Introduction

State Fragility in a Time of Turmoil

It is frequently assumed that developing states experience sustained progress over time as their economies grow, their institutions consolidate, and poverty diminishes. But for many, this is simply not the case. Some of the so-called fragile states suffer from quick reversals, while others improve in certain areas and weaken in others. Those fragile states whose stagnation is so tenacious despite generous aid programs and substantial and costly interventions are considered to be stuck in a "fragility trap." States that are persistently fragile pose an unmet challenge to policymakers, theorists, and analysts because they show little indication of how they might exit from their political, economic, and social malaise. Conventional aid policies do not appear to work as effectively in these countries. Caught in a low-level equilibrium, trapped states appear to be in a perpetual political and economic limbo that can last for years and, in several cases, decades. By definition, those stuck in a trap are characterized by weak policy environments, making engagement in them a long-term challenge. Their structural complexity means policy entry is difficult.

The persistence of fragility raises questions about the idea of managing transitions out of fragility. This is an issue raised by the Development

Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), or OECD DAC, in a report on fragile states (OECD 2015) and by Gisselquist (2015), in an assessment of fragility persistence. The idea that state fragility is solely a transitory phenomenon associated with, for example, a postconflict peace process is empirically untrue. For example, research on fragile, closed, and unstable states (Bremmer 2006; Tikuisis and Carment 2017) shows that they move both forward and backward in terms of their political and economic development so that stability and openness are never secure. Indeed, Bremmer (2006) shows that it is easier, when economic resources and growth are in doubt, for a leader to create stability by closing the country than to build a civil society and establish accountable institutions.

Chauvet and Collier's (2008) study on failing states provides one explanation for this behavior. They found the average duration of a failing state is a lengthy fifty-four years because external financing for resource exports and foreign aid tend to encourage rents and thereby retard reforms. Along similar lines, Andrimihaja, Cinyabuguma, and Devarajan (2011) argue that aid resources focused on poor property rights enforcement, corruption, insecurity, and violence are needed to propel states stuck in the fragility trap toward better economic outcomes. But such policy options are rarely successful because the incentives for leaders of trapped states to embrace reforms that affect their personal interests are too weak. Elite capture of the state and the benefits it accrues mean there are few incentives for ruling regimes to enact political and economic reform. Thus, we believe that reversals and traps occur not just because of highly authoritarian regimes. There are those states that fail to achieve sufficient capacity to meet the needs of their population yet are caught in a legitimacy trap with little inclination to exit. Then there are those states that are perpetually economically weak and often plagued by violence, perhaps shifting slightly with changes in effectiveness and leadership but not sufficiently to escape fragility. Such conditions can be exacerbated by high economic inequality or low development and recessions. Finally, there are those states with strong authority and democratic aspirations but without sufficient capacity to break free of fragility. In brief, challenges to and degradations in authority and capacity deriving from poor economic policy or failure to manage societal tensions appear to be key reasons why countries remain stuck in a fragility trap.

Further, the vexatious nature of fragility traps has motivated researchers and policymakers to recast their thinking about the causes of fragility, their inherent complexity, and the interdependence between aid and other forms of third-party assistance (Gisselquist 2015; Brinkerhoff 2014). In previous research on the causes of fragility (Carment, Prest, and Samy 2010), the authors argue that the inherent ambiguity in the fragility concept allowed policymakers to adopt it to their own agendas, a point reinforced by Grimm (2014) and Lemay-Hébert and Mathieu (2014), among others. While this conceptual flexibility lent itself to a diversity of policy programs and policy initiatives, we now see that the resulting lack of coherence has not generated the kinds of effective policy responses needed to fix the world's most fragile states (Brinkerhoff 2014). The inherent difficulty is in understanding the nature of the "trap" in which the most extreme cases are stuck. The following metaphor by Kingwell (2007) and quoted in Carment, Prest, and Samy (2010) is helpful to understand the extent of this problem:

> Fragility belongs to a class of properties, or qualities, philosophers call dispositional. A dispositional property differs from a static one in being lodged in potential rather than actuality. An antique china teacup is always fragile and it is also always white but its whiteness is bodied forth at every moment whereas its fragility depends on what will happen under certain future circumstances. (Kingwell 2007, F7)

The basic assumption of this metaphor is the scope and extent of the equilibrium in which such states are stuck and the impacts that "future circumstances" will produce on decreasing or improving a state's level of fragility. These future circumstances may be fortuitous and promising, such as a change in government or an economic windfall, or they may be a severe shock, such as a drought, an earthquake, or a neighboring civil war. The ability to withstand or manage negative effects is often referred to as "resilience" (Briguglio et al. 2009). Since fragility traps are a function of pernicious and often lethal "feedback loops" and equilibria, we argue that successful transitions from fragility involve a specific sequence of policies intended to improve a state's authority, legitimacy, and capacity through, among other things, compliance with the law and incorporation of peoples into a functional economy. (See, for example, Lambach, Johais, and Bayer [2015] and Call [2008] for extensions on this approach.) To be sure, sequencing is not without its challenges and controversies, particularly for those states emerging from conflict or with little or no experience in democratization.

For example, recognizing that countries in transition face a higher risk of conflict due to their institutional weakness, Mansfield and Snyder (2007) suggest that donors should prioritize strengthening recipient institutions prior to providing broader democracy promotion and support. While such "sequencing" is intended to maximize the likelihood of successful transitions by "rationalizing" democratization through securing institutional strength prior to transformation, Carothers (2007) argues that a "gradual" approach to building democracy, which encourages donors to contribute to supporting democratic principles and values in current contexts, could help develop democracy from current conditions rather than waiting for the conditions needed under sequencing.[1]

FRAGILITY AND CHARACTERISTICS OF STATENESS

Thus, to break free of the bad equilibrium in which states may find themselves, it is important to focus on those elements of statehood that can pull the country forward, akin to an all-wheel-drive vehicle in snow that shifts traction to the wheels that have the best grip while letting the others do less work. Applying the available power to wheels that spin freely without traction will only make it more likely that the vehicle remains mired. In this vein, we will show that shifts out of fragility are not obtained through economic transformation or capacity alone and especially if economic gains do not lead to positive changes in authority and legitimacy. To make this argument, we rely on our theoretical and conceptual foundations from past research. As noted elsewhere, fragility is a measure of the extent to which the actual practices and capacities of states differ from its idealized image (Carment, Prest, and Samy 2010). Based on our conceptualization, fragility is a matter of degree, not kind. It is a measure of the extent to which the actual institutions, functions, and political processes of a state accord with the strong image of sovereign state, the one reified in both theory and international law. By our definition, all states are to some extent fragile. This is, we believe, a closer representation of reality than an arbitrary line, however drawn, between failed and stable, weak and strong, or resilient and vulnerable. While conflict-affected states are by definition fragile, some but not all fragile states are mired in deep-rooted conflict and violent transitions (Tikuisis et al. 2015).

