
Civil War Research and International Development Discourse: Evolving Centrality of State and Nature of Its Institutions

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Abstract: *Recent civil war research and international development discourse indicate that state fragility is the key variable that causes political instability and violence. The problem of fragility lies in transitional states, which are being governed by hybrid regimes. International community, in the post Cold-War era, has been addressing the problem through peace-building programs by identifying and supporting structures relevant to the consolidation of peace. Under the euphoria of 'end of history', however, western policy makers and scholars believed that those relevant structures must be liberal in orientation. However, naivety, that liberalization of politico-economic structures alone would suffice the consolidation of peace, proved counterproductive. Thus, 'stateness first' and 'state-building for peace' is the lesson learned by scholars and practitioners in the field. Main theorists of the field, however, contend that state building is not a simple task of institution-building in isolation; rather it is a complex process of state-society relations. Therefore, problem of fragility and thus violence should be viewed through broader social context in which state operates.*

Keywords: Greed, Grievance, Opportunity structure, Peace-building, Good-governance, Hybridism.

1 Introduction

Two strands of interdisciplinary intellectual pursuits, civil war research and [international] development studies,--- by employing same concept but with opposite connotation...state capacity and state fragility---have realized the centrality of political order in shaping the socio-economic conditions. Hence, current debate in these areas revolves around regime types as main explanatory variables of peace and violence; and governance indicators as key measures of progress and decline. Civil war research

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addresses the causes of intrastate violence while development studies are concerned with the improvement of human conditions. Review of recent literature in these areas would bring more conceptual clarity while research findings and lessons would help us to devise ideal regime type and governance strategies for societies facing violent conflicts.

2. Civil War Research: Grievances, Greed and Opportunity Structure

Recent debate in civil war research has narrowed down between greed motives versus grievances, and complemented by opportunity structure. Grievance theorists based their research on the sense of inequality in economic, political and cultural realms of life---relative deprivation, exclusion, marginalization.ⁱ Relative deprivation is based on perceived distributive injustice in contrast to traditional explanation of violence as absolute poverty or scarce resources.ⁱⁱ Thus human desires, though, are endless and means to satisfy them are limited, however, given the conditions and situations, few desires are expected to be satisfied. The dissatisfaction of those expected desires create discontentment. The discontentment, in other words, is the gap between expectations and gratifications, due to either increase in expectations or decline in the rewards. When this discontentment is viewed against an expected level of satisfaction or against a better off group(s), it creates sense of relative deprivation. In traditional societies, problem arises when state starts socio-economic modernization process, as it brings changes in aspirations and achievements that may result in increasing gap between them. Initial modernization affects few members, however expanding modernization leads to alienation of large number of people with increasing intensity. Thus, scope and intensity of relative deprivation work as determining force, which may turn into politicized collective discontentment by acquiring political objectives with normative or utilitarian justification.ⁱⁱⁱ

Grievance theorists did not take into account collective action problem, however, greed theorists do.^{iv} They incorporate collective action problem in their explanatory designs with the underlying assumption that man is a

rational actor, who makes decision---whether or not take rebellious actions---by keeping in mind the expected utility of his/her actions with regards to his/her private gains. Collier and Hoeffler in their path breaking study in which they employed expected utility analysis, using mainly probit and tobit regressions, found that greed motives rather than grievances provide empirical explanation of rebellious violent behavior. They tested grievances using variables as rapid economic decline, political repression, income and asset inequality, religious and ethnic fractionalization, and political transition. The results of their study demonstrated that inequality in terms of land or income has no impact on civil war onset, while ethnic and religious fractionalization and state suppression---which previously thought as positively related to civil war onset---have, in fact, opposite impact, however, political transition may be a violent phenomenon.^v Thus contrary to grievances, greed motives as availability of finances through natural resources, funding from diasporas or in the form of lootable/exploitable money were found to be responsible for the increase of chances of civil war onset.^{vi}

