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Citation for published version:

Pospisil, J & Kuehn, F 2016, 'The Resilient State: New Regulatory Modes in International Approaches to Statebuilding?', *Third World Quarterly*, vol. 37, no. 1, pp. 1-16.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2015.1086637>

Digital Object Identifier (DOI):

[10.1080/01436597.2015.1086637](https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2015.1086637)

Link:

[Link to publication record in Edinburgh Research Explorer](#)

Document Version:

Peer reviewed version

Published In:

Third World Quarterly

Publisher Rights Statement:

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The Resilient State: New Regulatory Modes in International Approaches to Statebuilding?

'Resilience' has quickly risen to prominence in international security and development circles. In recent years, it has found its way into political discourse on statebuilding and state fragility, triggering a vast but often conceptually indistinct examination of the subject. Given its meaning in policy publications and guidelines, 'resilience' tends to eschew a static conceptualization of statehood, turning instead to a more dynamic, complex and process-oriented rendering of state-society relations. This illustrates a conceptual shift from 'failed states' to 'fragile states and situations'. It also transforms the 'failed state' as a mere threat perception – with 'stability' as its logical other – into 'fragility' as a particular form of social and political risk. This paper analyses the concepts in 43 policy papers focusing on the nexus of 'resilience' and 'fragility' in international statebuilding and assesses potential consequences. What does 'resilience' – as the opposite vision to 'fragility' – in fact mean? What is the practice derived from this chimerical state of states?

Keywords: fragile states, resilience, failed states, security, statebuilding policy

Introduction

The term 'resilience' has made its way into the statebuilding vocabulary: policy documents like the European Report on Development 2009¹ or the OECD DAC paper 'From Fragility to Resilience'² introduce – and use – resilience as a key concept in international statebuilding. Since the 2011 statebuilding guidance from the OECD DAC, the concept has been powerfully endorsed in the international statebuilding discourse. As a consequence, an increasing number of actors has turned to talking about and ostensibly planning resilience support, notably, the European Union in its 'Action Plan for Resilience in Crisis Prone Countries' from 2013.

Resilience has turned into a rhetoric tool to frame the international statebuilding agenda, mostly used in line with definitions such as that given by the DAC, according to which 'resilient states [...] are capable of absorbing shocks and transforming and channelling radical change or challenges while maintaining political stability and preventing violence. Resilient states exhibit the capacity and legitimacy of governing a population and its territory'.³ As clear as this definition may sound, the meaning, as well as intended addressees and, consequently, options for international engagement that the concept opens remain hazy, contradictory and disputed to be sure. Following the path of resilience discourse, we intend to track analytical or policy consequences from this opaque meaning of the term 'resilience': who is to be made resilient? Is it the state – as the OECD DAC definition implies? Is it state-society relations (or 'political settlements', about to become the conceptual framework for research and policy), societies as a whole, or communities, as David Chandler recently suggested?⁴ Even if an addressee is defined and agreed upon, what does resilience mean, can it be measured and how should it be applied in policy development in the first place? As next chapter of statebuilding endeavours, resilience has entered international parlance full force. It is now time to find out what it is meant to do, who uses the invocations of resilience for which purposes and what the practical consequences, e.g. programmes of international intervention, are.

This paper adds no additional meanings to the term resilience, nor does it attempt to decide definitely whether resilience aims at state institutions, state-society relations or social orders. Instead, it elaborates the particular features and aspects resilience has introduced to the statebuilding debate. After analysing resilience as specific (new) tool for statebuilding practices, we ask what the emergence of resilience tells us about changing international statebuilding policies: Is resilience a marker for conceptualizing statehood in different terms? What has changed in international statebuilding, and how are these changes reflected in the concept of resilience?

To find answers to these questions, we analyse 43 key policy documents from the last 15 years. The aim is to uncover the unfolding history and quality of the discourse on fragility and resilience. We discuss whether this discourse enables the development of new modes of regulating statehood⁵ in transnational policy design – mainly, of course, from the OECD world in its relation to peripheral statehood.

Statebuilding research revisited

Statehood and subsequent questions of statebuilding have always been relevant in international relations. Despite shifting cycles of focus, the state has been centre of political inquiries since it was famously ‘brought back in’ in the mid-1980s.⁶ Practically, the end of the Cold War opened up new avenues of international engagement with statehood – in particular where it soon became perceived as weak. On an academic level, this watershed resulted in challenging the central role the state held in earlier IR approaches from different perspectives.⁷ Resilience, we maintain, is a new step in framing and packaging ‘the state’ and what international actors expect it to do; in this section, we trace the evolving topics, from institutional approaches to ‘fragile states’ and prepare the ground for analysing resilience as a new vision in statebuilding policy.