The core structural elements of stateness that we use in this book are represented by authority (A), legitimacy (L), and capacity (C). Collectively known as ALC, they are our key organizing concepts for evaluating the change of states over time (Carment, Prest, and Samy 2010). Authority is defined as the extent to which a state possesses the ability to enact binding legislation over its population, to exercise coercive force over its sovereign territory, to provide core public goods, and to provide a stable and secure environment to its citizens and communities. The definition of authority thus derives in part from Max Weber's definition of the state as having a monopoly on violence. Legitimacy refers to the extent to which a particular state commands public loyalty to the governing regime and generates domestic support for that government's legislation and policy. Such support must be created through a voluntary and reciprocal arrangement of effective governance and citizenship founded upon broadly accepted principles of government selection and succession that is recognized both locally and internationally. Capacity considers the extent to which a state can mobilize and employ resources toward productive ends. States that are lacking in capacity are generally unable to provide services to their citizens and cannot respond effectively to sudden shocks such as natural disasters, epidemics, food shortages, or refugee flows.

OPERATIONALIZING ALC

The Country Indicators for Foreign Policy (CIFP) data set that we use in this volume provides an annual fragility index that goes back to 1980. CIFP's overall fragility index is calculated from more than eighty indicators that are spread across the three main characteristics of stateness—authority, legitimacy, and capacity—and six clusters of state performance (demography, economics, environment, governance, human development, and security and crime), with gender as a crosscutting theme.

In the case of authority, some of the indicators used to operationalize the concept are straightforward. They are fundamentally meant to represent effective governance—namely, the ability of states to deliver core public goods such as public security, law and order, and economic stability. We distinguish core public goods from other social services, such as education and health (discussed further below under capacity). For example, measures related to conflict intensity, rule of law, or political stability speak directly to the ability of governments to control disruptions within their territories and thus exercise authority. The control of territory, which prevents under- and ungoverned spaces from arising, is fundamental for state authority, rather than anarchy, to emerge. Consider, for instance, the tribal territories between Pakistan and Afghanistan or in Yemen for several decades, where lack of control over territory has resulted in the emergence of terrorist groups and secessionist movements. One of the challenges of state building in places such as Afghanistan is the fact that the central government has no effective control over its territory outside of Kabul and a few other large cities.

Incidents of (or fatalities resulting from) terrorism, military expenditure, or the external debt of a country are all factors that have an impact on the ability of a country to provide security within its borders. This lack of security may, for example, lead to refugee flows across borders, as we have seen in the cases of the ongoing migrant crisis resulting from the Syrian conflict and the refugee flows across the African continent toward European countries. Whether the ability of countries to avoid conflicts is related to the issue of authority or other factors is contested in the literature. For example, Collier et al. (2003) note that several root causes of conflict are prevalent throughout the literature—namely, ethnic and religious tensions, lack of democracy, and economic inequalities. However, they also argue that the "key root cause of conflict is the failure of economic development" (53). For them, poor countries that stumble into conflict are likely to experience perpetuated conflict or become "trapped" in further conflict, with more unequal and ethnically diverse societies having a higher risk of lengthy conflicts. This tendency to equate conflict with underdevelopment or fragility with underdevelopment is arguably too simplistic. For example, many low-income countries, such as Malawi and Tanzania, have been able to avoid civil conflicts and are quite resilient. On the other hand, there is now an increasing interest in political settlements and elite pacts as being at least as important as the technical challenges of international development (Pospisil and Menocal 2017), but this has yet to be fully translated into policy actions.

Authority is also not always considered on its own merit. For instance, in its work on supporting state building in situations of conflict and fragility, the OECD conflates authority and capacity as "state capability and responsiveness"—namely, the provision of security, justice, economic management, and service delivery (OECD 2011). The report argues that the state has four important functions: (1) to provide security, enforce the law, and protect its citizens, (2) to make laws, provide justice, and resolve conflict, (3) to raise, prioritize, and expend revenues effectively and to deliver basic services, and

(4) to facilitate economic development and employment. While the first two relate to the exercise of authority, the last two are arguably related to capacity. For example, basic services include not only rule of law and security but also social services such as education and health, which have more to do with capacity than authority. We discuss measures related to capacity further below.

Since authority is about effective governance, several indicators to operationalize authority by the CIFP project draw from the World Bank's Worldwide Governance Indicators (see http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/index.aspx#home). These include political stability, which refers to "perceptions of the likelihood that the government will be destabilized or overthrown by unconstitutional or violent means, including politically-motivated violence and terrorism," and regulatory quality, which refers to "perceptions of the ability of the government to formulate and implement sound policies and regulations that permit and promote private sector development." Similarly, the level of corruption in a country is another indicator of authority because it measures the ability of that country to regulate and prevent the abuse of public office for private gain. In sum, when borders are secure, collective violence and terrorism are under control, corruption is not predominant, core public goods (such as rule of law and security) are provided to populations, and economic stability ensures that growth and development are taking place, all of these features are indicative of countries with strong authority.

However, there are other indicators to measure authority, which, though important, may be less straightforward. Consider, for example, measures related to the ease of paying taxes from the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business Indicators. While taxation is about governments raising revenue to finance public goods and services, there is a significant literature that examines how taxation can contribute to governance and state building (see, e.g., Bräutigam, Fjeldstad, and Moore 2008). Viewed from the perspective of state building, tax collection is more than just economic resources, though. It is about the state having control over its territory to extract an optimal amount of revenue for the provision of public goods and services in return (Prichard 2010; African Capacity Building Foundation 2015). Finally, other measures related to infrastructure such as roads, electricity, and telephones are not necessarily the ones that come to mind when thinking about authority. And yet while they contribute to growth and development, they also act as networks that allow states to exercise better control over their territories.

In terms of operationalizing legitimacy, a straightforward indicator proposed for measuring legitimacy is the regime type of the state in question. Some have argued that certain types of government, such as dictatorships, are perceived as less legitimate than others and are forced to rely more on coercion of the population as a result (Badie, Berg-Schlosser, and Morlino 2011). To these authors, regime type could theoretically be used as a stand-in for legitimacy. The issue, however, is that this is little more than an ideal type and is unlikely to be an accurate representation of state legitimacy in reality (Badie, Berg-Schlosser, and Morlino 2011). Perhaps the best-known such measure of regime type is the Polity IV data set, which scores states between +10 for fully institutionalized democracies and −10 for fully autocratic states (Marshall and Cole 2014). Another well-known measure of the extent of democratic freedoms across the world is published annually by Freedom House and rates countries according to their political rights and civil liberties. Both the Polity IV and Freedom House indicators are used by CIFP to measure legitimacy.

Others have taken a narrower approach in using regime type to measure legitimacy, focusing on certain behaviors associated with particular regimes. Parkinson (2003), for example, proposes the use of representation as a measure of legitimacy, though this is problematic in that the applicability of such a measure is restricted to democratic states. Grävingholt, Ziaja, and Kreibaum (2015) instead use state repression as an indicator for state legitimacy, with greater levels of repression being indicative of less legitimacy due to such measures typically being costly and thus avoided when possible. This proposed measurement of legitimacy is itself a broad category, encompassing indicators such as the use of violence by the state to maintain power, restriction of the media, and the number of citizens who seek asylum in other states (Grävingholt, Ziaja, and Kreibaum 2015). Attempting to determine legitimacy by regime type alone, however, appears problematic, given that some autocratic states can stave off potential fragility and failure from popular unrest through means beyond coercion. Schwarz and de Corral (2013), for example, note that several Middle Eastern states have been able to prevent the loss of legitimacy via the use of natural resource revenues to buy off various societal groups.

