this erroneous assumption, the source of this biased treatment of non-state political units was identified to reside in the persistence within the “state-building” industry of the like-units assumption developed within the IR Theory. In this sense, chapter six constituted an
argument for the move from the prescriptive notion of the state towards the more flexible notion of polity.

Finally, the third section of the thesis introduced an alternative framework allowing the analysis of contemporary polities to be defined at the intersection of different waves of polity-creation. The two elements around which definition takes place I conceptualize to be on the one hand the existence (or inexistence) of a certain template for the polity to be created; on the other hand would be defined by the preponderance of internal (or external) agency in that construction. Thus, the seventh chapter followed the early creation of modern states in Europe (state-formation), the expansion of that model beyond the European core, carried predominantly by local elites (state-making) and the imposition of the modern state’s template by external actors (state-building).

The remaining sections of this concluding chapter offer the opportunity to contemplate potential consequences - and advantages - of such a framework for the way we theorize International Relations. In the light of space limitations, I restrict my comments to two dimensions. On a domestic level, given the hybrid nature of polities resulting from the confluence of two or sometimes even all three processes of polity-creation, the like-units assumption of the perspective crowning the modern state as the unique unit of analysis would have to be abandoned. At the international level, the neo-medievalist scenario could be re-articulated away from the image rejected by Bull (1977) towards an image including the co-existence in the international system of a diversity of polities, of which the modern state remains the dominant, but not the only form.

**Beyond the logic of homogeneity: hybrid polities**

A constant presence in the critical literature on state-failure, but not, interestingly enough on “state-building” one, is the acknowledgement of the high degree of diversity of actors, institutions, acts and modes of governance characterizing the field. This diversity is most often expressed in a too clear-cut binary analytical differentiation, such as that between internal and external, individual and collective, modern and traditional, state and non-state, public and private, formal and informal, and so on. In the previous chapters this
thesis scratched the surface of this diversity by mentioning the multiplicity of actors involved in the process of analyzing the concept of state-failure or implementing the policies of "state-building". As mentioned in chapter seven, despite the presence of a common image of what the end-point of the state-building missions should be, there is a multiplicity of strategies put forward for the achievement of this template. The most widely used typology differentiates between the priorities given to different sectors in the problem of sequencing the processes of state-building. This typology, associated with the work of Louis Andersen (2005, 2007) and Ulrich Schneckener (2008, 2009 and 2010) but used by other scholars (Chappuis and Hanggi, 2009: 33-36), distinguishes between a "liberalization first" strategy associated with the democratic peace branch of the liberal IR theory, "security first" associated with realist approach, "institutionalization first" associated with the institutionalist branch of the liberal IR theory, and finally a "civil society" or "bottom-up" strategy associated with the social constructivist approach (see Fig. ...). As Schneckener notes,

the assumptions underlying these strategies differ considerably when it comes to the behaviour of local actors, the root causes of fragile statehood, the priorities for statebuilding, the required resources, the time frame allotted to statebuilding projects and programs as well as the ways of external involvement in local structures (2010: 65)

What is more, even within the literature dedicated to the liberal peace, which constitutes an important part of the common template of a state, there is some variation. To illustrate different understandings, Richmond distinguishes between "gradations of the liberal peace model", among which he mentions hyper-conservative, conservative, orthodox and emancipatory varieties (2006b). In light of this complex image, it is not reasonable to expect the results of various attempts to build states to be identical. Indeed the final results would have to take into consideration not just the external factors, but also the local conditions and historical context.
<table>
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<td>Institutionalization first</td>
<td>Strengthening political and administrative institutions, promoting the rule of law</td>
<td>Medium- to long-term (10–20 years)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Civil society first</td>
<td>Strengthening social cohesion, enhancing political participation, supporting NGOs, associations, parties</td>
<td>Medium- to long-term (10–20 years)</td>
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The diversity of strategies and the multiplicity of actors involved in the process of external state-building missions are only compounded by the richness and complex tapestry of the local actors and the projects they themselves pursue. Indeed, an emergent element in the critical literature refers to the efforts to move beyond acknowledging the wide variety of the ways in which “states fail”, by pointing to “the persistence and resilience of the deeply engrained patterns of [local] political and economic life ... often underestimated by international actors [involved in state-building] (Paris and Sisk, 2007: 3). This survival of local institutions, actors and modes of governance covers two aspects. On the one hand, as Englebert and Tull’s research on sub-Saharan Africa shows, “the public institutions of failed states may be deeply dysfunctional, but this does not necessarily mean that they will be dismantled or that they cease to have some usefulness for local elites” (2008: 119). In this sense, as we have seen in the case of African state-making, the local elites take possession of external institutions, transforming in the process their forms and functions. On the other hand though, despite repeated attempts to replace them with external institutions, “societal institutions based (at least in part) on tradition, custom and affective ties” (Kraushaar and Lambach, 2009: 2) continue to make their presence felt, often “accompanied by the creation or growth of parallel local institutions, which provide substitutes for the provision of public goods, such as health care, education services, and security” (Englebert and Tull, 2008: 119).