A quarter of a century of increasingly open intervention in (primarily peripheral) statehood has shown that no easy fixes are likely. The introduction of resilience in statebuilding, and the new language it ushered in, demonstrate how dynamically understandings of the state are adopted, through several stages, lines and ‘generations’ of discourse. Scholarly research has been closely tackling the practical questions of state(re)building. As Bueger and Bethke point out, the ‘failed state’ concept is a joint product of policy and academia.⁸ Security and development actors, in particular, aimed to learn how to practise interventions more successfully. In many cases, such interests have been supported by research grants – conceptual work was conducted or commissioned by agencies like DIFD, the European Union and the World Bank, or the CIA-funded State Failure Task Force⁹. Carment et al. lament ‘lack of theorizing’ in fragile states research as a result of tight connections between practitioners and academic research.¹⁰ They locate the ‘fragile states’ concept as complementary to ‘developing states’ and ‘democratizing states’, with an intersection that they frame as ‘weak states’.¹¹ Chandler interprets such a framework as a movement ‘toward a common security-development paradigm’,¹² strongly intertwined with ‘post-liberal governance’ implemented in the institutionalist paradigm that statebuilding interventions follow¹³, as Ghani and Lockhart’s ‘Fixing Failed States’ demonstrates in particular.¹⁴ Such collaboration between the now Afghan president and the policy consultant Lockhart developing a statebuilding framework shows the strong linkage between academia and policy.

It is thus safe to assume that resilience likewise is a product of these epistemic structures of knowledge production. In the face of increasing disenchantment with straight-forward statebuilding, resilience evolved as a shift of vision, away from sturdy state institutions towards including societal forces which, according to common criticism, earlier statebuilding concepts were all too often ignoring.¹⁵ Asking how to build states, most accounts of statebuilding approaches failed to focus their attention on the very concepts intrinsically linked to this question, like, for example, 'fragile states'. 'For a majority of scholars, these concepts are not of interest as *objects of study*', Bueger and Bethke note.¹⁶ They analyse the evolving 'fragile states' concept and demonstrate which scholarly works proved to be the most important at a particular time for establishing the concept (with Zartman's 1995 publication on 'collapsed states'¹⁷ likely the most influential).

A recent Third World Quarterly special issue on fragile states as a 'political concept' emphasises the strong role of development policy actors in concept elaboration and development, in particular the World Bank,¹⁸ European Union¹⁹ and OECD. The International Network on Conflict and Fragility (INCAF) at the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) proved to be particularly influential. Lemay-Hébert and Mathieu demonstrate this with an actor-based analysis, revealing close personal links between scholars and DAC officials, and the vigorous attempts by the OECD to shape this discourse.²⁰ In the following, we expand on this analysis, scrutinising *how* resilience came to be viewed as a solution to all the problems older statebuilding approaches were unable to solve. While the history of the concept and the high degree of policy involvement are revealed, we explore *how* 'fragile states' have arrived at 'resilience'. To trace this process, we unpack policy discourse, showing how policy actors approach conceptual discussions more schematically compared to academic debates. Without neglecting the manifold problems resulting from the search for quick solutions, particularly in terms of implementation, such a focus allows to analyse systematically how a concept developed. The following section of this article thus traces the history of resilience empirically, focusing in particular on the development policy realm, since development policy epitomizes the civilian efforts of state- and peacebuilding.

Assessing the conceptual development of resilience within statebuilding, 43 key policy documents covering the last 15 years have been analysed (see appendix). These documents represent six key international actors from the multilateral (the OECD DAC and the World Bank) and the bilateral realm (Germany, the United Kingdom and the United States), as well as the European Union.²¹ All documents were subject to a software-assisted topical analysis, consisting of a structural coding process that was designed to identify similarities and differences in the meanings attached to key terms. The analysis situates resilience within older, more established terms like state failure and fragility. We are thus able to trace resilience's particular history, and the methods and practices used and aimed for in practice.

The Fragility-Resilience Spectrum in Statebuilding

State failure and state fragility are terms that deal with a similar phenomenon. However, they hardly refer to the same cases, or to the same structural framework. Most significantly, they are located within a certain historic disposition. Fragility is the younger term, in use since roughly the early 2000s, while the history of the concept of state failure can be traced back to at least 1992, when 'failed states' were introduced as part of increasing IR threat-mongering by the famous Foreign Policy article of Helman and Ratner.²² Carment et al. therefore speak of two generations

of approaches to the phenomenon of state failure. The first generation, exhibiting a simplistic assumption of 'failed states' that would need to be stabilised, 'tends to focus on unilinear causal explanations, in which a variety of factors cause either conflict or underdevelopment, which in turn leads to fragility, failure, or collapse of the state', while second generation approaches, in contrast, 'explicitly recognize the diverse nature of fragility and failure' and 'attempt to incorporate both structure and agency'.²³

Resilience then, one might assume, should be the child of what Carment et al. call the 'second generation'. Earlier, unilinear causality of 'failed states' would find its expression in equally unilinear cures like military-led stabilisation efforts, and building working state institutions, which would then guarantee state stability (as the opposite of state failure). Beyond such approaches, resilience can be analysed as opposite vision to fragility. In order to turn fragility around and transform fragile states and societies into something 'resilient', a much more complex package needs to be formulated, targeting agents as well as structures, along with their interrelations within the wider normative setting of statehood at the international level.

