

State Collapse: Causes, Dynamics and Linkages to Conflict

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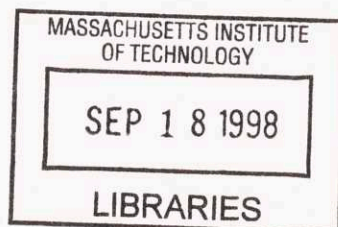
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Abstract

State collapse is a political event characterized by the rapid breakdown of established central authority, the loss of monopoly on the legitimate use of coercive force by the state, and the erosion of territorial penetration of authority. This thesis investigates the phenomenon of state collapse and has at its core three main questions: What causes state collapse? What dynamic processes act along the causal pathways to collapse? What are the linkages between state collapse and violent conflict, and how can they be severed?

The existing literature on the breakdown of socio-political entities includes the collapse of complex societies, ancient civilizations, empires and modern states. A selective review of the literature on state collapse highlights four deficiencies: (1) ambiguities in the definition and use of the term 'collapse', (2) a bias towards internal causes, (3) the retrospective focus of existing literature, and (4) the absence of rigid theoretical analysis of collapse.

States are primed for collapse by eight inter-dependent factors: (1) socio-economic privation, (2) acute demographic pressures, (3) inequitable distribution of resources and power, (4) militarism, (5) low national affiliation, (6) state corruption, (7) trans-boundary population flows, and (8) environmental stress. Given this propensity for collapse, alterations in the domestic balance of threat, coupled with low levels of political, economic and strategic interaction with the international system, make state collapse more likely. This is the primary working hypothesis on the causes of state collapse advanced in this thesis.

Violent conflict results from state collapse due to two mechanisms: the security dilemma and the intervention dilemma. Both of these causal mechanisms are tightly coupled: the security dilemma stimulates the intervention dilemma and vice versa. State collapse intensifies competing nationalist ideologies, then making conflict more likely. State disintegration may follow from collapse, and three variables increase the likelihood of such fragmentation: (1) ethnic homogeneity, (2) previous institutional capacity, and (3) international recognition.

In the context of fragmentation, an hypothesis of state-making and collapse is advanced, but not evaluated. The core proposition posits that in the absence of a dominant mode of affiliation to the state, the mis-alignment between 'nation' and 'state' will cause individuals to rationally choose alternative political ordering principles. State collapse occurs in response to this need for structural readjustment between nation and state. As newly formed states realize the benefits (primarily economic) from integration, these sovereigns will consolidate to form federal entities.

Both Somalia and Liberia were primed for collapse, and changes in the domestic balance of threat, coupled with abrupt cessation of external support and low systemic interaction, resulted in breakdown. Both cases support the theory of state collapse advanced in this thesis. However, the theory of state collapse presented here does not account for cases where external interaction was intended to cause collapse.

A framework for analyzing state collapse, at all stages, provides a structure for ensuring that effective strategies will span the spectrum from early warning systems to state reconstruction. Conflict prevention strategies should focus on breaking the connection between the intervention dilemma and the domestic security dilemma in collapsed states.

Thesis Supervisor: Nazli Choucri
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"If you only look at what is, you will never see what could be."

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Contents

1	Introduction	7
1.1	Overview	7
1.2	Why Focus on State Collapse?	8
1.3	Primary Objectives	10
1.4	Scope	12
1.5	Summary Conclusions	14
2	State Collapse: State-of-the-Art	15
2.1	Overview	15
2.2	Collapse of Socio-Political Entities	15
2.3	Contemporary State Collapse	21
2.4	Thematic Classification of State Collapse	28
2.5	Summary	28
3	The 'State' and State Collapse	32
3.1	Overview	32
3.2	The 'State'	32
3.2.1	The State: An International Relations Approach	34
3.2.2	The 'Normative' State	35
3.2.3	Nation versus State	35
3.2.4	The State as Political Institution	36
3.3	Defining State Failure	38
3.4	State Collapse	40
3.5	Through the Looking Glass	42
3.6	Summary	44
4	A Theory of State Collapse	45
4.1	Overview	45
4.2	Understanding State Collapse	45
4.3	Domestic & Systemic Condition Variables	46
4.4	Domestic Balance of Threat and International Isolation	54
4.4.1	Domestic Power Vacuums	55
4.4.2	Marginal Domestic Power Differentials	57
4.4.3	International Interaction	57
4.5	Feedback Dynamics in State Collapse	59
4.6	Intervening Variables	61

4.7	Triggering Events	62
4.8	Theoretical Predictions and Inferences	63
5	Linkages to Conflict	65
5.1	Overview	65
5.2	An International Relations Analogy	66
5.3	Dilemmas of State Collapse	68
5.3.1	The Security Dilemma	68
5.3.2	The Intervention Dilemma	70
5.4	Collapse and Ethnic Nationalism	72
6	Collapse and Disintegration	73
6.1	Overview	73
6.2	State Collapse and Fragmentation	73
6.3	States in Transition	76
6.4	Forced and Voluntary Dissolution	78
6.5	Collapse as an Evolutionary Process	79
7	State Collapse in Somalia and Liberia	80
7.1	Overview	80
7.2	Case Study Method	80
7.3	Somalia	81
7.3.1	Causes of State Collapse	84
7.3.2	Somalia - Assessment	90
7.4	Liberia	91
7.4.1	Causes of State Collapse	92
7.4.2	Liberia - A Summary	96
7.5	Methodological Critique	97
8	Policy Implications	101
8.1	Overview	101
8.2	Framework for Analysis	102
8.3	Windows of Opportunity	103
8.4	Early Warning Systems	104
8.5	Alternatives to the State	105
8.6	Preventive Diplomacy	106
8.7	Non-State Actors	107
8.8	Dealing with Dilemmas...	108
9	Conclusion	109
9.1	Summary	109
9.2	Suggestions for Future Research	111

List of Figures

1-1	State Collapse, Fragmentation and Conflict	13
3-1	Steps to State Failure. Competent government to domestic anarchy!	40
4-1	Causal Pathways toward State Collapse	47
7-1	Modified causal pathways towards state collapse. Phase I now constitutes 'primary' and 'secondary' causal factors.	100
8-1	Conceptual Framework for Analyzing State Collapse	102

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Overview

Realist theories of International Relations focus on the anarchic nature of the international system. Anarchy, the absence of a supreme governing body in the international system, means that no one state is entitled to rule, or obliged to obey. According to the Realist paradigm, systemic anarchy dictates that states must fend for themselves, and that interactions among states will be a zero-sum game. In this environment interstate conflict is inevitable.¹

In contrast to the anarchic nature of the international system, the *internal* structure of the state is hierarchical. The state as government is the authoritative political institution which is sovereign over a recognized territory. The state is entitled to rule, and the population is obliged to obey.² When the state collapses, or breaks down, domestic anarchy takes over, the horrific consequences of which were vividly demonstrated in both Somalia and Liberia in the early 1990's.

State collapse is a political process, characterized by the rapid breakdown of centralized, legitimate authority within a territorially-bounded, sovereign entity. Collapse means that the state loses a monopoly on the legitimate use of coercive force. Furthermore, the state as governing institution is unable to ensure territorial penetration of authority. State collapse represents the terminal stages of state failure or decay, a true crisis of legitimacy for the state.³ The term 'state failure' captures the

¹Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1979). See also: Robert O. Keohane, ed., *Neorealism and Its Critics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984)

²Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 89. Waltz contrasts the anarchic international system and the hierarchical domestic system as two distinct sets of ordering principles.

³The distinction between state "failure" and "collapse" is non-trivial. Failure can occur to varying degrees while state collapse implies a *sudden* implosion, consistent with the highest level of failure.

varying degrees to which the state is incapable of: (1) maintaining social cohesion and a viable domestic economy, (2) providing basic social services (sanitation, public health services etc.), (3) maintaining effective core state institutions, (4) preserving law and order, and (5) preserving the integrity of territorial boundaries.

With the fall of the Berlin Wall and the disintegration of the Soviet Empire, national leaders and citizens alike were optimistic regarding the possibilities for co-operation and peaceful co-existence in the *New World Order*.⁴ Contrary to these expectations, the past decade has come to be characterized by almost endemic civil conflict. The violent ethnic conflicts and abuses of human rights which occurred in sub-Saharan Africa in 1993/4 ; 'ethnic cleansing' in Yugoslavia ; domestic anarchy in Liberia and Somalia - and for the most part the international community was unwilling or unable to respond. The collapse of the state was a driving factor in each of the above debacles.

This thesis investigates the phenomenon of state collapse and has at its core three main questions: What are the causes of state collapse? What dynamic feedback processes operate along the causal pathways to collapse? What are the linkages between state collapse and violent conflict, and how can they be severed? The following sections outline the motivation driving this research and expand on the objectives of this thesis.

1.2 Why Focus on State Collapse?

State collapse is a catastrophic event, often resulting in widespread human suffering, violent civil conflict, population displacement, geno- and/or politicide, and flagrant abuse of human rights. State collapse can weaken regional stability and can compromise international rules and norms, especially in the area of human rights. Purely from a humanitarian point of view, the consequences of state collapse are enormous.

Prevention of the humanitarian disasters and violent conflict that follow in the wake of state collapse is the primary motivating factor driving this research.⁵ The

⁴Nancy Dunne, "Bush Spells Out Vision of 'New World Order'," *Financial Times*, April 15 1991, 4.

⁵Humanitarian motives for responding to state collapse are echoed in much of the literature. See, for example: Francis Mading Deng, "State Collapse: The Humanitarian Challenge to the United Nations," in: I. William Zartman ed., *Collapsed States: The Disintegration and Restoration of Legitimate Authority* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1995), 207-220.

international community has demonstrated remarkable restraint, almost paralysis, in responding to state collapse. Humanitarian and military interventions are expensive, both financially and politically. All too often the political motivation to intervene, especially in areas of little strategic or economic interest, is lacking.⁶ This fact points to the need for more *proactive* strategies for dealing with collapsing states. Specifically, an understanding of the causes of state collapse will aid in developing early warning systems, and in formulating strategies to deal with collapse.⁷ Furthermore, state reconstruction becomes more difficult if it is not addressed in the immediate period following collapse. Better to address the problem while some vestiges of the state remain intact, rather than waiting for complete implosion.

In dealing with collapsing states, the international community is faced with an *Intervention Dilemma*: states in the international community, either individually or collectively, will be cautious in their reaction to collapsed states due to the high cost of intervention. This inaction, however, may be perceived as signaling low geopolitical interest, or indifference, and may ultimately act as a catalyst for further state decline. The essence of the intervention dilemma, therefore, is that by hesitating to intervene due to possible collapse, the international community may actually catalyze breakdown, thereby further increasing the obstacles to intervention. In addition, when the central authority is challenged by other sub-national groups, the absence of clear, decisive policy in the international community may give a green light to further insurgencies. I will return to this intervention dilemma in Chapter 4.

In cases where state collapse results in civil conflict, neighboring states may experience a spillover of the violence, especially in ethnic conflicts. Population flight to neighboring states may alter the balance of power in the recipient state. Moreover, armed militias may seek to establish a base in bordering countries, immune from government forces of the target state.⁸ This *Spillover* effect may erode regional security. Furthermore, the *Domino* effect, whereby state collapse induces similar phenomenon in neighboring states, may extend the effects of state collapse across territorial bound-

⁶See, for example: James Bennet, "Clinton Declares U.S., with World, Failed Rwandans," *New York Times*, March 26 1998, A1.

⁷Strategies for dealing with collapsed states will focus on conflict prevention, managed transition and protection of the human rights of the population.

⁸Gerald B. Helman and Steven R. Ratner, "Saving Failed States," *Foreign Policy* 89 (1994) : 8.

aries.

A second motivating factor driving this research resides in a desire to advance a theory of state collapse which, by identifying causal factors, will aid in formulating strategies to deal more effectively with breakdown. This theory of state collapse couples internal (domestic) and external (systemic) causal factors. In doing so, this thesis will redress some of the shortcomings in the existing literature on collapse.

The third motivating factor is the adverse effect that state collapse can have on internationally accepted rules and norms, particularly in the area of human rights and state sovereignty. Recent examples of state collapse have posed significant challenges to the notion of internal sovereignty, i.e. the sole legitimate role of the state as centralized authority within a territorially bounded entity. Such challenges to internal sovereignty may also aid in preventing state collapse, by adopting supra-sovereign institutions to manage the internal affairs of the state in times of transition. This role of *conservatorship* has been adopted by the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC).⁹

In summary, the motivation for this thesis is derived from three factors: (1) a desire to prevent the humanitarian disasters and violent conflict that frequently occur in the wake of state collapse, (2) an interest in advancing an hypothesis of state collapse and so "fill in the gaps" in the existing research, (3) an effort to re-orient the thinking on state collapse to develop more proactive strategies.

1.3 Primary Objectives

This thesis has five main objectives which provide a structured set of answers to the three questions regarding state collapse identified above: causes, dynamics and linkages to conflict.

The first objective is to provide a review of the existing literature on state failure and collapse. This research survey is presented in Chapter 2, each work being assessed using a framework of three assessment criteria: (1) the definition of collapse used in the research, (2) the causes of collapse identified in the research, and (3) contextual focus of the work - is the research descriptive, remedial, preventive etc.? In addition,

⁹Ibid., 14-15.

the linkages between state collapse and conflict, if addressed by the author, are highlighted. As a prelude to *state* collapse, this review encompasses the collapse of other socio-political entities, such as the collapse of ancient states and civilizations, and the collapse of empires. An assessment of the literature highlights several deficiencies, including: conceptual ambiguities in the use of the term 'collapse'; a retrospective focus in the literature on dealing with collapsed states; bias towards internal, vice external, causes of state collapse; and finally, the poorly understood linkages between state collapse and conflict.

