disaster studies

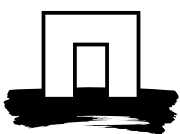## occasional paper 01

Human Security and Capacity in Fragile States

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A Scoping Paper

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Introduction

Objective of the paper

The aim of the International Development Academy (IS Academy) on Fragile States is to better understand the processes of socio-economic recovery and the roles of formal and informal institutions in conditions of state fragility. In so doing the IS Academy will explore effective locally anchored strategies to support economic security, including food-security and resilient livelihoods, in conditions of state fragility.

This scoping paper has been prepared to provide a conceptual point of departure for the work of the IS Academy. There is a wide range of organisations involved in the IS Academy and also a broad range of contexts in which the research will be undertaken. In light of such diversity, this paper has been prepared to ensure a modicum of common ground for the IS Academy and thereby provide a basis for fruitful *intellectual exchange within* the research group of the IS Academy and *clear entry points for policy support among* the wider stakeholders in the Dutch NGO community and the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This paper has also been prepared in order to inform other stakeholders in the wider humanitarian research community and practitioners about the work of the IS Academy and thereby initiate a dialogue regarding possible collaboration and synergy with other research, policy formation and evaluation initiatives.

This scoping paper has been prepared on behalf and with the participation of the IS Academy, which is a programme initiated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The IS Academies are partnerships between departments at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and university departments, involving a number of interconnected activities around a policy theme. The IS Academy on Fragile States is a collaboration of academic, governmental and non-governmental actors. These include Fragile States and Peacebuilding Unit of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Cordaid, ICCO, Netherlands Red Cross (NRC), Oxfam Novib and ZOA Refugee Care.

Disaster Studies at Wageningen University is providing the academic direction and the overall coordination of the IS Academy on Fragile States, while academic partners from other academic institutions - Maastricht School of Management, the Institute of Social Studies, University of Utrecht and University of Groningen, as well as other Wageningen chairs/ groups - will be involved in the pool of supervisors of the academy. The work of the Academy includes PhD and short-duration research, as well as a range of activities to enhance exchange and mutual learning.

Why focus on fragile states?

The focus on fragile states is a response to failures in the past to define 'the problem' that is to be addressed in a range of contexts with a variety of labels, including states in chronic conflict, post conflict recovery, transitional states, collapsed states. A point of departure for the work of the IS Academy is that it is more important to recognise and come to terms with the prevailing uncertainty that these myriad labels suggest than to try to find yet another structure to define these varied but related concepts/contexts. 'Fragility' is associated with flux, but there is little consensus about where change is headed and what should be done. At the same time, there is a consensus that something must be done. This combination of uncertainty and ambiguity with a normative commitment to act is the conundrum that the IS Academy seeks to explore. This consensus that 'something must be done' can be broken down to contrasting points of departure:

- The humanitarian community is concerned with states where 'fragility' means that the state cannot or will not shoulder responsibility to protect the lives and well-being of the population within its borders. The need for action is clear, but the uncertainties about the direction of change imply that the nature, scale and timeframe for humanitarian commitments are uncertain, as are interfaces with development agendas. Confronted with the indefinite nature of fragility, humanitarian programmes increasingly seek to contribute to enhancing livelihoods and strengthening institutions, without losing sight of providing services to those most in need. However, the diversity in conditions and lack of consensus on how to respond to these challenges leads to uncoordinated programming and trial and error methodologies.

- The development community is confronted with situations where the need for development is clearest but most ambiguous. Fragility is not considered to be an acceptable condition for the state, but at the same time, fragile states cannot apply most of the tools in the development toolbox. Indeed, the tools of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and other core agreements are out of reach, and a stratification of countries into those which can and cannot live up to the basic tenets of the declaration would effectively place a large number of countries in the 'fragile' category. The benchmarks and modalities of effective development, including conditional assistance, local ownership, accountability and good governance have to be reinvented for fragile situations. The dichotomies between what is known about what *should* be done and what *can* be done creates conundrums for deciding what *will* be done .

- For the international community beyond the aid sector, the security threats posed by fragile states have led to an increasing quest for integrated and coherent approaches to development and security. The Netherlands government aims for an optimal integration of defence, development and diplomacy, and is devoting growing resources to strategies such as Demobilization, Disarmament and Reintegration (DDR) programmes and Security Sector Reform, alongside more conventional development objectives. Interveners are increasingly asking for complex levels of coordination and articulation of different approaches . Neither the organs of international response, nor the institutions within fragile societies may be able to handle this ambitious 'coherence' agenda.

- For the academic community, fragile states have provided a somewhat disturbing 'reality check' on past models of political systems. Fragile situations challenge the demarcations between normality and exceptionality that have guided theories of state building and much of the organization of societies. The fragility of states discredits the Westphalian world order and draws attention to profound ambiguities regarding if and how normal notions of state sovereignty and state-society relations should be applied (Boege et al 2008). The academic discourse, primarily led by political science and international relations, has largely focused on the need to find alternatives to the given assumptions of the past (Di John 2006).

- The climate change and disaster risk reduction communities have been concentrating on searching for convergence in their own agendas and have therefore also been slow in recognizing that disasters and climate change are occurring in areas in crisis and/ or with weak governance structures. An exception is the discourse on links between climate change and insecurity, which is based on rather weak empirical findings. Proposed responses to these security concerns have been of questionable relevance in fragile states. There is a strong statist bias in most climate change mitigation and adaptation plans, with very ambitious checklists of things that government 'must do' which bear little resemblance to current understanding of what fragile states 'can do'. The gap between what can be done and assumptions about what 'must' be done is growing and there are few signs of an equivalent to the 'good enough governance' concept emerging in climate change circles.

This attention to uncertainties about the role of the state has provided a useful basis for overcoming some of the tunnel visions inherent in the aid discourses, but sometimes distracts from the need to understand the non-state factors which are at play. State-building is not the only agenda in situations of post- and chronic conflict. Fragile states differ from stronger states in that markets and conflict severely constrain the ability of states to determine their own agendas. Analyses of the political economy of fragility, and indeed, also the strengths that exist in fragile states, has provided an important contrast to checklists of steps required to achieve 'good governance' in states that are characterised as 'poor performers' in the more normative literature on aid effectiveness (Wimpelmann 2006).

Attention to the political economy of fragile states thus draws attention to how private sector actors are very much a part of the processes underway in fragile states and eventual recovery. There are attractive markets which attract investments despite (or even because of) the weak rule of law. This includes illicit activities, security services and construction. At the same time, aid promoting private sector investment is sometimes driven more by unrealistic optimism about silver bullet solutions and disbursement targets than an understanding of prevailing market opportunities and obstacles. The specific roles that can be played by international corporate actors - often inspired by corporate social responsibility and defined in corporate codes of conduct - are difficult to define in relation to local private actors, often small-scale and providing much local employment, and public service actors and in view of weak, non-existent or grossly outdated economic state policies and control mechanisms. Glaring examples include natural resource extraction or other forms of asset stripping which can provide quick profits but undermine longer term development. Increasingly, concerns

are also arising about how some strong states are also taking commercial advantage of the fragility of some states through land grabbing, suggesting the need for codes of conduct that go beyond the private sector (Von Braun and Meinzen 2009).

Human Security framework

The IS Academy for Fragile States works with the human security framework. The concept of human security emphasises the rights and needs of vulnerable people. The framework refers not only to their physical security but also to their social, economic and political security. In fragile states, people often have to cope without the protection of the state. Daily life during humanitarian emergencies is often marked by uncertainty, instability, and vulnerability to unexpected or unavoidable shocks. When moving from reconstruction to development, these multiple vulnerabilities and insecurities need to be addressed. Vicious circles of social exclusion and increasing insecurity can sometimes be broken by initiatives designed to advance local-level security and resilience at the same time as building better local institutions and addressing human rights.

Human security means creating structures and enabling environments that provide building blocks for survival, dignity and resilient livelihoods. The IS Academy stresses the need to understand the structures that enable or block local capacities. This requires engaging with the way assets (financial, social, natural, physical and human) are distributed, with the entitlements that households can draw upon in pursuing livelihoods, but also with policies, formal and informal institutions, infrastructure, services and markets. Economic, political and religious power relations at different levels shape access and distribution. There is always a risk that the most vulnerable, often those without strong family or community attachments, are excluded from economic recovery, as well as aid programmes, with the paradox that the most needy sometimes end up - in the aftermath of humanitarian and post-war reconstruction programmes - more vulnerable than before.

The Academy has a specific concern with vulnerable and poor populations, both rural and urban, given that they often face severe difficulties in restoring their livelihoods after war. However, the Academy captures local economic recovery in a wider sense. Dynamic local economies, with development opportunities for poor people, also require entrepreneurs and middle class consumers as well as state economic policies. The Academy is interested in local economic recovery, ranging from privately initiated economic growth and employment, people's livelihood strategies and the revitalization of economic institutions. In this, it has a special concern for social protection, or those practices or interventions that 'respond to levels of vulnerability, risk and deprivation which are deemed unacceptable within a given polity or society' (Norton in Harvey et al, p.9).

In order to fruitfully address these issues and to connect the socio-economic and political-institutional aspects of fragile states the IS Academy focuses in particular on the following four dimensions of human security:

- Food security, referring in particular to how people struggle to ensure regular access to food through increasingly complex livelihood strategies

- Economic security, referring in particular to security of livelihood and socio-economic resilience

- Environmental security, referring in particular to risk reduction and the capacity to respond to natural disasters

- Political security, referring in particular to political, institutional and governance structures that enable or block local coping capacities and resilience

This paper looks at the nature of human security in fragile states through the lens of how aid intervention and ongoing social, political and economic processes influence the state, the institutions of civil society and the private sector and how this effects the economic and food security of the population. In the IS academy we will treat presuppositions about these issues as discourses that shape strategies of donors, agencies and private actors. Discourses are more or less coherent sets of references that frame the way we understand and act upon the world around us. The effect of discourse is that certain ways of understanding society, including its organization and the distribution of power, become excluded whereas others attain authority. Hence, discourses are mindsets that have very tangible effects on the way realities can evolve. We can study discourses by making the presuppositions in donor, agency and people's strategies explicit and explore their implications in the practice of interventions and development (Hilhorst 2003).

The following section of this paper considers the concepts and labels that have been used over the years to describe fragile states, institutions in fragile states, socio-economic processes and the aid interventions that have been applied within them over the past two decades. The section underscores that current terminology primarily reflects the needs of observers (presumably from a non-fragile state) to define how these states fit into prevailing academic models and prospective aid modalities. Seen together they do not present an ever more accurate, useful or more comprehensive set of concepts, so much as a struggles to grasp an obviously multifarious and slippery collection of intervention models and country contexts.

Section three proposes an alternative framework for analysis that brings academic and aid discourses together by looking at fragility and aid as related to human, organisational and institutional capacities. The vulnerabilities of individuals, households and organisations, and the ways that weak institutions reinforce and perpetuate these vulnerabilities are analysed. This has been chosen as a way to highlight what fragility consists of in a way that (hopefully) can prove meaningful and accessible for using within a dialogue between academics and aid practitioners.

Section four summarises what is known about socio-economic security in fragile states with an emphasis on the linkage between livelihoods and food security. The aim is to map how the 'bottom line' of the research of the IS Academy can be congruent with most pressing and

fundamental concerns (the bottom line) of the residents of fragile states and to provide ideas for how concretely to link the concerns of state building with the humanitarian imperative of ensuring that human suffering is minimised.