Accountability mechanisms are also referenced in the literature as possible measures of legitimacy. In the case of CIFP, we use the voice and accountability indicator from the Worldwide Governance Indicators of the World Bank as one indicator of legitimacy. Weatherford's (1992) article on methods to measure political legitimacy, for example, cites the accountability of leaders to the people they govern as a major system-level component of legitimacy. Accountability mechanisms that could be used to measure legitimacy include legislatures, courts, and elections, with their ability to hold leaders to account serving as a way to measure the legitimacy of a state (Mulgan 2011). It is noted, however, that the main flaw in using accountability mechanisms and other system-level components to measure legitimacy is that it focuses more on formal governing structures than the subjective aspects of legitimacy (Weatherford 1992). Levi, Sacks, and Tyler (2009) highlight corruption and accountability as a way of measuring legitimacy, specifically the perception of administrative competence among citizens. For the former, they propose using the salaries of government officials and the potential rewards for citizens to attempt bribing them as an indicator, while the latter is to be measured by the government's ability to detect and punish corruption via the enforcement and monitoring of laws consistently and equitably (Levi, Sacks, and Tyler 2009). Gilley (2006) likewise proposes using corruption in measuring legitimacy, specifically by surveying citizens regarding their attitudes on corruption and their views of government officials.

Some authors have proposed using the integrity and quality of elections as a way of determining legitimacy within a state. As stated previously, elections could be considered a type of accountability mechanism in democratic states because poor performance or perceived corruption by the government can lead to it being removed from power by voters (Mulgan 2011). Norris, Frank, and i Coma (2014) assemble the Perceptions of Electoral Integrity data set to measure electoral integrity, specifically noting how questionable results can generate illegitimacy for governments and undermine them. The data set, which is based on various standards of electoral integrity, considers a total of forty-nine indicators measuring various aspects of the electoral cycle, such as campaign financing and the vote count. Several authors have also used electoral integrity to measure state legitimacy in case studies, such as Dizolele and Kambale in their 2012 article on the questionable results of the 2011 elections in the Democratic Republic of Congo, which noted how they undermined the government's legitimacy. The main issue with attempting to measure legitimacy using the integrity of elections, however, is that it is of little use in states where elections are not held, limiting the efficacy of such a measure to democratic states and those that hold sham elections.

Perhaps one of the more commonly referenced measures of state legitimacy is the willingness of citizens to obey the commands of the government. This ties directly to the commonly accepted definition of legitimacy as the recognition of a government's commands as justifiable (e.g., Gilley 2006; Levi, Sacks, and Tyler 2009). One proposed way of measuring this willingness, albeit indirectly, is through the quality of public goods and services provided by the government to its citizens, with better performance being considered an indicator of greater legitimacy (Levi, Sacks, and Tyler 2009). Other authors, such as Turper and Aarts (2017), propose using citizen trust in government institutions as a measure, citing it as a key indicator of legitimacy in democratic states. They note, however, that the single-item measurements and composite score models typically used to measure political trust are flawed in their own ways, potentially limiting the viability of such a measure. Some authors also suggest using consistent adherence to procedural justice by the government to measure citizen willingness to obey since it establishes that the government is willing to act in accordance with the law rather than circumventing it when convenient (Levi, Sacks, and Tyler 2009; Fisk and Cherney 2016). Fisk and Cherney (2016) also posit in their research on government legitimacy that service delivery and its influence on citizen perceptions could be used as an indicator, though their findings in Nepal suggest that it is not as correlated as procedural justice is. Authors such as Lemay-Hébert and Mathieu (2014) further highlight the OECD's measures of legitimacy, which include adherence to legal processes and service delivery as input and output legitimacy, respectively.

Finally, it is important to point out that some authors propose the use of multiple indicators for measuring state legitimacy, which aligns with the approach taken by the CIFP project. While more challenging to implement than individual indicators due to the difficulties in acquiring sufficient data for each indicator, this approach is perceived as especially useful due to lending greater accuracy to analyses. Weatherford (1992), for example, proposes a model for measuring political legitimacy that would combine the political components studied at the macro level, such as government responsiveness and external efficacy, with personal indicators from microlevel studies such as political interest and political efficacy. Lamb (2014) similarly argues that accurately measuring legitimacy (or the lack thereof) requires a multidimensional approach rather than focusing solely on individual views or public attributes at the expense of the other. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) model for studying state fragility takes a different approach, evaluating legitimacy in political, security, economic, and social outcomes with indicators such as the nature of political participation and level of support for militant groups using interviews, polls, and surveys (USAID 2005). Carment, Prest, and Samy (2008) similarly use a model based on a number of indicators for legitimacy, such as the Polity IV score for level of democracy, gender, and human empowerment measures, and press freedom. In chapter 2, we will more closely examine how legitimacy affects the capacity of states to develop over time, in particular public support for leaders and elites—both national and regional.

Most, if not all, definitions of fragility point to the lack of capacity—namely, the use of resources toward productive outcomes—as one important aspect of fragility. Brinkerhoff (2010, 66) defines capacity as follows: "Capacity deals with the aptitudes, resources, relationships and facilitating conditions necessary to act effectively to achieve some intended purpose. Capacity can be addressed at a range of levels, from individuals all the way up to entire countries." Although state building is now increasingly recognized as being critical, much of the focus of international actors is about building capacity and service delivery. Measures such as gross domestic product (GDP, both total and in per capita terms) and reserve holdings can thus be used to operationalize capacity because they speak to the amount of resources that states have. Further, they are available for most countries and thus helpful for comparative analysis. But even something like reserve holdings may be misleading if countries keep higher levels of reserves as a strategy to undervalue their exchange rates rather than a means to self-insure against future crises.

In his discussion of capacity development, Brinkerhoff (2010) talks about how donors have increasingly considered the environment within which capacity development takes place, which inherently poses a problem for fragile contexts. Indeed, an important change that has happened since the early 2000s is that donors have begun to focus their aid on countries with a strong track record of good performance.[2] This so-called selectivity or ex post conditionality requires that governments implement certain agreed reforms before becoming eligible for aid. For example, the US Millennium Challenge Corporation was established as an independent US foreign assistance agency in 2004. It partners with and provides aid to poor countries that are committed to good governance, economic freedom, and investments in their citizens. Countries become eligible for aid compacts (grants) based on an assessment of their performance on several indicators that include civil liberties and political rights, accountability, government effectiveness, rule of law, corruption, trade policy, and fiscal policy. Not surprisingly, some of the most fragile countries in the world have not benefited from aid under this program.