Our analysis of policy documents supports Carment et al.'s assessment on a general level. However, it reveals in more detail the importance of further fragmenting the history of statebuilding policy. When we look beyond simple mentioning of the terms ('failed states', 'fragile states', 'resilience') and take into account the meaning, definitions and analysis attached to them, we can distinguish four generations of statebuilding, presented in Table 1. As policy implementation tends to be slow and gradual, key policy papers, guidelines and strategies express the changes more concisely than those used by Carment et al., who relied on a much larger and less focused variety of policy documents.²⁴

[Table 1]

The first generation starts at the early stages of the development-security nexus in the heyday of conflict prevention.²⁵ In the late 1990s, this nexus was the catchphrase that encompassed all other elements of working in violent and conflict-ridden environments, a *leitmotif*. Questions of state failure existed at that time, but were perceived as a sub-feature of violent conflict. That a state fails in the course of violent conflict could be avoided, after all: 'In the case of "failed states", or in countries where certain areas are controlled by non-government or anti-government authorities, local level, non-state mechanisms may be the most effective means through which peacebuilding and conflict management can be animated.'²⁶

While conflict resolution was in full bloom, the concept of 'failed states' developed rather quietly, in particular in the national security realm of the United States. As early as 1994, the CIA launched a large-scale research project called the 'State Failure Task Force', located at George Mason University, which published its first report in 1995.²⁷ In 1997, 'failed states' were mentioned in the US National Security Strategy, although under the heading of 'regional or state-centered threats' (the Strategy in general focused more on *rogue* than on failed states²⁸). Another such niche was formed by the governance departments of the development agencies, set up as a consequence of the 'good governance' debate of the early 1990s: in 1993, USAID's Center for Democracy and Governance unveiled in its 'strategic plan' that '[t]he recent phenomenon of 'failed states' with no functioning governmental systems has caused widespread political instability and large-scale

economic collapse [...]. Helping to restore functioning governments and respect for human rights in those countries poses special challenges.’²⁹

Causes and consequences are inversed compared to previous conflict prevention: it is not violent conflict that causes state failure (and hence state failure will diminish if the violent conflict is transformed), but rather state failure virtually inevitably leads to violence.³⁰ Furthermore, ‘failed states’ added an important diplomatic tool: by creating a link to good governance, democracy and human rights, so-called ‘difficult partnerships’ (or *rogue states* in the more straightforward US language) could be included in the programmes, adding a pronounced political spin. Within the second generation (which had its breakthrough following 9/11 and the Afghanistan intervention),³¹ countries prone to violent conflict, without functioning state institutions, those – in the technical language of the World Bank – ‘under stress’ (LICUS), and the opponents of the ‘coalitions of the willing’ (to stay within the metaphors of the early 2000s) could be dealt with under the same heading.

Perhaps most crystalline, the German ‘Aktionsplan Zivile Krisenprävention’ of 2004 represents best the shift from conflict prevention to state failure (and the subsumption of the former within the latter).³² The strategic vision is prototypical: (re-)establishing reliable state structures, defined along the cornerstones of the rule of law, democracy, human rights and security, as well as the promotion of peace potentials within civil society.³³ Hence, dealing with state failure is a public effort aiming at working state institutions along an internationally agreed normative framework. Conflict prevention remains present, although as a private, almost second-order civil society enterprise. Remarkable in the ‘Aktionsplan’ is the intrinsic linkage of ‘peace’ with ‘stability’.³⁴ Despite Roger Mac Ginty’s argument that stabilization ‘lowers the horizons of peace’³⁵, this notion became a central point of reference in German state- and peacebuilding policies, mainly for the military. ‘Stabilization’ gained in importance in the upcoming years of the ‘state failure’ (but also the subsequent ‘state fragility’) discourse, particularly in US and UK strategies.

Interestingly, despite the steadily high popularity of the term ‘failed state’, the second generation proved to be short-lived. As early as 2003, USAID laid the foundations for the future shift to ‘state fragility’: they decided to develop a ‘fragile states strategy’, which was to become the main reference for the third generation. Preparing this strategy, the Center for Institutional Reform and the Informal Sector (IRIS) at the University of Maryland was consulted by USAID’s Bureau of Policy and Program Coordination to prepare definitions of and a methodology for dealing with fragile states.