The second objective of this thesis is to propose a theory of state collapse. As a precursor to developing an hypothesis on collapse, Chapter 3 operationalizes the state, departing from traditional theoretical definitions and employing a more pragmatic, empirical approach, based on observations of the workings of the international system. This provides the foundation for a theory of state collapse which couples internal (domestic) and systemic causal factors which make collapse more likely. The core hypothesis has two phases:

Phase I: *The propensity for state collapse is increased by eight inter-dependent factors: (1) socio-economic privation, (2) acute demographic pressures, (3) inequitable distribution of resources and power, (4) militarism, (5) low national affiliation, (6) state corruption, (7) trans-boundary population flows, and (8) environmental stress.*

Phase II: *Given this propensity for collapse, alterations in the domestic (within state) balance of threat, coupled with low levels of political, economic and strategic interaction with the international system, make state collapse more likely.*¹⁰

This working hypothesis aims to provide a coherent framework for identifying the causes of state collapse. The dynamic feedback effects acting along causal pathways are investigated in Chapter 4, focusing on: (1) the "slippery slope" from state failure to collapse, (2) the role of the security dilemma in state collapse, and (3) the

¹⁰I use the term 'balance-of-threat' to define the response of groups to shifts in the distribution of aggregate power in the system, in addition to the relative balance of offensive power between groups, taking into account the intentions of opposing factions. Balance-of-threat theory, as used in the international system, therefore builds on balance-of-power theory by accounting for disparities in offensive power, and the intentions of the adversary. For a detailed presentation of systemic balance-of-threat theory in the context of revolutionary war, see: Stephen M. Walt, "Revolution and War," *World Politics* 44, no. 3 (April 1992) : 321-368.

intervention dilemma as a multiplier in collapse.

Third, this theory of state collapse is examined using a *case study* approach. The two cases chosen for this purpose are Somalia and Liberia. In Somalia, following the ouster of dictator Siad Barre in January 1991, the government disintegrated in the face of violent conflict among competing parties aligned with clan groups. Central authority evaporated, authority fell to local clans, and government institutions crumbled. In Liberia, collapse of government authority occurred as a result of the violent conflict between competing groups following the overthrow of the government of Samuel Doe in 1990. The cases of Somalia and Liberia are investigated in Chapter 7. Issues in case selection are also addressed, particularly with respect to possible selection biases.

The fourth objective of this thesis is to explore, and highlight, the causal linkages between state collapse and violent conflict, which may be inter- or intra-state. The security dilemma and the intervention dilemma are the two core, dynamic pathways linking state collapse and violent conflict. Nationalism is reviewed in terms of its role in the absence of central authority. Having identified some causal relationships linking state collapse and conflict (Chapter 5), several preliminary conflict prevention strategies are outlined in Chapter 8.

The fifth, and final objective of this thesis is to investigate a crucial differentiation in the paths of collapsed states. In some instances, the territorial state will fragment and the previous entity will cease to exist. Alternatively, the territorial state may persist, however, the state as centralized authority may be transformed, as in the case of Somalia. Chapter 6 outlines possible trajectories for collapsed states, focusing on fragmentation and various forms of transition. For the purpose of analysis, conflict and fragmentation are presented here in that order, however, in reality, the causal connection may be bi-directional, conflict may follow from fragmentation, or vice-versa.

1.4 Scope

Figure 1-1 provides a logic tree representing the structure of this investigation into state collapse. Beginning with the territorially delineated, political state as the pri-

mary unit of analysis, the proposed hypothesis of state collapse proports that when states are primed for collapse, shifts in the domestic balance of threat, coupled with low geo-strategic interaction, make state collapse more likely. Collapsed states may

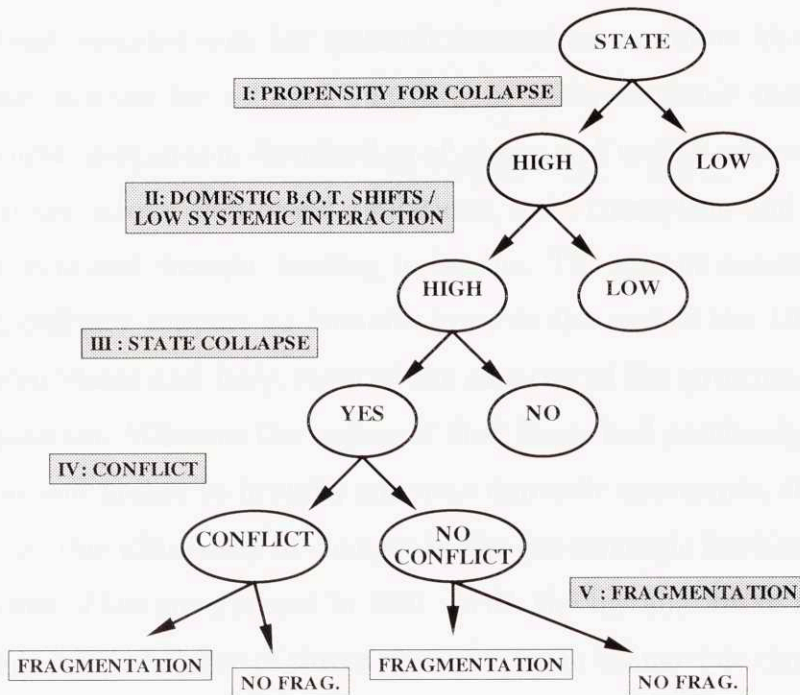


Figure 1-1: State Collapse, Fragmentation and Conflict

then fragment or go through a transition phase in which the pre-collapse state boundaries are preserved. Irrespective of the fate of the territorial entity, violent conflict may ensue, either between newly formed entities which have been born of the original state, or between opposing factions and groups within the territory.

The scope of this work is restricted to states that have endured, or have the potential for, collapse. Chapter 3 explicitly defines the role of the state and the nature of collapse. This tight conceptual framework limits the number of contemporary cases considerably, however, a focused study of state collapse is intended to provide important insight into the preceding conditions of state failure.

The theoretical component of this thesis is intended to guide policy by identifying strategies to deal with state collapse, and by identifying 'at-risk' states. Chapter 8 presents policy implications which follow from the theory and therefore provide a link between research and reality at all stages: state failure, collapse and reconstruction.

1.5 Summary Conclusions

The cases of both Somalia and Liberia support the theory of state collapse advanced in this thesis, namely: *"primed states, which experience abrupt changes in domestic balance of threat, coupled with low systemic interaction, are more likely to collapse."*

Somalia was primed for collapse due to poor socio-economic conditions, demographic pressures, inequitable distribution of power and wealth across clan lines, excessive militarism, strong clan-based affiliations, state corruption and environmental stress due to recurrent drought, leading to famine. The abrupt cessation of external financial and military support to Somalia towards the end of the 1980's, primarily from the United States and Italy, reduced the capacity of the government to suppress domestic opposition. Whereas the regime of Siad Barre had previously demonstrated it's willingness and ability to brutally suppress domestic opponents, the new balance of threat status, due ultimately to changes in the geo-strategic environment, resulted in the overthrow of the government in 1991. With the installation of an interim government, the domestic balance of threat situation again changed as clans felt excluded from power. Civil conflict, and the total breakdown of centralized authority ensued.

Liberia did not experience demographic pressures, environmental stress or trans-boundary population inflows. However, socio-economic privation, inequitable distribution of power and wealth, militarism, low levels of national affiliation and state corruption acted to prime the state for collapse. The domestic balance of threat changed rapidly at the end of 1989, with the beginning of armed opposition to the government by the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) forces under Charles Taylor. Liberia had also been cut from external, primarily U.S., financial support due to widespread government corruption. The combined change in the balance of threat, coupled with the reduced capacity of the government to suppress insurgencies, and the low level of international interest in Liberia, resulted in collapse and violent civil conflict.

Chapter 7 identified some possible methodological problems and case selection effects. The primary criticism of the theory presented here is that it does not explain the collapse of states which is induced by external actors.

Chapter 2

State Collapse: State-of-the-Art

2.1 Overview

The scholarly literature on state collapse straddles several distinct research areas, most notably, civil conflict, ethnic conflict and state formation. This chapter provides an overview of the current state-of-the-art regarding the collapse of socio-political constructs in general, using this as the point of departure for a more focused analysis of *state* collapse. The review uses a common framework which provides a contextual overview of the research, and then assesses the work using three criteria: (1) the definition of collapse used in the research, (2) the causes of collapse identified by the author, and (3) the analytical focus of the work - is the research descriptive, remedial, preventive etc. In addition, the review of each work examines whether the author identifies the causal links between state collapse and conflict. This chapter suggests several areas where the research can be strengthened, and serves as a survey of the causes of state failure and state collapse, drawing from both contemporary and historical cases. Finally, this review presents some thematic classifications of the causes of state collapse.

2.2 Collapse of Socio-Political Entities

The formation and breakdown of socio-political entities has been a pervasive feature of human history. Collapse is a political event, and as such is not restricted to any particular society or socio-political entity. Collapse has prevailed as the nature of socio-political entities has evolved, from complex civilizations to the modern 'state'.

In a book entitled *The Collapse of Complex Societies*, Joseph Tainter provides a review of the breakdown of complex political entities, using several case studies spanning a period of three millennia.¹ In addition, Tainter attempts to develop a general explanation for collapse, illustrating that, as a general process, collapse is not a recent phenomenon. Collapse can occur in complex societies, empires and states. This section will focus on the collapse of complex societies and civilizations, while the following section will focus specifically on state collapse.

Complex societies are the primary units of analysis in Tainter's work. A civilization is the cultural system of a complex society, which is:

"... focused on a center, which may not be located where it is literally implied, but which is the symbolic source of the framework of society. It is not only the location of legal and governmental institutions, but is the source of order, and the symbol of moral authority and social continuity."²

Using Tainter's terminology, states can be considered complex societies, albeit ones that are based on territoriality. Collapse is defined by Tainter as a political process:

"A society has collapsed when it displays a rapid, significant loss of an established level of socio-political complexity."³

In this statement, Tainter captures two important aspects of collapse: (a) a temporal dimension, i.e. collapse is a *rapid* process, and (b) the concept of breakdown of order which has been in existence for some period (established). Collapse is manifest as: (1) a lower degree of social stratification, (2) less economic and occupational specialization, (3) less centralized control, (4) less investment in the 'trappings' of civilization, such as monumental architecture, artistic achievements etc., (5) less flow of information between center and periphery, (6) less overall coordination, and (7) less sharing, trading and redistribution of resources.

In addressing the causes of collapse, Tainter groups the theories of collapse into eleven themes, which can further be consolidated into "meta-groups":⁴

¹Joseph A. Tainter, *The Collapse of Complex Societies* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988). Tainter provides an brief overview of the following cases of collapse, as treated in the literature: The Western Chou Empire; The Harappan Civilization; Mesopotamia; The Egyptian Old Kingdom; The Hittite Empire; Minoan Civilization; Mycenaean Civilization; The Western Roman Empire; The Olmec; The Lowland Classic Maya; The Mesoamerican Highlands; Casas Grandes; The Chacoans; The Hohokam; The Eastern Woodlands; The Huari and Tiahuanaco Empires; The Kachin; The Ik.

²Ibid., 27.

³Ibid., 5.

⁴I use this clustering of theories as a precursor to identifying thematic classifications of collapse in Section 2.4

1. **Socio-economic Factors:** Resource depletion; establishment of a new resource base; economic factors
2. **Political Incapacity:** Insufficient response to circumstances; intruders; class conflict, elite mismanagement or misbehavior
3. **Socio-political Factors:** Social dysfunction; other complex societies
4. **Serendipitous Factors:** Mystical factors and chance events; the occurrence of some catastrophe

Having reviewed the theories of collapse, Tainter presents his own hypothesis, which posits that "...investment in socio-political complexity as a problem-solving response often reaches a point of declining marginal returns", thus leading to collapse.⁵ In other words, with increasing complexity, complex societies eventually reach a point of decreasing marginal utility, after which the increased costs of maintaining this complexity compromises the society. Increased complexity requires increased bureaucratic administration, increased information processing, and increased extraction from the population. Tainter identifies the causal relationship between collapse and conflict, noting that conflicting goals between social entities can cause the breakdown of established order.⁶

Tainter's hypothesis on collapse provides a retrospective analysis of the breakdown of complex societies, however, the theory is not easily transposable to contemporary world politics. States are complex societies and therefore Tainter's hypothesis should apply equally well in the current global environment. One important difference between past and present societies outlined by Tainter is the absence of power voids in the international system. The present system, Tainter notes, is full of complex societies. This poses a problem for Tainter's analysis, as all cases of ancient collapse occurred, and were only possible, in a situation where the complex entity was surrounded by less complex neighbors.⁷ Despite identifying several global problems which may increase the likelihood of collapse, such as: nuclear war, environmental degradation, resource depletion and general economic breakdown, Tainter assures the

⁵Ibid., 118.

⁶Ibid., 64-65.

⁷Tainter refers to this situation as a power vacuum. Tainter, *The Collapse of Complex Societies*, 213.

reader that "...collapse today is neither an option nor an immediate threat."⁸ The empirical evidence obviates a rebuttal to this statement. Furthermore, Tainter indicates that contemporary states cannot unilaterally collapse, since the disintegration of government would result in the absorption of the population and territory by other states. This proposition, however, eliminates the possibility of state reconstruction.

The collapse of ancient states and civilizations is also the subject of an edited volume by Norman Yoffee and George L. Cowgill.⁹ In the introductory chapter, Norman Yoffee provides a review of the literature on the collapse of ancient states and civilizations, looking at collapse from different perspectives: social collapse as an evolutionary phenomenon, collapse within general systems theory, and collapse as a drastic restructuring of social institutions. Yoffee addresses the conceptual ambiguities in the use of the term 'collapse', and highlights the guidelines used for contributors to the volume. Collapse, according to Yoffee, is a process of termination, and can be considered as either the collapse of civilization, or the collapse of the state. Collapse of the state can refer to political decomposition, institutional restructuring or social transformation, however, Yoffee narrows the focus of the volume to look at cases where collapse was followed by substantial periods of political fragmentation.¹⁰ The specific causes of collapse are identified by each of the individual chapters in this volume, although the chapter by G.W. Bowersock on the collapse of the Roman Empire is less than explicit in outlining these causal relationships. Two chapters of the Yoffee and Cowgill volume are discussed here.

Herbert Kaufman provides the first chapter of the Yoffee and Cowgill book which bears directly on this thesis.¹¹ Kaufman recognizes the ambiguity in the term 'collapse' and identifies a common thread linking the cases investigated in the volume. The collapse of civilizations,

"...is the dissolution of large-scale political systems encompassing many local groupings of people and institutions, and perhaps comprising numbers of regional collections of localities."¹²

⁸Ibid., 213.