This paper concludes with a set of overarching hypotheses and methodological frameworks for the research of the IS Academy. These hypotheses are intended to provide a basis for discussions within the IS Academy about how the concepts and approaches outlined in this paper relate to the empirical realities they are facing in the various research sites.

Box 1. How do we look at interventions?

Development programmes predominantly reflect notions of modern organisations and the linearity of planned intervention. According to this model, development interventions follow the policy cycle model, in which policy is the systematic pursuit of goals and the end result of a purposive course of action (Colebatch 2002:49). Development policy is about choosing objectives, but also about the means to reach these, and the actors to be involved. It has been amply demonstrated in the past decades that the linearity of planned interventions is not how it works in practice.

In reality, development interventions are socially constructed. They can be productively portrayed as arenas where issues, resources, values and representations are contested. Intervention policies are constructed by the participants in the process, which begins long before the actual plan gets produced. One important question is whether interventions are actually meant to do what they proclaim, or whether they are meant to be implemented at all. Policy statements often have a highly symbolic value and may hide different objectives. Many international socio-economic interventions in fragile situations are loaded with implicit expectations towards enhancing security or thwarting unwanted migration flows. Part of their genesis can often be explained by the desire of agencies to expand their domain of intervention. Once an intervention is launched it is translated and negotiated all the way down to the level of implementation. Actors invest them with their own meanings and the interlocking interests they want the intervention to serve. As a result, intervention processes do not happen in a linear fashion, but have all kinds of directions, ruptures, closures and moments of 'fanning out'. Hence, we view aid interventions not as the chain of implementation of pre-defined plans but the negotiated product of a series of interfaces between different social fields (Long and van der Ploeg 1989).

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Concepts and labels for understanding and addressing fragility

Defining the nature of the state

The various labels applied to states that are now most frequently referred to as 'fragile' have changed over time. The focus of the IS Academy is not on rehashing the debate around the what label or conceptual political science framework is most appropriate, but it is nonetheless important to start by briefly summarising the antecedents of the fragile state discourse, both in terms of how states are perceived and how aid interventions are framed. Allowing for a fair degree of overlap and disjuncture, the following labels have been applied over the past two decades for what the aid discourse today generally refers to as 'fragile states':

- *Collapsed states*
  When the concept of fragile states originally entered the aid discourse in the early 1990s they were most frequently referred to as collapsed states. This was motivated by the realisation that something had to be done to deal with places where conventional assumptions about having a state to build were no longer appropriate, e.g., Somalia, Liberia, East Timor and Kosovo (Zartman 1995). These terms were used to draw attention to the fact that the rules of engagement had to be very different. Robert Kaplan (1997) presented this within a dramatic vision of growing global chaos. His de facto fear-mongering elicited a counter-reaction among researchers who questioned Kaplan's reductionist and deterministic assumptions about what were clearly a far more complex set of phenomena (Di John 2006; Call 2008). Many researchers have pointed out that these sloppy labels are frequently applied to an extremely heterogeneous and dynamic set of countries (Brinkerhoff 2007). Duffield (2002), for example, has explored how these states do not suggest an absence of order, but rather a new form of order based on transnational networks wherein the accoutrements of traditional states are no longer needed.

- *Failed/weak states*
  The need for an alternative to the collapsed state label became apparent as weak or otherwise problematic states, such as Afghanistan or North Korea, began to be referred to as 'collapsed' simply because they were not seen to be fully legitimate and were failing to perform in many of their basic functions. The somewhat more nuanced label of failed or weak states thus entered the discourse. The focus on state failure

was also accompanied by a realisation that the failure of states to shoulder normavite responsibilities was not an absence of governance but rather a part of the changing security complex that created a demand for space where illicit trade and political movements could become established and thrive (Duffield 2001). Addressing failure was therefore not a matter of filling a vacuum but rather a process of rooting out undesirable elements as part of the new security agenda that prevails today.

- *States in transition*
  A problem with these labels for many actors was that they were static and in some respects an excuse for bypassing existing institutions rather than dealing with the problems of state structures that existed but were failing in their basic tasks (see, for example, Lister 2005). There is clear evidence that fragile states are dynamic environments where actors are recreating their own institutions, relations and organisations, and where there is a major role for aid to act as a catalyst for these efforts (Brinkerhoff 2007). Ignorance of existing societal dynamics has been recognised as encouraging misguided attempts to start from scratch in state-building (Boege et al 2008). The transitional perspective is a reaction to journalistic images of barbarism and chaos in that the emphasis is instead placed on planned change, whereby societies and states are rebuilt, usually with a leading role played by the international community. In the aid discourse references to fragility are currently often linked to statements about sequential transition processes (e.g., OECD/DAC 2007; Oxford Policy Management and the IDL Group 2008). The unique nature of political and economic development in a given state may be overlooked. In what may be interpreted as a recognition of the need to focus on the institutions that exist in a given country, current approaches to transition promoted by the OECD and others emphasise strongly the need for comprehensive 'whole of system' and 'whole of government' approaches (see www.3c-conference2009.ch/) as an alternative to the piecemeal approach that has until now characterised most efforts to promote recovery. This 'whole of...' discourse assumes that it is the fragmented and weak international commitment to recovery that leads to protracted crisis. The core problem with such a paradigm is that it may also lock aid into a faith in planned development, rather than an acknowledgement of the uncertainties that accompany the flux of change.

- *Fragile states*
  This term does not entirely avoid the problematic nature of the other labels, but is currently largely preferred since it highlights both the need for action (to lessen fragility) while also flagging the risks of descending into the category of failed states (the uncertainty inherent in the term 'fragile'). It also tends to be used with a stronger focus on internal processes and recognition of the forces that reproduce fragility, rather than the focus on planned interventions and internationally driven reconstruction that characterises the discourse on transition. A problem with the term is that it is perceived as a pejorative categorisation which can gloss over the strengths and fragilities that exist in all states, whether they are included in the standard lists of fragile states or not.

The term fragile states is thus problematic in that it hides a large diversity of situations, ranging from countries that are in the process of recovery after conflict and are re-building their political and economic institutions to countries where low levels of state effectiveness and economic development seem to be chronic, as well as countries where state-building and economic development are hampered by protracted conflict. There is also diversity within countries, as fragility may be typical for some regions or particular state sectors. So-called 'fragile' states can in some respects be very strong, or may be strong in some parts of their territory, but fragile and contested in other parts of the country. Colombia, Guatemala and Uganda are cases in point, and the gradual retreat of state institutions from declining neighbourhoods many mega-cities in the world also comes to mind. A concern of the IS Academy is to ensure that the categorisation that the term 'fragility' suggests should open fields of inquiry and not close them.

Fragile states can also be considered as a challenge to conventional development thinking. When states are weak or contested this obviously conditions processes of recovery and places special challenges on economic reconstruction, such as:

- Where stability has been achieved, it is often patchy and non-linear, with high risk of recurring violence and high levels of criminality and sexual violence.

- Uneven levels of state capacity can create disconnects between different levels of the state.

- International aid generally consists of pockets of services, often organised in parallel to state structures.

- Ongoing acute (humanitarian) needs and a high level of food-insecurity exist, alongside the challenges of addressing development problems.

- The struggle to manage day-to-day governance takes precedence over the need for an overall planning process with which to align interventions, resulting in weak coherence and local ownership.

- Institutions are in flux, leading to shifting alliances and power constellations which are difficult to understand and meaningfully respond to. Conditions may be favourable to political and economic entrepreneurship that, whilst including potential seeds for change, may also provide opportunities for elite capture of resources and development assets.

The discourse on collapsed, failed and fragile states has, at a minimum, led to a wide consensus that there must be engagement with state structures, no matter how problematic they may be (Call 2008). It should ultimately be stressed that the process of labelling, regardless of the label chosen, has been criticised as distracting donor attention from the need to identify where capacities exist, where they need to be strengthened, where they need to be built from scratch, and above all, what sequences are needed when it is unclear where to start (see e.g., Grindle 2005). Labels can encourage an illusion that planning is a matter

of choosing the right aid effectiveness blueprint rather than investing in empirical analyses of the nature of capacities, norms and fragility in any given state (Call 2008; Wimpelmann 2006). Emerging alternatives to these concepts include calls for recognition of 'hybrid political orders' (Boege et al 2008) and 'institutional multiplicity' (Hesselbein et al 2006) which in some way echo recognition among aid practitioners that 'contiguum' of approaches is needed to address humanitarian and development needs simultaneously rather than sequentially. The most important aspect of this shift has been a growing recognition that there is no blank slate. Institutions exist, political processes are underway and prevailing norms are more likely to guide local expectations about the state-building process than the goals of the international community to take advantage of the 'opportunity' of state fragility to introduce secular parliamentary democracy, free market ideals or other accoutrements of 'good' liberal governance.

Interplay between fragile states and globalisation

The approach proposed in this paper highlights the local perspective, but retains explicit links to global factors. Researchers such as Mark Duffield (2001) and Carolyn Nordstrom (2004) have stressed how fragility and 'durable disorder' are generated in a symbiotic relationship between fragile and non-fragile states. This perspective disputes the assumption that fragile states are a temporary anomaly and draws attention to the need to look at recovery processes in the perspective of the web of economic and political relations that link fragile states to transnational structures. These concepts stress how fragility is not just a lack of capacities, but is also a functional and durable dimension of prevailing transnational systems.

The focus of the IS Academy on livelihoods and food security provides opportunities to analyse examples of this process in specific spheres and thereby transcend the oversimplified and grossly inaccurate claims that food security is primarily related to local food production and productivity. The recent 'food crisis' may illustrate the transnational factors shaping food security within and beyond fragile states. It is a clear and dramatic example of how global trends can have impacts on both political instability and household socio-economic security. It is also an example of how response, in the form of promoting increased use of agricultural inputs for high yielding varieties, may end up being a technological change agenda that implicitly 'picks winners' rather than addressing the actual landscape of risk and vulnerability. Furthermore it is an agenda that is implicitly reliant on organisational capacities, in the form of national agricultural research and extension structures, capacities that are extremely weak in fragile states and where evidence shows that they cannot be rebuilt without long-term investments.

As noted above, fragile states attract less than altruistic investment in the form of transnational land-grabbing and resource exploitation. Analysis of these investments is another important aspect of the interplay between fragile states and globalisation. The 'non-DAC donors,' such as China, Kuwait, Iran and Venezuela are particularly active in fragile states, often with investments related to gaining access to such resources and/or promoting alternative political ideologies. There is a growing literature on the role of China in international investment in fragile states.

Defining the nature of institutions and socio-economic processes
in fragile states

Socio-economic processes are often thought to come to a standstill during crisis or to become functionally integrated into forces driving the crisis. Implicit in many descriptions of fragile states is the notion that the normal economy collapses. Production processes, capital investments, import and export, transportation of resources and stable currencies are all assumed to disappear. This imagery portrays the normal economy as being entirely replaced by economies of violence.

Aid has been criticised for being part of this process. The 1980s and 1990s saw a number of influential studies focusing on the many large and small-scale ways in which aid can fuel economies of violence (Duffield, 1993, Keen 1994). Economies of war refer to the systems where the production, mobilisation and allocation of resources are organised to benefit from and even sustain violence (Le Billon 2001, Kaldor 1999). These economies are intricately linked to global networks of drugs, arms and human trafficking. Although fully unfolding in war, these economies are the continuation of informal practices of globalised economies linking fragile and non-fragile states where violence regulates people's livelihoods, in most cases without escalating into full war (Duffield 2001) Actors and institutions, like markets and local entrepreneurs are likewise often considered to be fully incorporated in the logic of conflict. Fragile economies are described as being dominated by corruption and criminal activities.