The published report was a result of this consultancy and introduced three important aspects into the debate on state fragility: first, it defined fragile states as a multidimensional problem, but still as a problem related to states which could be subject to a typology: ‘states that are ‘failing,’ ‘in failure,’ or ‘recovering from failure,’ may be considered as all – to varying degrees – fragile states.’³⁶ Second, a so-called ‘matrix for state assessment’ is introduced, which – as an important step for later stages of the statebuilding debate – contains legitimacy as one of its dimensions. The matrix encompassed – on the y-axis – the four dimensions of core state activities (‘PESS’ – the political, economic, social and security dimension), and divided those dimensions on the x-axis into the two categories of ‘effectiveness’ and ‘legitimacy’ (creating the so called PESS-EL matrix³⁷). Adding legitimacy appeared to be the main message of the report: ‘we believe it is the preoccupation of donor with state effectiveness [...] and the reticence to address state legitimacy – the perception of the various groups in society that the state acts with a sufficiently encompassing interest – which constitute the principal reason for the lack of success in the past’.³⁸

The third important feature of this report – one that did not make its way into USAID’s Fragile States Strategy – is the first ever introduction of resilience into the statebuilding discourse. Resilience is defined as the capacity to ‘withstand serious adverse pressures and internal conflicts without failing’³⁹ by exhibiting effectiveness and legitimacy at the same time. Not yet representing all features of current resilience discourse, this definition already points to a more complex, socio-political and socio-economic framing of causes not included in state institutions. Resilience introduces criteria into the discourse which cannot be pinned down materially, measured, or influenced by outsiders. The rhetorical device, thus, allows designing interventionist policies whose effects are *a priori* indirect. Causality of interventions and effects is henceforth decoupled, responsibility of external actors and agencies obfuscated. The accentuation of legitimacy and the introduction of resilience are characteristic of the debate at that time and lead the way to the fourth generation.

The typology, still, demonstrates a conservative moment, aiming to retain definitions and practices of former concepts, strategies and policies (which of course were up and running on the ground). This is illustrated by the paradoxical division of effectiveness and legitimacy into two analytical categories, while describing resilience as contingent on the state being both. Bringing effectiveness and legitimacy together, however, also shows the practical limitations of the second and third phase of statebuilding. Culminating in several ‘good enough’ concepts being developed, mainly ‘good enough governance’,⁴⁰ stability translated in another ‘good enough’ factor: ‘Stabilisation, state-building and peace-building together combine short-term actions to establish good enough security and stability with actions to address the structural causes of conflict, poverty and instability over the medium to longer term.’⁴¹ Hence, Mac Ginty’s assumption of a ‘lowering of horizons’ is confirmed: stabilisation remained a focal point at the very moment when it became visible that grant expectations regarding state-building could not be met.

Generally, the third generation of statebuilding remained a hybrid undertaking, split between the strictly normative approach represented by the ‘failed states’ concept and the much more fluid phenomenon of ‘fragility’. The move from third to fourth generation is characterized by three interrelated passages: (1) ‘fragile states’ gradually turn into ‘fragile situations’⁴² and later into deterritorialized ‘fragility’.⁴³ (2) ‘Resilience’, which was just briefly present at the beginning of the fragile states debate, returns to become the main catalyst for the fourth phase. Finally, (3) along with resilience, several conceptual figures enter the central stage of analysis: state-society relations,⁴⁴ which should be constructive and mutually reinforcing; political settlements,⁴⁵ which ought to be inclusive; and the adaptive capacity of (state and social) institutions to cope with shocks and crises; the latter highlighted in particular in the attempt to substitute the still popular stabilisation-paradigm.⁴⁶

In the course of this conceptual transformation of statebuilding, resilience resembles a virtual black hole: it incorporates humanitarian relief, development policy, diplomacy and politics⁴⁷ and offers an integrating bridge for the efforts of statebuilding, peacebuilding and conflict prevention. The latter is demonstrated by the merging of the once distinct working groups at the OECD DAC that were tasked with such issues, the DAC Network on Conflict, Peace and Development Cooperation (CPDC), and the Fragile States Group (FSG); the former existed as a task force from 1995 and became a network in 2001, the latter existed since 2003. In January 2009, both groups were integrated and transformed into the INCAF, now the international ‘one stop shop’ for all questions concerning violence and state failure. Furthermore, from the very beginning fragility became a trigger item for Whole-of-Government efforts of various varieties, in particular regarding

international intervention.⁴⁸ In effect, while the discourse maintains that problems need to be tackled with much more focus and mutual influences of policies must be pondered on, resilience is yet another step of broadening – without deepening – the conceptual understanding of interventions. Resilience thus serves as a justification for intensified continuation of the usual practices of intrusive and transformative activities.⁴⁹

Besides technical advantages, political reasons for the promotion of ‘resilience’ in the debate on failed states and fragility can be identified, in particular the growing significance of the so-called ‘non-traditional donors’. These non-traditional donors, mainly the BRICS countries, but also Turkey, Indonesia, and the Gulf States, are highly sceptical about the fragility concept and ‘reluctant collaborators’ at best in the international endeavours of peace- and statebuilding.⁵⁰ They view failed states labelling with severe political reservations which, according to Richmond and Tellidis, is a main reason why in particular the BRICS countries in 2011 refused to sign the ‘New Deal on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding’ in Busan.⁵¹ Following Richmond and Tellidis’ assumption that the new donors focus on agenda setting rather than on criticism regarding traditional donors⁵², the ‘resilience’ approach with its far wider – and also in parts radically different – agenda served to provide common ground.