Indeed recently, in the light of the resilience of local forms of governance, there has been a revival of the interest in the study of what is variously presented as “traditional”, “indigenous” or “customary” institutions, practices and authorities – including tribal leaders and clan chiefs, religious
authorities, village institutions, elders and so on. To pick up only one recent example, emphasizing the importance of customary land tenure arrangements, the traditional justice mechanisms and the provision of social welfare through complex networks of solidarity including “extended family ‘houses’ or ‘uma’”, Brown has shown how, despite at least three different external state-building processes (Portuguese, Indonesian and UN) “traditional forms of social organization remain widespread and powerful in East Timor, meshing with church, resistance and other local community forms” (2009: 152). The renewed interest in the persistence of “socially embedded institutions based on [local] culture, social organization and daily practice[s]” (Cleaver, 2002: 13) has sometimes been overshadowed by their placement in the context of analyses of “spoilers” to the process of state-building (Stedman, 1997; Newman and Richmond, 2006; Schneckener, 2009). However, the ubiquitous discourse of “local ownership” in programmatic documents of the US, EU, OECD/DAC and so on, points to the recognition of the need to engage with local forms of governance – at least at the rhetorical level.\(^4\) But the logic of “local ownership” cannot move beyond mere rhetoric, as long as the analysis of local forms of organizing political communities continues to be dominated by the image of the state.

This thesis proposes a move away from the narrow analytical vision responsible for the designation of particular political communities as “states with adjectives”, or to see them "from the perspective of ‘incompleteness’ … as either ‘not yet’ properly built, or ‘already’ failing or failed again” (Boege et al. 2009c: 14). The expression of “states with adjectives” is built in direct reference to the critique of the “democracy with adjective” (Collier and Levitsky quoted in Kraushaar and Lembach, 2009: 1). Developed in response to the proliferation of qualifiers to the concept of democracy - “limited”, “electoral”, “delegative”, “controlled”, “tutelary”, “guided”, “façade”, “illiberal”, “low-intensive” being only some of the terms identified – this critique considers that “when democracy is prefixed with adjectives, it lessens its meaning in order to converge on a reality of ‘diminished subtypes’” (Zinecker, 2009: 304). In the same way, many – even if perhaps not all – of

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\(^4\) For a good overview of the debates on “local ownership” in the context of Security Sector Reform and non-state justice networks, see the collections of essays in Donais (2008) and particularly Scheye (2008).
the political units defined as “failed states” are in fact not states, and our analytical terminology must reflect this reality. As proposed in chapter six, even if not exactly a state, these political units remain nevertheless a form of polity. The problem that remains to be established is what kind of a polity and what is the best way to reconceptualize the framework of analysis in such a way as to encompass not only the diversity of actors and the resilience of local forms of governance, but to be placed in the context of “competing political orders” (von Trotha, 2009).

The model of polity-creation at the intersection of different projects carried out by different actors is consistent with the observation that the result of external or internal interventions aimed at (re)shaping the nature of the polity often “simply add[s] a new layer of rules, without [necessarily] overriding others” (Putzel quoted in Mallet, 2010: 78). As such, the dynamic in place cannot be suitably captured either in reference to the aim of the intervener (in this case the state), or by the reification of the situation before the intervention (“pre-state” or “pre-colonial” political order). Instead, given that “societal and political orders are based on institutions, [and through extension] rules, norms and expectations in a specific setting … [the political reality in these places] is characterized by institutional hybridity and a blend of traditional and modern norms and practices” (Debie and Lambach, 2009: 25).

In this sense, the model of polity-creation proposed in my thesis is compatible with an emerging branch of scholarship articulated by scholars associated with the Australian Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies (ACPCS). While still in its infancy as an analytical tool, the concept of hybrid polity has proven its utility by already being embraced by some scholars although the geographical area of study is so far understandably confined to the Pacific basin and parts of the African continent. In these recent works they depart from the discourse of state-failure by presenting a “new perspective on social formations, where formal and informal elements coexist, overall and intertwine in the context of hybrid political orders” (Kraushaar and Lambach, 2009: 1). This

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5 Continuing the analogy with the nature of the political regime, Zinecker argues that “if democracy is not established in all its constituent parts and lacks the ‘tyres’ or the ‘engine’, it is not a democracy, even if it has a ‘steering wheel’ – such as universal suffrage” (2009: 306).

6 In Africa the initial studies include Somalland and Putland (Debie et al. 2009; Boethe et al. 2009a; Mehler, 2009) but also Mozambique (Mallet, 2010; Reisinger, 2009). In the Pacific there were studies of East Timor (Clements, 2009, Brown, 2009b) and Papua New Guinea (Boege et al. 2009; Boege, 2010). Finally, the complex case of Afghanistan was opened to the study from the HPO perspective by Schmeidl, 2009.
reconceptualization moves beyond the state-centrism of state-failure, given the fact that

in hybrid political orders, diverse and competing authority structures, sets of rules, logics of order, and claims to power co-exist, overlap, interact, and intertwine, combining elements of introduced Western models of governance and elements stemming from local indigenous traditions of governance and politics, with further influences exerted by the forces of globalization and associated societal fragmentation (in various forms: ethnic, tribal, religious) (Boege et al. 2009c: 17).

While, as repeatedly noted, the concept of "hybrid political order" (HPO) is "neither entirely novel nor analytically groundbreaking" (Mallet, 2010: 65), its application challenges many of the assumptions dominating the field of "state-building" and state-failure. At the same time, in the formulation of the ACPCS team, the logic and the conceptualization of HPO presents several advantages when compared with alternative terminology. Indeed, as mentioned by Mallet and recognized by the scholars proposing it, the concept of hybridity is not new. As Ann Tickner noted, as early as 2003 the concept of hybridity gained traction in cultural studies: "in the past decade the notion of hybridity has become a buzzword for the multifarious configurations of identity and temporality produced by transnational cultural phenomena such as imperialism and globalization" (2003: 305). According to her, a crucial role in introducing the concept of hybridity in cultural studies was played by two authors, one of whom, Nestor Garcia Canclini, describes Latin American culture as "a series of hybrid circuits in which characteristics present in traditional, modern and postmodern societies intermingle"; the other, Homi Bhabha, studying the issue of identity in a (post)colonial environment argued that "cultural encounters necessarily involve negotiation instead of negation and alterity (based upon the colonizer/colonized dichotomy), and that negotiation strategies create new, [third or hybrid] spaces of agency for the postcolonial subject" (Tickner, 2003: 305). In this context, the concept of hybridity permeated the discussion on political regimes in which it defined the institutional setting marking the incomplete transition between autocracies and democracies, serving for instance to "classify countries as having hybrid
political institutions if they are neither full autocracies nor full democracies” (Fox and Hoelscher, 2010: 8).\(^7\)