⁹Norman Yoffee and George L. Cowgill, eds., *The Collapse of Ancient States and Civilizations* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1988). This volume includes case studies of: Mesopotamia; Mayan Civilization; The Roman Empire; The Han Dynasty.

¹⁰Norman Yoffee, "Orienting Collapse," in Yoffee and Cowgill, eds., *The Collapse of Ancient States and Civilizations*, 15.

¹¹Herbert Kaufman, "The Collapse of Ancient States and Civilizations as an Organizational Problem," in Yoffee and Cowgill, eds., *The Collapse of Ancient States and Civilizations*, 219-235.

¹²Ibid., 219.

Kaufman explicitly defines internal and external factors which cause collapse. The exogenous causes cited by the author are: (1) natural disasters, (2) economic privation, (3) abrupt changes in trade patterns, and (4) decreasing marginal utility of extraction. Endogenous factors are: (a) core fragmentation (divisions within ruling elite), and (b) decentralization of authority due to rising aspirations of field administrators.¹³

The causal linkages between conflict and collapse are examined briefly in a chapter of the Yoffee and Cowgill volume by Shmuel N. Eisenstadt, which is the second chapter in this book relevant to the current review. Eisenstadt contends that all political systems have the potential to develop “anti-systems”, and it is these alternative ordering frameworks, often led by secondary elites, which result in changes in the relative power position and aspirations of sub-national entities, thus making conflict more likely.¹⁴ Essentially, Eisenstadt presents an hypothesis which states that changes in the domestic balance of power make intrastate conflict more likely.¹⁵ To summarize, while Yoffee and Cowgill provide a framework for assessing the collapse of empires and civilizations, they fail to provide a rigid definition of collapse and to clearly outline the causes.

The books by Tainter, and Yoffee and Cowgill, focus on the collapse of ancient states and civilizations. The collapse of empires is another form of political fragmentation. Empires are characterized by a ‘core’ and a ‘periphery’. In an article which advances a structural theory of imperialism, Johan Galtung provides a conceptual framework for the relationship between core and periphery, and the core and periphery in each of these spheres.¹⁶ Supreme authority is concentrated at the core and control is expanded to the periphery. In addition, the core and periphery are territorially bounded, and are inhabited by culturally different elites and populations.¹⁷ While empires may lose, or give up, some of their territorial possessions (the periphery), collapse can only be said to occur if this political breakdown is also

¹³Note that Kaufman uses the terms ‘exogenous’ and ‘endogenous’ to refer to the causal location with respect to the core administrative organization.

¹⁴Shmuel N. Eisenstadt, “Beyond Collapse”, in Yoffee and Cowgill, eds., *The Collapse of Ancient States and Civilizations*, 241-242.

¹⁵Eisenstadt’s hypothesis maps well to neorealist theories applied to domestic politics.

¹⁶Johan Galtung, “A Structural Theory of Imperialism,” *Journal of Peace Research* 8, no. 2, (1971) : 81-118. Galtung presents a framework which consists of the core and periphery in the Core (CC and CP), and a core and periphery in the Periphery (PC and PP).

¹⁷Karen Barkey and Mark Von Hagen, eds., *After Empire: Multi-ethnic Societies and Nation-building* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1997), 20-21.

evident at the core. The collapse of the Roman Empire cannot be excluded from a study of political fragmentation. While the Roman Empire was in a state of decline beginning in the third century, actual collapse of the core did not occur until 476 A.D. under Romulus Augustulus, and the exact data is still debated by historians. Focusing on the Roman Empire as a complex society, Tainter documents the causes of collapse cited in the literature: geographical over-extension, barbarian incursions, economic stagnation, a decline in civic responsibility, and political reorganization.¹⁸ The collapse of the Western Roman Empire, in addition to the cases of Classic Maya Civilization and the Chacoan Society, is used by Tainter to test his "*marginal utility of increasing complexity*" hypothesis. Tainter suggests that the increased costs and complexity of administering previously conquered territory, placed a heavy burden on the population, thereby further reducing the productivity of the population, thus reducing resistance to barbarian incursions. In the latter stages, the Empire ceased to be a viable entity, and the barbarian kingdoms evolved as an alternative ordering principle.

In a concise edited volume, Karen Barkey and Mark Von Hagan review the causes and consequences of empire collapse, focusing on the Ottoman, Habsburg and Russian empires, and the Soviet Union. Three primary causes of empire collapse are noted in this volume: (1) demise of relationship between core and periphery, (2) internal conflict and national liberation movements, and (3) internal realignments due to economic development, demographic movements, intermixing and assimilation of ethnic groups.¹⁹ This short volume contains a chapter by Victor Zaslavsky on the breakup of the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union represents a special case in the study of collapse. It raises the question of *volition*. Does the voluntary dissolution of central political institutions qualify as collapse? In short, yes. However, this question will be addressed in more detail in Chapter 3. Zaslavsky suggests that the ethnoterritorial breakup of the Soviet Union was a result of: (1) Soviet systemic crisis, (2) exhaustion of the Soviet 'model', (3) an un-viable form of social organization: the military-industrial society, and (4) peripheral nationalism.²⁰

¹⁸Tainter, *The Collapse of Complex Societies*, 128–152.

¹⁹Karen Barkey and Mark Von Hagan, eds., *After Empire: Multi-ethnic Societies and Nation-building* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997)

²⁰Victor Zaslavsky, "The Soviet Union," in, Barkey and Von Hagan, eds., *After Empire*, 73-96.

The study of empire collapse bridges the gap between complex societies and contemporary states, to which I now turn.

2.3 Contemporary State Collapse

States and empires are complex societies, and empires are first and foremost states. The study of state collapse, therefore, should build on the body of research exploring the collapse of non-state entities. The collapse of the modern state, that is, the Westphalian state model based on sovereign control over a recognized territory, and post-World War II collapse in particular, is the subject of this section.

In a edited volume entitled, *Collapsed States: The Disintegration and Restoration of Legitimate Authority*, I. William Zartman compiles case studies covering contemporary state collapse in Africa.²¹ In the introduction to this volume, Zartman defines collapse as:

”... a situation where the structure, authority (legitimate power), law, and political order have fallen apart and must be reconstituted in some form, old or new.”²²

Zartman goes on to note that collapse is ”...marked by the loss of control over political and economic space.” Collapse is manifest as:

- the devolution of power to the periphery and elite conflict
- the erosion of centralized authority
- paralysis of government: inability to make difficult policy choices.
- a defensive posture adopted by the incumbent regime
- the loss of control by the center over agents of the state, particularly the military

The specific causes of state collapse are presented by the contributors to the individual chapters of Zartman’s volume. Two chapters in particular are reviewed here as they are relevant to the case studies in Chapter 7. Hussein M. Adam presents a portrait of the collapse of Somalia, in which he paints a vivid image of a country which reverted to a nineteenth century style existence. The causes of collapse in Somalia

²¹I. William Zartman, ed., *Collapsed States: The Disintegration and Restoration of Legitimate Authority* (Boulder: Lynne Reiner, 1995). This volume includes case studies on: Chad, Uganda, Ghana, Somalia, Liberia, Mozambique, Ethiopia, Angola, Zaire, Algeria and South Africa.

²²*Ibid.*, 1.

were: (1) the authoritarian rule of General Mohamed Siyad Barra, (2) military rule, (3) a shift from class rule to clan rule, (4) government inspired clan rivalry, (5) urban state terror campaigns, and (6) abrupt withdrawal of support for the Somali regime by external donor states. Adam's work captures the internal and external dimensions of state collapse, and also highlights, but does not explain in detail, the nature of the post-collapse conflict which engulfed Somalia.²³

The second case study in Zartman's volume which bears directly on the present work is that by Martin Lowenkopf, which explores state collapse in Liberia.²⁴ Lowenkopf cites economic malperformance, a poor reform strategy, loss of control over agents of the state, and the transparent policies of President William Tolbert, as sowing the seeds of collapse. With the ascension to power of Samuel Doe in 1980, the situation in Liberia worsened. State corruption, inter-ethnic hatred and poor economic performance pushed Liberia towards collapse. In attempting to suppress the National Patriotic Front of Liberia, under the control of Charles Taylor, after they entered Liberia on Christmas Eve 1989, Doe's government forces engaged in ethnic oppression, which further eroded the legitimacy of the state, leading to atrophy of government authority.

Zartman's volume represents a multi-dimensional approach to the study of collapse, looking at both collapsed and reconstructed states. Also, this work provides an assessment of states in danger, as well as suggesting possible strategies for state reconstruction.

That the African states feature so prominently in the literature on state collapse, may help provide some insight into causal factors. Jeffrey Herbst investigates state-specific strategies for dealing with collapse, attempting to get away from the fixations of maintaining the existing unit.²⁵ Herbst uses the term 'state failure' to capture the breakdown of centralized institutions, and cites as causes the misalignment between European and African concepts of sovereignty, poor economic performance in African countries, and rapid withdrawal of donor support for inept regimes.²⁶ Herbst presents

²³Hussein M. Adam, "Somalia: A Terrible Beauty Being Born?" in Zartman, ed., *Collapsed States*, 69-89.

²⁴Martin Lowenkopf, "Liberia: Putting the State Back Together," in Zartman, ed., *Collapsed States*, 91-108.

²⁵Jeffrey Herbst, "Responding to State Failure in Africa," *International Security* 21, no. 3, (Winter 1996/1997) : 120-144.

²⁶*Ibid.*, 124.

his analysis in the context of breaking the "intellectual log-jam" in conceptualizing sovereignty and the state, and laments the assumption within international organizations that there is no alternative to the current state. The author proposes variants on the sovereign state, such as: increasing the flexibility of international institutions and de-certifying failed states.²⁷ This article stands out in the literature as it is one of the few scholarly works which suggests an alternative intellectual approach to the state, sovereignty, and the role of the international community.

The Afro-centric nature of the literature on state collapse is also reflected in an article by Ali A. Mazrui, in which the author identifies structural aspects of state institutions as leading to collapse.²⁸ Mazrui introduces his article with the "Paradox of Decolonization" which confronted newly-independent African states. Free from colonial control, these states were accorded recognition over a defined territory by the international community, but were ill prepared to govern the state. Mazrui outlines six primary functions of the state: (1) sovereign control over territory, (2) sovereign supervision of national resources, (3) effective revenue extraction, (4) national infrastructure capacity, (5) provision of basic services, and (6) capacity for governance and the maintenance of law and order. State failure, according to Mazrui, denotes an inability to perform some or all of the first five functions of the state. However, the inability to govern and maintain law and order, the sixth function of the state, is indicative of collapse. State collapse in Africa can be the result of too much and too little government, that is, a polarization of central authority, "...between tyranny and anarchy."²⁹ Another apparent contradiction in the African state, Mazrui contends, is that there may be too few or too many ethnic groups. Mazrui, however, fails to enlighten the reader as to a more appropriate level of government, or an appropriate ethnic composition, even in a state-specific context.

In an article entitled "Saving Failed States", Gerald Helman and Steven Ratner define the failed state as one which is "...utterly incapable of sustaining itself as a member of the international community".³⁰ State failure is manifest as civil strife,

²⁷ Ibid., 139-143.

²⁸ Ali A. Mazrui, "The Blood of Experience: The Failed State and Political Collapse in Africa," *World Policy Journal* XII, no. 1, (Spring 1995) : 28-34.

²⁹ Ibid., 29.

³⁰ Gerald B. Helman and Steven R. Ratner, "Saving Failed States," *Foreign Policy* 89 (1994) : 3-21

government breakdown and economic privation. Helman and Ratner highlight the role of external aid in sustaining Third World states, and the consequences of eliminating this assistance. In addition, the authors look at failed states (Bosnia, Cambodia, Liberia, Somalia), failing states (Ethiopia, Georgia, Zaire) and the newly independent states of the former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia. Traditional approaches to dealing with failed states, particularly United Nations mechanisms, are reviewed by Helman and Ratner, prior to advancing three possible strategies: (1) U.N. government assistance, (2) U.N. Trusteeship, and (3) U.N. Conservatorship. The third option, United Nations Conservatorship, envisions a system whereby the U.N. would temporarily manage the affairs of the collapsed state, and is the preferred option of the authors, who cite as an example the United Nations Transition Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC).³¹ The authors do acknowledge practical limitations regarding the implementation of United Nations Conservatorship, specifically financial and administrative barriers, but fall short of outlining specific solutions. Factors contributing to state failure identified in this article include: government corruption, natural disasters, economic malperformance and powerful insurgencies.

Helman and Ratner's work does not differentiate between types of failed states. The authors group together Bosnia, Cambodia, Liberia and Somalia. Clearly, the failure of Bosnia, a newly independent state, stands in stark contrast to the case of Somalia. Using the cases of Somalia, Liberia, Rwanda and Haiti, Jean-Germain Gros attempts to provide a categorization, or 'taxonomy', of failed states based on three core attributes: a recognized territory, central authority and territorial penetration of this authority.³² From these three state characteristics the author develops five categories of failed states:

1. **Anarchic States:** No centralized authority; armed groups engaged in conflict.
Examples: Somalia and Liberia
2. **Phantom States:** State authority limited to certain areas. Example: Zaire in the latter stages of Mobutu's regime³³

³¹Ibid., 12.

³²Jean-Germain Gros, "Towards a Taxonomy of Failed States in the New World Order: Decaying Somalia, Liberia, Rwanda and Haiti," *Third World Quarterly* 17, no. 3 (1996): 455-471.