Diverse interests require the amplification of reference concepts, and resilience allows for all those actors new to the scene of international assistance to find their epistemological niche. This is not to say that realist-leaning interest politics is taking over, but rather that resilience has been turned into a tool to emphasise (murky) commonalities while downplaying policy differences. Non-interventionism and a particular focus on humanitarian relief are both highly relevant aspects of ‘resilience’ in the statebuilding context *and* of the, however rudimentary, peacebuilding policies of the BRICS countries.⁵³ Hence, they work as rhetorical bridging factors in this regard. ‘Conflicting objectives’ are now an accepted reality in fragile state policies, while, at the same time, it remains unclear how to deal with them productively: ‘These tensions [of competing priorities and agendas] must be recognized and acknowledged by the international community even if they cannot be overcome.’⁵⁴

However, such an astonishing assimilating capacity of ‘resilience’ brings in its wake an increasing vagueness on the practical side of this newly developed conceptual toolkit. The insights from the policy papers suggest that vagueness and uncertainty in the application of the fragility framework are a result of framings of statehood on the analytical as opposed to the policy level. On the one hand, fragility – but even more so resilience – immediately opened up a cleavage between the important bilateral actors within the OECD. The Anglo-American countries showed instant flexibility and took up the concepts with enthusiasm⁵⁵ but without a strategic vision how to implement them; others, in particular France and Germany, showed reluctance (and at times even opposition) to taking up the approach. This cleavage resulted in the ‘downgrading’ of resilience from the main concept of overcoming fragility⁵⁶ to a very general ‘vision’, as in the – internationally endorsed – OECD DAC statebuilding guidance from 2011.

Henceforth, strategies, methods and concrete policies tied to a resilience-based approach developed a catchy, sophisticated and – by heavily drawing on the post-colonial debate – remarkably critical discourse while remaining vague on concrete consequences for practical engagement. Interventions should be ‘integrated’, ‘foster constructive state-society relations’,⁵⁷ political settlements and processes should be made ‘inclusive’,⁵⁸ public expectations should be managed,⁵⁹ communities should be made resilient.⁶⁰ All these efforts are embedded in an increasingly complex rendering of legitimacy, which is now no longer focusing primarily on the

state, but also on 'non-state networks and institutions'.⁶¹ In this way, the causal factors for conflict and state fragility become merged into a tautological fundament justifying interventions: lack of legitimacy causes conflicts, which in turn prevent social and state institutions from gaining legitimacy.

Despite watering down its central position under resilience, the state retains its prominent position as the primary 'other' of statebuilding efforts. But it is now disempowered from its position of equality in international relations and reduced to its 'core functions' (perhaps best represented in the main slogan of the World Development Report 2011, 'citizen security, justice, and jobs').⁶² Chandler's argument that '[t]he problematic of how states can be strengthened through accessing and influencing social or societal processes has thereby become positioned at the heart of the statebuilding problematic'⁶³ indeed summarises well the four generations analysed here. Still, the transformative impetus regarding the relationship between state and society as rendered by the statebuilding community fails to live up to this conclusion. An overview of the history of the use of the term 'resilience' in texts on statebuilding reveals a much more hybrid (dis-)arrangement of distinct – and at times confusingly interlinked – strands of approaches that target either states and their institutions, societies or both. The resilience umbrella provides the necessary framework for this ambiguity that is not able to decide how to behave towards statehood, which is not functioning as it should be.⁶⁴ In this light, resilience can be viewed as empty signalling, providing 'kippers and curtains' for continued practices which can be tailored to the institutional interests of implementing agencies, to the (geo-)strategic visions of intervening states, and provides a back door for recipients' attempts to steer practices in favour of their individual or group interests.