Along with human motives---greed or grievances---, socio-physical conditions too determine the incentives as well as hurdles for mobilization. Hence, rational man must incorporate socio-physical situations in his/her calculations, while taking decisions either about his/her private gains or about rectification of his/her grievances through rebellious activities. Greed theorists, though, base their studies on the assumptions that man is rational, however, they remain preoccupied with individual's greed motives; hence pay little emphasis on objective socio-physical conditions. Thus, their studies do not remain valid according to the basic assumption.^{vii} This problem is addressed by the scholars who assume that man, being a rational actor, calculates opportunities against the hurdles present in the environment, while taking strategic decisions. Thus, study of opportunity structure, too, has become part of recent research agenda. Opportunity structure theorists focus either on deep structures (social structure... classes, ethnic

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groups, authoritarian, democratic or semi-democratic structure), country characteristics (per capita income, size, terrain etc.), immediate specific changes or events that create a favorable situation for opponents to launch a collective action against the government (McAdam, 1982; Tarrow, 1994; Meyer, 2004: 125-45). Tarrow described favorable factors related to opportunity structure as: increasing access in previously repressive regime; changes in political alignment; polarized/divided elite; limited repression and limited accommodation; weak state; and extreme but inconsistent repression that makes regime illegitimate, hence ineffective. McAdam added to the list international or external support to the activists (McAdam). Favorable factors, though, increase the understanding; however, it is proper sequencing of factors [as theory] that explains the phenomenon.

Tilly's resource mobilization theory is an example relevant to the perspective. He elaborated the perspective, as politics is a constant competition between ruling elite and contending elite. The outcome of the competition will depend on who controls the resources of power. He contended that individual interests do not convert, automatically; into collective action rather it is the process of mobilization and organization [by leaders] of adequate resources that aggregate and regulate the individual interests into collective action. Hence, it depends how leaders effectively use resources of power i.e. to recruit and organize members through incentives or coercion for participating in collective action. This effectiveness depends on leaders' control over 1) Normative resources---commitment of members with group and its ideals 2) Coercive resources---inflicting punishment/injuries to rivals and 3) Utilitarian resources---rewards (Tilly, 1978: 69-70). Hence, when contenders will find the opportunities to equate [roughly] their resources of power with the ruling elite, then a situation may develop in which opponents could mutually involve in attacks and counter attacks on each other's resources through mobilization leading to violence (Tilly, 1978: 216-19).

As underlying assumption of both greed theorists and opportunity structure theorists is same hence both

incorporate favorable opportunities in their designs however variation in emphasis, either on greed motive or opportunity structure, leads them different conclusion. A distinct example is Collier and Hoeffler on the one hand, and Fearon and Laitin on the other hand. Collier and Hoeffler found in their study that availability of finance (greed motive as well as opportunity) through natural resources increases the risk of civil war onset (Collier and Hoeffler, 2004).

However, Fearon and Laitin in their study do not find any relation between natural resources and civil war onset. Neither do they consider ethnic or religious fractionalization as contributing factor in civil war onset, while Collier and Hoeffler contend that polarization increases the chances of civil war (Collier, Hoeffler and Rohner, 2009). In nutshell, Fearon and Laitin, focusing on favorable opportunities, found that poverty, rough terrain, state weakness and large population make state vulnerable to civil war (Fearon and Laitin, 2003).

However, both agree that state's administrative weakness increases the likeliness of civil war onset (Fearon and Laitin, 2005). As initial civil war research---before exploring state's weakness as key factor---was centered on human motives. Similarly, post-Cold-War international development programs were based on [liberalism's assumption of] human nature.

3. Changing International Development Discourse: Good Governance, Peace-building, Building State for Peace

Political development scholarship, in the context of Modernization Paradigm, gave priority to nation-building in post-colonial states. However, after Vietnam War emphasis on nation-building declined and during 1980s both state-building and nation-building had been replaced by market dynamics on international agenda (Fukuyama, 2004). Immediate after the end of Cold War, under the euphoria of so-called victory of liberal democracy, development discourse

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re-embraced modernization perspective, but with new terminology and title as good governance. Good governance agenda, however, ignored the caveats of the modernization revisionism that development is not a smooth project in which all the good things go together, but a process of trade offs on the one hand between democracy and stability, and on the other hand between growth and distribution. Initially good governance was a narrow concept of administrative efficiency reminiscent of negative state as efficient, accountable, transparent but limited government. Later emphasis on competitive economy parallel to competitive politics increased the agenda, however, incorporation of free media and vibrant civil society made it system-wide overarching concept.