³³In Chapter 4, I define the state along the same lines as Gros, with the core elements of central authority; recognized territory and penetration of authority. This type of failed state I later refer to as a *garrison* state. The core state

3. **Anemic States:** State capacity drained from counter-insurgencies which aim to replace existing authority. Example: Haiti
4. **Captured States:** Strong centralized authority captured by elite. Example: Rwanda
5. **Aborted States:** Failure before state formation could succeed. Example: Bosnia

In addressing the causes of state failure, Gros restricts the analysis to focus on internal factors associated with state failure. Gros argues that failing states have no control over external factors, and that "...it is counterproductive to dwell on things that one cannot control."³⁴ Quite the opposite! While the state maintains even a minimum level of sovereign control, possibly the *only* realm in which the international community can act is the external environment. Nonetheless, Gros identifies five causes of state failure: (1) economic malperformance, (2) lack of social synergy, (3) authoritarianism, (4) militarism, and (5) environmental degradation caused by rampant population growth.³⁵

State collapse and reconstruction in Central Africa is the subject of an article by Rene Lemarchand, in which the author examines the patterns of decay in Rwanda, Burundi and Zaire, paying particular attention to the humanitarian dimensions of collapse, and the geo-political implications for the Great Lakes region.³⁶ Lemarchand portrays state collapse as a slow process of decay, which erodes the political bases of state authority. Collapse is the result of: (1) insurgencies born of refugee flows, (2) political exclusion and ethnic stratification, (3) demographic pressures, (4) international isolation, and (5) triggering events. Lemarchand concludes with an analysis of the prospects for state reconstruction in Rwanda, Burundi and Zaire. In Rwanda, a military ethnocracy is emerging, with a pan-Tutsi army underpinning the core state institutions and the appointed parliament. Burundi and Zaire constitute what Lemarchand calls 'parastates', lacking in essential attributes of a functional state.

institutions may exist, but territorial penetration of authority is compromised. For a more detailed explanation of the use of this term see Chapter 3, fn. 18.

³⁴ Jean-Germain Gros, "Towards a Taxonomy of Failed States in the New World Order," 465.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 462.

³⁶ Rene Lemarchand, *Patterns of State Collapse and Reconstruction in Central Africa: Reflections on the Crisis in the Great Lakes*, Presented to XVIIth World Congress of the International Political Science Association, August 1997

Contrasting state making and state failure in the Third World, Mohammed Ayoob defines failed states as those in which the state structures have completely collapsed. Ayoob links state failure with ethnonational self-determination, noting that ethnic nationalism dominates when institutions collapse, or are incapable of fulfilling the needs of the population.³⁷ The role of external support for regimes is emphasized by Ayoob, noting that during the Cold War, the super-powers reinforced client governments in internally fragmented states. The withdrawal of this support, coupled with the advanced weaponry available to both sympathetic governments and opposition groups, makes state failure more likely. This piece by Ayoob is one of the few articles which addresses the role of international rules and norms in state failure. Specifically, Ayoob considers the exclusive nature of sovereignty, and the concept of ethno-national self-determination, and their role in inducing state failure.

All of the works reviewed so far have identified causes of state failure and collapse, however, few, if any, have attempted to provide a framework for assessment of future crisis leading to state collapse. Pauline H. Baker and John A. Ausink attempt to remedy this deficiency by providing a framework for analysis and by identifying preliminary indicators of state collapse.³⁸ The authors examine state collapse in the context of the causal linkages between breakdown and ethnic conflict, defining a collapsing state as:

"...one that is losing legitimacy, maintains few functioning state institutions, offers few or no public services and is unable to contain, or deliberately inspires social fragmentation."³⁹

Collapsed states lose physical control over the territory, lose a monopoly on the legitimate use of force, forfeit the authority to make collective decisions for the population, and are unable to enter into formal relations with other states. This definition used by the authors is restrictive, as it fails to account for what Gros terms the "phantom" state (see above), where the state may exert authority over limited territory, but may still enter into relations with other states. Baker and Ausink propose ten indicators of state collapse: (1) demographic pressures, (2) massive refugee movements, (3) un-

³⁷ Mohammed Ayoob, "State Making, State Breaking and State Failure," in Chester A. Crocker et al., eds., *Managing Global Chaos* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1996) 37-51.

³⁸ Pauline H. Baker and John A. Ausink, "State Collapse and Ethnic Violence: Toward a Predictive Model," *Parameters* (Spring 1996) : 19-31. Baker and Ausink use the term ethnic conflict to denote disputes based on group identity, where that identity is formed on the basis of language, race, religion, ethnic origin, clan etc.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 22.

even economic development across ethnic lines, (4) legacy of vengeance-seeking group grievance, (5) criminalization of the state, (6) sharp and severe economic distress, (7) massive, chronic, or sustained human flight, (8) progressive deterioration of public services, (9) suspension of the rule of law, and (10) security apparatus operating as a "state within a state".⁴⁰

The indicators proposed by Baker and Ausink may be problematic, in that many of the ten 'metrics' outlined above may be both indicators and causes of state failure. For example, 'criminalization of the state', and 'massive refugee movements' can be both causes and manifestations of state collapse. This methodological problem is a result of the state failure continuum, i.e. it is not a discrete phenomenon, and therefore cause and manifestation may be difficult to separate.

The use of predictive indicators in state failure is also the subject of a Task Force report commissioned by the Directorate of Intelligence of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency.⁴¹ The task force defined four types of state failure: (1) revolutionary wars, (2) ethnic wars, (3) mass killings, and (4) adverse or disruptive regime changes, and identified 113 cases in the period 1955-1994. This report employed advanced analytical techniques to establish causal relationships between 75 high-priority variables, and state failure.⁴² A primary objective of this research was to develop a predictive model of state failure. In the selected test period, the best predictors of state failure were high infant mortality and low trade openness. The report also identifies three indicators which correlate strongly (78 percent accuracy in predicting outcome) with state failure which results in ethnic conflict: low trade openness, the ethnic character of the ruling elite and a youth bulge.⁴³

This report, however, has some serious methodological flaws. First, the research attempts to develop a predictive model for a range of phenomenon: revolutionary war, genocide etc. As in the case of Rwanda, genocide does not necessarily imply state failure. On the contrary, for a mass genocide to be effective requires great organization, and territorial penetration of authority through an institutional framework.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 25-29.

⁴¹ Daniel C. Esty et al. *Working Papers: State Failure Task Force Report* Central Intelligence Agency, 1995.

⁴² Note that these 75 variables were selected from an initial 'pool' of over 600 parameters, divided into three categories: Demographic/Societal; Economic/Environmental; Political/Leadership.

⁴³ The authors used as an indicator the ratio of population in the 15-29 age group to the 30-54 age group.

Second, parameters such as 'low trade openness' and 'the ethnic character of the ruling elite' may be both causes and manifestations (and hence indicators) of state failure. Furthermore, these indicators may be necessary, but not sufficient, conditions for collapse. Finally, while this research employed some sophisticated statistical analysis in developing indicators for state failure, the predictive capabilities of this model are questionable, due primarily to the broad spectrum of cases included in the analysis.

2.4 Thematic Classification of State Collapse

A core question which this thesis addresses is: What are the causes of state collapse? The literature review presented here is conducted by author, chosen as the most appropriate format for presentation due to the multiple causes of collapse identified in each work. Table 2.1 summarizes the causes of state failure and collapse identified in the literature. These causes of collapse can be consolidated into thematic classifications, categorized as follows:

1. **Domestic Socio-economic:** socio-economic privation; demographic pressures;
2. **Domestic Socio-political:** elite rivalry; political exclusion of ethnic groups; ethnic composition of elite; authoritarian rule; militarism; state corruption; powerful insurgencies; structural mis-alignment of 'nation' and 'state';
3. **Geo-political:** withdrawal of donor support; trans-boundary population flows;
4. **Multiplier effects:** environmental stress; natural disasters; triggering events;

2.5 Summary

A selective survey of the existing literature on collapse, focusing on the breakdown of complex societies and states, illustrates several deficiencies. First, there is some ambiguity in the use of the terms 'failure' and 'collapse'. Second, several authors concentrate more on internal causes of collapse, and there is little work which captures the coupling between domestic and systemic causes of collapse. Third, the literature exhibits a definite retrospective bias, and many of the works reviewed here are purely

explanatory in nature. There is scant research devoted to developing strategies to deal with collapsing states. Fourth, there is little in the way of theory in the literature on state failure and collapse. This thesis will address some of these deficiencies, and in particular, will advance a theory of state collapse which couples domestic and systemic factors.

Author	Context	Causes of Collapse
Joseph A. Tainter	Complex Societies	Declining marginal utility of complexity
Norman Yoffee & George L. Cowgill	Ancient States and Civilizations	
Herbert Kaufman (in Yoffee et al.)	Collapse as an Organizational Problem	Natural disasters
		Economic privation
		Abrupt changes in trade
		Decreasing marginal utility of extraction
		Core fragmentation
		Power challenges from peripheral elites
Joseph A. Tainter	Lit. Review of Collapse of Roman Empire	Geographical over-extension
		Barbarian incursions
		Economic stagnation
		Decline in civic responsibility
		Political reorganization
Karen Barkey and Mark Von Hagen	Empire Collapse	Decay in relations between core and periphery
		National liberation movements
		Internal realignments
Victor Zaslavsky (in Barkey et al.)	Collapse of Soviet Union	Soviet systemic crisis
		Exhaustion of Soviet 'model'
		Peripheral nationalism
I. William Zartman	State Collapse in Africa	
Hussein M. Adam (in Zartman)	Somalia	Authoritarian rule
		Military rule
		Class- to clan rule shift
		Government inspired clan rivalry
		Urban state terrorism
		Withdrawal of external support
Martin Lowenkopt (in Zartman)	Liberia	State corruption
		Economic malperformance
		Ethnic hatred / oppression
		Civil conflict

Author	Context	Causes of Collapse
Jeffrey Herbst	State failure in Africa	Structural aspects of African state
		Economic malperformance
		Withdrawal of external support
		Regime incapacity
Ali A. Mazrui	State Collapse in Africa	Inappropriate concepts of sovereignty
		Ethnic polarity
		Polarity of central authority (anarchy or tyranny)
Gerald Helman & Steven R. Ratner	State Failure / U.N. Strategies	Government corruption
		Natural disasters
		Economic malperformance
		Powerful insurgencies
Jean-Germain Gros	Categorizing failed states	Economic malperformance
		Lack of social synergy
		Authoritarianism
		Militarism
		Environmental degradation
		Demographic pressures
Rene Lemarchand	Collapse in Central Africa	Insurgencies due to refugee flows
		Political exclusion
		Ethnic stratification
		Demographic pressures
		International isolation
		Triggering events
Mohammed Ayoob	State Making / State Failure	Ethno-national self-determination
		Withdrawal of donor support
		Militarism
Pauline H. Baker & John A. Ausink	Indicators of State Failure	
Daniel C. Esty et. al.	Predictive model for State Failure	

Table 2.1: Survey of Causes of State Collapse

Chapter 3

The 'State' and State Collapse

3.1 Overview

State collapse is a political phenomenon, describing the rapid breakdown of centralized authority, the absence of territorial penetration of authority, and the loss of monopoly on the legitimate use of coercive force within the state. As a prerequisite to further refining this definition of state collapse, the nature and roles of the state must be outlined explicitly. This chapter explores the multi-dimensional nature of the state, using both a theoretical approach, and a more pragmatic approach based on empirical observation of the workings of the international system. State failure is then investigated as a prelude to state collapse. This chapter concludes with an investigation of conceptual alternatives to the state, using a process of abstraction from international relations norms.

3.2 The 'State'

The classic conceptualization of the modern state is one of a territorially bounded entity, with a centralized ruling authority which maintains a monopoly on the legitimate use of coercive force within its boundaries.¹ The state is a political institution, the ruling authority which delegates all power, and is the sole legitimate representative of the population, both domestically and in the international system.² The state maintains the authority to make collective decisions on behalf of the popula-

¹Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (New York: Mc-Graw Hill, 1979), 104.

²The term 'legitimate' refers to the government of the state as the unitary representative of the population. In a normative sense, legitimacy refers to the consent of the governed to be ruled by the central regime. However, in world politics, legitimacy does not imply consent by the majority of the population.

tion. The origins of the modern state can be traced to the Treaty of Westphalia, in 1648, which established the international system based on mutual recognition of sovereign, territorial entities.³

States have two core characteristics: they are *sovereign* entities, and therefore possess exclusive authority within their boundaries, and they are identified by an internationally recognized *territory*. These core attributes can be further refined, such that the features which distinguish the state from other political entities are: territorial organization; differentiation by class and occupation; monopoly of force; authority to mobilize resources and personnel; and legal jurisdiction.⁴ Sovereign states are the *sole, legitimate* representatives of the territorially bounded population within the border (internal sovereignty) and on the international stage (external sovereignty). Sovereignty, however, is a double edged sword: it can be used to hold the state apparatus accountable for actions within a delineated border, yet it can preclude the international community from intervening in the internal affairs of a given state. This presents the international community with a dilemma of intervention, namely, that state recognition may accord legitimacy to the regime and hence reduce regime instability, while at the same time excluding the possibility of intervening in domestic affairs of the state.⁵

Four approaches are used here to investigate the state, and in each case the analysis is presented in the context of anticipated changes in the role of the state due to collapse. These four analytical 'lenses' are: (1) the state as the dominant unit in International Relations, (2) the state as normative order, (3) the alignment of nation and state, and (4) the state as political institution.⁶ The key point here is to investigate how conceptual approaches to the state, and state roles, are altered by collapse.

³These is a significant body of literature on state-making, and the origins of the state. See: Charles Tilly, ed., *The Formation of Nation States in Western Europe* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1975); Charles Tilly, "War Making and State Making as Organized Crime," in Peter B. Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol, eds., *Bringing the State Back In* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 169-191; Friedrich Kratochwil. "Of Systems, Boundaries, and Territoriality: An Inquiry into the Formation of the State System," *World Politics* (1986)

⁴Joseph Tainter, *The Collapse of Complex Societies* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 29.

⁵Article 2(7) of the U.N. Charter states that the organization is not authorized to intervene "... in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any state."

⁶Several other analytical lenses have been suggested for studying the state in the context of international relations. For example, Stephen Krasner offers four conceptualizations of the state: (1) the state as government, (2) the state as bureaucratic institution and administrative apparatus, (3) the state as ruling class, and (4) the state as normative order. Stephen D. Krasner, "Approaches to the State", *Comparative Politics* 16, no. 2 : 223-246.

3.2.1 The State: An International Relations Approach

The territorially-bounded state is the primary unit of analysis in contemporary theories of international politics. States, viewed through both neorealist and neoliberal lenses, are the primary actors - the sole, legitimate representative of the bounded population, either permanent or transient, in the international state system.⁷ Neorealism views states as unitary, rational actors, striving to maximize their relative security in the anarchic international system. The concept of *relative* gains between states is central to realist theories. Neoliberalists accept that states are the primary actors, but emphasizes the role of non-state actors, primarily international regimes, and are optimistic regarding the prospects for cooperation in the international system.⁸ This represents the state as viewed from the international system: a "top-down" approach.