Conclusions

A case can be made for resilience being the name of the last stage of the inherent statebuilding dilemma. Working with states directly and improving their institutional capacity (from within or without) proved unsuccessful to a large extent, sustainable stability could not be achieved; civil society as it was narrowly perceived in the form of professional and nice to handle NGOs was – in most cases outside of Western contexts – simply non-existent, or, if created from scratch, showed exactly the lack of capacity and social grounding that was to be expected from a retort. Hence, no addressee for capacity building, no partner for social transformation remained; thus, institution building, as a consequence, has reached its logical end. This proved to be the entry point for resilience and its quest for smart-sounding, but abstract objectives: 'inclusivity' of the political settlement, 'mutual reinforcing' in the relationships between (which kind of) state and (which kind of) society, and so on. As shown in table 1, it is no coincidence that complexity and hybridity with no clearly recognizable causal relations replaced explanatory factors for political problems: donor agencies intellectually capitulated to complexity in the face of sustained lack of operational successes. In a quest for pragmatism, the 'good enough' and the downscaling of ambitious programmes to decentralization and community-building efforts seem to be the only residual option for international efforts. Thus, while not having to justify international practices and being able to blame others, notably 'local' social figurations with assumed affinity towards violence, corruption, and fiscal complacency, resilience allows keeping the self-image as benign, neutral, and constructive firmly in place.

Still, all such efforts are pressed into the normative corset that consists of two cornerstones: firstly, although it hardly needs mentioning, interactions and partnerships are required to adhere to the prescribed international norm system, in particular where human rights and gender are concerned. By 'limiting' these norms to a red line condition, international actors constrict politics to the liminal space of intervention.⁶⁵ Instead of seeing interventions as aiding that which is to be, international actors now assume that potential partners have already internalized their norms – otherwise cooperation is ruled out as not feasible. In the 'old days' of democracy and human rights promotion, it was presumed that the potential partner had to learn human rights and gender-sensitive behaviour during the statebuilding exercise; now, such behaviour has become a precondition for any outside assistance in statebuilding. Paradoxically, by showing cultural sensitivity and a willingness to work beyond traditional avenues, those norms gain an even stronger role undergirding the practices of interventionist programmes. Hence, before engaging with partners to increase resilience, they must ensure that they are perfectly aware of the normative expectations of internationally accepted, *responsible* conduct. This again illustrates how responsibility for potential failure is transposed to the intervened.

Secondly, the normativity of the international system is in full force. In statebuilding, aid effectiveness and the agreed and internationally endorsed principle to favour the use of partner country systems act as the main pivot. Paradoxically, interventions work around state agencies to achieve better efficiency, often even implementing programmes through their own aid industry. They remain, however, dependent on the legitimating structure of the state to be able to justify such action and spending in the eyes of the public (that is, tax-payers) and recipient populations. As such, the exigency of having to rely on the state dictates which channels should be used, even if this establishes and nurtures Potemkin, or façade, states.⁶⁶

As if this dilemma was not challenging enough, the situation is further aggravated by fragile states themselves, who increasingly dare to take on this particular donor discourse: by playing the same diplomatic game, the neglected partner governments of countries with a questionable track record like Afghanistan, the DRC or the CAR demand a much more active role in the debate and in decisions about the allocation of funds – sometimes after decades of unsuccessful cooperation. The so called 'g7+ group' formed by those countries has become the main vehicle to hijack the donor discourse – and to keep the money flowing. Reduced to the liberal core of assistance motivation – individualism and legal equality – interventions have little guidance or strategic perspective for politics under such circumstances. 'Best practices' seem to have become 'any practice' and, in a twist of history, subject countries are starting to usurp the benefits of this inverted relationship between the Global South and North.

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Table 1: Four generations of statebuilding policy

	1st generation: Conflict Resolution	2nd generation: Failed States	3rd generation: Fragile States	4th generation: Fragility/Resilience
Approach	Violent conflict causes state failure	Types of state failure	Types of state fragility	Diverse situations of fragility
Causes	Root causes of conflict / trigger factors cause conflict to turn violent	Unilinear explanations (institutional failure)	Multilinear causes (governance, institutional capacity, participation...)	Complexity / Hybridity
Main Lines of Intervention	Stabilisation operations / conflict prevention & transformation	Institution building, capacity building (state, civil society)	Statebuilding on various levels (channelling etc.).	Strengthening resilience of state-society relations, resilience / inclusivity of political settlement
Exemplary Document	DAC Guidelines Conflict, Peace, Development (1997)	Aktionsplan Zivile Krisenprävention (Germany, 2004)	Fragile States Strategy (USAID, 2005)	DAC Policy Guidance Supporting Statebuilding in Situations of Conflict and Fragility (2011)