In parallel, more anthropologically inclined authors studying the postcolonial state - particularly in Africa, in search of a concept to explain the socio-political realities hidden behind the mask of a modern state - have variously talked about “neopatrimonialism” (Erdman and Engel, 2007), “mediated state” (Menkhaus, 2006: 78, 103-105; 2008) or “twilight institutions” (Lund, 2006). The logic of hybridity transpires also from institutional studies, above all through the concept of “institutional multiplicity” developed by scholars working at the Crisis State Research Centre (Beale et al. 2004; Golooaba-Mutebi et al. 2006; Hasselbein, 2008).\(^8\)

The concept of hybridity as institutional multiplicity was boosted by the development of the EU whose political-constitutional configuration attracted the label of “hybrid polity”, given the “supranational and intergovernmental institutions and forms of governance which transcend Westphalian norms” (Manners, 2002: 240). Remaining in the legal arena, in the light of the resilience of customary forms of governance, the concept of hybridity owes significantly to the increased interest in the study of “transitional” and “customary” or “informal” justice mechanisms, particularly in the context of reconciliation and indigenous mechanisms of conflict resolution.\(^9\)

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\(^7\) As Mac Ginty (2010a: 397) notes, the term “hybrid peace force” was used in the context of Darfur to refer to the joint inter-organizational United Nations and African Union mission (UNAMID). At the same time, the term “hybrid tribunals” is used in the context of debates on “transitional justice”, with hybrid courts usually having jurisdiction to try international crimes; they generally operate in places where crimes occurred - current experience includes Sierra Leone, Timor-Leste, Kosovo, Bosnia, Cambodia and Lebanon - employing both domestic and international personnel and being financed by the international community. For a recent evaluation of early hybrid tribunals see Martin-Ortega and Herman (2010) and for a second-wave see Kermani Mendez (2009).

\(^8\) Golooaba-Mutebi et al. use the concept of “institutional multiplicity” to examine “the multiple ‘rule systems’ that confront economic and political actors providing distinct and different normative frameworks and incentive structures in which they act”. In this sense they distinguish between four systems: “rule systems adopted by the state (statutory law); the rule systems evolved over time by older communities (customary traditions); the rule systems that communities or groups have devised for survival; and the rule systems hatched by non-state centres of power (warlords, bosses, criminal gangs)” (2006: 1).

\(^9\) There is an already vast literature dealing with the so-called “transitional justice” incorporating local traditions and conflict resolution mechanisms, but it is beyond the scope of this thesis to deal with that literature. Interest in the so-called transitional form of justice in the wake of the Truth and Reconciliation Tribunals is also illustrated by the existence of a journal dedicated to the issue, the International Journal of Transitional Justice published from 2007. Besides the interest in transitional justice, there is increased interest – particularly in post conflict environments – in identifying potential advantages the local, “traditional” mechanisms may have in relation to the modern, Western understanding of retributive justice. In this regard, Kimathi noted that “traditional and informal justice mechanisms continue to be
While the concept of hybridity has a reasonably substantial pedigree in these literatures, it was until very recently absent as an analytical tool from the vast literature on post conflict reconstruction, state-failure and "state-building". However, a concept that, besides considering the modern state actors, institutions and forms of governance, pays attention to local forms of governance is aligned with the increased interest in the analysis of the local, customary mechanisms of conflict resolution. This is evidenced by the recent utilization of the HPO framework by scholars writing about "community policing" as a complement if not outright alternative to Western-dominated SSR and DDR programmes (Hughes, 2010; Dinnen and Braithwaite, 2009; Boege, 2010) or the "hybrid peace" (MacGinty, 2010a). Capturing the coexistence and the interactions between multiple logics, values and institutions of governance (state and non-state, formal and informal and so on), the concept of hybrid political orders draws heavily on related concepts, but at the same time it is flexible enough to move beyond certain limitations these related concepts have.

To begin with, HPOs are the institutional outcome and expressions of the process of bricolage.10 Adapted from the anthropological writings of Claude Levi-Strauss, the concept of "bricolage" was utilized to denote the process through which self-conscious actors "recombine already available and legitimate concepts, scripts, models, and other cultural artefacts that they find around them in their institutional environment" (Campbell, 1998: 383). In this sense, "institutional bricolage" was used to denote the process through which "external ideas are modified by national officials in order to translate external policy advice into their specific domestic context" (Broome 2010: 5) while the resulting institutions "adapted for multiple purposes", are "embedded in networks of social relations, norms and practices ... draw[ing] on both traditional and modern form of interactions" (Cleaver, 2002: 17-21). The framework of polity-creation resulting in hybrid political orders however allows enriching the concept of bricolage in two ways. First of all, the

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10 I am grateful to Andre Broome for alerting me to the concept of bricolage in the early stages of my research.
combination and interweaving of “traditional” and “modern” elements within the HPO leads to the formation of qualitatively new, syncretic institutions as a result of “ongoing, incremental [and] creative transformation of all elements - administrative forms, rules, habits, or norms [derived] from more than one socio-cultural origin” (Galvan quoted in Sehring, 2009: 65). Second, by situating the creation of a hybrid polity at the intersection of different processes (state-formation, making and building) allows the simultaneous acknowledgement of path-dependency and the innovative nature of the process of bricolage. What is more though, it rejects “the idea of completely conscious and rational designing of institutions” by describing a “nonteleological, partly purposeful and partly unintentional process of the combination and transformation of institutional elements that results in a qualitatively new type of institution” (Sehring, 2009: 66).