When the state collapses, it ceases to be the unitary actor representing the population. In the absence of central authority, sub-national groups become the *de facto* representatives of the population. States and international organizations, in attempting to reconstruct the collapsed state, will enter into negotiations with sub-national groups. Also, during and following collapse, international institutions dominate international relations, whether they are inter-governmental organizations such as the United Nations, or non-governmental organizations such as the International Committee of the Red Cross. These actors perform an important role as they are not sovereign actors, and therefore do not pose a direct threat to the sub-national entities, in terms of competing for power and territory within the state. Furthermore, regional inter-governmental organizations play an important role in dealing with collapsed states. For example, the role of the European Union in the transformation of Yugoslavia, and the role of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in responding to domestic anarchy in Liberia.⁹

⁷ Several scholars contend that a characteristic of the state is that it represents a *permanent* population. However, even in the case of transitory populations, internal sovereignty dictates that the state can assume authority over foreign nationals within its border.

⁸ Joseph M. Grieco, "Anarchy and the Limits of Cooperation: A Realist Critique of the Newest Liberal Institutionalism," *International Organization* 42, no. 3 (1988) : 485-507.

⁹ For the role of ECOWAS in Liberia, see: Herbert Howe, "Lessons of Liberia: ECOMOG and Regional Peacekeeping," *International Security* 21, no. 3 (Winter 1996/1997) : 145-176.

3.2.2 The 'Normative' State

The 'normative' state has three core functions: (1) protection, (2) resource extraction and (3) resource redistribution. The state has the authority to make collective decisions for both the permanent, and any transitory, territorially bounded population. The 'good' state provides for the security of its population. Again, this is a normative statement, for in many instances the state employs the police and military to suppress opposing domestic factions. The *social contract* which exists between the state and the population represents a compromise: the state provides protection and services, in return for obedience and taxation. In other words, the individual cedes elements of freedom to the state in return for guarantees of security and participation. In addition to the roles mentioned above, the normative state will respect the human rights of the population, and will, to the best of its ability, ensure a sustainable domestic economy, equitable allocation of natural resources and redistribution of goods and services.

The roles of extraction, protection and redistribution fall to sub-national entities as the state plunges into collapse. Individuals will look to alternatives to the state to provide for their basic security needs. Factions within the state will engage in local extraction and redistribution. Taxation of the population is necessary to generate income to pay for this protective function. Without the administrative capabilities of state institutions basic social services will cease to function. If respect for human rights is a fundamental characteristic of the normative state, then the absence of supreme authority in the collapsed state means that individuals and groups will not be held accountable for their actions by any authority within the state. This is a dangerous situation in the context of human rights, as individual rights can be abridged with apparent impunity. Thus, under anarchy, if civil conflict ensues, it is more likely to be bloody!

3.2.3 Nation versus State

The third approach to analyzing the state focuses on the nation and the state. Some clarifying concepts are necessary here. An ethnic group, or *ethnie*, defines a named human population with a common ancestry, shared memories and culture, a link

with an historic territory, and a measure of solidarity.¹⁰ A *nation* defines an ethnic which has a mass culture, centralized economy, and a compact, delimited territorial homeland. The state may not coincide with a given nation. For example, the Kurdish nation transcends the territorial boundary of three states: Iran, Iraq, and Turkey. The Palestinian nation (not including the diaspora) extends from the West Bank, across the Dead Sea, to the East Bank in Jordan. The state may consist of one or more national entities, each of which may be wholly, or partially, enclosed within the state territorial boundary. Individuals will act rationally to ensure that their basic needs are met, and in so doing, will choose the most appropriate ordering principle. A strong sense of belonging to a nation or ethnic group will erode support for the state and will prime the state for collapse.

I contend that the degree to which the 'nation' and 'state' overlap is crucial in determining the fate of collapsing states. When the state collapses, individuals will attempt to satisfy basic economic and security needs by identifying with the 'nation'. Therefore, in the wake of state collapse, the nation will take on the role of the state, and hence collapse may result in more aggressive nationalism.¹¹

3.2.4 The State as Political Institution

The state is a political institution, which, like most organizations, has two primary objectives: (1) to perform the functions associated with statehood, and (2) to maintain itself as a viable institution. Viewed from an institutional perspective the state can be conceptualized as an interface between the international system and domestic civil society. As the governing body, a functional state is characterized by the centralization of authority, the penetration of institutional controls from the governing center throughout the territory and the specialization of institutional tasks within national and local government. In this context the state assumes an "intermediate" role. Moreover, as an institution, the state does not merely reflect the aggregate decisions and actions of its members. The structure of the state as an institution also influences outcomes. The ruling elite and opposing groups will be constrained in some way by the institutional structure of the state. Even if these constraints are

¹⁰ Anthony D. Smith, "The Ethnic Sources of Nationalism," *Survival* 35, no. 1, (Spring 1993) : 49.

¹¹ The role of ethnic nationalism in inducing post-collapse conflict is discussed in Chapter 5.

not imposed at the domestic level, interaction with the international community will require a certain institutional capacity.

With the onset of collapse, the state will concentrate its efforts in maintaining the core institutions, the survival instinct takes precedence over other roles of the state. The motivation for this may be to secure, or enhance, the power position of the elite. The regime will fortify the center by ensuring tight control over the agents of the state, and the military in particular. Institutional decay will begin at the periphery and spread rapidly to the center.

This cursory four level analysis encompasses some of the more traditional, theoretical views of the state as an actor in international politics - the state is the universally recognized ordering principal for political life. However, this theoretical approach does not map well onto empirically observed realities in the international system. Interactions between states in the international system suggest another image of this ubiquitous entity.

Viewed in the context of world politics, the state is characterized by mutual recognition of sovereignty and territory in the international system. The state is the recognized center of authority, which may or may not be capable of exerting control throughout the territory. Statehood is an international norm, an accepted format for organizing political interactions. The state is often not well aligned with the concepts of legitimate representation. For example, in Zaire under Mobutu Sese Seko, the recognized 'state' referred to an internationally accepted regime which exercised little territorial authority outside the capital.¹² Moreover, the state will often not fulfill its normative roles: protection of the population; provision of basic human rights; equitable distribution of resources and power etc. Despite infringements of human rights and gross corruption in some regimes, the international system still accords legitimacy to these states.

International recognition, therefore, is the core characteristic of statehood. Sovereignty and territoriality can only be exercised by the state once it has been accorded this recognition. For example, the Palestinian Authority possesses many of the attributes of statehood: an elected governing body and a (de facto) territorial boundary,

¹²Jean-Germain Gros, "Towards a Taxonomy of Failed States in the New World Order," 459.

i.e. the West Bank and Gaza. However, only recently has the international community, through the United Nations, increased the degree of recognition for such entities. The case of Taiwan also stretches the conceptual limitations of theoretical approaches to the state. Taiwan, in theory, remains under the sovereign control of China, despite the fact that the island supports democratic elections, and enters into relations with states in the international system.¹³ Once the state has been recognized, sovereignty and territoriality become private goods in the hands of the state.

International recognition, therefore, emerges as the dominant, necessary attribute of statehood. Sovereignty and territoriality follow on from international recognition, and thereafter reside with the state. As such, sovereignty, and therefore statehood, are merely mechanisms for mutual recognition within the international system. The theoretical image of the state as a central authority which extends control over a given territory is not reflected in the empirical workings of the international system.

3.3 Defining State Failure

As mentioned at the outset, the process of failure represents a crisis of legitimacy for the state. When can states be said to fail? There are several degrees of state failure, which can be thought of as a continuum: one extreme represents the state as a legitimate and competent entity (government) while the other extreme is characterized by domestic anarchy, or the absence of centralized control within the territorially bounded unit.¹⁴ Figure 3-1 represents the two ends of the state failure continuum, highlighting the various intermediate steps:

- The inability to ensure social cohesion and a sustainable economy
- Widespread dysfunction / corruption in core state institutions (Armed Forces / Police / Judiciary / Civil Service)
- Increased social disharmony due to socio-economic incapacity
- Inability to contain social fragmentation (possibly along ethnic lines)

¹³Edward A. Gargan, "Taiwan President Says he Would go to Beijing for Talks," *New York Times*, May 20 1996, A3.

¹⁴Waltz uses the concept of a 'continuum' in explaining anarchy in the context of the international system. See: Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 114.

- Loss of monopoly on the legitimate use of force
- Loss of control over principal 'agents' of the state (military, police)
- Erosion of centralized authority
- Inability of the state to function effectively as a member of the international community

Decaying states will exhibit some, or all, or these characteristics, and to varying degrees. A contemporary example may help to illustrate how this continuum can be used as a checklist for state failure. The complex crisis in Indonesia in May 1998 reflects several elements of a failing state: Dysfunction and corruption in core state industries controlled by the family of President Suharto; Increased social disharmony due to socio-economic inadequacy, and real or perceived allocational asymmetry across class (business elite) and ethnic (Chinese) groups; Distinct loss of social cohesion, manifested by mass rioting in Jakarta; partial loss of control over agents of the state (military siding with protesters); 'fortification' of regime.¹⁵

State failure, therefore, is a chronic debilitating condition which, if untreated, will culminate in the acute, terminal crisis of state collapse, the *rapid* breakdown in central authority and the loss of monopoly on the legitimate use of force, rendering the state incapable of sustaining itself within the international community. Due to the absence of centralized authority in a collapsed state, violent conflict, revolutions, politicide or genocide may ensue.

Recognizing the varying degrees of decay, some authors have identified discrete categories of failed states. Possibly the most rigorous such categorization is provided by Jean-Germain Gros, who suggests five discrete types of failure based on three criteria: a recognized territory, centralized authority and territorial penetration of authority.¹⁶ Failing states may exist purely as phantom states, whereby the central authority does not adequately perform the roles of protection, allocation and redistribution for society. In such instances the state merely refers to the core regime, severed from legitimate representation. However, the emphasis on the territorially

¹⁵Mark Lander, "Indonesian Capital Engulfed by Rioting," *New York Times*, May 15 1998, A1. Also: Mark Lander, "Riots Break out in Jakarta after Shooting of Students," *New York Times*, May 14 1998, A6.

¹⁶Jean-Germain Gros, "Towards a Taxonomy of Failed States in the New World Order," 457-458. This categorization of failed states was presented in Chapter 2.

bounded state in the international system is such that these states are legitimate in the eyes of the international community. Therefore, the state may be no more than an abstraction to facilitate transactions between (not necessarily cohesive) societal groups.

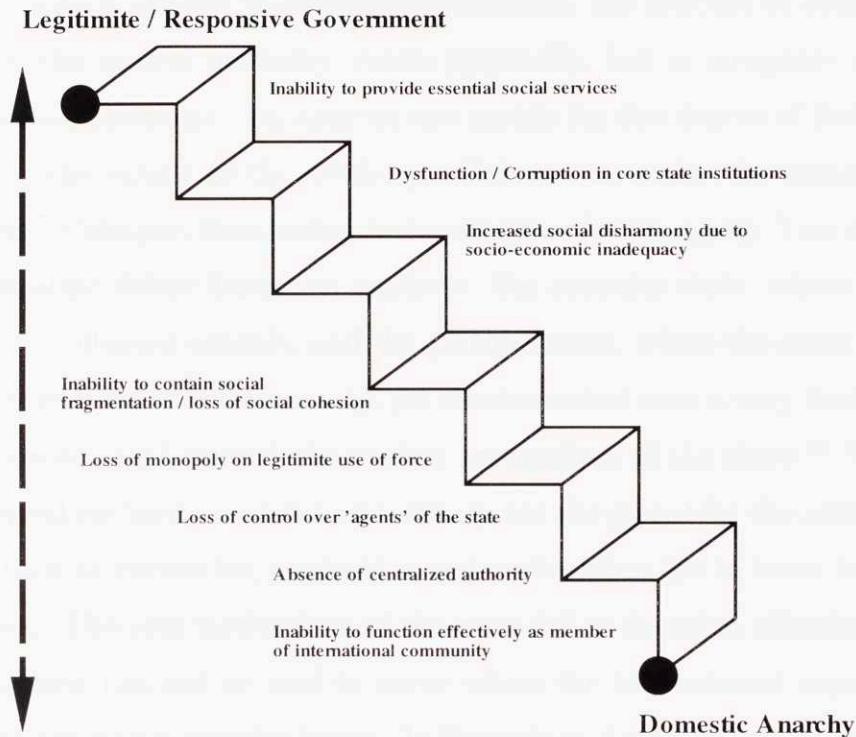


Figure 3-1: Steps to State Failure. Competent government to domestic anarchy!

3.4 State Collapse

State collapse is a political process whereby the established centralized authority of the political institution of the state has fallen apart, and by which the government loses the monopoly on the use of coercive force. The 'core' is unable to project authority into the 'periphery' of the internationally recognized territory. Absent supreme authority and the domestic environment transcends into anarchy. Here, anarchy is used in the same context as in realist theories of international relations. That is, anarchy denotes the absence of a supreme governing body: no one is entitled to rule, no-one is compelled to obey. In collapsed states, the Hobbsian view of life dominates:

life can indeed be "nasty, brutish and short".

Two core characteristics of the state have been discussed: sovereignty and territoriality. Collapse refers to the breakdown of centralized authority, or the loss of significant penetration of this authority into the periphery. Since territorial penetration of authority is central to effective government, the concept of collapse includes cases where the central authority exists nominally, but is incapable of projecting power into the hinterland. An appropriate metric for the degree of failure in power projection is the extent of the territory which is not under the control of government forces.¹⁷ Collapse, then, refers to the erosion of sovereignty. Two distinct types of collapsed state follow from this analysis: the *anarchic* state, where then central authority has collapsed entirely, and the *garrison* state, where the state is still recognized in the international community, yet exerts control over a very limited territory, generally concentrated around the nuclear institutions of the state.¹⁸ With the collapse of central authority, power and territory are the prizes for the ambitious! State functions, such as extraction, protection and reallocation fall to lower levels of social consolidation. The core institutions of the state fail to function effectively.