Several of the countries that we consider trapped in fragility, such as Afghanistan, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia, and South Sudan, are low-income countries with poor policy environments.[3] These are countries that do poorly on human development indicators and are unable to provide basic services such as health and education to their populations. Indicators such as GDP and GDP per capita and those related to the provision of basic services—namely, education completion rates, health expenditure, and the Human Development Index of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)—are thus used to measure capacity. This is not to say these countries have not experienced economic growth. However, to the extent that growth and development may not always be inclusive or trickle-down, other measures such as education and health indicators, life expectancy, and infant mortality are important complements to income measures. In fact, the point of creating the UNDP's Human Development Index—which combines per capita income with life expectancy and education—was to shift the focus away from a narrow conception of development based on income to a broader one that recognized the multidimensionality of the development process. Over time, this elastic definition of development has been stretched to include other dimensions such as gender and inequality.

However, it is also true that per capita incomes can explain much of the variation that is observed in the availability of social services such as health and education across countries. In other words, notwithstanding the problems that result when growth and development are not inclusive enough, improvements in per capita incomes are essential for the poor and the services that they can afford.[4] Indeed, sustained economic growth—that is, continued improvements in incomes—is the most effective way to deal with extreme poverty and ensure that people have access to basic services.[5] In this regard, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) led to significant increases in aid toward poverty reduction and the social sectors and away from the hard sectors such as infrastructure. As the first MDG of halving poverty was achieved before the 2015 deadline, the emphasis in recent years has shifted to "shared prosperity" (World Bank 2014). Inequality, which was not among the eight MDGs, is now one of the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). However, Dollar and Kraay (2002) and Dollar, Kleineberg, and Kraay (2016) have shown that even the poorest quintiles benefit from income growth overall. Unfortunately, there are significant gaps in data on inequality for fragile countries.

Other measures related to capacity focus on external factors in the form of foreign aid, remittances, foreign direct investment, and countries' trade balance (and openness to trade) can add to resources that are mobilized domestically. There are important distinctions from the latter (e.g., taxes collected) and external finance such as foreign aid and remittance flows. Taxes imply a fiscal contract between governments and citizens whereby there is an expectation that governments will provide public goods and services in return for the taxes collected from citizens. On the other hand, foreign aid and remittance flows can be characterized as "unearned revenue" and may in fact create disincentives for governments to mobilize resources domestically, especially during an economic downturn. However, even if they can create disincentives to raise revenue locally and a situation of overdependence, external finance such as foreign aid is important for small economies that do not have large internal markets and face difficulties either raising revenue locally or attracting other sources of external finance.

Table I.1 provides examples of indicators used by the CIFP project to operationalize the ALC construct. This list is by no means exhaustive, but it indicates the range of indicators that can be used to measure various characteristics of stateness. Tikuisis et al. (2015) argue that a disadvantage of using several indicators is that they may describe similar state characteristics and lead to biases as a result of oversampling. They propose the use of a minimalist construct based on data availability and unambiguous correspondence with authority, legitimacy, and capacity. As a result, their minimalist State Evolution Model (SEM) considers only a few variables to categorize states, which are highlighted in table I.1. A minimalist approach is also helpful because the data requirements are less demanding. In the next chapter, we choose correlates that build on the ALC construct to test the correlation of various traps with the fragility trap.

TABLE I.1. EXAMPLES OF INDICATORS FOR ALC

Authority	Legitimacy	Capacity
Conflict intensity	Press freedom	Education—primary completion female
Dependence on external military support	Gender Empowerment Measure	Education—primary completion total
External debt—percentage of GNI	Gender Related Development Index	Foreign aid—percentage of expenditures
Government effectiveness	Human rights—empowerment	Foreign aid—total and per capita
Infrastructure—electricity	Human rights—physical integrity	GDP per capita
Infrastructure—telephones	Level of democracy	GDP total
Level of corruption	Participation in international political organizations	Health expenditure—percentage of GDP
Military expenditure—percentage	Permanence of regime type	Human Development Index
Paying taxes	Restrictions on civil liberties	Infant mortality
Political stability	Restrictions on political rights	Life expectancy—total
Terrorism—number of fatalities	Voice and accountability	Literacy total
Terrorism—number of incidents		Remittances as portion of GDP
		Reserve holdings—total

WHY FOCUS ON THE FRAGILITY TRAP?

In applying the fragility index and ALC construct to an evaluation of states stuck in a fragility trap, we ask three core questions: (1) Why do states stay stuck in a fragility trap? (2) What lessons can be gleaned from states that have successfully transitioned from fragility to effectiveness and resilience? (3) In what ways do targeted and context-specific policies and interventions support fragile states' transitions toward resilience and sustainable exits from the fragility trap? In seeking answers to these questions, there are a number of criticisms that such an endeavor might precipitate and that we must confront before we embark on this study. The first is that it is hardly original to argue that states do not constantly modernize in teleological terms. It has been over fifty years since theories of modernization put forward by Rostow (1960), among others, were held in check by Huntington (1968), who reoriented the discussion in opposition to the unilinear assumptions of modernization theory (Fukuyama 2006). Huntington's examination of institutional breakdown as a consequence of rapid social mobilization showed how states decay or reverse their trajectory. Since then we have witnessed numerous contributions over the last three decades from Migdal (1988, 2001), Jackson (1990), Rotberg (2003, 2004), and Mata and Ziaja (2009), among numerous others who, through their writings, have opened up the theoretical discussion regarding chronic fragility.

Second, we have seen a backlash against the idea of the fragile or failed state as policy prescription. Consider that an article in *Foreign Affairs* (Mazarr 2013) argued that the concept of state failure was no longer useful to policymakers because the so-called Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) was essentially over and that the results from comprehensive interventions in failed states over the last decade were generally unsatisfactory. But these criticisms were largely directed at a very narrow and specific understanding of fragility amid the development of a particular single-ranked index of country performance vaulted onto the policy stage with the introduction of the Fund for Peace "Failed States Index" (FSI) in 2005. Almost exclusively, those states that ranked high on the FSI list were those experiencing, emerging from, or entering into large-scale conflict.[6] Kaplan (2014), among others, has been critical of such methodologies because they are not sufficiently nuanced and are overdetermined by conflict.[7]

Along with these more mainstream policy and empirical criticisms are the debates over the securitization of development, or the security-development nexus (Buur, Jensen, and Stepputat 2007; Stern and Öjendal 2010; Duffield 2005). This school of thought questions the linkages between security and development as they are seen through Western policymaking lenses. Some argue that the focus on this nexus is another tool of the international hegemonic communities that can be used to further security interests and funnel much-needed aid money toward "hard" approaches to intervention in fragile states. It also questions the use of the term "security-development nexus," arguing that it is not clear exactly what is meant by it and that it is used inconsistently and for different purposes (Stern and

Öjendal 2010). We take these points seriously when considering the development of our theory, analysis, and conceptual framing of the problem. We understand that we must locate the fragility trap within a larger set of assumptions of how states develop over time. We are sensitive to the need for nuance and disaggregation, avoiding overdetermination in conceptualizing the fragility trap primarily as a function of conflict. We are also aware that fragility traps cannot be solely defined through a security lens.