Equally important, this perspective helps to move beyond the artificial depiction of governance in terms of binominal categories (formal/informal, state/non-state, tradition/modernity, public/private and so on). This represents another advantage of the alternative concepts, such as the dichotomy between formal and informal institutions. As Kraushaar and Lambach noted, “even though research … has yielded important insights into how formal and informal institutions interact, these approaches retain a dualistic understanding and treat the formal and the informal as functionally distinct spheres despite their structural interdependence” (2009: 8). In contrast, hybrid political orders refers to a blending of these various spheres resulting - sometimes, but not always - in the creation of syncretic institutions. However, that is not to say that in moving beyond the duality, the proposed framework ignores either the traditional or modern elements. On the contrary, unlike the transitional logic of a concept such as “hybrid regime”, the proponents of HPO are at pains to underline the transformative nature of the interaction between the different logics of governance. Mallet for instance warns that while “the term ‘traditional’ often implies – unintentionally or otherwise – something which is fixed and unchanging”, the fact that “culture is not a static phenomenon, but something which is in a constant state of flux” forces the analyst to “recognise that ‘traditional’ structures and discourses are as susceptible to change as anything else” (2010: 76). In a similar manner, accepting that “custom is in a constant flux and adapts to new circumstances, exposed to external
influences”, Boege et al. talk about “tradition” or “custom” as ideal-types, as “there are no clear-cut boundaries between the realm of the exogenous ‘modern’ and the endogenous ‘traditional’, rather there are processes of assimilation, articulation, transformation and/or adoption in the context of the global/ exogenous – local/indigenous interface” (2009a: 20). Paralleling the warning referring to the consequences of repeated, successive attempts at state-making (or state-building), as well as attuned with the literature on “invention of tradition”, MacGinty invites us to “think of entities (individuals, communities, institutions) as being hybridized from the outset, ... to see [actors and structures labeled as ‘local’, ‘indigenous’, ‘exogenous’ or ‘international’] as composites, or amalgamations resulting from long-term processes of social negotiation and adaptation” (2010a: 398).

Perhaps the most substantial differentiation with competing concepts derives from the emphasis put on and the manner in which the HPO treats the interaction between competing political orders. First, whereas concepts like “institutional multiplicity” limit themselves to observing the co-existence and overlapping of a variety of “system of rules”, “hybrid political orders incorporate and build on this by revealing the connections and associations between these different institutions” (Mallet, 2010: 77, emphasis in original). That the interaction between these different systems is at the heart of the HPO model is beyond doubt. Boege et al. note that in comparison with other concepts, theirs is “broader (perhaps too broad) and thus allows us to encompass different non-state forms of order and governance and at the same time to focus on the crucial point, namely the combination, interaction and mutual penetration of institutions of governance” (2009d: 88, emphasis added). But the concentration on the nature of the interactions is made from a neutral position, without privileging either mode of governance. Thus, the HPO framework “does not view the state as the prima facie superior form of governance” (Kraushaar and Lambach, 2009: 14), nor is it “romanticizing or idealizing customary actors and institutions ... [which] are not “better” than state institutions per se [and] can be highly problematic” (Boege et al. 2009a: 26). This neutrality distinguishes the HPO concept from many of its

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11 Consciously or unconsciously, the logic of hybridization operates in the literature dedicated to “non-state armed groups” including the distinction between different “stages” of warlordism (Mac Ginty, 2010b) or that between “old” and “neo” Taliban (Giustozzi, 2008).
competitors by creating an analytical advantage. As already mentioned, unlike the assumption of a transition - from an ineffective to an effective, superior stage - inherent in the concept of “hybrid [political] regime”, HPO’s interest on the transformation is value-free. In a similar manner, concepts such as neopatrimonialism become only a narrow, particular instantiation of the potential constellations of interactions between the “local” and the “external”. Indeed, instead of a unidirectional focus on the so-called “corruption”, “invasion” or “capturing” of the “modern” by the “tradition” - as is the case with the concept of neopatrimonialism - or the “alteration” of the “tradition” in contact with the “modern”, the HPO framework allows the analysis to investigate cases of cross-pollination between the two or more elements of the hybridity.12 For example, it becomes possible to analyze not only the way in which “bigmen must become politicians, as only then will they get access to state coffers that make it possible to distribute gifts to their kin and clients”, but also the reverse logic through which “politicians must [become] bigmen, as only then can they rely on the support of a loyal and powerful (usually kin-based) constituency” (Boege et al. 2009b: 603).

In this way, the HPO concept invites the analyses of specific local circumstances and historical context leading to the formation of particular configurations of various interactions. In terms of potential constellations of interaction, Kraushaar and Lambach provide an incipient model based on four types, in which the two extremes of complementarity and competition are mediated by the possibility of accommodation and competition.13 Analyzing distinctive configurations of power and dynamics of interactions, other authors

12 As Kraushaar and Lambach show, “rather than truly analyzing mutual interactions, neopatrimonialism often presents the whole process as an invasion of the formal by the informal” (2009: 11). Interestingly, Boege et al. are aware of the transformation of the “tradition” in contact with repeated attempts at “modernizing” and in consequence discuss a combination of three spheres, which they label “customary” – including customary law, traditional societal structures and traditional authorities, “modern” – associated with the modern state institutions and “new formations” – “like warlords and their militias, ethnic or millenarian movements or rackets of organised crime” (2009a: 23).