State collapse can not be said to occur where the institutional capacity, in both the core and periphery, remains intact. In Rwanda in April 1994 the central authority of the state was fully functional. Territorial penetration of authority was achieved through tightly organized prefectures. This institutional framework was used as a platform for organizing the acts of genocide committed in the weeks following the assassination of President Habyarimana of Rwanda on April 6th.¹⁹

State collapse beckons the question of *volition*. Does the voluntary dissolution of a state constitute collapse? The definition of collapse proposed here is based on the rapid breakdown of centralized authority and the loss of legitimate control over a given territory. In the case of Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union, the state underwent a

¹⁷I suggest this as an appropriate metric as it can be assessed quantitatively, whereas factors such as the erosion of state authority are more difficult to quantify.

¹⁸The label, 'garrison state', as I have applied it here, should not be confused with that introduced by Harold D. Lasswell in *The Analysis of Political Behavior: An Empirical Approach*. Lasswell uses the term to describe a state in which, "...the specialists in violence are the most powerful group in society." Lasswell often refers to this construct as a military state. Therefore, Lasswell's use of the term connotes a particular type of developmental construct, while I use the term to define a particular type of state in which the government is incapable of projecting central authority into the territory. See, Harold D. Lasswell, "The Garrison State," in *The Analysis of Political Behavior: An Empirical Approach* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1947), 146-157. Quote taken from p. 146.

¹⁹For a detailed account of civil conflict and genocide in Rwanda, see: Gerard Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis: History of a Genocide*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995)

voluntary dissolution, and did not lose, so much as forfeit, the monopoly on the use of coercive force. However, in terms of the fate of the centralized authority, for the dissolution of the state to occur, a breakdown of the political structure is necessary. Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union underwent a form of 'managed' dissolution: the fate of the state was decided (more or less) prior to the dissolution of the government - this was certainly not the case in the collapse of Somalia.

A further clarification regarding the nature of collapse pertains to the difference between secession and collapse. I have defined collapse to include the absence of territorial penetration of legitimate authority. If a group residing within the state wishes to secede, then by nature of this intention, the central authority has already lost significant control over this part of the territory. If the secession is successful, then the state authority has collapsed in that area. However, if secessionist movements are suppressed, then clearly the central authority maintains control within the territory. In the case of Kosovo, secessionist movements by the Kosovo Liberation Army during June and July 1998 were crushed by Serbian forces, thus demonstrating the ability of the central government to effectively project force into the periphery.

3.5 Through the Looking Glass ...

The norms of statehood, which evolved over several hundred years in Europe, form the backbone of interactions with the international community. International recognition, sovereignty and territoriality are the universally accepted traits of the state. The slow, and bloody, evolution of European states, therefore, stands in stark contrast to the premature birth of post-colonial and post-communist states, where the attributes of statehood were thrust upon the people. By now, it has become clear that the manner in which statehood was imposed was far from optimal. What, then, is a more appropriate form of statehood?

Contemporary international norms dictate that states will be organized around the core concepts of sovereignty and territoriality. In order to conceive more practical, and more appropriate forms of political organization, one must engage in a process of abstraction, whereby existing norms are suppressed. Forgetting then for a moment the norms of statehood, let us begin with a 'clean sheet of paper' for drawing up a

blueprint for a more appropriate organizing principle.

One should begin this analysis with the normative role of the state, which was outlined in Section 3.2.2. The state should provide a sustainable economic environment for the people it represents, in addition to ensuring equitable distribution of resources within the group. The state should provide balanced protection to the population, and extract from the population those resources deemed necessary to provide collective social services. To collapse the normative role of the state to one objective: the state should ensure that the population enjoys basic human rights.²⁰ Furthermore, it may be appropriate to organize the population around some common goal or shared characteristic, whether this is an inherent property of the population (as in ethnic origin), or a state-induced characteristic, such as national affiliation to the state, or belief in a shared economic goal i.e. individual opportunity.

The most basic concerns of the population will be the fulfillment of basic security and economic needs. If these needs are not satisfied, the survival instinct takes precedence, and individuals will look to alternative organizations to fulfill these basic needs. A political entity, therefore, which provides for the basic human rights of the population, in addition to providing their basic security and economic needs and an equitable distribution of resources and power, will be more likely to be a coherent, viable unit.

Since the current international system is founded on the mutual recognition of territorial boundaries, it will be difficult to move toward a system in which the territory and its sovereign control is not perceived as the dominant attribute of the state. However, the fixation on territory may be ameliorated by focusing on aspects of sovereignty, such as affiliation to a local government, irrespective of territorial location. One possible alternative to the 'state' is a federal entity which administers a specified territory, but which is governed by proportional representation of sub-national groups within this territory. Each sub-national entity would have sovereign control over its own territory and contribute to the administrative role of the central federal body. The primary role of the federal institution would be to provide

²⁰Steinbrunner suggests using the provision of basic human rights as a basis for state sovereignty, irrespective of political or economic ideology. Quoted in: Francis Mading Deng, "State Collapse: The Humanitarian Challenge to the United Nations," in, I. William Zartmen, *Collapsed States: The Disintegration and Restoration of Legitimate Authority* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1995), 211.

a 'point-of-contact' to the international system. Each sub-state territory would be accorded sovereignty and recognition by the international community, but only as a viable component of the federal state. International recognition of the federal state would require that the sub-national entities meet strict requirements in terms of human rights, corruption, allocation of resources and power etc. Under such a structure, sovereignty would reside at a sub-national level.

3.6 Summary

In a theoretical context, the state is defined as a territorial entity, over which a centralized authority maintains a monopoly of coercive force. In the field of International Relations, the state is the primary unit of analysis. From a normative standpoint the state should provide for the basic human rights of the population, and its role should be extractive, protective and redistributive, in an equitable sense. The nation and state may not be well aligned, especially in the absence of some overarching societal 'glue', whether it be ideology, ethnic affiliation or economic motives. The state as political institution will be concerned with performing the actions of the state and self-preservation.

State failure is a process of decay, which represents a crisis of legitimacy for the state. It may ultimately result in collapse, a more complete and rapid breakdown, although collapse may refer to the breakdown of central authority (anarchic states), or the loss of territorial penetration of authority (garrison states).

Chapter 4

A Theory of State Collapse

4.1 Overview

When states are primed for collapse, abrupt changes in the balance of threat within the state, coupled with low levels of political, economic and strategic interaction with the international community, makes state collapse more likely. Domestic and systemic socio-economic and political factors act to provide the necessary, but not sufficient, background conditions which increase the propensity for collapse. This statement provides a concise working hypothesis regarding the primary causes of state collapse. It couples internal and external factors, as they can rarely be treated in isolation.

This chapter begins with an expansion of this hypothesis, investigating two distinct causes of shifts in the domestic balance of threat: (1) domestic power vacuums, and (2) marginal domestic power differentials.¹ Dynamic causal processes operating during state failure and collapse are also identified. Specifically, two core dynamic effects are (i) the *Security Dilemma*, and (ii) the *Intervention Dilemma*. The roles of triggering events in collapse are investigated. Finally, several predictions which follow from the theory are outlined at the close of the chapter.

4.2 Understanding State Collapse

The primary hypothesis of state collapse presented in this thesis has two phases:

¹The term 'domestic power vacuum' refers to the absence, or perceived absence, of effective authority at the 'core' of the state. There is a 'void' in the political space. Marginal domestic power differentials (MDPD) refer to situations where there are a number of key players of approximately equal power at the national level. An analogy in the international system is a multi-polar system consisting of several, roughly equal, major powers. In other words, marginal domestic power differentials describe the absence of a clear preponderance of power residing with any one group.

Phase I: *The propensity for state collapse is increased by eight inter-dependent factors: (1) socio-economic privation, (2) acute demographic pressures, (3) inequitable distribution of resources and power, (4) militarism, (5) low national affiliation, (6) state corruption, (7) trans-boundary population flows, and (8) environmental stress.*

Phase II: *Given this propensity for collapse, alterations in the domestic (within state) balance of threat, coupled with low levels of political, economic and strategic interaction with the international system, make state collapse more likely.*

Phase I outlines the socio-economic and political factors which increase the propensity for state collapse. In other words, these are necessary, but not sufficient conditions for collapse. Each of these parameters is described fully in Section 4.3. Some, or all, of these condition variables may be present, and to varying degrees. When these factors are present, the political institutions of the state experience an erosion of legitimacy and authority.

Phase II posits that, given this increased propensity for breakdown, the state is likely to collapse when two precipitating conditions are satisfied. First, when the state experiences abrupt changes in the domestic balance of threat, state collapse is more likely. Second, and coupled with this internal factor, low levels of interaction between the state and the international system, politically, economically and strategically, will further push the state towards the precipice of collapse. Figure 4-1 provides a schematic representation of causal pathways in state collapse.

The following sections expand on the domestic and systemic condition variables that prime the state for collapse, and investigate the dynamic nature of collapse.

4.3 Domestic & Systemic Condition Variables

Eight condition variables act to prime states for collapse. A complex inter-dependence exists between these factors, each of which represents an intervening hypothesis on the causes of state collapse. Each causal factor is examined in turn, using empirical examples where appropriate.

I: Socio-economic Privation

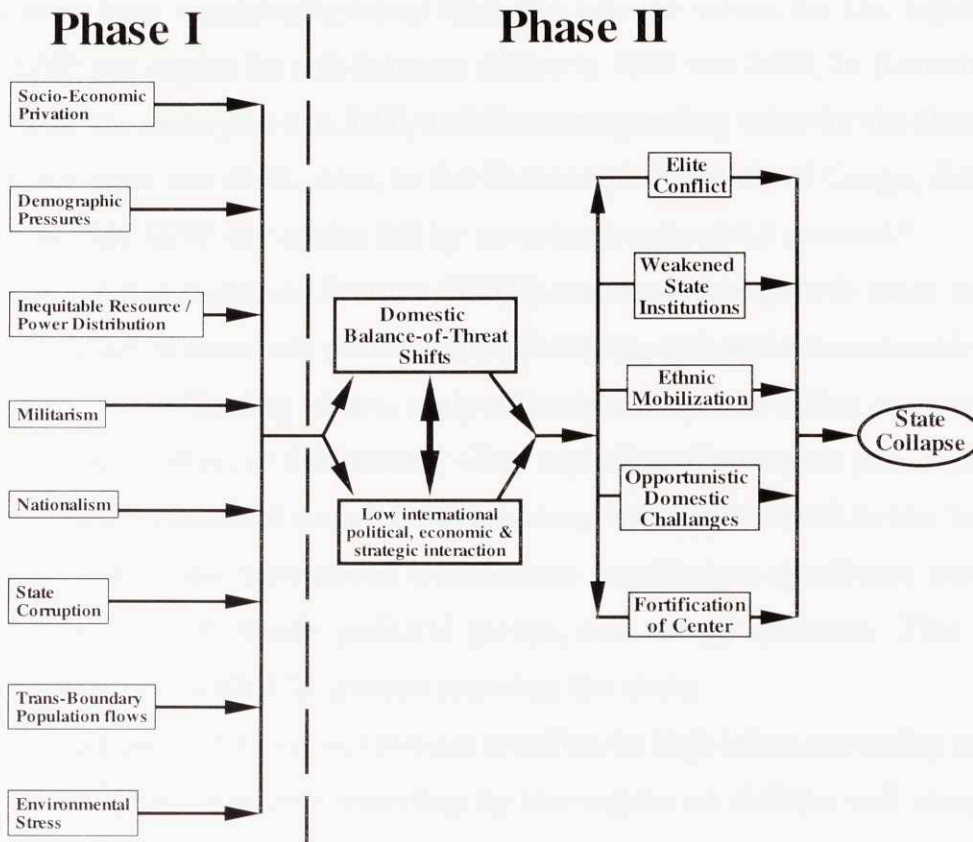


Figure 4-1: Causal Pathways toward State Collapse

When the government is unable, or unwilling, to provide a sustainable economic environment, state collapse is more likely. The government may be incapable of maintaining a viable economy due to institutional incapacity, poor economic policies, over-reliance on external donors, poor debt management, civil conflict, and the concentration of state resources in the military. Alternatively, the state may be unwilling to support a stable economy due to high levels of state corruption, instead funneling state resources to the ruling elite. An ailing domestic economy, often inducing popular discontent with the government, can be exploited by leaders of sub-national groups to mobilize support in opposition to the regime. Thus, economic malperformance feeds opportunistic power-brokering by leaders of sub-national entities.

Economic conditions in several African countries provide the clearest example of the role of economic privation in priming the state for collapse. Economic growth rates and per capita Gross National Product (GNP) in Rwanda, Zaire, Burundi and

Somalia have been consistently lower than the average values for the region. The average GNP per capita for sub-Saharan Africa in 1996 was \$490, In Rwanda, GNP per capita for the same year was \$190, and the corresponding value for the Democratic Republic of Congo was \$130. Also, in the Democratic Republic of Congo, during the period 1986-1996 GNP per capita fell by an average rate of 9.3 percent.²

Per-capita Gross National Product (GNP) and economic growth rates are often used as indicators of economic performance. However, such indicators should be used with caution. In collapsing states, malperformance and corruption in government institutions may inhibit, or deliberately alter, reporting of economic performance. In addition, with the erosion of state legitimacy, many transactions shift to the 'informal' economy, in which case unreported transactions constitute a significant percentage of the revenue for individuals, political groups, and the government. This parallel economy is often controlled by groups opposing the state.

Poor health-care and social services are manifest by high infant mortality rates and low life expectancy. Excessive spending by the regime on defense will compromise social services. Again, in Rwanda, Somalia and the Democratic Republic of Congo, life expectancy values and infant mortality rates are lower and higher respectively when compared to global averages within the same income group.³ Socio-economic privation may also result from natural disasters, or the influx of a large number of refugees which places additional strain on the state.

Finally, when the population is deprived of basic socio-economic needs, they will be more likely to align with other sub-national entities, possibly in the hope of securing better economic conditions. Economic malperformance therefore erodes credence in the institutional capability of the state.

II: Demographic Pressures

Aspects of the population 'profile' of the state will increase the propensity for state collapse. Specifically, this category includes: high population density, rapid pop-

²Source: World Bank, *World Development Indicators*, 1998.