Notwithstanding these criticisms, we believe a focus on the fragility trap is warranted on both theoretical and policy grounds. From a policy perspective, there are numerous challenges to states stuck in a fragility trap, including risks of ethnic conflict, challenges to economic development, and regional instability. Leaders must ensure they have institutions to provide adequate services to the population, and they must always find ways to properly channel ethnic, social, and ideological competition that will otherwise erode the effectiveness of weak institutions even more. They must find a way to overcome the cumulative effects of poverty, overpopulation, rural flight, and rapid urbanization as well as environmental degradation, which can otherwise overwhelm a vulnerable state's legitimacy.

In more basic terms, our need to understand the fragility trap promotes a disaggregated analysis of fragility. From a theoretical perspective, these challenges are both conceptual and causal. We know that examining fragility is more nuanced than just considering whether it does or does not exist. As noted, fragility can be viewed as the inverse of resilience. But what actually defines state resilience? Is it the resilience against economic shocks, against humanitarian disasters, or against political violence? Perhaps it is a composite of these, which still presents an analytical challenge. It would be prudent, then, to examine the fragility trap along separate dimensions of stateness in an effort to bring increased rigor and clarity to the identification of state structural factors that are causal to a specific dimension of fragility. Such an approach, if successful, would show that the core characteristics of the fragility trap are interlinked and generate negative spillover effects across domains of state performance. A key but underemphasized element in the conceptual discussion on fragility traps is the legitimacy that upholds existing divisions of labor and political order. Societal perceptions and expectations are essential determinants of how a population views and reacts to state policies. A state that does not fulfill the most basic obligations of statehood means that leadership does not have the means and credibility to compel internal order and deter or repel external aggression.

Weaknesses in legitimacy also derive from a leadership that does not, or cannot, provide sufficiently for the people to attract minimal domestic support. For example, when the central state starts to deteriorate, leading to the fractionalization of society, loyalties can shift from the state to traditional communities that seem to offer better protection, employment opportunities, and public services. Thus, compliance with state laws can degenerate when state institutions lose legitimacy in the eyes of large segments of the population, resulting in lost economic productivity.

There are other important reasons to focus on fragility traps. For one, states in a fragility trap are quantitatively and qualitatively distinct from those that are not. Indeed, while it has been argued that states close to this tipping point can benefit more from foreign aid (Andrimihaja, Cinyabuguma, and Devarajan 2011), using aid resources to tackle endemic problems such as poor property rights enforcement, corruption, insecurity, and violence may not be sufficient to propel states stuck in the fragility trap toward better economic outcomes. Since this policy insight is simply a theoretical premise without sufficient empirical validity to support it, an objective of this volume is to assess how specifically bad policies keep states stuck in traps while better policies help shift them away from fluctuations and tipping points. This matters because donors are hesitant to allocate aid dollars precisely because of such volatility and lack of traction. For example, many of the countries stuck in the fragility trap are aid darlings (e.g., Afghanistan) yet have shown little to no improvement in their condition. Indeed, the 2009 European Report on Development came to the conclusion that from 1979 to 2009, fragility levels of the bottom thirty-five countries had not improved. Clearly the fragility trap exists, and thinking about these trapped countries requires further theorizing and empirical evaluation.

Another reason to focus on fragility traps is that over the past decade, the majority of research has focused on the causes of fragility. Absent from this very large and well-documented research are studies of fragility persistence. Conversely, we still do not completely understand why states that were once considered fragile have successfully recovered and have become stable, while others remain fragile for long periods of time. Finally, the tendency to focus on causes of fragility using ex post facto analysis has lent itself to reactive rather than anticipatory policy responses. Exit and prevention strategies are often missing or weak in the overall policy envelope. With sufficient forewarning, donors and other international actors can contribute to supporting and facilitating political and institutional processes in order to strengthen the basis for resilience and to prevent a country from lapsing back into fragility and potential failure. This might include political settlements, by working to underpin the responsiveness of the state to effectively fulfill its principal functions in providing key services or by supporting legitimate forms of societal political pressures that will determine how a state should function.

WHAT IS A TRAP? CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS OF SEVERAL TRAPS

Scholars have long recognized the existence of traps wherein states are unable to achieve economic growth, provide essential services, and control the use of force within their borders. The seminal interpretation of this concept has been outlined by economists as the "poverty trap," which describes various self-reinforcing mechanisms whereby individuals or countries that start out poor are likely to remain poor (Azariadis 1996; Azariadis and Stachurski 2005). Consider, for example, the textbook neoclassical growth model, which predicts convergence in incomes across countries. The observation of divergence in incomes in the data has led to a search for possible explanations. Accordingly, theories of conditional convergence argue that some countries may face intrinsic characteristics—distance from seaports, natural resource endowments, institutional legacies resulting from colonial history—that prevent them from attaining higher income levels.[8] Another explanation is related to the issue of thresholds and multiple equilibria. Instead of a unique equilibrium for a country, it can find itself in a low- or high-level equilibrium, depending on its ability to cross a minimum threshold level of income per capita at which there are increasing returns. Such multiple equilibria growth models allow for the possibility of poverty traps and provide an argument for coordinated public intervention in the form of a big push (e.g., significant increases in aid flows) to enable countries to reach a high-level equilibrium.

Broadly speaking, the main identified causes of such traps include lack of technology adoption, market failure, and institutional failure. Poverty traps occur when poorly functioning markets and institutions perpetuate themselves through a positive feedback-cycle mechanism because the incentive structures are distorted by imperfect information, high transaction costs, and pervasive corruption. Moreover, institutions are difficult to reform from the outside, and change often has to come from within (Weaver 2008; Chauvet and Collier 2008). Institutional structures are heavily "path dependent," a fact that also feeds into the perpetuation of the poverty trap because they are resistant to (in this case, positive) transformation (David 1994). Often institutions and their rules are created and maintained by those in power; in a sense, they are a political construction, where those in power have the incentive to stay there and a disincentive to promote reform (North 1995). It is also important to note that poverty traps do not have to be limited to the state level and that within countries local variations of the same phenomenon exist (Jalan and Ravallion 2002).

Another important trap is the so-called conflict trap, which occurs "if the long-term risk of conflict in a country or region increases considerably after the first conflict onset" (Hegre et al. 2011, 3).[9] Countries in the conflict trap tend to be stuck there for a very long time, they generate spillovers to other countries, and they have a high chance of returning to conflict even after the first one has ended (Hegre et al. 2011). Collier et al. (2003) identify several channels through which a conflict trap arises. First, civil wars halt economic development through their impacts on growth and per capita incomes; the loss of human and physical capital as a result of war has devastating consequences for countries as a result of lost production. Countries become trapped when war causes poverty, and low income contributes to tension. Low growth means high unemployment and thus plenty of angry young men ready to fight.[10]

In addition to the poverty trap and the conflict trap, fragile countries may face a capability trap that prevents them from carrying out basic functions such as service provision, maintenance of law and order, and security (Pritchett and de Weijer 2010; Pritchett, Woolcock, and Andrews 2010, 2013). Empirical research focusing on "capability traps" have largely drawn on the effects of donor communities (Pritchett, Woolcock, and Andrews 2010, 2013) or are based on limited interpretations of state development equivalent to economic growth (Andrimihaja, Cinyabuguma, and Devarajan 2011) or governance (Rotberg 2004). In a valuable interpretation of the capability trap, Pritchett, Woolcock, and Andrews (2013) and Andrews, Pritchett, and Woolcock (2017) argue that the key reasons for failures of interventionists come from the kinds of aid delivered to the most fragile states and the subsequent lack of an optimal response that undermines the development of strong institutions and public administration strategies. They argue that states adopt either "isomorphic mimicry" to maintain international legitimacy despite structural dysfunctionality or "premature load bearing," which allows failure to exist while creating the illusion of implementing effective developmental policies and the trappings of modernization.