13 Building up on a typology of interaction between formal and informal institutions, they define the four configurations as follows: “where effective formal institutions exist and the interests of formal and informal institutions converge, informal institutions may act as complementary counterparts, thus adding their problem-solving capabilities to stabilise and support formal institutions. Where goals are incompatible, formal institutions serve as the accommodating framework in which conflicts are managed in the interest of reconciliation and stability. Where formal institutions are ineffective, informal institutions may act as a substitute for the state as long as interests are compatible. The combination of ineffective formal institutions with incompatible goals leads to the socially dysfunctional result of competition where formal and informal institutions undermine each other” (Kraushaar and Lambach, 2009: 7).
diffwewrntiate between “successful” and “less successful”, if not even “malevolent” hybrids. Schmeidl for instance considers the “warlord hybrid political order” emerging in Afghanistan as an undesirable result whose origin she identifies in the weakening of the tribal structure as a consequence of continuous warfare, as the “customary institutions have been slowly supplanted by jand salar (gunmen, warlords) who tend to be powerful because of their military might” (2009: 71). At the opposite end of the continuum, Boege et al. analyze the case of Somaliland and Bougainville as instances of “successful’ hybrid state-building” (2009a: 27-29).

One may agree or disagree with these incipient attempts of organizing a typology of interaction. However, the HPO framework does allows and even invites the analysis of a diverse configuration of interactions between the “local” and the “external”, between the “informal” and the “formal” and other similar dichotomies. In doing so, it not only moves beyond the teleological state-centrism permeating the literature on “state-failure” but it constitutes an elegant analytic avenue for “bringing the political back in” to the study of “state-building”. Indeed, viewing the process of polity-creation as resulting in a hybrid polity “implies a shift in focus beyond the technicalities of [state]building effective institutions on the central level, towards the politics of bargaining and contestation in the ‘context of competing political orders’” (Wuuff Moe, 2010: 29, emphasis in original). From the perspective of the polity-creation framework this thesis proposes, the attractiveness of the concept of the hybrid polity derives not only from its ability to inform the analysis of a large variety of configurations between different forms of political communities. While it certainly responds to the call of moving beyond the state-centrism characterizing the field of international interventions, “hybrid political orders are not about sidelining the role of the state” (Mallet, 2010: 75). Advocating an analytical shift from the state to polity-creation is not the equivalent of proclaiming the disappearance of the (modern) state as an important unit in international relations. However, it implies that concentrating solely on the state as the unit through which the international system is analyzed is incorrect. And that is due to the fact that despite – or perhaps, because – of international efforts to build modern states in the Westphalian Periphery, the configuration of the system does not correspond anymore, if it ever did, to the image of a world composed solely of
states. Instead, it is a world in which the metaphor of neo-medievalism may be resurrected for a better understanding of the dynamics of international relations.

**Beyond homogeneity in IR: re-articulating the neomedievalist scenario**

Articulated for the first time by Arnold Wolfers (1962) and most famously treated in Bull’s *Anarchical Society* (1977), the concept of neomedievalism has appeared at regular intervals for the past fifty years in the vocabulary of IR theory, always in contexts dominated by the feeling of uncertainty in relation to the nature of the system’s transformation. In different forms and at different times, the image of a pre-Westphalian world appealed to scholars in search of a metaphor able to capture the image of world politics beyond the hegemony – and I use the concept here in Gramscian terms – of state-centric theories. As Friedrichs noted, ever since 1962 “the concept of ‘new medievalism’ has led the quiet life of a sleeping beauty” (2001: 476) having episodic moments of awakening, but never really being embraced by mainstream theorizing. In the context of the 1970s debates on “transnational relations”, “pluralism” and “interdependence”, neomedievalism was reconsidered by Hedley Bull and presented as one among several “alternative paths to world order”, only to be rejected as having a diminished analytical potency when compared with the international society of states paradigm. Largely abandoned for the rest of the Cold War era, the concept was resurrected in the early 1990s in a negative instantiation warning against the dangers of a “durable disorder” (Minc, 1993) or a “coming anarchy” (Kaplan, 1994) marking the retreat of the Westphalian world (Hassner, 1992). By the end of the century, renewed attention to neomedievalism (Croning and Lepgold, 1995; Andersen, 1996; Kobrin, 1996 and 1998; Cerny, 1998; Holsti, 1999, van Creveld, 2000) coincided with an explosion of scholarly interest in the phenomenon of “privatising security” (Brauer, 1998; Gaul, 1998; Nossal, 1998; Zarate, 1998; Shearer, 1998a, 1998b, 1999; Adams, 1999, 2002; Mandel, 2001; Avant, 2000, 2005; Singer, 2001; 2003). The latest “awakening” of the concept took place in the years