Thus, during 1990s international development agencies and donor countries, following the good governance agenda, were pressing developing states to introduce various reforms under the structural adjustment programs. While in states facing civil war, the international community extended its role, under the auspices of UN, from traditional peacekeeping to humanitarian intervention and peace-building programs. Peace-building programs were the efforts by the international community to prevent the reversal of violence through identifying and supporting structures, which, presumably, were relevant to the consolidation of peace (Call and Cousens, 2007). Under the euphoria of 'end of history', western policy makers and scholars believed that those relevant structures must be liberal in orientation. However, naivety that liberalization of politico-economic structures alone would suffice to consolidate peace proved counterproductive. In many cases, lack of effective institutions and institutionalization of political behavior resulted in the further deterioration of the situation. For example in Rwanda liberalization of media, in fact, aggravated the social division by propagating hatred and inciting genocidal violence (Paris, 2004).

Thus, scholars like Fukuyama realized the trade off between stability and liberty. Hence, he suggested 'stateness first', before initiating the liberalization programs, in war-torn societies (Fukuyama, 2005). The 'stateness first', however, as

top priority, had already been reinforced by the events of 9/11, 2001 with the proclaimed links between international terrorism and weak states. Fragile states with the possibility of becoming failed states and even collapsed states was thus being viewed as potential places of anarchy where non-state actors, free from rules and laws--- reminiscent of Hobbesian state of nature---, could disrupt the global security too.^{viii}

Hobbe's assumption about human nature may be right or wrong, however in this globalised world, Hobbesian state of nature, in the form of failed states, has become a nightmare, which also haunts the inhabitants of stable liberal-democratic states. Failed states as breeding nurseries of global terrorism or through their potential contagiousness could disrupt the global security system. Hence, failing/fragile, failed and collapsed states have become focus of study for scholars of International Relations. However, scholars of comparative politics, since decolonization, have already been concerned about newly independent nascent states in their journey of state-building, nation-building and political development. Thus, state-failure is a merger of comparative politics and IR scholarship.

In addition to peace-building and global security, the need for strong and effective state was also being recognized with regards to development especially in the context of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). World Bank Commission on Africa stressed the need for effective [state] institutions for transformation necessary to achieve the MDGs. Collier also linkages between fragile state and violence on the one hand, and fragile state and underdevelopment on the other hand (Collier, 2007). Hence UNDP, realizing the need for effective political (state) institutions, has promoted the merger of peace-building and state-building as a single concept 'building state for peace'. Thus, UNDP's approach 'state-building for peace', in the context of centrality of state with regards to civil war, global security and development, indicate the renaissance of state with broader objectives distinct from developmental state's

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objective of economic growth and security state's objective of protection of national interest.

4. State Capacity, State Fragility and State-Failure

Keeping in view the varying, even contradictory, explanations of scholars from different perspectives, the agreement between Civil war researchers, Development experts and IR scholars on state's weakness, as a factor that causes violence and underdevelopment, indicate the centrality of state's capacity in maintaining civil peace or causing civil war. However, state capacity is a broad concept with many aspects as: bureaucratic efficiency, regime stability, level of economic development, extractive capability, military power and so forth.^{ix}

Prospective rebels, presumably, find opportunities when state is weak due to its low capacity to repress rebellion or accommodate grievances. Decline of state's capacity to deter mobilization is considered important indicator in this regard (Tilly, 1978; Skocpol, 1979). Concept of state capacity in civil war research, especially when it is low or declining, enhances the understanding of civil war onset, however, search for appropriate remedies is the area of international development studies. Where similar concept 'state capacity' but with opposite connotation i.e. incapacity---state fragility, has acquired central place on research agenda, over a period of time; as state capacity has acquired in civil war research.