 An alternative strand of parallel research and writing has consistently pointed to the coping strategies of people during conflict and the resilience of institutions during conflict. Anderson and Woodrow famously stated in 1993 that 'Disaster victims have important capacities which are not destroyed in a disaster. Outside aid to these victims must be provided in ways that recognise and support these capacities if it is to have a long-term effect. When relief assistance is given without recognition of these capacities, it can undermine and weaken them, leaving those whom it is intended to help even worse off than they were before' (Anderson and Woodrow, 1993:136). In more recent years research has revealed the continuity in economic activity although often very localised (Levine and Chastre, 2004, Longley, et al 2006). There is thus a flip-side of war economies in the continuation of the normality of economies of production, transactions and distributions that we may call the economies of survival during crises (Hilhorst 2007). Although economies may largely collapse during war, people hold on to normality as much as they can and continue planting their fields and trading their products. Likewise, certain formal and informal institutions continue to function or provide services. Informal safety nets continue to be operative to some extent. Where national governments have collapsed or are party in the conflict, line ministries in many cases nonetheless continue to be responsive to people's needs, even though their services have become severely restricted (Christoplos 1998). This can also be the case when parallel structures of rebel movements, and even violent movements like Hamas, maintain service provision for their followers. During its long independence war with Ethiopia, the Eritrean opposition developed a popular legitimacy and imagery both locally and internationally based on the health services it provided. Its small plastic sandal factory achieved iconic status and is now commemorated with a monument. An understanding of

these services can shed a different light on how they maintain and develop their legitimacy among their followers and the factors that determine their embeddedness in society. The everyday realities of war are not all-encompassing, and jumping to assumptions about war 'risks disabling precisely the strategies and tools of social organization, culture and politics through which violence can be reduced and its adverse effects mitigated' (Richards 2005).

It is now beginning to be understood that the economies of war and of survival are deeply intertwined, and most activities are multi-faceted (Nordstrom 2004). The woman who brews beer for soldiers or barters products with rebels to make ends meet, for instance, also contributes to alcohol-related insecurity and the maintenance of violence. Interventions, however, often operate on the assumptions that economies are destroyed or have become a mere pretext to violence. This means that they aim to remove the economic drivers of conflict on the assumption that this is a precondition for rebuilding peace-time economic life, without considering what economic initiatives can be built on (Hilhorst 2007). The IS academy takes up the challenge of examining how the continuity and initiatives from below can become a part of resurrecting socio-economic life, as well as the role of institutions.

Attribution of socio-economic problems in post-conflict or fragile states solely to the dynamics of conflict or fragility should be treated with caution. Many different factors come into play. Local economies in fragility or war are nonetheless tied into international economies, and are subject to the vagaries of climate and disaster, just to mention a few of these. Often there are underlying development problems that may predate the conflict (and may be among the root causes of conflict in the first place), or evolve relatively independent from the political situation. Current land problems in Burundi, for example, become manifest with the influx of returning refugees, yet are much more structurally caused by low productivity, land fragmentation and the lack of off-farm employment (van Leeuwen 2008).

The relation between development and security

The attention to socio-economic recovery in fragile states is partly driven by assumptions about the relation between development and security. It is assumed that socio-economic security has the potential to contribute to stability, which is expressed in the saying that there can be no peace without development and no development without peace. It is also assumed that development can enhance people's confidence in durable peace (peace dividend) which entices them to return to their normal lives and resume investing in their futures. Further, it is assumed that development can contribute to restoration of the social fabric of society by revitalizing local institutions and trust. These assumptions are often driven by unwarranted faith in development narratives and lack empirical evidence. For instance, the recurring notion that the first 100 days after peace are crucial to enhance trust in the peace process, may lead to unwarranted and hasty development-oriented programming that may do harm in the long run.

Empirically, we will approach these assumptions with an open mind. We expect that economic growth may indeed result in stability, but it may also contribute to instability, especially when it leads to increasing inequality and exclusion. We will keep an open mind

as to where economic security is derived from, and be cautious about attributing roles in recovery according to Western models. Socio-economic security can be derived from unexpected local institutions, including civil society structures, rather than from nationally-driven state-centred initiatives. It is especially important for us to critically assess how macro-economic strategies tie in with and condition economic strategies in specific localities.

Defining the nature of aid

In addition to the shifting labels for *states*, there have been a number of terms used to different forms of *actions amid fragility* which have provided conceptual and bureaucratic frameworks for aid response in contexts where conventional mechanisms and interagency relations have been shown to be unsuitable:

- *Linking relief, rehabilitation and development (LRRD)*
  The desire to find ways to structure response to disasters preceded a concern for collapsed states. LRRD stems from a realisation, which emerged during the 1980s, that the cycle of recovery from disaster was not inevitable and, therefore, required special measures to ensure that the continuum leading back to development functioned as it should (Buchanan-Smith and Fabbri 2005). LRRD (and related terms, such as 'developmental relief') became an objective of many agencies. The early LRRD discourse reflected a need to proactively search for ways to ensure that, at a minimum, relief did not undermine the prospects for future development, and, hopefully, that it would greatly improve the prospects for a smooth transition back to normal development modalities. This conceptual framework increasingly came into disrepute by the late 1990s since it did not accommodate the chronic and recurrent nature of conflict and vulnerability to natural hazards. Furthermore, questions were raised about whether the categories of relief, rehabilitation and development referred more to structures of aid administration than to on-the-ground programming realities (White and Cliffe 2000). This critique stressed that the complex factors that led to emergencies could not be fixed with more cleverly designed relief projects. It is indeed partially a reaction to simplistic and above all over-optimistic assumptions associated with LRRD, that properly planned relief would be likely to contribute to a linear process leading toward normal development, which inspired the alternative labels listed above. LRRD is not dead today, despite the criticisms made. Continuum thinking repeatedly slides back into recovery modalities despite glaring evidence that it is not happening according to plan (Koddenbrock 2009). This is presumably because the need to show progress in the new security agenda demands results (Buchanan-Smith and Fabbri 2005), even if prevailing knowledge about fragile states suggests that these results are likely to be ephemeral.

- *Responding to complex political emergencies/protracted crises*
  The main reaction to LRRD in the mid-1990s was the introduction of new label of 'complex political emergencies' which was driven by a desire to find a fundamentally different approach to politically complex conflicts. This discourse sought to distance humanitarian response to conflict from that of 'natural disasters', which were

at the time said to be the inspiration for inappropriate LRRD approaches. The conflicts in Somalia, Afghanistan, the Great Lakes, the Western Balkans and East Timor focused attention on complex political emergencies and the need for models that acknowledged the need for aid amidst chronic conflict and protracted crisis (White and Cliffe 2000; Buchanan-Smith and Fabbri 2005). The World Bank has acknowledged the need for 'differentiated approaches' in fragile states, with scenarios of deterioration, prolonged crisis or impasse, post-conflict or political transition, or gradual improvement (Operations Policy and Country Services 2005). One downside of the modalities that emerged related to complex political emergencies was that it left (and to a major extent still leaves) response to disasters triggered by natural hazards in fragile states in a conceptual and operational limbo (Christoplos 2000; Buchanan-Smith and Christoplos 2004). The extremely weak links between conflict and 'natural disaster' recovery efforts in Aceh and Sri Lanka after the South Asian tsunami (Christoplos 2006) are evidence that this remains unaddressed despite increasing attention being given to the need for modalities to deal with the inter-relationships between increasing natural hazards due to climate change and insecurity in the fragile states that are confronted with these hazards (Young, et al, 2009).

- *Transitional programming*
  Partially inspired by the need for a paradigm to address the fundamental reform processes in ex-Marxist states, starting in the early 1990s a variety of initiatives were labelled as transitional. Currently the transition label generally refers to post conflict response rather than post-Marxist reform. The label retains the linear assumptions of LRRD, but acknowledges that 'transition' is a different condition than either collapse or normal development, and thus requires different modalities focused more on institutions and state building.

- *Early recovery*
  The introduction of the cluster approach to humanitarian action was seen to require a 'new' aid category, which has been labelled 'early recovery.' The meaning of this term is still being defined, but it appears to encompass a highly ambitious combination of objectives and tools for initial rehabilitation investment and state-building directed primarily toward provision of basic services. It is 'guided by development principles' (UNDP 2008) but includes little guidance regarding how to relate to the nature of fragile states. It suggests that an 'early recovery network', be establish and led 'as far as possible, depending on the context' by the government. It is thus far unclear how early recovery will avoid reintroducing the distortions of the earlier discourse on LRRD. One of the problems seems to be that the organization of aid enhances the treatment of early recovery as a separate sector rather than a cross-cutting concern that ties in with preceding and succeeding processes.

- *Good enough governance*
  While generally not explicitly linked to the discourse on fragile states, there has been a recognition in development circles that conventional guidelines for good governance are not realistic for many more or less fragile states where objectives and strategies must be tempered by an understanding of what may be possible at different times

and what prevailing 'drivers of change' exist in a given context (DFID 2005). Grindle (2005) has proposed an alternative objective of striving for 'good enough governance'. This concept has the potential of providing a basis for pragmatically determining how to sequence and encourage development in situations where conventional checklists of what elements of governance 'must be in place' are obvious inapplicable. The Netherlands has likewise moved away from applying criteria of good governance as thresholds for aid and instead adopts a notion that development assistance should not be risk-averse and must retain a flexible approach to governance criteria in order to allow interventions to find their way in fragile situations.

- *Rule of Law*
  International policy in fragile states or post-conflict societies has been criticised for being too normative and too much oriented towards the formal restoration of democracy. In response, policies are now increasingly geared to (re-) establish the rule of law. Rule of Law approaches aim to ensure that institutions necessary to uphold the law (such as police and judiciary) operate properly, but leave more room for national ownership as they do not aim to dictate the content of the laws to be upheld. Rule of Law approaches have a number of advantages compared to state building models, in particular because they take a comprehensive view of (some) institutions and are oriented towards the security needs of people. They also have disadvantages in seeking to establish particular institutional frameworks while overlooking how security needs are perhaps already being met through the multiple or informal arrangements that have evolved over time. They also tend to over-emphasise state solutions and ignore the equally important protective practices of non-state actors.

Chronologically, this jumble of models can be loosely described as being reflective of a series of gradual shifts. Earlier assumptions of the possibility to use aid to drive a more or less linear continuum from fragility/conflict/collapse to 'normal' development have been replaced by an acknowledgement that contiguums (Buchanan-Smith & Fabbri 2005) exist, wherein a number of processes and aid forms must exist simultaneously, and that these contiguums may prevail during an indefinite period of time. This shift concerns both socio-economic processes as state or institution building approaches. These shifts, however, have not yet resulted in substantial changes in the practices of aid. While we know much better what aid should *not* aim to achieve, it is not sufficiently clear what should drive aid instead of the 'return to normalcy' of the LRRD continuum. As a result, we witness the repeated tendency to either apply labels and programming modalities that slide back to continuum approaches (Koddenbrock 2009), or to apply labels that can be interpreted as sidestepping the bigger picture, such as 'early recovery'. One of the present contradiction is that the ambitions for aid have become less robust in abandoning notions of linear development, but at the same time we see that the ambitions of aid stretch farther than ever, in seeking increasingly complicated levels of integration and the piling up of objectives, including (a) the development task of state building, (b) the humanitarian imperative of ensuring service provision and (c) the international demand to preserve security.