Before discussing its content in different interpretations as well as the suggestion of a new articulation in terms of the framework which the present thesis proposes, it is important to inscribe its use in a tradition that rejects its application to current circumstances as replicating the ones before the rise of the modern system of states. Indeed, over and over again, scholars employing the concept of neomedievalism have been careful to distance themselves from a “literal” comparison with the (European) Middle Ages. Hedley Bull himself was first to recognize the “trivial point ... [that] any future form of universal political organization will be different from previous historical experiences, in the sense that it will have certain features that are unique and will not exactly resemble any previous system” (2002[1977]: 247). Two decades later, for Ole Waever, “it became clear that we [neo-medievalists] did not talk so because of any ‘identity’ between the Middle Ages and our present situation ... it is a metaphor [that] underlines the alternative to sovereignty, the surprising presence of overlapping authorities, [and] complexity” (1997: 61). Pointing to the fact that “the concept of new medievalism is based upon a relational analogy and not upon an essentialist comparison”, Jörg Friedrichs defines the neo-medieval analogy as “first and foremost a heuristic device” (2004: 19). Similarly, Zielonka emphasizes that by using the concept of neomedievalism he “never intended to suggest any historical equivalence ... [the concept] is an abstract paradigm describing the nature of the emerging European polity ... contrast[ed] with the paradigm of a Westphalian state” (2006: 7). Finally, in the most recent contribution, Cantir and Schrodt concluded that using the concept of “neomedievalism is not a blanket statement about the return of serfs, lords and moated manors ... instead it is a metaphor that allows one to avoid the theoretical limits of state-centric theories, which ... are becoming increasingly incapable of explaining [certain] phenomena” (2010: 12).  

But the use of the concept as a heuristic device is not the only commonality these authors share with Bull’s formulation. Besides the fact that in general they reach a different conclusion regarding the feasibility of the use of the concept to describe current realities, the vast majority of these scholars

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14 These different authors refer interchangeably to “neo-medievalism”, “neomedievalism”, “new medievalism”, or “new Middle Age”. I use “neomedievalism” for consistency purpose.
continue to work within the logic of neo-medievalism as introduced by Bull almost half a century ago. Most such analyses start from Bull’s definition of neomedievalism as “a system of overlapping authority and multiple loyalties” (2002: 245) and measure the existence of such a system against the five criteria considered by him: the level of regional integration (of states); the intensity of (state) disintegration; the “restoration of private international violence”; the degree to which transnational organisations are undermining the system of states; and, lastly, the extent to which the “technological unification of the world” paves the way towards a demise of the states-system (2002: 255–264). There is of course a variety of ways in which different authors engage with this concept. Falk, for instance, argues that “there are three rather parallel invocations of the new medievalism … [with a] first discourse taking account of complexification, the second discourse [analysing] the onset of the information age, and the third discourse [emphasizing] the recovery of the sacred” (2001: 108). However, despite the difference of focus, most of these analyses constitute a reassessment of Bull’s verdict against the same criteria, in light of the “changed international environment of our present time” (Friedrichs, 2001: 484).

Even if the use of neomedievalism aims at moving the analysis beyond the state, it is a misrepresentation to describe it as marking the end of the state-system and the emergence of an international form of governance led by transnational corporations, non-state actors and the global civil society (Gilpin, 2001: 390-398). While none of the scholars mentioned above “go as far as to pronounce the state dead” (Cantir and Schrot, 2010: 12), they invoke the medieval metaphor as a way of reflecting a recognition that “there are power struggles going on which bypass, cut across and even undermine the supreme authority of the state” and which create a situation where “the state is losing its previously unchallenged supremacy as the most significant entity in the international system” (der Derian, quoted in Fabry, 1998: 11, emphasis added). Among the ingredients marking the weakening of state autonomy, authority and ultimately power and thus justifying the neomedieval metaphor, one identifies the debate on sovereignty (Kobrin, 1998; Deets, 2004); the transformation in the willingness and capabilities of states – developed and developing alike – to perform “traditional” functions in particular in the arena of welfare and security services (Cerny, 1998; Holsti, 1999; Williams, 2008);
the recognition that identity patterns are becoming increasingly complex and more fluid than assumed by state-centric perspectives (Linklater quoted in Falk, 2001: 110; Zielonka, 2006, esp. 133-136; Williams, 2008: 14-16); the blurring of distinctions between "domestic" and "foreign" policy in the context of "globalization"; "global governance" and the rise of a global civil (some would add and/or uncivil) society (Cronin and Lepgold, 1995: Kобрин, 1998); and finally the "unbundling" of territoriality and a move towards trans- or post-territoriality (Ruggie, 1993; Agnew, 1994; Kобрин, 1998).

In recent decades two major arguments have been brought forward to justify the reassessment of Bull's verdict in regard to the prospects of a neomedievalist scenario. From the very beginning the poster child of the neomedievalist metaphor in the various IR literatures was and continues to this day to be the case of European integration. Most recently, Jan Zielonka (2006, 2007) and his followers (Angelescu, 2008) rejected the "Westphalian, state-centric paradigm" as unfit for explaining and understanding the evolution of the European Union. As Zielonka describes it, the Westphalian interpretation of the state

has absolute sovereignty over its territory ... its borders are fixed and hard, its socio-economic system is relatively homogeneous, and one single (national) culture predominates ... it has a clear hierarchical governmental structure with one centre of authority ... and there is a high degree of overlap between the legal, administrative, economic, and military regimes within it (2006: 10).

In contrast, he argues, the EU

has no effective monopoly over the legitimate means of coercion ... has no clearly defined center of authority ... its territory is not fixed ... its geographical, administrative, economic and cultural borders diverge ... and its prime "international" role (although unstated) is to keep peace among its members states and not to project power abroad (Zielonka, 2007: 6)

From the Westphalian perspective, thus, the construction of the EU can only be described as what its former President of the European Commission called an "Unidentified Political Object" (quoted in Zielonka, 2006: 4). However, the neomedieval metaphor is more appropriate as an analytical tool for describing the institutional result of European integration with its "polycentric governance, fuzzy borders and soft forms of external power projection"
(Zielonka, 2006: 4).\textsuperscript{15} The distinction between the two explanatory models within the group of scholars calling for a reassessment of Bull’s analysis of neomedievalism by emphasizing European integration can thus be illustrated as in Fig. 12 by contrasting the vision of a future EU as a federal state in the Westphalian tradition to one that analyses the future of the EU through the conceptual lenses of a neomedieval empire.