Appendix: 43 primary documents included in the analysis

Institution / Period	Pre-2001	Pre-FSP	Post-FSP	Recent
DAC	P1) OECD DAC 1997: DAC Guidelines on Conflict, Peace and Development Co-operation; P2) OECD DAC 2001: Helping Prevent Violent Conflict. The DAC Guidelines; P3) OECD DAC 2001: Poor Performers: Basic Approaches for Supporting Development in Difficult Partnerships;		P4) OECD DAC 2007: Principles for Good International Engagement in Fragile States & Situations; P5) OECD DAC 2007: Whole of Government Approaches to Fragile States;	P6) OECD DAC 2011: Supporting Statebuilding in Situations of Conflict and State Fragility. Policy Guidance; P7) OECD DAC 2013: Fragile States 2013: Resource Flows and trends in a shifting world;
EU	P8) EU 2001: EU Programme for the Prevention of Violent Conflicts;	P9) EU 2003: A Secure Europe in a Better World: European Security Strategy;	P10) Council of the EU 2007: Council Conclusions on a EU response to situations of fragility; P11) Commission of the European Communities 2007: Towards an EU response to situations of fragility; P12) EU 2008: Providing Security in a Changing World. Report on the Implementation of the European Security Strategy; P13) European Report on Development 2009: Overcoming Fragility in Africa: Forging a New European Approach;	P14) Council of the EU 2011: Council conclusions on conflict prevention; P15) European Commission 2013: Action Plan for Resilience in Crisis Prone Countries 2013-2020; P16) Council of the EU 2013: Council conclusions on EU approach to resilience;
Germany		P17) Regierung der BRD 2004: Aktionsplan 'Zivile Konfliktprävention, Konfliktlösung und Friedenskonsolidierung'; P18) BMZ 2005: Übersektorales Konzept zur Krisenprävention, Konfliktbearbeitung und Friedensförderung in der deutschen Entwicklungszusammenarbeit; P19) BMZ 2006: Observations on Service Delivery in Fragile States and Situations;	P20) BMZ 2007: Entwicklungsorientierte Transformation bei fragiler Staatlichkeit und schlechter Regierungsführung; P21) BMZ 2009: Promoting Resilient States and Constructive State-Society Relations;	P22) AA/BMVG/BMZ 2012: Für eine kohärente Politik der Bundesregierung gegenüber fragilen Staaten; P23) BMZ 2013: Development for Peace and Security; P24) BMZ 2013: Strategy on Transitional Development Assistance;
UK		P25) DFID 2005: Why we need to work more effectively in fragile states; P26) Cabinet Office 2005: Investing in Prevention: An International Strategy to Manage Risks of Instability and Improve Crisis Response; P27) Secretary of State for International Development 2006: Making governance work for the poor. A White Paper on International Development;	P28) DFID 2010: Building Peaceful States and Societies;	P29) DFID/FOC/MOD 2011: Building Stability Overseas Strategy; P30) DFID 2011: Governance & Fragile States Department. Operational Plan 2011-2015; P31) DFID 2012: Results in Fragile and Conflict-Affected States and Situations;
USA	P32) USAID 1994: Strategic Plan;	P33) Goldstone et al. 2004: Strategy Framework for the		P35) USAID 2011: Statebuilding in

		Assessment and Treatment of Fragile States; P34) USAID 2005: Fragile States Strategy;		Situations of Fragility and Conflict. Relevance for US Policies and Programs; P36) USAID 2013: USAID Strategy on Democracy, Human Rights and Governance;
World Bank		P37) World Bank 2002: World Bank Group Work in Low-Income Countries Under Stress. A Task Force Report; P38) World Bank 2005: Fragile States – Good Practice in Country Assistance Strategies; P39) IEG 2006: Engaging with Fragile States. An IEG Review of World Bank Support to Low-Income Countries Under Stress;	P40) IDA 2007: Operational Approaches and Financing in Fragile States; P41) World Bank 2007: Strengthening the World Bank's Rapid Response and Long-Term Engagement in Fragile States;	P42) World Bank, African Development Bank 2011: Providing Budget Aid In Situations Of Fragility; P43) World Bank 2011: World Development Report: Conflict, Security and Development.