³For example, in Rwanda, the life expectancy at birth remained at approximately 40 years over the period 1970-1996. The average value for Sub-Saharan Africa in 1996 was 52 years, while the average life expectancy of people in countries of the same income group, on a global scale, was 63 years. In Somalia, the average life expectancy was 40.1 years in 1970, rising to 48.6 years in 1996. In 1990, infant mortality rates (per 1,000 live births) for Rwanda and Somalia were 133.6 and 132 respectively, well above the Sub-Saharan, and low-income group averages: 91 and 68 respectively. Source: World Bank, *World Development Indicators* 1998.

ulation growth rates, and a significant 'youth bulge', i.e. the percentage of adult population in the 15-29 age group.

High population density and growth rates increase the demands on the resources of the state. In addition, such pressures increase the strain on government institutional capacity to provided essential services. Some authors include the degree of ethno-geographical 'mixing' within demographic pressures. However, the degree of ethnic homogeneity, of itself, is not a significant cause of state collapse. Ethnic heterogeneity, coupled with strong, and possibly militant, ethnic affiliation, has a more pronounced effect on the ultimate fate of the state.⁴

Three population variables, and changes in each, influence state viability: the size, composition and distribution of the population. In a study on the linkages between population and conflict, Nazli Choucri suggests three ways in which population variables impact conflict: (1) by directly shaping the environment (parameters), (2) acting as multipliers of underlying factors, and (3) by influencing the dynamics of the conflict directly.⁵ A similar analysis can be applied to the role of population variables in state collapse. Hence, demographic pressures can shape the domestic environment, can magnify underlying conditions, and can influence the dynamics of state collapse.

At least one study on state failure has identified a positive correlation between a youth bulge and state failure.⁶ However, this positive correlation was evident only for state failure involving ethnic war, and in cases states had low trade openness and where the ruling elite represented a particular demographic group. This relationship bears explanation. Low trade openness is a measure of the level of economic interaction with the international community, in addition to providing a barometer of economic development. Low economic development, coupled with a large proportion of the population in the 15-29 age group, may lead to civil conflict. Where there also exists an ethnic 'bias' in the ruling elite, this may be ethnic conflict.

III: Inequitable Distribution of Resources and Power

Inequitable distribution of state resources or power, whether real or perceived, across

⁴Chaim Kaufman, "Possible and Impossible Solutions to Ethnic Civil Wars," *International Security* 20, no. 4 (Spring 1996) : 136-175.

⁵Nazli Choucri, "Perspectives on Population and Conflict," in Nazli Choucri, ed., *Multidisciplinary Perspectives on Population and Conflict*, (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1984), 1-26.

⁶Daniel C. Esty et al., *Working Papers: State Failure Task Force Report* Central Intelligence Agency, 1995.

ethnic, political or ideological cleavages makes state collapse more likely. Overt concentration of power and resources within specific societal groups increases domestic disharmony, especially when combined with poor economic performance and state corruption.

Examples of inequitable distribution of resources and power resulting in conflict abound. In Nigeria in the mid 1960's, the superior economic and educational status of the Ibo tribe led to violent tribal disputes, which ultimately led to the Biafran war of secession during 1967-1970. In Northern Ireland during the mid- to late 1960's social discrimination against the Catholic minority fueled nationalist sentiments which ultimately resulted in the adoption of terrorist tactics by the Irish Republican Army, commencing in 1969. In the Serbian province of Kosovo, where ethnic Albanians constitute ninety percent of the population, discrimination in access to schools, housing, employment, and social services fueled nationalist feelings, leading to calls for secession by the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), commencing in the late-1980's.

Exploitation by the state, whether real or perceived, will stimulate ethnic nationalism. Individuals will seek affiliation with a coherent group within the state. The 'exploited' will band together to balance against the state, while the state elite will consolidate power and wealth by ethnic affiliation.

IV: Militarism

Militarism, as used here, relates to two phenomenon. First, militarism defines a policy of aggressive military preparedness within the state, concentrated either within the government or within opposing groups. Second, militarism denotes the availability of, or access to, weapons by individuals and groups within the state.

When states spend a disproportionate amount of their revenue, compared to their capacity, on arming themselves, other aspects of government spending are compromised. Specifically, services that are considered secondary to the survival of the state, such as education and healthcare, will be curtailed.

Take the case of Ethiopia during the Dergue regime, 1974-1991. Military spending averaged thirty five percent of central government expenditure during a period of three years from 1988-1990. The victory of the Ethiopian Popular Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) over the Dergue regime brought an end to thirty years

of civil conflict and led to the establishment of the independent state of Eritrea. Ethiopia's military spending plummeted, from a peak of \$900 million in 1989, to \$191 million in 1995. As a percentage of Gross Domestic Product defense expenditure fell from an average of 8.2 percent during 1986-91, to 2.7 percent in 1994. Although spending on health and education in Ethiopia has risen slightly, the benefits from reduced military spending will only be reflected in the longer term.⁷

During the Cold War, both the United States and the Soviet Union provided support to client states in the form of arms transfers. In the post-Cold War world the strategic landscape has been re-orientated - however, the legacy of previous super-power involvement lives on in countries such as Somalia and Afghanistan in the form of an abundance of weapons available to individuals and groups.⁸ This ease of access to weapons also undermines local authority and provides opposition groups with more leverage, as they can more readily pose a threat to rival groups or government forces. Even a relatively small, but dedicated, fighting group, armed with sophisticated weapons, can pose a threat to the state. It should be noted that access to weapons, of itself, does not increase the propensity for state collapse. In both the United States and Switzerland, to mention but two examples, light weapons are freely available to the population. However, the combination of easy access to weapons, coupled with dissatisfaction with the state (either due to state corruption or oppression), makes for a more explosive cocktail.

As in the case of using indicators for quantifying economic performance in collapsed states, data on military expenditure should be interpreted with caution. Such figures seldom reflect military spending by groups in opposition to the government. In addition, external arms transfers, either to the government, or opposing groups, may be "donated" by sympathetic governments.

V: Low National Affiliation

National affiliation defines the degree to which the population, as a nation, identifies with the territorial state. The concept of the 'nation' was defined in Section 3.2.3.

⁷Source: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, *SIPRI Yearbook 1997*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 180-183.

⁸For a discussion of the role of militarism in failing states, see: Mohammed Ayoob, *The Third World Security Predicament: State Making, Regional Conflict and the International System*, (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1995), 165-173.

Individuals will turn to alternatives to the state when the central government is incapable of providing for the economic and security needs of the population.⁹ The state may lack the institutional capacity to provide for the basic needs of the people. Low levels of affiliation to the state will be exacerbated by overt corruption and inefficiency in state institutions, and by economic malaise.

In other words, when the population identifies more strongly with an entity other than the state, there may be trouble ahead! Inequitable distribution of resources and power will consolidate the discriminated party into alternative groupings, such as ethnies. The notion of 'coincidence' between nation and state was captured by John Stuart Mill:

"It is in general a necessary condition of free institutions that the boundaries of governments should coincide in the main with nationalities."¹⁰

Furthermore, leaders of sub-national groups will encourage, and exploit, low levels of affiliation to the state, as a means of increasing either their personal power, or the support base for the group.

VI: State Corruption

Corruption within core state institutions, especially at the higher tiers of government, can prime the state for collapse. Corruption compromises the capacity of state institutions, and results in economic and political instability. Moreover, corruption exacerbates economic privation and reduces the level of national affiliation within the state.

Since corrupt governments are more likely to experience socio-economic privation, there is a second, more subtle mechanism by which corruption undermines the legitimacy of the state. International institutions and multi-national corporations (MNC's) will be reluctant to offer economic assistance or invest in the country (respectively) if there is widespread corruption. In fact, many recent economic assistance packages agreed by the International Monetary Fund have conditions which specifically address institutional corruption.

State corruption is exacerbated by economic malperformance. When individuals become incapable of providing for their own basic economic needs, they will be more

⁹See: Jack Snyder, "Nationalism and the Crisis of the Post-Soviet State," *Survival* 35, no. 1, (Spring 1993) : 5-26.

¹⁰John Stuart Mill, c. 1860. Quoted in, David Welsh, "Domestic Politics and Ethnic Conflict," *Survival* 35, no. 1 (Spring 1993) : 65.

likely to turn to illicit means of generating income.

VII: Trans-boundary Population Flows

The flow of large groups of people across state boundaries can alter the relative power of specific groups in both the sending and recipient states. Refugees, often fleeing from conflict and oppression, increase the strain on the resources of the recipient state. As Lemarchand notes, "...it is in Rwanda, Burundi, and Zaire that the collapse of state systems is most patently traceable to insurgencies born of refugee flows."¹¹

Trans-boundary population flows may be forced or induced, and the destabilizing effects that such flows can have on states may in some cases be the motivating factor behind the migration. Forced displacement of populations across territorial boundaries may be used to generate a more ethnically homogeneous host state, or may be used to purge the state of political dissidents. Host countries can force emigration to influence the foreign policy of the recipient state, or a third party.¹²

The influx of migrants may pose a threat to the internal security of the state in several ways: (1) in the form of an attack by armed refugees, (2) as a threat to political stability, and (3) as a threat to the societal values of the receiving country.¹³ The primary mechanism by which trans-boundary population flows influence the stability of the state, is by altering the domestic balance-of-threat, whether real or perceived.

VIII: Environmental Stress

Environmental problems, such as: water and food shortages, desertification, soil erosion, nuclear waste hazard, air and water pollution etc. increase pressure and 'stress' on the population and on the institutional capacity of the state.¹⁴ Such problems, either natural or man-made, magnify any deficiencies in the economic performance of the state. Furthermore, environmental stress can be induced, and manipulated, by both internal and external actors. Famine, food and water shortages, and the instability that follows in the wake of large-scale natural disasters have often been exploited to increase the power of a particular sub-national group.

¹¹Rene Lemarchand, *Patterns of State Collapse and Reconstruction in Central Africa: Reflections on the Crisis in the Great Lakes*, Presented to XVIIth World Congress of the International Political Science Association, August 1997.

¹²For a discussion of the role of migration in security, see: Myron Weiner, "Security, Stability and International Migration," *International Security* 17, no. 3 (Winter 1992/1993): 91-126.

¹³*Ibid.*, 103.

¹⁴For an excellent assessment of the role of environmental factors in violent conflict, see: Thomas F. Homer-Dixon, "On the Threshold: Environmental Changes as Causes of Acute Conflict," in: Sean M. Lynn-Jones and Steven E. Miller, eds., *Global Dangers: Changing Dimensions of International Security* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995).

4.4 Domestic Balance of Threat and International Isolation

For the purpose of analyzing state collapse, the domestic (within state) system can be viewed as a microcosm of the international system. The primary units of analysis are sub-national political entities, which may be political parties, ethnic groups etc. In the domestic realm, supreme authority resides with the government. Even with a supreme institution, subnational entities will operate to maximize their relative power, whether in a democratic or non-democratic structure. Sub-national groups will act in ways similar to states in the international anarchic system, especially in their actions to maximize their relative power over opposing groups.

The preceding section has identified eight factors which prime the state for collapse. Given this propensity, shifts in the domestic balance of threat, and isolation from the international community, whether strategically, politically, or economically, will push the state toward collapse. Balance-of-threat theory builds on balance-of-power theory as a core element of the realist paradigm, and neorealism in particular. In this section, balance-of-threat theory is transposed from the international realm to the domestic system, in an effort to use this elegant theory to explain the behavior of actors at the state level.

Neorealist theories of international relations operate on several key assumptions: (1) the state is the primary actor, (2) states are unitary, rational actors, (3) the international system is anarchic, and (4) national security dominates the interaction between sovereign states.¹⁵ A prominent 'strand' of neorealism is balance-of-power theory, which rests on several assumptions, most of which are consistent with those of realism: (1) that states are unitary actors, to whom self-preservation is essential, and universal domination is the ultimate objective, (2) states will act in rational ways to align 'means' and 'ends', (3) the 'means' can be internal, increasing military and economic capacity, or external, strengthening the state's position in the international system through alliances, and (4) the international system is a self-help system.¹⁶ The purpose of the balance is to maintain stability in the system, without destroying the constituent states. In short, balance-of-power theory requires an anarchic system,

¹⁵ Joseph M. Grieco, "Anarchy and the Limits of Cooperation: A Realist Critique of the Newest Liberal Institutionalism," *International Organization* 42, no. 3 (Summer 1988) : 485-507.

¹⁶ Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1979)

populated with states striving to survive.¹⁷ Balance-of-threat theory builds on the foundation of balance-of-power, adding that groups will respond to changes in threat, not just shifts in aggregate power. Aggregate power, offensive power, and adversarial intentions are the three main components of threat.¹⁸

Two particular types of changes in the domestic balance of threat are investigated here: (1) domestic power vacuums, and (2) marginal domestic power differentials.

4.4.1 Domestic Power Vacuums

The absence, or perceived absence, of dominant power at the 'core' of the state creates a domestic power "vacuum", or void. Power vacuums can result from the absence of one or both components of power: power as capability, or power as will residing at the core. These two elements are essential to understanding domestic power plays.¹⁹

Power vacuums are important forces in shaping the destiny of the state, and national leaders are all too aware of their destructive potential.²⁰ However, power vacuums, of themselves, are insufficient to induce state collapse. Characteristics of the domestic structure augment the importance of power vacuums. The most important such characteristic is the absence of institutionalized power-transfer mechanisms, which invites opportunistic power challenges when a vacuum does arise. This is manifest in newly democratizing states, which were previously under the control of military or authoritarian regimes, as in the case of Nigeria following democratic elections in 1993. In this regard it is often not democracy *per se*, rather the transition to democracy, which can represent the most dangerous period for the state. This is not to say that power vacuums can only occur when institutionalized power transfer mechanisms

¹⁷Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 117-121. See also: Stephen M. Walt, "Revolution and War," *World Politics*, 44, no. 3, (April 1992) : 321-368.

¹⁸Walt, "Revolution and War," 332-333.

¹⁹Nazli Choucri, Robert C. North and Susumu Yamakage, *The Challenge of Japan Before World War II and After* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 8.