![Fig. 12 Westphalian vs. Neomedieval models of the future of EU system](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Westphalian superstate</th>
<th>Neo-medieval empire</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hard and fixed external border lines</td>
<td>Soft-border zones in flux</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relatively high socio-economic homogeneity</td>
<td>Socio-economic discrepancies persist without consistent patterns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A pan-European cultural identity prevails</td>
<td>Multiple cultural identities coexist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overlap between legal, administrative, economic, and military regimes</td>
<td>Disassociation between authoritative allocations, functional competencies, and territorial constituencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A clear hierarchical structure with one centre of authority</td>
<td>Interpretation of various types of political units and loyalties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distinction between EU members and non-members is sharp and important</td>
<td>Distinction between the European centre and periphery is most crucial, but blurred</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redistribution centrally regulated within a closed EU system</td>
<td>Redistribution based on different types of solidarity between various transnational networks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One single type of citizenship</td>
<td>Diversified types of citizenship with different sets of rights and duties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A single European army and police force</td>
<td>Multiplicity of various overlapping military and police institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absolute sovereignty regained</td>
<td>Divided sovereignty along different functional and territorial lines</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textit{Source:} Zielonka (2006: 12)

In addition to the “unbundling of basic state functions and the growth of uneven, crosscutting and overlapping levels of governance” (Cerny, 1998: 36), the re-evaluation of a neomedievalist scenario is requested by authors investigating the challenges to the state’s monopoly over violence. At the inception of the post-Cold War period, the academia as well as a substantial part of the mass-media brought to the forefront of public debate the allegedly new phenomenon of Private Security Companies. Initially branded as a

\textsuperscript{15} Inspired by Zielonka, Angeleascu analyses the Schengen Convention’s fluctuating membership (gradual expansion to include more EU members and non-members alike) as well as the EU’s “voluntary withdrawal clause” included in the Treaty of Lisbon as an illustration of the neomedieval characteristic of the “soft, fluid border ... shared and spread authority, no monopoly over law-making [and] an emerging preference of member states to take actions outside the official EU framework” (2008: 51)
reformation of the classical “dogs of war” image mainly by a media eager to attract public attention (Zarate, 1998; Cook, 2002), the phenomenon has since permeated scholarly circles in connection with the ascendancy of a neoliberal economic paradigm and its corollary of privatizing the functions of the state (Edmonds, 1999; Brayton, 2002; Buthe, 2003; Avant, 2004, 2005) as well as the (re)emergence of the non-state armed actors that became the object of previous chapters. Notwithstanding this evolution, much of the analysis of the phenomenon of privatising security remains descriptive in its nature, with numerous terminological, conceptual and taxonomical controversies still abounding, many of which cluster around attempts of building functional typologies (Adams, 1999; O’Brien, 2000; Singer, 2003; Spearin, 2004) and dealing with the problem of legal consequences in an effort to regulate the new “business of war” (Gaul, 1998; Zarate, 1998; Jackson, 2002; Kinsey, 2003; Spearin, 2003; Singer, 2004).

Without delving into the intricacies of a top-down privatisation of security (Wulf, 2005, 2006a and 2006b), suffice it to note that scholars focused on these analyses consider the “increasing breakdown of the state’s monopoly of legitimate violence” to be largely responsible for the contemporary utility of neomedievalism as a concept” (Berzinis and Cullen, 2003: 13). This responsibility derives not only from the quantitative growth or qualitative development of various forms of non-state violence, devolved by the state to private security companies or challenging the state by formations such as warlords, tribal militias and the like. It matters because, whether in the form of regulating the activity of private military companies (Leander, 2010), debates about their involvement in peacekeeping as a corporate alternative (Cook, 2000; Bures, 2005; Patterson, 2008), arguments in favour of “outsourcing the responsibility to protect” (Pattison, 2010a and 2010b) or humanitarian assistance (Spearin, 2001; 2005; Leander and van Munster, 2007), as Friedrichs notes in direct response to Bull’s own criteria, “private violence is also increasingly viewed as legitimate” (2004: 7). Besides the activity of corporate military forces under the control of states and international organizations, calls for a re-evaluation of the relevance of neomedievalism continue to arise from analysis of the “erosion of state control [of violence] from within”, as Cantir and Schrödt’s recent survey on warlords and armed gangs demonstrates (2010: 3, 14-30).
As both branches of neomedievalist literature show, the factors identified by Bull over three decades ago as potential features of a neomedieval world have, if anything, witnessed an intensification that would alone demand a re-evaluation of his dismissal of the metaphor’s usefulness. However, to do so would be insufficient to avoid the dangers of an exclusionary tendency in Bull’s interpretation of the neomedieval scenario. This exclusionary tendency does not refer so much to the risk of announcing the disappearance of “the state as a form of socio-political governance” (O’Hayon, 2003: 91), which, as already seen, is by and large avoided, at least at the rhetorical level, by scholars utilizing this metaphor. It does refer though to the important observation that,

although Bull himself was very well aware of the fundamental unity of the medieval world, his definition of medievalism as a “system of overlapping authority and multiple loyalty” gives a one-sided view of medievalism as the [strict] opposite of hierarchical order (Friedrichs, 2004: 9)