Box 2. Coping and development interventions for economic and food security

Humanitarian and development agencies use similar terminology for different approaches to achieve what are inherently different rehabilitation and development goals that reflect different levels of ambition. At one end of the spectrum are efforts that are primarily oriented toward shoring up existing or past coping and survival strategies. At the other ends are programmes directed toward addressing the underlying factors that create poverty and foster violence. The following table presents a somewhat stylised set of brief descriptions of examples of programming at either end of the coping-development continuum.

| *Coping and early recovery*	*Development and sustainability*
Providing cash grants for daily survival and reinvestment in small enterprise	Promoting social protection measures that can be managed by the state and targeted toward the chronic poor
Increased access to low-interest credit via a range of NGOs and small organisations	Support to larger, potentially sustainable microfinance institutions with professional, specialised staff and which charge interest rates that can lead to future viability
Distribution of imported seeds and contracting of state institutes to multiply seeds for free and widespread distribution	Investments in seed systems, including a defined role for the state in ensuring quality control and support to market oriented seedproduction enterprises
'Renting' local agricultural advisory organisations to provide agricultural extension services to chosen groups of 'beneficiaries'	Long-term investments in extension systems with links to value chain actors and research in country and in the region
Business development services and capital investment focused on a small number of 'winners' who can be expected to re-establish their businesses quickly and (perhaps) eventually contribute to broader economic dynamism	Private sector development programmes which include analysis and close monitoring of both broader market trends and potential pro-poor impacts through strengthening of labour markets and links to public and private institutions

The models and principles of aid have received ample attention, yet this needs to be matched with research into the way aid models and programming actually works in society. Important questions are how aid fits into people's lifeworlds, strategies and livelihoods, how aid programmes shift the power balances in society and may have many unintended effects, and how they are anchored in ongoing socio-economic and institutional processes.

Fragile state discourses and the IS academy

From the above, we derive four main conclusions that guide the IS academy:

1. The label of 'fragile states' hides a large variation in conditions. Processes occur in fragile societies which result in a certain level of market functionality and socio-economic organisation that may or may not be triggered by aid interventions (and when they are this often concerns unintended effects). We call these *local ordering processes*. The notions of chaos that permeated early analyses of collapsed states are being replaced with recognition that recovery is about dealing with existing local ordering processes and not about filling a vacuum. The role of local and nationally driven processes is increasingly considered important, but remains ambiguous. There is a growing recognition that fragility is a national issue and not just a challenge for the international community, but there is less consensus about what that means for aid modalities and levels of ambition. This is mainly due to a lack of empirical insights into what drives local institutional and socio-economic processes.

2. The debates on fragile states have stimulated a rethink about the merging of humanitarian, development and security agendas in those spaces. Past debates over which *principles* should frame policies and programming, are being overtaken by a growing realisation that there is, instead, a need to identify where the potential dangers and synergies of this merging are greatest, and to identify strategies to more pragmatically protect and promote these principles accordingly (Grindle 2005). This marks a shift in attention from the principles of aid to process approaches. It also shifts attention from models of aid to the empirical realities of aid in practice.

3. The overwhelming attention to peace-building and state-building agendas has led to a neglect of what may be the ultimate determinant of whether the social compact between state and citizen exists, i.e., if a minimal level of food and economic security are being maintained. In contexts of chronic conflict and uncertainty, populations are often accustomed to relatively ephemeral state structures. Expectations for provision of basic services are scaled down and attention shifts to non-state, market-driven actors, at least for those who can afford these services. Protection of human life and safety becomes a responsibility of the international community. Securing people's entitlements, access to productive assets and markets is a major component of recovery and one of our working hypotheses is that this may largely determine the legitimacy of authorities in the eyes of local people.

4. A main lesson of the discourse on fragile states over the past two decades for the IS Academy is that the design (and critique) of alternative models and principles is not necessarily the most useful starting point if the label 'fragile states' is to open a field of critical inquiry. The models developed have provided a way of understanding how fragile states differ from non-fragile states, but have failed to give guidance on what to do about them. An alternative is to focus on the interfaces and national and local levels where policies and practice meet. The Academy hence aims to study processes at the interfaces of socio-economic recovery, institutional conditions and cultures, and the socio-political dynamics of interventions.

Interventions   Institutions

Livelyhoods
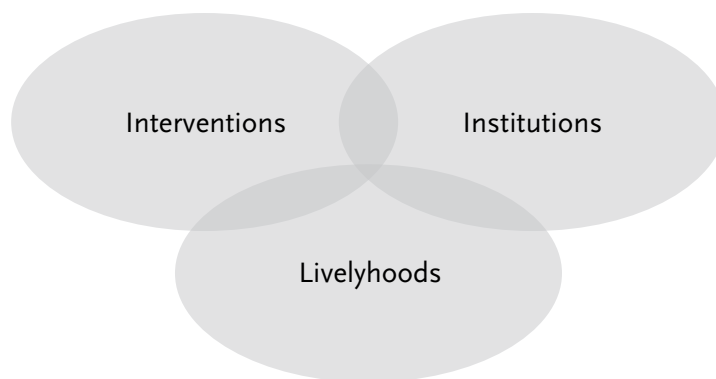
With regard to institutions, the academy takes an empirical focus that steps away from the more normative approaches of nation-building, good governance and rule of law models. Instead, the approach proposed in the next chapter focuses on *capacities*. A focus on institutional and personal capacities is open-minded in getting to grips with what exists rather than what ought to exist, while retaining the possibility of providing entry points for interventions and programming.

The Academy follows a shift over the past decade to a focus on livelihoods (see chapter 5). It has been recognised that the cornerstone of survival amid protracted crisis is not and should not be food aid or a faith that the markets for food and labour will sort themselves out in a humane manner. The confusion of labels, templates and concepts outlined above illustrates an acknowledgement that livelihoods exist in fragile states, with or without aid. Some are sustainable, some not, some are legitimate, some not, some provide a minimum of food security, some not, some are reliant on formal, state and market institutions, some thrive on their absence. The IS Academy will analyse the implications of people's livelihood struggles within the broader conditions for economic and food security in fragile states. The research of the IS Academy will call attention to the interplay of intervention mechanisms and local organisation of livelihoods in order to develop more empirically grounded understanding of how livelihood struggles relate to the political economies of aid, markets and state formation in fragile states.

The academy will seek out when and how interventions become meaningful to enhance people's security, for instance through asset provision, support to coping strategies, increasing household resilience, etc., but also at higher scale levels by creating safety nets,

supportive institutions and creating an enabling environment and the rule of law. This starts with a focus on the working of interventions in practice. Understanding the role of interventions starts with recognising the dynamics of how different groups of actors have a role in livelihood processes: political structures, public sector, private sector, informal community institutions, civil society actors including religious actors, households and aid agencies. Competing claims on entitlements to resources and power always play a role. Aid interventions can be seen as spaces where these different actors manoeuvre to realize their own projects, and are anchored in these political, economic and socio-cultural processes. Interventions always become political, if not in their intentions, indeed in their effects.

3

Fragile states and fragile capacities

Why start with capacities?

The issue of capacity has not been a major theme in discussions of aid response in fragile states. The problems described above regarding labelling are a reflection of tendencies to implicitly assume that there are virtually no capacities in fragile states. This produces the assumption that the building blocks of state building and recovery are in the hands of the international community: there is a crisis, thus, there is a blank slate. This is where much of the discourse goes astray. In the most fragile of states there are functioning institutions, organisations and people, all with significant capacities. There are multiple rules and norms that govern the actions of the state and the private sector, even if there are also usually considerable opportunities to circumvent these norms. One of the stratifying mechanisms in such conditions becomes the ways in which different actors manage to exploit their room for manoeuvre to circumvent, bend or cross between different sets of rules to enhance their own projects. The interfaces between policies and practice are where people are engaged in developing their own institutional, organisational and human resource capacities. The failure to recognise and respect these strategies frequently causes aid efforts to go astray. A capacity focus can overcome this by better recognising how actors are, themselves, developing their own opportunities and (re)creating organisations and institutions amid the most fragile of state structures.

There are, however, also examples of where a romanticised view of local (usually civil) society obscures understanding of the dynamics of change and the often uncivil nature of the societies in question. For example development programming enabled civil society actors in Rwanda to assume a role in the genocide of 2004 (Uvin 1998). Furthermore, it would also be a mistake to disregard people's vulnerabilities. The HIV/ AIDS pandemic, for example, has severely effected people's capacities to recover (Waal 2002). Recognition and respect for local capacities should not lead to uncritical assumptions about what these capacities amount to and to what ends they are being applied .

Although we find capacities to be a good analytical entry-point for our discussion, two disclaimers are required. First, the term capacities is used here in an open-minded way. It does not imbue these capacities with the expectations embodied in the development agenda of 'capacity building.' This aid discourse on 'capacity building' is often misguided from a local perspective and overlooks the political and other entanglements of capacities within

broader institutional constellations. Secondly, we recognize that questions of capacities are contested and interrelate with questions of both legitimacy and the often contested nature of the state in these settings. Formal state power is often elitist and contested by local claims for autonomy. The capacity to resolve such contestations in non-violent ways could be the major hallmark of a 'de-fragilzed state (de Waal 2009).

Institutional capacities: the (seemingly) most obvious breakdowns

Narrow preconceptions of what institutions exist in fragile states derive from simple checklist approaches to capacity development. The reality is one of existence of multiple normative frameworks in the flux of change rather than absence of institutions. When states are not capable of imposing norms, this does not represent a vacuum, it is an opening where a range of norms can exist simultaneously. Hesselbein et al (2006) suggest that recognition of 'institutional multiplicity' can provide an entry point for awareness of the four 'rule systems' which determine normative frameworks and incentive structures:

- Rule systems adopted by the state (statutory law);

- the rule systems evolved over time by older communities (customary traditions);

- the rule systems that communities or groups have devised for survival;

- and the rule systems hatched by non-state centres of power (warlords, bosses, criminal gangs).

These categories can help to transcend the legalistic tunnel vision that can constrain analyses and initiatives in fragile states. They can also overcome the formalistic categorisation of formal and informal institutions which is the starting point for many conventional institutional approaches, but sheds little light on the dynamics of fragile states, where even formal institutions are managed in highly informal ways.

Box 3. What do we mean when we refer to institutions?

Institutions are structures and practices that govern people's behaviour and interactions. They can be highly formalised and established (in law or organizations for example) but usually have an emergent character. They evolve and change in tacit ways, and hence their level of institutionalization varies. Institutions are shaped in the interaction between structures and practices. Because social actors invoke, negotiate and manipulate the meaning of institutions in their everyday life, institutional change happens all the time. Hence, institutions provide ordering, but there is never order. Systems of meaning never attain coherence and closure.
Institutions can have different sources of legitimacy, such as state endorsed, socially legitimized by tradition, introduced by exogeneous development, or forwarded by

contestants to state power. This means that there are usually alternative institutions governing entitlements, systems of authority and representation, mechanisms for dispute resolution, organization of local level security, and the organization of economic transactions. This may lead to conflict, yet it is also in this multiplicity of institutions that people find room for manoeuvre to negotiate institutional arrangements.