However, burden of defining and criteria-setting for failing, failed and collapsed states owe to International Donor Agencies/states, which are in the search of appropriate strategies for the recovery of these states through different programs entitled conflict prevention, peace-building and post-conflict reconstruction. For instance, World Bank measures states strength/weakness through Country Policy and Institutional Assessment (CPIA) criteria that ranks country on the basis of quality of policies and institutional framework with regards to resource utilization towards sustainable and poverty reducing development. A proposed definition of fragility within Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is, in the context of

state-society relations, the inability to manage the changes in peoples' expectations and capacity through political process while previously it defined: "States are fragile when state structures lack political will and/or capacity to provide the basic functions needed for poverty reduction, development and to safeguard the security and human rights of their populations" (OECD DAC, 2007). If a state faces incapacity in maintaining monopoly over coercive means and provision of public goods then it is termed as fragile state or failed state (CSRC, 2006; Rubin, 2006). The difference between fragile state and failed state is the variation of degree of incapacity (Francois and I Sud, 2006). The more comprehensive definition is given by Crisis States Research Centre, "a fragile state' is a state [which is] significantly susceptible to crisis in one or more of its sub-systems" (Di John, 2008).

Thu underlying focus in all definitions of state fragility is the nature of political institutions; hence, recent studies link fragility with the nature of institutions or regime type.

5. Transitional Regimes/Hybrid Institutions

As autocracies adopt coercive approach that results political suppression and economic discrimination hence, according to grievance perspective autocracies are more prone to violence (Gurr, 1970; Schnytzer, 1994). While others contend that autocracies relying on coercive measures can suppress dissent hence chances of civil war in such states are less (Davenport, 1995; Lichbach, 1995; Tullock, 1971).

Research studies in civil war and development studies, however, pointed out that the problem of fragility or incapacity is related with the nature of institutions or regime type. States with Hybrid or transitional institutions were found vulnerable to political instability or civil war. Weak democracies and weak autocracies termed as partial democracies or anocracies were found more vulnerable than

full democracies and autocracies (Sambanis, 2001; Hegre et al., 2001; Reynal-Querol, 2002). Hybridism may cause civil war and state-failure (Goldstone and et al., 2010: 190-208; Gates and et al., 2006; Snyder and E. Mansfield, 1995: 5-38). U-curve shaped relationship between degree of democracy and likeliness of violence exists as partial democracies experience increase level of violence due to insufficient coercion to suppress the dissent as well as inadequate freedom to accommodate the grievances (Hegre et al., 2001; Hibbs, 1973; Muller and Erich Weede, 1990). Hence scholars link it with [failed] democratic transition.^x

Scholars, however, do not have unanimity about terminology and typologies for mixed institutions. Partial democracy, anocracy, transitional regimes, hybrid system, competitive authoritarianism regimes, ambiguous cases, institutionally inconsistent political systems and neo-patrimonialism are the terminologies which are being alternatively used. Competitive authoritarianism, according to analysts, differs from other forms of hybrid regimes as in the former “democratic institutions offer an important channel through which the opposition may seek power from those regimes in which democratic rules simply serve as to legitimate an existing autocratic leadership” (Levitsky and Way, 2005: 54). Common feature of these regimes is that elections are held and results are sufficiently unpredictable which make the ruling group cautious and serious, however, procedural standards are not according to the consolidated democracies (Levitsky and Way, 2002: 51-56; Robertson, 2007: 781-98).

6. Conclusion

Regime type or state institutions do not operate in vacuum. Not only do individuals serving in state institutions come from society but society also provide the context in which institution operate. Hence, problems of fragility and thus, violence should be viewed through broader social context in which state operates. Scholars of state-building/nation-buildings have also realized the importance of social context.

Optimism of modernization scholars that local identities, being traditional in character, would be replaced by modern homogeneous national identity through nation/state-building process has met disillusionment. Because attempts to make nation and state congruent, through cultural homogenization (nation-building), have resulted in the ethnic conflicts (Connor, 1972: 319-355). Hence in contrast to homogenous approach, multiculturalism as an approach, which incorporates local context, has been emphasized (Kymlicka, 1995). Migdal in his study explained the mutual interaction of state-society factors related to state-building processes (Migdal, 1988). Others, Brock (2001) and Ottaway (1999), have termed it ethno-centric state-building. Whaites considered it 'responsive' state-building (Whaites, 2008) which Jones et al elaborated as effective political process that facilitate the mutual negotiations between state and citizens about demands, expectations and obligations (Jones and R. Chandran, 2008).