Some studies have identified mechanisms by which states can artificially prop up their institutions so that the institution looks and feels like an ideal model; however, the actual functionality and resilience is left lacking (Pritchett, Woolcock, and Andrews 2010, 2013). Closely related is the idea of premature load bearing, wherein newly formed state institutions are expected to achieve much more than is possible in a short period of time. Western development agencies commonly use results-based management approaches to decide where and how much aid to allocate, resulting in unrealistic expectations that are not met. This is because states adapt to the expectations placed on them as Pritchett, Woolcock, and Andrews's idea of isomorphic mimicry shows. Indeed, Bermeo (2016) shows that fragile state reversals and "regressive" trends in governance are partly due to the fact that abuses have become subtler. Outright military coups have become less common, and those coups that do occur often attempt to frame their actions in the context of an effort to restore or improve democracy. Democratic backsliding, moreover, often takes place in those very democratic institutions, such as elections and majority rule. Bermeo (2016) makes the case that a great deal of these trends can be explained by the improvement and implementation of international observation.

Such strategies, according to Pritchett, Woolcock, and Andrews (2010, 2013), allow states to buy time to enable reforms to work, to mask nonaccomplishment, or to actively resist or deflect internal and external pressures for improvement. Further, they suggest that it is dangerous to conflate institutional form with institutional function. Systemic isomorphic mimicry occurs when organizations implement policies or programs that mimic the institutional forms of functional states and expect them to operate in the developing state in the same manner. The illusion of development is rewarded and overshadows its lack of functionality. Pritchett, Woolcock, and Andrews (2010, 2013) warn that this can lead to premature load bearing, which occurs when unrealistic expectations overwhelm the capabilities of institutions and ultimately undermine indigenous efforts and systemic change in the developing state. Thus, weak administrative capability is the main cause of slow or stagnant development. Baliamoune-Lutz and McGillivray (2008) reinforce this point by showing the "modernization theory" bias that assumes institutions can be imported into countries to facilitate rapid development. Clearly, there are fundamental differences between the internal political and economic orders of these types of capability-trapped states. Further, implementing development policy that does not consider the specific incentive structures that help provide order can be ineffective or further exacerbate core structural problems. While these preliminary studies of potential explanations of the capability trap and its causes are certainly useful, many of the conclusions are drawn on the basis of anecdotal evidence and specific examples of how these principles may play out in practice. Likewise, when it comes to the economic modeling of fragility referenced above, only three variables are empirically tested, leaving out a great deal of valuable information and oversimplifying the phenomenon.

A final and related trap is one we call the "legitimacy trap," which describes the weakness of societal values to legitimize the actions of the state, leading to a perpetuation of weak institutions and rule of law. In contrast to capability traps driven largely by donor expectations regarding institutional capacity and development, legitimacy traps conjure up ideas of societal consent and participation in systems of good governance (local, regional, and global) and effective leadership. The legitimacy trap carries a normative dimension about the kinds of outcomes and processes that are most appropriate to ensure stable political orders. Different political orders have different forms of legitimating processes, but the assumption is that each will derive stability from constructive, ongoing, and effective bargaining between the state and society. Formally, as defined earlier, legitimacy is the extent to which a state commands public loyalty to a form of governance in order to generate domestic support for that government's legislation and policy, through a voluntary and reciprocal arrangement of effective governance and citizenship founded upon broadly accepted principles of government selection and succession that are recognized both locally and internationally.

As others have argued, this implies that institutional design is crucial to legitimacy. States in which the ruling regime lacks either broad and voluntary domestic support or general international recognition suffer from a lack of legitimacy and poor institutional design. Other studies referencing legitimacy point to political interference, rent seeking, elite capture, and lobbying as the key culprits in propagating extreme fragility (Asongu and Kodila-Tedika 2013). One can think of legitimacy first as a process that engenders viable and lasting state-society relations, such as a just and fair legal system that improves the likelihood of compliance with the law, and secondly as an outcome from which society derives some lasting benefit, such as security or education. The basic institutional mechanisms of a state may reflect mechanisms that are deemed necessary for facilitating a realization of those effective outcomes, while processes may relate to programs and policies that a state is willing to undertake in order to attain effective outcomes. Attitudinal and cultural perceptions of these processes and outcomes capture a related kind of state-society legitimacy because they represent a shared belief in a particular type of political order. When organized around forms of identity, community, class, or gender, these shared beliefs resonate within and impact the overall effectiveness of the political order.

Differences in how a political system should be ordered, for example, will generate crises of legitimacy, internal struggles, and sometimes violence. Compliance with the law typically declines when state institutions lose legitimacy in the eyes of large segments of the population, but that is not always the case. Clearly, in many countries the idea of legitimate political orders is simply rhetorical window dressing; governments routinely base their legitimacy on a variety of other grounds, invoking ideology, external threats, or even the divine right of kings to justify their exercise of authority. Similarly, the protection of human rights, as enshrined in such documents as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, presents a meaningful normative metric with which state performance may be measured.

Again, such documents are clearly aspirational in nature; few, if any, (especially fragile) states have the capacity, let alone the will, to implement global ideals of human rights. Similar arguments may be made with respect to respect for political rights and civil liberties, the treatment of disempowered populations, and environmentally sustainable policies. For example, there is strong evidence that globally, and particularly in fragile states, women (as a group) are more vulnerable and marginalized than men (as a group) across numerous political indicators of legitimacy (voice and representation), social indicators (enrollment in primary and secondary educationa institutions, literacy, health), and economic indicators (wages, income, labor force participation, land rights).

As Pritchett, Woolcock, and Andrews (2010, 2013) argue, legitimacy is also derived from international recognition to the extent that there are international standards, norms, and rules by which states are expected to behave. In this regard, legitimacy is distinct from legality insofar as an outcome or a process can be considered legitimate without being legal. Consider, for example, the World Bank's approach of measuring governance as a set of traditions consisting of both formal and informal institutions that determine how authority is exercised in a particular country for the common good, thus encompassing the process of selecting, monitoring, and replacing governments; the capacity to formulate and implement sound policies and deliver public services; and the respect of citizens and the state for the institutions that govern economic and social interactions among them.

The World Bank framework does not conflate effective or good governance with "legitimate" political processes such as democracy, although that is often what the literature does. The two ideas are related, and understanding both is essential. In other words, the most effective governance outcomes may not be achieved in the presence of democratic structures. Certainly, the relationship between democracy and good governance is not absolute, where nondemocratic and hybrid regimes are capable of achieving good governance in the absence of democratic political processes. In this regard, policymakers must be sensitive to the need for measures of legitimacy that incorporate participatory processes and state-society relations while not equating them completely with democracy.