Fragile states are characterized by more fluid and rapidly changing institutions, because of a combination of responses to lack of legitimate state institutions, rivalry between different sources of power and legitimacy and emerging new problems and changing conditions as a result of violence and displacement. The contestation of institutions in these situations is not limited to the problematic of states, but may equally concern changing traditional institutions, such as chieftaincy and patronage, or newly introduced developmental arrangements. It is important to document these multiple processes and understand their effects on local ordering processes, the governance of entitlements and processes of in- and exclusion.

The following very briefly presents examples of the main overlapping areas of institutional dysfunction that tend to appear in fragile states:

- *Social institutions*
  Social capital is a catch-all term for the norms and customs that enable people to come together to deal with problems, to develop the trust required for economic development and even to address the short-comings of the state. The search for solutions for fragile states has at times led to over-optimistic assumptions that pre-existing social institutions can fill the gap. Empirical research has consistently shown that social capital continues to exist in fragile states, but it may also have been weakened by many of the factors that have affected the state. It is not a grand solution and neither is it usually very equitable. Nonetheless, existing social structures may be the strongest basis for normative change in a fragile state and therefore must be a central point of departure for understanding and addressing human security (Manor, 2006).

- *Political institutions*
  Politics does not disappear in a conflict zone, but the norms that channel political action toward constructive aims are weakened, along with the sanctions that may otherwise exist against predatory and populist political behaviour. Political institutions are more easily used for personal and short-term gain. This can lead to plunder of natural resources or attempts to transfer access to economic assets to political supporters. These tendencies are far from unique to fragile states, but the extent to which coercive power is unfettered is greater. This frequently creates contradictions in aid to fragile states. Promotion of a rapid transition to democracy or at least a modicum of political legitimacy and phasing out of international administration (i.e., Iraq, Kosovo, Bosnia Herzegovina, etc.), are run simultaneous to field level

programmes, particularly those that are labelled as humanitarian, that struggle to keep local politicians from 'politicising' the aid effort.

- *Natural resource management institutions*
  Traditional norms for managing natural resources are in many contexts more important than formal rules. These traditional structures may or may not be affected by conflicts and a weakening of the regulatory capacity of the state. A collapse of land-use planning and regulation may increase the likelihood of disasters stemming from natural hazards (especially in earthquake prone countries such as Afghanistan) and make coordinated and large scale climate change adaptation actions impossible. But these formal capacities tend to be very limited in even modestly weak states as well, raising questions about whether it is realistic to expect these institutions to be a priority in fragile states. Conflict may shield predatory extraction of lumber and other resources, or it may protect some areas as foreign investment is discouraged due to insecurity and even landmines. There is a significant debate about the extent to which institutional failures in governance over natural resources (perhaps being intensified by climate change) is a primary driver behind state fragility (Samset 2009).

- *Economic and financial institutions*
  Functioning markets rely on formal and informal regulatory structures, monitoring functions and ethical norms. These may be absent or severely weakened, thereby undermining the trust that must underpin economic development. Formal banking systems may collapse, but informal financial services, such as the *hawala* system operating in Afghanistan, Somalia and other fragile states may quite efficiently replace many of the services provided by formal institutions in other countries, especially in providing channels for transfer of remittances. It is starting to be recognised that addressing gaps in economic and financial institutions in fragile states requires a long-term process toward the development of formal institutions at the same time as taking an 'if it isn't broke, don't fix it' approach to informal structures. The problem with such a two-track approach is that there is significant suspicion, sometime justified, that informal structures are being used for illicit political and economic activities which may also undermine equity and justice.

- *Judicial, tax and regulatory institutions*
  There are some areas where informal institutions are wholly inadequate for meeting human security needs. Formal incentives and sanctions guiding the behaviour of politicians, civil servants, the private sector and civil society tend to be weak or absent in fragile states, with implications for food and economic security. This can have direct impact on, for example, whether an international or national aid provider can be held accountable for their work, or if farmers can trust that the fertilisers that they buy contain the ingredients that are on the label. Lack of capacity for taxation means that governmental resources are so limited as to create undue reliance on aid for core public expenditure, with negative implications for reliability and legitimacy in the work of public agencies.

- *Transparency and corruption*
  Many of the above symptoms of fragility lead to a severe deficit of transparency, leading in turn to corruption and a lack of trust in political, market and judicial institutions. Lack of functioning judicial authority means that corruption in the use of aid cannot be effectively constrained apart from using the rather blunt power of purse strings. Sometimes corruption is so endemic that it is taken for granted. This can become one of the most fundamental obstacles to rebuilding respect, accountability and a leadership role for the state and can lead to chronic fragility.

Even if these institutions are deemed to be exceedingly weak, merely pointing out failure can be counterproductive. Documenting fragility can encourage humanitarian agencies to 'fill the gap' with structures that do little to address the underlying institutional factors that constrain economic and food security. For example, agencies promoting so-called livelihood programmes frequently help small scale farmers from a limited geographical area to sell their goods in international markets. These projects tend to bypass the weak or non-existent institutional structures that would be needed in order to secure access to these markets after the close of the project. Phyto-sanitary regulatory structures, market information systems and trusted financial intermediaries are part of any market chains. In fragile states these may be more informal than in other countries, but they must exist. Somalia has, with significant yet uneven success, retained access to livestock markets. Informal financial markets linking Afghanistan to international markets have existed throughout the conflict. Research into seed systems has in most cases shown that the informal institutional structures through which farmers accessed seeds before the onset of 'fragility' still function, and that seeds and tools programmes frequently yield little additional benefit. Local people may know quite well how to protect their communities from floods and landslides, but the current popularity of disaster risk reduction among humanitarian agencies may lead to training courses that provide little added value. Agencies frequently ignore these institutional realities because of their ignorance and the pressure to demonstrate legitimacy for both internal and external audiences encourages them to overstate their own importance.

This is not to suggest that vulnerable populations in fragile states can necessarily rely on existing institutions. The lack of formal institutions to defend property rights can create openings for land-grabbing and theft of other resources such as water and forest. This may occur on local scales, when warlords and other powerful local authorities expropriate resources, or on a global scale, as evidenced by the Daewoo Corporation's recent leasing of half the arable land in Madagascar and Chinese investments in a number of countries. These kinds of resource grabs frequently occur in rural hinterlands where states that would otherwise not generally be characterised as 'fragile' are unable to exert legitimate authority, or where isolation from public attention and weak rule of law create incentives for extortion by either national or local officials. All of these points contribute to weakening the legitimacy of the state. If the state cannot facilitate or regulate, it cannot be said to govern. The challenges highlighted above point to the Janus face of private sector development amid weakened institutions. A vibrant private sector is a far more effective generator of economic and food security than a collection of 'livelihood projects', but such vibrancy can also be highly exploitive if institutions cannot provide a modicum of regulation and control.

Box 4. Enabling factors and obstacles impacting on livelihoods in fragile states

Activity	Enabling Factors	Obstacles
General agricultural production	Effective inspection and certification of agricultural inputs Tariffs on grain imports from countries with subsidies Access to research and extension services Investment in infrastructure Investments in value chains to enable local producers to access national and international markets Closely managed food aid programmes that do not compete with local markets for food or (in the case of food for work) labour at critical times in the agricultural cycle	Uncontrolled borders leading to imports of dangerous and/ or ineffective agrichemicals and subsidised agricultural products Corruption and chaotic regulatory and tax structures leading to uncertainty about a 'level playing field' in markets Lack of access to new varieties and breeds and knowledge of how to produce them Lack of knowledge about markets Isolation from domestic and international markets due to poor infrastructure
Livestock production	Phytosanitary control to meet export requirements and to prevent imports that introduce disease and pests Security -particularly important with livestock due to isolated pastures and relative ease of transporting and sale of stolen animals	Lack of capacity to meet export requirements Lack of control over imports, impacting on disease vectors, biodiversity, etc. Insecurity and theft Degradation of common property resources (pasture)

Activity	Enabling Factors	Obstacles
Natural resource management based livelihoods	Sustainable management of common property resources based on social capital and maintenance of traditional norms Protection of forests, watersheds and biodiversity Land-use planning (formal or informal) to mitigate risks of flooding, landslides, etc.	Uncontrolled and unregulated extractive industries War economies resulting in a breakdown of reciprocal patron-client ties, replaced with unsustainable extractive exploitation of natural resource base, especially common property Land grabbing of fallow lands leading to collapse of swidden production systems and over-intensification of production on fragile soils
Rural wage labour	Climate for investment by a range of market actors creating jobs throughout value chains Capital availability and security for investments in a range of rural enterprises Mobility (security, appropriate laws) to allow landless populations to seek employment where wages are highest	Powerful (armed) actors control access to local populations, pushing down wages Insecurity and uncertainty prevents investment, pushing rural economy toward household subsistence production
Industry	(Re)investment in medium and large-scale industry generally reliant on strong institutional environment Small-scale construction industry usually benefits significantly from recovery investments (especially housing) and return of private capital for other small and medium-scale businesses	Lack of large-scale capital for local entrepreneurs to take advantage of investment opportunities, e.g., leading to reconstruction contracts being awarded to firms from non-fragile states Lack of human resources with appropriate skills and lack of functioning national structures for training Insecurity and uncertainty regarding tax and regulatory structures discourages investment

Young, et al (2009) report that in Darfur the state actively encourages 'asset stripping' both for commercial gain and to deprive their political opponents access to livelihoods. This leads to a vicious cycle as asset-stripping resulting from conflict-related processes, policies, and institutions weakens pre-existing survival strategies informal institutions. People's livelihood adaptations due to their loss of assets lead to further conflict. Young, et al cite examples such as 'grazing by nomads of farmers' fields, the fencing-off of common grazing land for cultivation purposes, the gender-based violence used to control access to forestry resources, and the blocking of nomadic access to traditional rainy season grazing lands.'

Organisational capacities

The most obvious elements of state strength and fragility is whether the organs of governance function, whether a modicum of basic public services are being provided and (increasingly) whether the international community has a functioning 'partner' to align with. The latter has to do with ability to channel aid within national budgets with an acceptable level of transparency and capacity to participate as a 'partner' in planning or even to lead policy discussions. These capacities can exist in either governmental structures or in private service providers or civil society. In fragile states aid is more often than not channelled through non-state actors on the assumption that they are either stronger or can scale up their capacities in a fast and flexible manner. Some donors and NGOs choose specific types of partners for ideological reasons, related to their own views about appropriate future roles for the state, civil society and the private sector. Organisational development is generally portrayed as a relatively technical process, but particularly in fragile states the choice of target organisations and the visions for their future roles can have significant ideological undertones.

There are vast gaps between the humanitarian and developmental agendas with respect to strategic and tactical objectives in organisational development. The missing links between relief, rehabilitation and development can become most apparent when it comes to what is expected and what is supported in organisations. The Sphere standards, for example, have set goals for service provision that are far beyond the capacities of most fragile states. This gap may even be growing. Human rights based approaches that demand certain levels of service provision as a 'right' and calls for greater accountability among humanitarian agencies have steadily raised expectations regarding benchmarks for NGO service provision. At the same time, development thinking has begun to acknowledge that objectives should focus more on 'good enough governance', which reflects the human resources, financial flows and institutional environments that characterise fragile states. More attention is being paid to sequencing organisational development ambitions than in setting short-term service provision targets. The humanitarian imperative may come first in humanitarian operations[1], but sustainability is given higher priority in development efforts which may suggest very different priorities.

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1   The Red Cross and Red Crescent Code of Conduct for humanitarian action begins with the statement that 'The humanitarian imperative comes first'.