Huntington, as one of the pioneers of Institutionalizations approach, employed social context in his explanation of the causes of political instability and violence in developing societies. Gap between rapid social mobilization and slow institutionalization---formation of stable pattern of socio-political interaction is the main cause. "The lag in the development of political institutions behind social and economic change" is the main cause of political violence (Huntington, 1968: 4-5; 274-75).

Elias's Civilizing Processes, a theory of socio-political order, links the macro structure of state institutions with micro social structures of the society. When macro structure as an external constraint transforms into internalized self-restraint reflected in individual behavior at micro level then order becomes fully established (Elias, 1994: 443-56). Thus establishment of stability is the process of inter-linkage between state structure and social practice through inculcation of normative values of the new order. Hence it is the transition from absolutist/authoritarian rule to

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normative/institutional order...personal rule to democratic rational rule.

Problem is to reconcile power structure to social practice; legal authority to daily practice; macro structure to micro structure. Hence, problem is not only the transition of old order to new order but transition from old society to new society.

Notes

ⁱ Relative deprivation of economic needs expounded by Ted Gurr (Gurr, 1970) is considered as the representative of grievance perspective however political variants of this perspective also have their proponents as Vilfredo Pareto who explained it as unsatisfactory co-option of non-elite. Other classical exponents of this perspective are Gaetano Mosca and Emile Durkheim.

ⁱⁱ For instance, Dahrendorf argues that absolute poverty may create a sense of belonging among deprived people and thus may convert them as one collective entity. Klare contends that scarce resources as “Unsettled contested resource deposits” would be guide of conflict zones in the World for twenty first century (Klare, 2001).

ⁱⁱⁱ Antecedents of relative deprivation theory were Davies (1962); (Feierabends, 1966), however Ted Gurr is considered as leading exponent of this theory. For recent work on grievance perspective see (Buhaug, Lars-Eric Cederman and Jan Ketil Rod, 2008: 531-51).

^{iv} However Ted Gurr in his later work (Gurr, 1993: 123-24) attempted to address the problem by merging relative deprivation theory with Tilly’s resource mobilization theory. He explained as deep grievances and strong identity make easier for group leaders to articulate the grievances and thus organize members for collective action.

^vBesides demonstrating the irrelevance of grievances their study (Collier and Anke Hoeffler, 1998: 563-573) illustrated that large exports of primary commodities, bulges of young men, low education and economic decline were significantly related with civil war onset. Though ethnic and religious fractionalization has no impact on civil war, however, polarization...two groups similar in size...makes societies prone to the eruption of civil war (Collier, and Anke Hoeffler and Dominic Rohner, 2009: 1-27).

^{vi}For relationship between natural resources and funding from diasporas with civil war see (Collier, and Anke Hoeffler, 2004: 563-95). However, large deposits of natural resources, they contended, would strengthen the government, hence will decrease the chances of civil war. While, Regan and Norton (Regan, and Daniel Norton, 2005: 319-36) explained that how lootable money increases the likeliness of civil war.

^{vii}Some of the civil war experts (Buhaug, Lars-Eric Cederman and Jan Ketil Rod, 2008: 531-51; Cunningham, Kristian Skrede Gleditsch and Idean Salehyan, 2009: 570-97) have argued that civil war is at least a dyadic phenomenon hence, instead of exclusive focus on one actor, understanding of mutual interaction between state and non state actors is imperative for the explanation of civil war.

^{viii}However, Patrick argued that relation between fragile state and threats to global security is far from universal (Patrick, 2006).

^{ix}For utility and problems in employing the concept of state capacity to understand violence see (Hendrix, 2010: 273-85, in Sobek, 2010).

^xHowever, Gleditsch claims that it is not democracy per se but Irregular leader change which increases the likeliness of civil war (Gleditsch, 2010: 299-310).

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