The legitimacy trap underpins our understanding of why state-society relations are so weak in fragile states. Yet it is a largely underemphasized, if not neglected, aspect of development policy and theory. Assessments of fragile states are particularly prone to this problem wherein the majority of donors have either focused on economic capacity or governance. Indicator-based analyses, in particular, typically reflect this dichotomy while underemphasizing questions of legitimacy. In part, that neglect is a function of the methodological difficulty of measuring legitimacy—especially when it comes to evaluating inclusivity and horizontal inequalities within a society. In part, it reflects an undue emphasis on growth as a solution to underdevelopment.

In reality, it cannot be assumed that a strong state is coterminous with strong state-society relations, just as it cannot be assumed that a fragile state necessarily has weak state-society relations. Similarly, a state's legitimacy is closely tied to its treatment of minorities and the effectiveness of its policies toward poverty, inclusivity, and inequality. Narrow policies favoring one group are seen to be less legitimate than broad distributive ones. A less legitimate state does not merely respond to crises produced by uneven political and economic opportunities but is also itself the dominating force providing differential advantages to regions and peoples. Similar to Bremmer's (2006) idea of open and closed systems, there are instances of fragility where the state is underconsolidated—a situation where the state is not effective in the performance of its duties—and cases where the state is overextended—where it becomes a threat to its inhabitants.

In reviewing these various interpretations of what might keep fragile states trapped, we see merit in each, in particular those that emphasize weak capabilities and legitimacy since the two are interlinked. To be sure, not all fragility trap countries are conflict-ridden ones or those mired in extreme poverty or ones that might suffer from chronic legitimacy problems. Rather, fragility trap states exhibit a combination of these factors that place them at the bottom, including economic underdevelopment, a lack of political authority, and poor legitimacy. Further, in many of these descriptions, directions of causality are difficult to tease out, meaning that research examining the fragility trap should use a combination of both macrolevel comparisons and microlevel qualitative case studies (Carment and Samy 2012). This type of mixed-methods analysis will allow for a better understanding of how structural factors interact with exogenous shocks and agency-driven processes.

An additional caveat is that while the fragility trap is evocative of Collier's (2007) conflict trap, not all states trapped in extreme fragility are affected by conflicts, just as most, but not all, countries in conflict are fragile by definition (Carment, Prest, and Samy 2010). The fragility trap is not purely about economic development either. Not all poor people live in fragile states. According to recent studies, four-fifths of people living on less than $2 a day, an internationally accepted poverty line, live in middle-income countries, not poor ones (Sumner 2012). However, notwithstanding the claim that poverty is distributed across both low- and middle-income countries, it is estimated that by 2025 most absolute poverty will once again be concentrated in low-income countries. While middle-income countries will continue to make progress against poverty, the distribution of the global poor is growing in fragile states. That is because the number of poor people in fragile states has stayed flat since 1990 at about five hundred million and will continue at roughly that level until 2025. So while there may be more poor people in middle-income countries, those numbers will decrease over time. Additionally, by 2025, there will be twice as many poor people in fragile states relative to those in middle-income countries. For the same reasons that economic growth lifted China and India out of extreme poverty, foreign aid may be less relevant to middle-income countries as opposed to solutions developed through their own domestic policies. Most important, if absolute poverty levels in fragile states persist, then rather than being irrelevant, foreign aid will be essential for those states stuck in a fragility trap.

Related to the above point, there are those states that were recently or are now at the bottom of fragility rankings but which are defined as middle-income. This group includes some large states such as Angola, Iraq, Pakistan, and Nigeria and smaller ones such as Papua New Guinea and Yemen.[11] These states are often described as middle-income fragile or failed states (MIFFs). The MIFFs account for over two hundred million of the world's most impoverished people. Taking into account MIFFs as part of the fragility trap problematic raises important questions about how fragility is conceptualized and measured but also how to engage them. MIFFs pose a problem for donor engagement because they do not always need as much aid or the kind of aid targeting poor states. Their problems are mostly ones of distribution, political legitimacy, and governance. While some MIFFs perform well economically because they are resource rich, not all do, raising the question of why that particular type of state performs poorly despite reasonable economic performance.

Another reason for the persistence of fragility traps is clearly related to Pritchett, Woolcock, and Andrews's (2010, 2013) identification of "isomorphic mimicry," or the prevailing development orthodoxy to reward countries that are seen to be performing well or are thought to have good policy environments, with no clear direction on how to engage those characterized by perpetually poor policy environments. Conversely, high concentration of aid to a few aid darlings among the most fragile states (OECD 2015) means that some fragility trap states are vastly overfunded with respect to their capacity to absorb these funds, leading to premature load bearing. Fragility trap states with weak policy environments and poor institutional characteristics face a real challenge in effectively absorbing large amounts of aid over short periods of time. Studies have shown that the macroeconomic impact of aid on growth declines with fragility and that this effect is especially important in low- and lower-middle-income countries. Conversely, the aid orphans among the most fragile states are resource constrained as they cannot rely (as much as nonfragile states can) on other sources of financing, such as remittances and foreign direct investment.

One of the general conclusions we draw from an assessment of these various traps is that core structural elements of stateness represented by ALC provide key organizing concepts for evaluating the change within states over time. Indeed, as pointed out by Kaplan (2014) and reinforced by Grävingholt, Ziaja, and Kreibaum (2012), when state fragility is conceptualized as a multidimensional phenomenon, one does not lose policy-relevant information, compared to a situation where a single composite index is used. In brief, authority matters because leaders must ensure they have institutions to provide adequate services to their populations and protect them. Legitimacy matters because leaders must find ways to properly channel ethnic, social, and ideological competition that could otherwise erode the effectiveness of institutions. Capacity matters because leaders must find a way to overcome the devastating effects of poverty, overpopulation, rural flight, rapid urbanization, environmental degradation, and so forth. For example, the loss of legitimacy in state institutions in some segments of the population can result in noncompliance with the rule of law. Consequently, social and political order can break down, along with the loss of national cohesion and recognition of a common authority. As Faust, Grävingholt, and Ziaja (2013, 7) noted, what is needed is a bridge between single-score rankings "and the anarchic picture emerging when every country context is considered as qualitatively different." That such approaches are possible has recently been demonstrated in formal modeling (Besley and Persson 2011) and through data-driven clustering (Carment, Prest, and Samy 2010; Grävingholt, Ziaja, and Kreibaum 2012; Tikuisis, Carment, and Samy 2013).