The interface between these contrasting sets of expectations is a possible area for IS Academy research in that it highlights the challenges of choosing between different ways to balance slower and uncertain state building approaches with the need to get services running for a significant proportion of the population. The emerging 'early recovery' agenda reflects a perceived need to move from the patchy nature of service provision that exists in most fragile states to national systems. But there are as yet few answers about how this scaling-up can be achieved given expected trajectories for the development of capacities in public service providers. One aspect that comes in is the problem of scale: the pockets of service delivery versus a planned approach that builds up from primary to secondary to tertiary levels (education, health) and aims to provide citizens with similar service levels. For example, in Angola state water services are almost free but coverage is so limited that most people are dependent on private water sources which often consume 10 % - 30% of available income in poor urban areas.

In development efforts, particularly those promoted by the US, fragility is often portrayed as an 'opportunity' to introduce *new public management*, i.e., new structures of slimmer government with services either contracted out to the private sector or left for the market to provide (Christoplos 2000). The most compelling argument for taking advantage of this 'opportunity' is that conflicts whittle down civil service agencies and severely restrict tax revenues, which is interpreted as suggesting that there is no need to build up what was there before if there is no realistic hope of maintaining a strong public bureaucracy for the foreseeable future.

Although the basic logic of not recreating an inefficient bureaucracy and looking for new efficient approaches cannot be denied, this does create a conundrum. In post-conflict and post-disaster contexts the demand for public services is extremely high. Ability to provide these services is perceived by the public as evidence of whether or not the state is back in operation. Expectations often reflect hope for a return of the paternalistic state that existed in the past. The public is unlikely to accept a different role for the state if the alternative, leaner version of governance does not get off the ground. A 'market' for the services in question cannot be created overnight; there are very few service providers apart from NGOs that are ideologically and structurally oriented toward free (aid financed) service provision. There is also little or no capacity within government structures to be the 'smart buyer' of services that new public management demands. This is an area where more research is needed into the interface between policies and the organisations that are tasked with implementing such reforms, be they government agencies that are expected to be transformed into service procurers or NGOs that are pressured to become vehicles for commercialised public service contractors.

Fragility is also often seen to be an 'opportunity' to *decentralise* functions from central government to local authorities. Central ministries are rightly seen as being busy enough getting their own houses in order. They usually have little capacity (or motivation) to get out of the capital city. Local authorities are often taking advantage of the power vacuum by strengthening their own role in governance and control. Given that decentralisation is by nature seen as being generally a 'good thing' in most development circles, it is natural that advice frequently leans toward 'going with the flow' by formalising de facto trends toward

decentralisation. Problems arise in that, whereas local authorities may be gathering more power, that does not necessarily carry with it capacities to provide a modicum of governance, much less withstand the temptations presented by commercial investors. The result is that, instead of developing a social contract with the local population (which is a core underlying assumption about the value of decentralisation), these authorities frequently become involved in selling natural resources, managing illicit enterprises and even extorting land and forced labour from their 'constituents'. Even where their intentions are appropriate and financing is available, local authorities may lack the knowledge or staff to implement measures to reduce risks of future conflicts or adapt to climate change. Experience with natural disaster risk mapping has shown that local authorities and communities can easily be mobilised for planning but that implementation is a much harder task (Christoplos et al 2009 forthcoming). Decentralisation is another interface between policy and practice that deserves closer analysis.

The nitty gritty challenges of rebuilding a state (service provision in particular) are commonly, and in some respects accurately, seen as related to the capacities of the individuals working with public, private and civil society organisations. This is not to say that it should be seen as simple or straightforward. An understanding of the context of human resource capacities requires a transnational perspective. Conflicts create brain drains that can continue long after the cessation of hostilities. This has rightly been acknowledged as having potentially very positive impacts on human resources when returnees from the Diaspora are engaged in recovery efforts, but can result in considerable tensions as well. The skills and experience of returning former refugees are an important resource for fragile states, but this resource can be difficult to situate in recovery of private or public institutions. Many returnees have primarily worked in factories but have little opportunity to apply their skills upon return to obtain economic security for their families or contribute to broader economic development given the absence of a functioning industrial sector in most post-conflict contexts. Even where there is progress toward re-industrialisation, the new industry may bear little resemblance to the labour intensive industry of the past (e.g., Bosnia Herzegovina, see Christoplos 2007b). Rural development, through agriculture or other forms of investment linked to natural resource management, may be where the greatest potential exists, but few refugees have worked in rural areas during their absence and those that have were most likely engaged as hired labour on large farms, providing little relevant experience for finding food security.

There are links between the fragility of governmental agencies in retaining qualified staff and the relative strength of civil society and the private sector. 'Poaching' of government staff by international agencies, local NGOs and the private sector is common. This may involve providing payment levels far in excess of government salary scales. It may also involve provision of salary top-ups and other incentives for government staff to apply their full attention to a given donor funded project rather than following their job description or responding to the needs of their agency. This is one of the issues that the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness has been meant to address. The weak penetration of the Paris Agenda in fragile states is evident, though by this measure there are similar problems in countries that have made strong ostensive endorsements of the Paris Agenda and which are not generally perceived to be 'fragile'.

The boom-bust world of aid in fragile states is not conducive to conventional assumptions and processes of 'capacity building'. People have their capacities built and then move on to organisations where they can best use their new skills and where they are offered better conditions. This does not mean that capacity development is impossible, but rather that investments often contribute to strengthening the human resource pool rather than contributing to a steady development of the specific organisation being supported. 'Poaching' of highly qualified staff does damage Southern/Eastern institutions, but it would seem that these individuals should have the same rights as their Northern colleagues to develop their careers as they choose. The experience and skills that they develop after they have been 'poached' will in most cases be fed back into local organisations after large operations are phased out.

The dichotomies of relief and development are apparent in the 'capacity building' efforts applied fragile states. The humanitarian sector leans heavily toward quick fixes for the human resource aspects of capacity, primarily investing in training to address the international agencies' own instrumental objectives.

When is a state no longer 'fragile'?

Reducing or dealing with fragility depends on processes of change in the institutional, organisational and human resource capacities of states, civil society, businesses and the household. The fragility concept can be (re)defined as a question of who can do what. Fragility can be measured in terms of whether or not households and businesses are able to achieve their most basic aims; whether or not states can carry out their most basic responsibilities; and how these processes interact.

Any exploration of capacities related to economic and food security leads to grey zones between the roles of the state, private sector, civil societies. There are a range of ideological positions regarding who should do what. These positions can undermine recovery if they are not informed by awareness of who wants to do what and who has the capacity to do what. The fragmented perspective of the aid community can obscure the interfaces where these different capacities need to fit together to form functioning societies and economies that result in a modicum of human security. It is in the interfaces of how these pieces fit together that the IS Academy may be able to provide greatest insight. Analysis of the processes of change in how capacities are developed, degraded and distorted can provide a framework for the IS Academy to concretise the academic discourse within the immediate capacity-related concerns of humanitarian and development practitioners.

4

Socio-economic security in fragile states

Defining the research area

The previous chapters have summarised the context of the IS Academy research with regard to the concepts that underpin interventions in fragile states and the underlying nature of fragility in terms of capacities. This chapter will present the basic assumptions about socio-economic security that will structure the research itself.

The IS Academy focuses on the interlinkages between socio-economic security (including food security, livelihood resilience, income generating capacities, social protection) and the development of political and institutional structures. One of the concerns is to examine complex and conflict-ridden interactions between processes of economic transformation, especially with regard to the non-state actors that dominate the realm of socio-economic recovery, and the political transformations underway in specific regions. This includes a conundrum in that the focus is on the *role of the state and related political process* within the (largely) *private spheres of how households act to maintain food and economic security*. The research programme needs to be cognisant of the strong ideological stances on the relative roles of public and private, while retaining an empirical focus on what evidence reveals about how states foster or inhibit enabling environments for more robust livelihood strategies. This also means that the research needs to be reflexive about presuppositions regarding the desired roles of states, civil societies and private actors that slip into the research questions and designs. To this purpose, we will critically interrogate each other's work and seek external reviews on the reports and publications we write.

The research shall map the roles of the state in its interactions with civil society and the private sector in promoting equitable recovery and development and/or how the nature of these interactions contribute to increasing clientelism and social/political/ cultural exclusion in socio-economic structures. A central question is the likelihood that fragile states and other stakeholders in fragile countries will act in an inclusive manner, or if they are inevitably drawn into processes that are intrinsically linked to trajectories of exclusion. The need to achieve an understanding of the intertwined nature of trends toward inclusion and exclusion is a central focus of the IS Academy.

The research focuses on the interfaces between people's livelihoods, institutions and interventions. Interface analysis focuses on the linkages and networks between individuals

or parties at points where different and often conflicting life-worlds or social fields intersect (Long 1989). Interface analysis can help uncover important dynamics concerning the interplay of discourses, the way in which power relations get shaped and actors give meaning to and transform development processes and aid interventions. It contributes to our understanding of how institutions and actors frame each other and how aid as an external factor becomes 'internalised' and comes to form part of the constraints and resources available to social actors. Interface analysis can also inform on organising processes of various social actors and thus help reveal how aid interventions both affect and are shaped by the way in which institutions evolve (Long 2001).

Box 5. How do we look at livelihoods?

Livelihood is a way to explain how people make a living. The concept became very popular in the 1990s, in response to the macro-economic approaches in the 1980s, in order to redirect attention to the challenges of how to approach the different aspects of livelihood practices on a micro-level. Livelihood approaches have become strongly associated with models, such as the famous DFID model, that incorporate material and non-material assets, or 'capitals' and capabilities which are present, and situate these in a framework that maps the opportunities and constraints that people encounter in making their living (Bebbington 1999, Chambers and Conway, 1991). Compared to the restricted ways in which humanitarian relief portrays victims of crisis, livelihood approaches focus on people's agency and form the foundation of participatory approaches in interventions (Kaag et al. 2004). Livelihood approaches centre on households within their immediate enabling or disabling environments.

The use of livelihood approaches can be problematic in practice for several reasons. Firstly, they may lead to static analyses of what households can do, and overlook the vagaries and fluidness of conditions in crisis situations. In times of increased risk and vulnerability, people need to constantly assess and re-assess what livelihoods strategies they can safely pursue (Lautze and Raven-Roberts 2006). Secondly, it has been observed that despite the comprehensive models underlying livelihood approaches, interventions often continue to reflect what Farrington (1998) has labeled the 'yeoman farmer fallacy', where every rural inhabitant in a developing country is assumed to be a subsistence farmer, informing the seeds-and-tools bias of many rural society reconstruction programming (Longley et al. 2006). This means that the diversification of livelihoods that is typical of poor people's strategies may be ignored due to a focus on subsistence while overlooking entrepreneurial activities that are geared to accumulation and may affect social relations. It also means that the supra-local interconnections in livelihood strategies - ranging from seasonal migration to international emigration - may be ignored. Finally, gender studies in particular have pointed out that livelihood approaches may overlook intra-household heterogeneity and power differentials.