Notes

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- ¹ *European Report on Development*.
- ² OECD DAC, *Concepts and Dilemmas*.
- ³ OECD DAC, *Supporting Statebuilding*.
- ⁴ Chandler, 'International Statebuilding'.
- ⁵ Hameiri, *Regulating Statehood*, chapters 2 and 3.
- ⁶ Evans, Rueschemeyer, and Skocpol, *Bringing the State back in*.
- ⁷ Buzan and Hansen, *Evolution of International Security Studies*, 25-26.
- ⁸ Bueger and Bethke, 'Actor-networking', 1.
- ⁹ Esty et al., *State Failure Task Force Report*, 49.
- ¹⁰ Carment, Prest, and Samy, *Security, Development, Fragile State*, 4-5.
- ¹¹ Ibid: 7.
- ¹² Ghani and Lockhart, *Fixing Failed States*, 26.
- ¹³ Cf. Duffield and Hewitt, *Empire, Development and Colonialism*, 122-126, who link this institutionalist paradigm to indirect rule and cf. Bliesemann de Guevara and Kühn, *Illusion Statebuilding*, 41-46.
- ¹⁴ Ghani and Lockhart, *Fixing Failed States*.
- ¹⁵ See Bliesemann de Guevara and Kühn, *Illusion Statebuilding*.
- ¹⁶ Bueger and Bethke, 'Actor-networking', 1.
- ¹⁷ Zartman, *Collapsed states*.
- ¹⁸ Nay, 'Production of Hegemonic Knowledge'.
- ¹⁹ Grimm, 'European Union's ambiguous concept'.
- ²⁰ Lemay-Hébert and Mathieu, 'Oecd's discourse'.
- ²¹ The United Nations and its sub-organisations were left out of the study, since they tend to avoid working with diplomatically sophisticated terms like 'failed' or 'fragile states'.
- ²² Helman and Ratner, 'Saving Failed States'.
- ²³ Carment, Prest, and Samy, *Security, Development, Fragile State*, 16-17.
- ²⁴ Cf. Ibid: 22-54.
- ²⁵ Pospisil, *Entwicklung*, 107-109.
- ²⁶ OECD DAC, *DAC Guidelines on Conflict*, 37.
- ²⁷ Esty et al., *State Failure Task Force Report*. The significance of this research project can be determined by the fact that it is still up and running, presently in its sixth phase under the heading 'Political Instability Task Force', cf. <http://globalpolicy.gmu.edu/political-instability-task-force-home/>.
- ²⁸ White House, *National Security Strategy*, 7.
- ²⁹ USAID, *Strategic Plan*, 5.

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- ³⁰ This reveals a basic anthropological understanding very much akin to that of Thomas Hobbes, in that absent a Leviathan, violence is not only inevitable but what most people will be happy to engage in.
- ³¹ Cf. Bueger and Bethke, 'Networking the Failed State', 24.
- ³² Regierung der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, *Aktionsplan*.
- ³³ Ibid: 2.
- ³⁴ Ibid: 1.
- ³⁵ Mac Guinty, 'Against Stabilization', 26.
- ³⁶ Goldstone et al., *Strategy Framework*, 3.
- ³⁷ A similar matrix was used by DFID in its 2005 strategy 'Why We Need to Work More Effectively in Fragile States': the y-axis consists of the factors 'state authority for safety and security', 'effective political power', 'economic management' and 'administrative capacity to deliver services', the y-axis of the two dimensions 'capacity' and 'willingness'. DFID, *Why we need to work*, 8.
- ³⁸ IRIS, *PPC IDEAS Annual Report*, 27.
- ³⁹ Goldstone et al., *Strategy Framework*, 38.
- ⁴⁰ DFID, *Why we need to work more effectively in fragile states*, 20; see also Kühn, *Creating Voids*
- ⁴¹ DFID, *Building Peaceful States and Societies*, 37.
- ⁴² Cf. OECD DAC, *Principles for Fragile States*.
- ⁴³ E.g. *European Report on Development*.
- ⁴⁴ E.g. OECD DAC, *Supporting Statebuilding*, 11.
- ⁴⁵ Ibid: 13.
- ⁴⁶ E.g. BMZ, *Development for Peace*, 10.
- ⁴⁷ E.g. European Commission, *Action Plan for Resilience*, 4-6.
- ⁴⁸ E.g. Patrick and Brown, *Greater than the Sum*, and OECD DAC, *Principles for Good Engagement*.
- ⁴⁹ Kühn, *International Peace Practice*, 27.
- ⁵⁰ IDS Policy Briefing, 'Beyond the New Deal', 1.
- ⁵¹ Richmond and Tellidis, *The BRICS and international peacebuilding and statebuilding*, 4.
- ⁵² Richmond and Tellidis, 'Emerging Actors in International Peacebuilding and Statebuilding: Status Quo or Critical States?', 565.
- ⁵³ Ibid, 576-577.
- ⁵⁴ USAID, *Statebuilding in Situations of Fragility and Conflict*, 24.
- ⁵⁵ This might also be due to the fact that all of the relevant concepts have been prominently developed by British and US-American scholars, e.g. OECD, *Concepts and Dilemmas*, 4.
- ⁵⁶ As, for example, in the *European Report on Development*.
- ⁵⁷ OECD DAC, *Supporting Statebuilding*, 62.
- ⁵⁸ DFID, 2010: 6.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ BMZ, *Strategy on Transitional Development Assistance*, 5.

⁶¹ DAC, *State's Legitimacy*, 41-46.

⁶² World Bank, *World Development Report 2011*, 145.

⁶³ Chandler, *International Statebuilding*, 4.

⁶⁴ Cf. Kühn, 'The Peace-Prefix'.

⁶⁵ For the concept of liminality cf. Smirl, *Spaces of Aid*, 42-45.

⁶⁶ Cf. Bliesemann de Guevara and Kühn, *Illusion Statebuilding*.