THE WAY FORWARD

In chapter 1, we construct and test a fragility trap model to explain why some states are stuck, while others are not. We focus on the duration of the trap over a thirty-five-year period and the key causes of its persistence over time, drawing on operationalized interpretations of the four traps identified above. To test our model, we conduct statistical analysis based on an overarching framework organized around the three clusters of ALC. We then exploit the time series nature of our data set to conduct a comparative analysis of fragile state types. We argue that changes over time—or transitions—are a function of the sequencing of changes in key structural features of "stateness." For states that successfully exit fragility, not only do we expect to observe improvement in these key features, we also expect a specific kind of causal sequence to occur. Understanding the underlying causal features of this sequence of changes will contribute to a general framework and theory of fragility dynamics. Using a threefold typology of states—those that are stuck in a fragility trap, those that have successfully exited, and those that fluctuate between a successful exit and fragility—we examine where they fit with respect to some of the results on the determinants of state fragility. This methodology is consistent with current theoretical insights regarding exits from fragility described by Marshall and Cole (2014) and Naudé, Santos-Paulino, and McGillivray (2011, 8), who argue that "it is not unreasonable to conclude that all states are fragile to various degrees, in various domains and over different periods of time."

In chapter 2, we first examine why elites are important to understanding fragility dynamics. Then we turn to theoretical explanations of the kinds of elite behavior we observe in fragile states. We consider the importance of legitimacy and how its absence ultimately undermines those elites whose actions contribute to perpetual fragility. This chapter emphasizes state-society relations, specifically the role of legitimacy in underpinning the behavior of political, social, and economic elites. A focus on legitimacy is important for a number of reasons. First, previous studies found that legitimacy is rarely factored into aid allocation decisions (Carment, Prest, and Samy 2008). Second, its absence correlates strongly with weaknesses in the institutional processes that uphold rules, norms, and enforcement characteristics that collectively determine economic performance. Third, findings on the Arab Spring and democratic backsliding show that a lack of legitimacy is a key driver of instability and stagnation even when economic performance and state security are strong (Tikuisis and Carment 2017).

This chapter also considers the most salient causes of stagnation and reversal in light of our need to identify drivers of change that inform our case study comparisons. A focus on elites is important for three reasons. First, as fragile states undergo constant contractions and expansions in effectiveness and capacity, elites play an important role in implementing policies that effect those changes. Second, and related to the first, despite their importance, elites are often taken as a given in much of fragile states research, especially with its focus on structural transformation. Third, we assume the pursuit of elite interests may bring benefits to their own group but may also produce counterproductive outcomes for the state when its government proves incapable of adaptation. In some cases, that adaptation may entail a contrary policy change that alienates sectors of society or, worse, leads to the collapse of the state itself.

In chapters 3, 4, and 5, we juxtapose the threefold typology derived from our large sample analysis in chapter 1 against the main points in chapter 2 and apply them to six contrasting case studies. This comparison is an appropriate means to provide further support for our claims regarding the utility of sequencing fragile state transitions and fragility traps. Methodologically, there are two key strengths to this approach. First, theory building from cases often results in the generation of novel insights due to the constant association of seemingly incongruous evidence between different case types (Eisenhardt 1989). We will highlight the differences among the three types of fragile states through a structured comparative approach, by isolating and comparing common variables such as the ALC clusters and an identical time period for each. Second, a typology is more often than not empirically testable through quantitative means because measurable constructs have already been used to develop it to begin with. However, detailed cases can be held up for comparison in order to determine whether our theoretical claims hold true more generally (Eisenhardt 1989).

With these advantages in mind, we examine the sequencing dynamics present in a selected country of each type in more detail. Specifically, we look at two country-cases in each chapter: Yemen and Pakistan (type 1, countries trapped in fragility), Laos and Mali (type 2, countries that have moved into and out of fragility), and Bangladesh and Mozambique (type 3, countries that have exited fragility) as exemplars of each particular type. The selected cases are exemplars of the class of fragile states we wish to examine, a technique that is referred to as the "typical-case approach" (Gerring 2007, 91). The approach relies on the notion that the case selected is representative of the broader set of cases within the given category and is used to prove causal mechanisms that may provide evidence for or against a given theory (Seawright and Gerring 2008). By using this typological framework built on statistical analysis of the cases, we reduce the potential for case selection bias. The idea is to provide both enough control and enough variation on the dependent variable so that observations on the cases can be comparatively assessed in order to provide insight into each country type (George and Bennett 2005, 83). The specific countries to be examined were also selected based on the principle of maximizing geographical diversity and the range of fragility outcomes in order to improve the overall generalizability of the findings (Flyvbjerg 2006). Finally, there were also considerations made regarding data availability and the viability of information from secondary sources for in-depth case examination.

In chapter 3, we compare Pakistan and Yemen. Yemen, a country of twenty-five million inhabitants on the southern tip of the Arabian Peninsula, has been stuck in a fragility trap for over thirty-five years. It has ranked in the top forty most fragile countries for its entire postunification history and has been ranked among the top twenty most fragile countries more than two-thirds of that time. CIFP's rankings have placed Pakistan in the top twenty fragile states in the world in most years during the past two decades. On the one hand, as Pakistan's inability to control internal conflict, environmental degradation, and a highly unequal society increase over time, the legitimacy of the government continues to erode, and challenges from within increase. Yemen chose to not initially participate in the GWOT, suffered the consequences, and has since fallen into collapse. Pakistan, in contrast, was a full partner in the GWOT. Its economy has since stabilized, while its political fortunes remain uncertain.

In chapter 4, our two cases are Laos and Mali, countries that have moved into and out of fragility for over thirty years. They are both affected by environmental impacts and regional volatility, and because they are landlocked are dependent on their neighbors for economic prosperity and political stability. The picture of Mali's stability from 1980 to the present is of a country that continually "exits" fragility, only to reenter it further down the road. In fact, this is a pattern followed by many countries, including Laos. What these countries show is that stability is both achievable and easily reversed. In Mali's case, we witness forms of "isomorphic mimicry" and elite "rent seeking" in which elites take on the trappings of Western institutions to generate international support while failing to incorporate and develop fundamental strengths over time.

In chapter 5, we consider our successfully exited cases. They are Bangladesh and Mozambique, both of which have been fragile for much of their existence. Yet, unlike the other fragile states examined in this volume, both have managed to improve their performance over time. Since their calamitous and inauspicious beginnings, both Mozambique and Bangladesh have been beset by assassinations, internecine political infighting, and corruption. Yet their economic situations have improved despite ongoing aid dependence in the case of Mozambique and deep corruption in the case of Bangladesh. To be sure, both have significant structural problems that continue to hamper their economic growth and political development. In particular, in the case of Mozambique, structural economic weaknesses are beginning to reveal themselves, and the political situation has been volatile in the last few years. But in comparison to other countries examined in previous chapters, their exit from fragility is more clear-cut if not spectacular.

In comparing the successfully transitioned states against those that remain fragile and stuck in a trap, the concluding chapter (chapter 6) puts forth an explanation on why states fail to exit the fragility trap. We juxtapose this conclusion against those states that have successfully done so. Here we provide generalizable results, especially as they relate to how policies can support viable exits from the fragility trap. The chapter concludes by making the case that we must move beyond such exclusive definitions and understandings of fragility traps defined by the presence of large-scale violence or economic underdevelopment. There is a real need for closer and better monitoring of specific countries whose negative trends could be reversed through strategically timed and fairly narrow and specific policy interventions.