It is important to acknowledge how people's livelihood strategies affect the

institutional environment that put boundaries on the room for manoeuvre of individual households. We need to conceptualize livelihood practices as 'embedded action and of livelihood as fluid, moving with changing circumstances and responding to but also influencing external conditions' (Kaag et al. p.55). At the same time, we need to understand how livelihoods are entangled with the institutional environment. It is often inaccurate to portrait poor people as simple bystanders or victims of ongoing upheaval. They are often involved (sometimes forcefully) in the ongoing social and political strife. Local communities may have (more or less hidden) ties with warring parties. A poor farmer may also be an occasional militia member for a specific group, or an important source of logistical support. The violence they have suffered, or partaken in, may be relevant to their political identification and loyalties, and affect their livelihood choice.[2]

The use of models in livelihood analyses are instrumental to mapping risks and opportunities, but fails to capture the processes by which these become effective and the meaning that people attach to them. People do not rationally calculate their options, but their considerations and preferences are mediated by their interpretations of these options and come about in the interaction of everyday life. Anthony Bebbington stated 'Over and above the meaningfulness of a particular set of assets, then, there is a meaningfulness associated with the set of cultural practices made possible (or constrained) by the patterns of co-residence and absence linked to certain livelihood strategies' (Bebbington 1999 pp. 2034). The interactive nature of livelihood choices and the agency people invest in organizing their daily lives cannot be captured by mapping exercises and underline the importance of ethnographic research in analysing livelihoods.

Core challenges in research into how to address livelihoods and food security in fragile states

Understanding of the nature of livelihoods and food security in fragile states has often been distorted by prevailing narratives about how people survive in severe conditions and also by tendencies to anchor hopes for recovery in 'nostalgia' for a pastoral romantic vision of the past. The criticisms of the LRRD continuum notwithstanding, it is not only the aid community that are prone to hopes and assumptions that recovery is about a linear return to normalcy. States and citizens enter into recovery with hopes that the structures of the past can be rebuilt, without awareness of how the conditions for strong states have changed during the period of the conflict. Grand irrigation schemes, parastatal marketing boards, state managed cooperatives and other accoutrements of the failed statist models of economic development from the 1970s are dusted off and presented by leaders who have spent decades fighting in the bush or otherwise isolated from current norms and the lessons that have been learnt in the interim. International and national NGOs, eager to avoid the mistakes of neoliberalism, promote projects that are disconnected from current market

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2   Based on comments by Ralph Sprenkels.

realities in their efforts to revive rural economies that were in many cases crumbling even before the start of the conflict.

This nostalgia may overshadow analyses of what fragile states can do to defend property rights, provide basic regulatory functions, etc., and what the implications are regarding the strategies of households and businesses if they cannot (or do not wish to) shoulder these tasks. Research into the role of the state needs to contrast expectations (of the state, the population and the aid agencies) with the capacities to actually manage basic responsibilities and how actors perceive and deal with the gap between the two. Analyses need to also consider the extent to which civil society and private sector institutions can fill the gap of limited state capacities. Points of departure for this analysis can include, for example, research into the role of farmer organisations and innovative interventions to deal with weak capacities, such as warehouse receipt systems wherein farmers can store their harvests with large commercial actors and thereby be able to access credit using this collateral and sell their products when prices are high.

Another aspect of recovery where nostalgia may distort priorities is in understanding the implications of climate change for 'building back better'. New knowledge about future trends and hazards suggests that many vulnerable populations, especially in drylands (in Africa) and areas where agriculture is dependent on glacial melt (e.g., Afghanistan and Nepal), will not be able to return to past livelihoods and may need to be encouraged to seek completely different opportunities. The capacities of fragile states, civil society, private sector actors and many of the international agencies engaged in recovery to incorporate these factors in their economic and food security strategies is often far from sufficient. This is indeed an emerging challenge to both conventional models of economic development and those promoting romantic reliance on 'indigenous knowledge' as an appropriate basis for local development models.

At the same time, there is a lack of congruence between the high ambitions of new plans for climate change adaptation and mitigation and what is known about capacities within fragile states. Many of the climate related tasks that are being proposed assume that line ministries and frontline service provision, regulatory and research institutions exist and can exert their will to put into place very different systems for natural resource management. There are few fragile states where this assumption is valid, and environmental agencies are usually a relatively low priority for states that are struggling to manage their most basic functions. There is a strong statist bias in most climate change mitigation and adaptation plans, and there is little indication that these agendas, with very ambitious checklists of things that government 'must do,' are being modified to reflect current understanding of what fragile states 'can do'. The gap between what can be done and assumptions about what 'must' be done is growing, and there are few signs of an equivalent to the 'good enough governance' concept emerging in climate change circles.

In a similar vein, we see gaps evolving between systemic analyses of what must be done and insight in what local people actually do about their problems. Economic recovery and adaptation to climate change are largely shaped by the multiple ways in which people reflect upon their experiences and what happens around them and use their knowledge and

capabilities to interpret and respond to their environment. Household coping practices and the ways in which individual actors develop preferences and lifestyles, while seeking to adjust their livelihoods to changing opportunities and constraints, results in new mechanisms of social and economic ordering. One example is the preference of many returning refugees who have experienced camp life to base themselves in cities rather than resume the rural life of their parents. While many aid programmes are designed to promote the restoration of rural livelihoods, people-generated dynamics are often concentrated in informal economic processes that tie and reshape different urbanities and ruralities.

Relations between food and livelihood insecurity and chronic fragility

As noted above, concerns for food and livelihoods are beginning to figure in the new, emerging security agenda. Several factors shape the merging of these agendas. First, in countries as diverse as Kosovo and Afghanistan, the factors driving international interest in recovery are not entirely altruistic. The growth of smuggling, narcotics and organised crime are evidence that a failure to address livelihood and food security may lead to the pursuance of unsanctioned livelihoods instead, with impacts that transcend borders. State fragility is clearly a business opportunity (Cooper 2002). The income from unsanctioned economic activities sometimes flows into the coffers of unsanctioned political movements and attracts members to these movements. In light of this, the allure of programming to promote 'alternative livelihoods' in fragile states is understandable.

The rush to promote such 'alternative livelihoods' (or even 'instant livelihoods') before illicit livelihoods take root, has carried with it tendencies to ignore the realities of the markets for labour, services and products upon which the sustainability of these livelihoods will rely. Thousands of demobilised combatants (including child soldiers) are given quick training in skills shoe repair, carpentry and tie-dying with little attention to prospective job markets. Inputs are provided for small-scale peasant farming for urbanised populations who may have left agriculture generations ago and where commercial agriculture is putting the 'real peasants' out of business.

In reaction to these mistakes, an alternative approach has emerged, focusing on investments, often very considerable, in entrepreneurs and farmers who have the land, knowledge and social capital to take advantage of prevailing opportunities (Christoplos 2007b; Christoplos et al 2009 forthcoming). These programmes 'pick winners' with assumptions that this will lead to a trickle-down effect that create livelihoods for the chronic poor who would be lured into undesirable occupations and political movements. They are also sometimes justified as making the best of a bad situation by at least helping 'somebody', which it is assumed will eventually lead to broader economic development, which will in turn lead to stronger state capacities and a virtuous cycle that will eventually result in better livelihoods for those who are excluded at first. There has been insufficient wider, ex post evaluation and research into whether or not these assumptions have proven valid. Little is known about whether policies that focus on 'picking winners' create such a trickle-down effect or if they exclude 'losers' even in the long-term, and thereby aggravate security concerns.

The belief in 'picking winners' is rooted in assumptions that 'economic development solves everything,' i.e., that attention to targeting and vulnerability distracts from the need to address the overall lack of licit economic dynamism in fragile states. It is difficult to dispute the claim that addressing fragility is contingent on economic development. However, there is clear evidence that economic development alone is not sufficient for addressing the underlying factors that make fragile states fragile. Bosnia Herzegovina, Kosovo and East Timor are examples of countries which have achieved fairly strong economic growth, but where massive unemployment still threatens stability and has resulted in ingrained poverty (Christoplos 2007b). The 'economic development solves everything' narrative can lead to exclusion.

Food security and state fragility

A political perspective on food insecurity starts with the analysis of its causes. It has been argued that famine is not in the first place a failure of some kind (of food-supply, livelihood systems or climate), but the normal outcome of economic and political processes. David Keen starts his analysis of food crises in Sudan with a question about the beneficiaries of famine: its perpetrators and bystanders (Keen, 1994; see also Duffield, 1993). Alex de Waal brought this approach powerfully home by labelling famine as a crime (de Waal, 1997).

It might seem that ensuring food security is in many respects the most visible and fundamental indicator of whether or not fragile states and the international community are meeting their most basic responsibilities. This is surprisingly not the case in the overwhelming majority of research on fragile states. Until 2008, food security was generally ignored in research into fragile states or was treated as a mundane and technical task for humanitarian agencies. With concerns about the political impacts of rising food prices and their wider impact (e.g., land grabbing, urban food riots, etc.) this may be changing. Also, there are growing concerns about potential ecological 'tipping points' wherein climate change may lead to sudden collapse of food production systems, particularly in conflict-prone arid and semi-arid areas.

A major point of confusion in analysing the importance of food is that the term food security is used by different actors to mean different things. The humanitarian community focuses mostly on household food security and nutrition, whereas national politicians are often more concerned with national-level supplies and ensuring a modicum of food price stability for urban populations. The global food price crisis of 2008 drew attention to overall global food supply.

 The antecedents of the current discourse on food security stem from the late 1980s when, due to the impacts of droughts in Africa and concerns about the nature of famine, food availability and consumption were being compromised by many of the factors that may have been early forms of climate change. Yet at the same time, the focus was shifting away from increasing yields to understanding the complex nature of hunger and famines. As mentioned above, Amartya Sen and Alex de Waal drew attention to how famine resulted, not from a lack of food in a given region, but rather from political decisions and the structures of

vulnerability that led to a lack of 'entitlements' by marginalised populations to gain access to the food they need. Such entitlements could consist of income, access to social protection or smallholder production. Sen showed that food exports always increase from famine affected areas, largely because poor people cannot afford to buy food. He concluded that increasing global food supply is not a panacea for famine. The broader 'freedom' to buy food, as influenced by local/national/international policies, markets and trends, was recognized as more important than household or even national production levels.

Recent events have swung the pendulum partially back toward food security and increasing yields, this time linked to the political security agenda. Food prices that skyrocketed during 2007-2008 and which are likely to remain volatile have underlined how the bottom line in the livelihoods of the poor is being able to afford enough to eat. The global forces that determine the nature of today's agrifood systems are clashing with the expectations of the poor, and food is the most incendiary factor. International security is reliant on how states manage this interface. Food security is a determinant of whether or not the state is viewed as living up to its most basic responsibilities. In many Asian countries, the most fundamental indicator of the social compact between the state and its population is perceived as being whether or not there is enough rice available at an affordable price. In Mexico, increases in the price of tortillas have led to riots. In other countries different staples have become a symbol of access to a minimum level of well-being. Evidence indicates that people perceive that they have a right to food, especially a right to have enough food for their children, which in many respects transcends the livelihoods concept. The violent reactions to the food crisis have shown that food security is not just an indicator of the sustainability of livelihoods; it is even a determinant of social and political stability. Thus, food security is a strategic interface between international efforts to address geo-political and human insecurity and the struggles of individuals, households and communities to survive.