Comparing the neomedieval scenario not with the Westphalian ideal (against which Zielonka, for instance, builds his interpretation), but with the medieval system, Friedrichs first recuperates the meaning of the neomedievalist metaphor as a matter of systemic order. The second step in his re-articulation is to correct the emphasis on fragmentation by a compensatory attention paid to the “unity of the medieval world”. In this way, the medieval and by extension neomedieval system is defined as “a system of overlapping authority and multiple loyalty, held together by a duality of competing universalist claims.” While the dual universalism of the medieval world in this ascension is defined by the imperium and sacerdotium, represented respectively by the institutions of the Empire and Church, Friedrichs argues that in the neomedieval world their place is taken by “the antagonistic organizational claims of the nation-state system and the transnational market economy” (2001: 475). From this analogy with the medieval system, he then extracts the defining characteristics of neomedievalism as shown in Fig. 13

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16 There is certainly an element of truth in Cantir and Schrodt’s remark that, “despite the common wisdom that 1648 – or at least the early modern period – marked the shift to dominance of the nation-state as the central actor in European politics … the pivotal year for ascendancy of the nation-state is probably 1948, not 1648.” If that is true, they are also correct to place the dismissal of the neomedievalist scenario by Wolfers and Bull at the peak of the “relatively short [perhaps only four decades] period … [when] the nation-state does in fact have nearly exclusive claim to authority (and clearly has exclusive claim to legitimacy)” (2010: 6-7).
The Middle Ages were characterized by a system of overlapping authority and multiple loyalty. These centrifugal forces were held together by two interdependent forms of universalism: the Empire with its claim for political legitimacy, and Christianity with its transcendental claims.

The social locus of secular universalism in the Middle Ages was formed by the dominant class of feudal aristocracy.

Today we are experiencing the re-emergence of overlapping authority and multiple loyalty. These centrifugal forces are held together by two interdependent forms of universalism — the state with its claim for sovereign actorhood, and the world market economy with its claims for efficiency.

The social locus of modern political universalism is formed by an international class of policy-makers and bureaucrats.

The social locus of economic universalism is the transnational managerial class. The managerial class is characterized by an extraordinary degree of spatial and social mobility.

Religious universalism was supported by leading exponents of Catholic theology. Although to a lesser degree, even secular universalism had its organic intellectuals like Dante, Ockham and Marsiglio.

Both the nation-state system and the world market economy are supported by a knowledge-based elite, or epistemic community, of intellectuals and public writers.

Religious and secular universalism raised competing claims to supremacy. However, in the end neither of the two prevailed. Both Empire and Church declined, and the modern nation-state system emerged.

Economic and political universalism raise competing claims to supremacy. For the time being, it is unclear both how long this contest is going to last and how it will end.


While welcoming this completion of Bull’s definition of neomedievalism, the findings of this thesis point against accepting the fundamental assumption of this reconceptualization, that is “the homogenizing role of the territorial state, which is particularistic in content but universalistic in form” (2004: 17). As the thesis argues, the actions guided by the logic of the “homogenizing role of the territorial state” lead not only to the rise of what can be described as a “state-building security dilemma”, but also to the formation of hybrid political orders as alternatives to the traditional image of a “modern state”. With this conclusion in mind it is important to re-interpret the neomedieval metaphor in

17 In the context of neomedievalism, Cerny described the “new security dilemma” by showing how “attempts to provide international and domestic security through the state and the state system actually become increasingly dysfunctional ...[by giving birth to] backlashes at both local and transnational levels” (1998: 40).
a way that reflects not only the plurality of actors involved, but also the diversity of organizing principles and forms of polities; moreover, it is essential to open up new spaces for an analysis of the interaction among them. A reinterpretation of the neomedievalist metaphor along the lines of hybrid political orders would by definition abandon the linear assumption implied by an exclusivist interpretation: either a state-system based International Society order, or an order in which the state is effectively marginalized. Instead, it would be better equipped to present the "neo-medieval cartography" as one of "archipelagos" (O'Hayon, 2003: 92). To be useful in this context, the neomedievalist metaphor must allow the possibility of "change" being not only a non-zero-sum game, but also non-uniform, and highly contingent on domestic, regional and international circumstances. As O'Hayon argues, it has to offer

a non-zero sum conception of sovereignty that – while not denying the erosion of state power in certain contexts, as well as the continued popularity of the state (especially for those fighting to obtain one) in others – prefers the notion of unbundling of territoriality, authority and sovereignty … [aware that] these processes are not evenly felt by all states however, as they occur in several different forays and at varying speeds depending on the state and policy area in question (2003: 27).

Naturally, these are only speculative comments exploring the realm of possibilities opened by a polity-creation framework that could and, equally important, should replace the "state-building"/state-failure framework, still predominant in the practice of international relations. It may very well open as many, if not more questions than it answers. For instance, one question that is suppressed by Bull’s neomedievalist scenario or Friedrichs’ reconceptualization would be, in the context of the English School, whether there could be various International Societies instead of a single one. This in turn opens up for investigation the nature of the interaction between their component units. Another area of inquiry that will have to be addressed concerns the circumstances leading to peaceful or conflictual interactions between different polities. Do all polities participate with one or another international society and what would the limits of such participation be? Unlike the "state-building"/state-failure framework that it aims to replace, a polity-creation framework, particularly in association with a concept such as that of hybrid political orders, can ask and investigate at least some of these questions, rather than ignoring or offering a pre-ordained set of answers.


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