Until the late 1990s there was an assumption that humanitarian assistance for agriculture was, ipso facto, a matter of distributing seeds, tools and occasionally fertiliser. This type of programming grew along with the interest in LRRD as food aid was associated with relief and seeds were seen as being an easily managed and popular (among donors) symbol of commitment to rehabilitation. This narrow 'quick fix' for food security has been increasingly questioned on a number of grounds (Longley, et al 2006, Christoplos 2007a). These include concerns about the lack of evidence in most cases that local seed markets had actually collapsed, fears that seeds were being imported that were inappropriate for local conditions (particularly the micro-conditions within farms and localities), and the lack of competence of many agencies promoting 'improved' seed varieties about regarding whether or not such improvements are appropriate from for the farming systems of the poor. Perhaps most important Furthermore, seed programmes have been promoted as a way of reaching the poorest, whereas a large proportion of the rural poor are landless and therefore have little use for seeds, improved or otherwise. Those who sharecrop may benefit, but there have even been reports that landowners have reduced the share of the harvest retained by sharecroppers in accordance with their lower input costs due to free seeds.

One alternative response to the realisation that food and economic security could not be effectively addressed by either food or seeds alone has been a trend to provide cash to

those affected by a disaster or emergency. There are a range of justifications for this new programming modality, perhaps the most important being that cash allows recipients to decide how to use these resources themselves. At the same time, it has been pointed out that cash relief should not become the new standard mantra of humanitarian action, as its appropriateness is contextual and depends, amongst others, on the prevailing economic conditions and security situations. (Levine and Chastre, 2004)

Labour markets and economic security in fragile states

The interest in livelihoods in fragile states brought with it a realisation that labour markets are probably more important than seeds for food security, not the least for the landless (Pain & Lautze 2002). The need to take into account labour markets is partially a result of recognition of entitlements and partially an awareness of the limitations of the 'yeoman farmer fallacy' (Farrington), i.e., a misguided tendency to assume that the rural poor are/ should be/want to be small-scale peasant farmers. Massive migration to urban areas and rural landlessness would seem to be obvious indications that rural people have other goals, but fixed assumptions about poverty and rurality still guide most recovery efforts.

There are many examples of how recovery investments, even in countries still in conflict, have transformed labour markets in unexpected ways. The recovery process has generated a demand for labour in some fragile states that has led to an influx of labourers from neighbouring areas (Sri Lanka in areas affected by the tsunami, see Christoplos 2006), neighbouring countries (from Pakistan to Afghanistan, see Christoplos 2004) and has increased wage levels vis-à-vis neighbouring countries to the point that some agricultural activities are no longer profitable (Bosnia Herzegovina, see Christoplos 2007b) Despite this recognition there has been little empirical analysis of how aid impacts on labour markets. There is acknowledgement that labour markets may be important, but it has not led to a significant rethink on the role of aid in fragile states.

Remittances are a vital resource during and after conflict for those struggling to survive and rebuild their livelihoods. These financial flows are often greater than the money from grants and loans provided by the international community. Despite being increasingly recognised as important, these flows are largely invisible in planning for economic and food security. In many countries social and economic divides emerge between those with and without access to remittances. Apart from generally creating an enabling environment for investment in livelihoods, there is little that the aid community can do to influence these financial flows or to channel them differently. It is important, however, that planning be informed by a more holistic understanding of where and how capital is being generated for investments. Greater humility about the relative importance of aid is a starting point for understanding the reality of economic and food security in fragile states.

The parallel processes of climate change and increasing state fragility

Another global factor impacting on fragility and socio-economic security is, as mentioned

above, that of climate change, both with respect to impacts of climate change itself and also the impacts of climate change mitigation and adaptation investments on the architecture of aid and development. Particularly in drylands, in countries reliant on Himalayan snows and glacier melt for agriculture (Afghanistan, Nepal) and in central Africa there is large overlap between state fragility and current/expected climate change. There is, however, a danger in generalisations. The intensification of conflict in Darfur has coincided with a return of higher levels of rainfall after a long period of drought (Young et al 2009). Southern Somalia has experienced disasters due to flooding as well as drought in recent years. The only certain trend for many areas is that of greater climate variability (and uncertainty). There has been some speculation on the interlinkages between these factors, but little empirical research.

Adaptation investments are therefore needed, but the most vulnerable countries are also the countries with least capacity to engage in discussions on climate change adaptation, much less carry out the increasingly ambitious measures being promoted internationally or deal with the uncertainties that accompany recognition of climate change. The capacities of authorities to manage such investments at national level are extremely limited, with environmental issues rarely being a priority for either fragile states or for donors investing in post-conflict programmes. Both lean toward views that livelihoods come first, the environment later. Decentralised capacities within agricultural and public works ministries are a precondition to state engagement in addressing increasing risks of floods and droughts, but these are rarely present. New ideas for risk transfer, relying on long-term and predictable commitments to co-finance and manage index-based insurance programmes and related schemes are likely to be equally problematic given the fact that these programmes have a poor track record even in relatively stable contexts (Arnold 2008).

When new climate change mitigation architecture is put into place, this may lead to struggles over access to resources that are essential for livelihoods since payments for environmental services involve a commoditisation of natural resources that have traditionally been managed on a common property basis. These mechanisms, such as the programme for Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries (REDD), are frequently portrayed within the climate change community as 'low hanging fruit', i.e., easy to implement (Früling & Warfvinge 2008). This disregards decades of experience and research on how efforts to undertake attractive concepts such as 'community forestry' can unleash a range of natural resource conflicts at local, national and sometimes even global levels. Lessons could be drawn from analyses of how 'green wars' resulting from a rush to exploit natural resources create state fragility (see, e.g., Di John 2006). These and other new global norms and market institutions mean there is no return to the strong states of old. A transnational perspective is needed in order to understand how local natural resource management and agricultural production systems are likely to change and 'develop' in a post-conflict, chronic conflict or post-disaster recovery phase.

Growing populations, urbanisation and geographic concentration of economic development activities are trends that are universal to fragile and non-fragile states alike. The impacts of climate change on coastal cities and the financial crisis on urban economies are also affecting both. The increasing pressures on land and other natural resources mentioned above are by no means unique to fragile states. Cultural transformations are underway

throughout the world. These transformations are strongly affected by the presence of chronic conflict and heightened tensions related to age, ethnicity, gender and other factors in fragile states, but these transformations are underway on a much broader scale. In light of these factors it is essential that fragile states are not treated as a discrete category where everything is attributed to the conflict, narco-mafias or other factors specifically related to fragility.

These broader factors, together with climate change, are impacting on the changing landscape of disaster risk and the capacities of households and governments to manage natural hazards. These geo-physical factors, together with demographic and natural resource pressures are leading to a loss of biodiversity and with that increasing risk due to the undermining of people to effectively manage their ecosystems.

Within the climate change community there are growing concerns that the convergence of these different factors are leading to approaching 'tipping points', where states and socio-economic systems are no longer able to adapt, and therefore fail. It can be presumed that some collapsed states, such as Somalia, may be a demonstration of what happens after such tipping points have been reached. At the same time, it may be possible to learn about the nature of resilience by observing how households, businesses and states deal with the tipping point of state failure. This could inform the frequently deterministic and generally empirically weak discourse within the climate change community about how people actually deal with profound shocks and develop new livelihoods to adapt to the changing conditions.

The proof is in the pudding

There may be 'no peace without development' but development, if too narrowly defined may not lead to peace. If economic development is to result in relatively inclusive economic and food security, this will require targeted and empirically informed strategies for how to invest the 'peace dividend.' This means that there should be a new perspective on the roles of the state, civil society and the private sector, which includes active consideration of options for new and innovative reforms, but which is cognisant and respectful of the expectations and desires of national and local actors. Socio-economic security is contingent on a rebuilt social contract, and that contract will be determined as much by local social, cultural and economic norms and trends as by models from abroad.

Food and livelihood security are the ultimate proof of whether the fragile states concept is just a buzz word or something that actually provides guidance on how to achieve impact. The IS Academy can illustrate and enhance understanding of this link and raise critical questions about the extent to which current thinking has really transcended reductionist models, such as the LRRD continuum, to provide more informed, iterative and flexible approaches which reflect local realities. Undue faith in the LRRD continuum lies behind much of the optimism regarding trickle-down development as it can give the impressions that once things are 'on the right path,' socio-economic security is virtually inevitable. Measurement of what is happening in livelihoods and in households' food security can provide a reality check regarding whether or not this is really happening.

5

Conclusions: Working hypotheses and methodological issues

Working hypotheses

- *Local ordering processes exist and are the central point of departure for understanding economic and food security in fragile states*
  The processes underway in fragile societies are not chaotic. They lead to a certain level of market functionality and socio-economic organisation. These may be strongly influenced by transnational and global trajectories and effective strategies to promote livelihoods and address economic and food security should reflect a recognition and respect, (without however romanticizing them), for the nature of these ordering processes.

- *Competing claims on entitlements to resources and power frame fragility*
  Different groups of actors compete within and contest these processes, including political structures, civil servants, private sector, informal community institutions, civil society actors including religious actors, households and aid agencies.
  It is primarily in the nature of this competition, rather than in the design of interventions, that a range of strategies emerge to deal with state fragility, in locally specific ways.

- *Securing people's entitlements, access to productive assets and markets is a major component of recovery*
  The actions of authorities towards economic recovery, by enabling measures to enhance development as well as by addressing disabling factors and processes, may largely determine the legitimacy of authorities in the eyes of local people.

- *Aid interventions are spaces where different actors manoeuvre to realize their own projects*
  The study of aid interventions must be grounded in understanding how aid fits into people's lifeworlds, strategies and livelihoods. They do not just 'cope' with the fragile nature of the states in which they live. They use aid to proactively construct systems, social relations and market structures that reflect what they perceive to be opportunities for both immediate survival and long-term sustainability.

- *Interventions are always political, if not intentional, indeed in their effects*
  Aid interventions are, sometimes deliberately but always effectively, anchored in political, economic and socio-cultural processes underway in any locality or nation. Research should reflect the ways that different categories of aid - across continuums and contiguums - impact on the political processes that are underway in their midst.

Methodological issues

- *The need for empirical research to break out of the current discursive impasse*
  The history of different fashions in conceptual models for describing both fragile states and the types of interventions that are applied within them make clear that we do not need more labels. What is needed is empirical research which unpacks the actual processes underway within these different headings. *Multi-actor perspectives are essential, i.e., research must have a very different ambition than project evaluation and transcend aid categories.*

  The growth of aid evaluation has been highly beneficial in starting to loosen the blinkers that prevent aid agencies from looking beyond the confines of their projects. But the demands of accountability have meant that evaluation and other forms of aid review cannot escape a significant degree of bias toward emphasis on finding (and perhaps exaggerating) causal relations between interventions and impact. Research is needed with can provide a multi-actor perspective to transcend this tunnel vision. There is potential for a synergetic relationship between the work of the IS Academy and aid reviews in that the latter can provide valuable data and even open doors and ask intriguing questions about the local and transnational processes in which aid becomes intertwined.

- *Exploring the meso-level is a strategic entry point for analysing wider processes*
  The issues highlighted in this paper encompass a far larger research agenda than what can be undertaken by the IS Academy. It is suggested that the main niche of the IS Academy should be to start with meso-level analyses of the construction of economic and food security in order to link bottom-up research on household and community practices with analysis of national and transnational trends and policies. There are several reasons for this focus. The meso-level is often an important political hub where - due to lack of central control- large room for manoeuvre exists for public and private actors. Local economies are tied into markets and migration patterns beyond the locality, and district towns are usually vibrant centres of recovery. Perhaps most importantly, the meso-level is a major gap in current research and in indeed in intervention practice. Impact evaluation tends to focus on micro-level impacts on 'beneficiaries', whereas the majority of the academic discourse has focused on the macro processes of state formation. The meso-level has received insufficient attention thus far.

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