²⁰State leaders acknowledge the destabilizing effects of power vacuums. Three examples highlight the importance of power vacuums in domestic politics: (1) Following Japan's national election in July 1995, in which the government authority was weakened significantly, Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama declared: "A political vacuum cannot be allowed for even one day ... so we have decided to continue in office.". See Nicholas D. Kristof, "Japan's Leaders to Stay On Despite Poor Election Showing," *New York Times*, July 24 1995, p. A 3. (2) In the context of the situation in Zaire in 1996, then leader of the opposition to President Mobutu, Laurent Desire Kabila remarked: "...[put together an administration] so that we combat, we fight against chaos, against the vacuum of power." James C. Mc Kinley Jr., "Help Wanted in East Zaire as Rebels Try to Govern," *New York Times*, Dec. 4, 1996, A12. (3) When Russian President Boris Yeltsin became ill during September 1996, his security adviser, Aleksandr I. Lebed, stated that the President's illness had created a power vacuum, which was being exploited by lesser powers within the government. See, Michael R. Gordon, "Lebed Calls for Yeltsin to Transfer his Powers," *New York Times*, Sept. 29, 1996, p. 9

are absent, rather that the likelihood of power vacuums occurring is increased under these conditions. Also, when formalized power transition is absent, power vacuums will be more intense.

By definition, state collapse itself causes a power vacuum, however, the importance of power voids as a *cause* of collapse cannot be underestimated. Power vacuums provide linkages to other destabilizing effects. In an article which focuses on the role of nationalism in the post-Soviet state, Jack Snyder suggests that ethnic nationalism "...appears spontaneously when an institutional vacuum occurs."²¹ Nationalism, according to Snyder, arises from a group's incapacity for collective action coupled with real or perceived threats to the group, either to its property, security, religion or ideology. Therefore power vacuums may make ethnic nationalism become the 'default' option.

Balance-of-power theory suggests that groups will act to maximize their relative security in the self-help system. Under power vacuums, opportunistic groups will attempt to maximize their relative security by trying to 'fill' the vacuum. The difference between a power vacuum and state collapse is that in the former, the state as political institution remains intact, albeit without a dominant power focus. In state collapse, the core state institutions have collapsed completely, or are incapable of projecting authority effectively. Power vacuums, therefore are more enticing to opportunists, as the state remains functional, and as such, is a more rewarding prize. In addition, power vacuums may precipitate defensive power-grabbing, i.e. if one group fears that an opposing group will take advantage of the power vacuum, there will be more incentive for the group to act 'defensively' to counter possible threats later.

To summarize, domestic power vacuums alter the balance of threat as they induce uncertainty in the continuity of government, they foster suspicion regarding the intentions of other groups, and they augment the perception of adversarial offensive power, as opponents will view each other as perspective power-grabbers.

²¹ Jack Snyder, "Nationalism and the Crisis of the Post-Soviet State," *Survival* 35, no. 1 (Spring 1993) : 12.

4.4.2 Marginal Domestic Power Differentials

Even if power voids do not appear in the political "space" of the state, the absence of a preponderance of power residing with a single subnational entity can lead to abrupt changes in the domestic balance of threat. The concept of 'marginal power differentials' captures the approximate parity among political entities within the state. Using an International Relations analogy, it represents a multi-polar domestic system of roughly equipotent actors. In multi-party democracies which exhibit marginal power differentials, for example, the fragile "rainbow" coalitions that barter for government, can be highly unstable. This political instability, and frequent changes in government, weaken state institutions and constrain the implementation of national social and economic policies. India is a prime example of a democracy in which marginal power differentials have destabilized the central authority due to the fragile coalitions which have governed the sub-continent. The formation of a Hindu nationalist government under Prime Minister Vajpayee following the elections in early 1998, required the majority party to build a coalition with 20 regional parties.²² Under these circumstances, national leaders will attempt to dilute the effects of marginal power differentials by consolidating their power and attempting to rally popular support, as India did in promoting Indian nationalism, and by consolidating the state behind a nuclear weapons program used to demonstrate India's technical prowess and major-power status.

4.4.3 International Interaction

Changes in the domestic balance of threat is an internal factor which precipitates collapse. This domestic balance of threat is coupled to external causal factors in state collapse, specifically, low levels of interaction with the international community, either strategically, economically or politically. This section outlines how a *Laissez Faire*, or isolationist, attitude by the international community can increase the likelihood of state collapse.

Strategic Interaction

The geo-strategic status of a state will significantly influence the prospects for sur-

²² John F. Burns, "Hindu Party Says it Will Reconsider Its Nuclear Policy," *New York Times*, March 19 1998, A1.

vival, as opposed to collapse. When a state is, or is perceived to be, of strategic importance, meaning that certain attributes of the state passively increase its importance in the international system, vis a vis its relative importance to one or more states. Characteristics of the state which may augment its strategic value are: geographical location, natural resources, and political ideology.

The geographical location of a country is a form of "passive" strategic importance. Location is an inherent attribute of the state that cannot be altered without expansion. Also, strategic importance is unstable, subject to rapid fluctuations depending on the balance of power in the international system, the proximity of dominant states in the system, and military technology.

During the Cold War, both the United States and the Soviet Union projected influence in their respective spheres of interest. The United States considered several areas to be of strategic importance. Regions such as the Horn of Africa and the Korean Peninsula were important from a geographical viewpoint. The Horn of Africa was designated as a staging post for possible U.S. operation in the Middle East. In addition, the Middle East itself was of strategic importance due to the oil reserves in the region. States in central Africa were considered of strategic importance from an ideological viewpoint, i.e. whether they were anti-communist states.

Economic Interaction

In addition to the strategic importance of the state, the extent of economic interaction with the international community can strongly influence the possibility for external assistance in the event of state deterioration.

More specifically, the level of foreign trade and foreign direct investment between the international community and the state will be reflected in its salience on the international stage. The economic ties between states has long been proposed as a stabilizing effect in the international system, and as a cause of peace.²³ Economic inter-dependence can increase the level of interaction two ways: (1) by building ties between two or more societies, and providing an educational conduit across nations, and (2) by influencing the foreign policy of states based on economic motivation.

²³See for example: Geoffrey Blainey, "Paradise is a Bazaar," in *The Causes of War* 3d. ed., (New York: The Free Press, 1988), 18-32. Also, in the specific context of the causes of the First World War: James Joll, "The International Economy," in *The Origins of the First World War* 2nd. ed. (New York: Longman, 1992), 146-173.

Political Interaction

The third category of interaction between the state and the international community is political interaction, where the relationship between the state and the external environment is forged by political linkages: common membership of international institutions, bi-lateral affiliations based on alliances, commonality of political ideologies etc. The most wide-ranging example of political interaction in the international community is through the United Nations.

International regimes are defined as "...*principles, norms, rules and decision-making procedures around which actor expectations converge in a given issue-area.*"²⁴ International institutions are more formalized regimes which are associated with a definite, routinized institutional framework. Apart from reflecting the convergence of actor expectations, international institutions reflect structural influences on actors. Therefore, the level of participation by a state in international accords, regimes and conventions will establish tight linkages with the international community. International institutions will impose structural constraints on member states, passive measures such as regular meetings, institutionalized communications pathways, linkages between the institution and several sub-national bodies. In short, international institutions actively and passively forge a relationship between a state and the international community.

4.5 Feedback Dynamics in State Collapse

The causal pathways from legitimate government to state collapse have been identified in the preceding sections. These pathways, however, are iterative, that is, dynamic feedback effects operate to such the state into a downward spiral of collapse. This section presents three such dynamic feedback effects: (1) the "slippery slope" from failure to collapse, (2) the security dilemma, and (3) the intervention dilemma.

The "slippery slope"

State failure and collapse were defined explicitly in Chapter 3. State collapse is a rapid event, which follows from a longer period of state failure. This *long duree* of state decay is self-destructive, that is, once a state enters a spiral of decay, the

²⁴This definition is proposed by Krasner in: Stephen D. Krasner, ed., *International Regimes* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983)

process can often be self-perpetuating. As the state loses legitimacy, individuals will gravitate towards other socio-political entities, thus further weakening the influence of the state. Also, the the causes of state collapse presented in Section 4.3 illustrate the complex interdependence that exists between these factors.

The Security Dilemma

The essence of the security dilemma is that actions by a group to increase it's security, inevitably compromise security in the long term, by stimulating security concerns in other groups.²⁵

In the context of state collapse, the feedback effects from the security dilemma alter the domestic balance of threat. In collapsing states, the actions of sub-national groups to compensate for the deficits of the state institutions, will alter the domestic balance of power, eroding the legitimacy of the state. The increase in power of opposing groups will alter the perception of threat faced by the government, which will respond with measures to consolidate it's own power. This 'tit-for-tat' security game results in the polarization of government and opposition, thereby further aggravating the security dilemma.

The Intervention Dilemma

The third dynamic feedback effect which will be investigated here is the intervention dilemma. The concept of an intervention dilemma captures two effects:

1. By hesitating to act to support the collapsing state, the international community may in fact further erode state legitimacy, thus increasing the barriers to intervention.
2. The norm of sovereignty, once accorded to the state, excludes the international community from intervening in the internal affairs of the state, thereby making intervention more difficult.

In addition, the degree of international intervention will enter the threat calculus of both the ruling and opposing elites. Low levels of strategic, political and economic interaction with the international community increases the likelihood of state collapse.

When external actors hesitate in responding to state collapse, state legitimacy will

²⁵For the systemic security dilemma, see: Robert Jervis, "Cooperation Under the Security Dilemma," *World Politics* 30, no. 2 (January 1978) : 167-214. For the security dilemma applied to the domestic realm: Barry R. Posen, "The Security Dilemma and Ethnic Conflict," *Survival* 35, no. 1 (Spring 1993) : 27-47.

be further eroded, and domestic challengers will be more belligerent, safe in the knowledge that the international community will not react.

4.6 Intervening Variables

When states are primed for collapse, by some of all of the eight factors described here, then changes in the domestic balance of threat and international isolation make state collapse more likely. Several intervening variables, acting between erosion of state legitimacy and state collapse, will be investigated here: (1) elite conflict, (2) rapid decay of state institutions, (3) ethnic mobilization, (4) opportunistic domestic challenges, and (5) fortification of the 'center'. Some of these intervening variables have previously been addressed in the context of the security dilemma.

Changes in the domestic balance of power may result in elite conflict, a power struggle at the core. Contending sub-national groups engage in conflict as a means of consolidating their power and improving their relative position such that they will be poised to rise to a hegemonic position within the state. Elite conflict will often revolve around establishing control of the agents of the state, especially the military, since in the collapsed state, control of the military will greatly enhance a leader's position. Where one elite is the military, this group will have an advantage in the struggle for power, unless there are militarized factions supporting opposing groups.²⁶

When the state is primed for collapse, state institutions will undergo a rapid decay, in contrast to the longer term decay associated with state failure. This weakening of state institutions will provide a negative feedback to the causes of state collapse - it will exacerbate: economic malperformance, inequitable distribution of resources and power, nationalism, militarism, and state corruption. Moreover, weakened state institutions will increase the perceived threat posed by sub-national groups.

As a means of rallying support for their respective groups, factional leaders will engage in ethnic mobilization, exploiting cultural, racial, political, or ideological affiliations to gain solidarity. The security dilemma has been seen to feed-back into regime instability, by consolidating sub-national groups and generating mutual mistrust in an atmosphere of impending anarchy. The security dilemma is exacerbated by ethnic

²⁶Stephen M. Walt, "Revolution and War," *World Politics* 44, no. 3 (April 1992) : 321-368.

mobilization and vice versa. A recent, and oft cited, example of ethnic mobilization is evident in the actions of Slobodan Milosevic in the early stages of the civil war in Yugoslavia. The Serbian leader used militant ethno-nationalism to improve his personal power base and secure political power within the new Yugoslavia.²⁷

The erosion of regime legitimacy will invite opportunistic domestic challenges. As the decay of central authority progresses, factions will be increasingly belligerent in their challenge to the remnants of the core, and to opposing groups. These groups will challenge government forces as a means of: (1) testing their 'resolve', (2) de-marking territory, and (3) accelerating collapse.

Finally, in the latter stages of collapse, the regime will attempt to fortify the core, either by withdrawing to territory which is easier to defend, by consolidating control over the military and its most advanced weaponry, or by securing the primary financial assets of the state.

4.7 Triggering Events

State failure has been defined as a process of decay, which may ultimately lead to collapse, a complete and rapid breakdown of central authority. Events which push the state 'over the edge', from failure to collapse, are important in that it will be difficult to predict such triggering events. Such events may be: economic crisis; abrupt changes in political framework; abrupt changes in the global environment, such as economic recession. However, these events alone are seldom sufficient to induce collapse. More frequently, triggering events act to exacerbate one or more of the causal factors outlined in the preceding sections. For example, the assassination of President Habyarimana of Rwanda on April 6th 1994 is seen by many as the defining event which triggered the mass genocide against the Tutsi which took place over the following weeks. However, this event was more a 'signal' than the crossing of a threshold. Research by Gerard Prunier has shown that plans for the genocide were in place prior to the shooting down of the President's plane.²⁸

²⁷For the manipulation of ethnic affinities as a cause of state failure, see: Jean-Germain Gros, "Towards a Taxonomy of Failed States in the New World Order: Decaying Somalia, Liberia, Rwanda and Haiti," *Third World Quarterly* 17, no. 3 (1996): 464-465. Also: Warren Zimmerman, "The Last Ambassador: A Memoir of the Collapse of Yugoslavia," *Foreign Affairs* 74, no. 2 (March/April 1995): 2-20.

²⁸Gerard Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis: History of a Genocide* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 222-223.

Most commonly, abrupt changes in the domestic political framework will result in changes in the domestic balance of power. Power vacuums may result from triggering events such as the death or sudden illness of an authoritarian leader.²⁹ Often such triggering events, either natural or man-made, are exploited to destabilize the regime. For example, drought and famine have often been exploited by warring factions to infirm the opposing group. In such cases, however, the triggering event acts as a multiplier to other causal factors.

4.8 Theoretical Predictions and Inferences

This chapter presented a theory of state collapse. Theories of international relations should outline explicitly what one would expect to observe in a given situation, if the theory is valid. For the purpose of conducting case studies in a scientific manner, several prediction that follow from the theory are presented here. In Chapter 7, two case studies will be performed to verify whether the predictions are reinforced by empirical observations.

First, the theory of state collapse proports that the propensity for state collapse is increased by eight inter-dependent factors: (1) socio-economic privation, (2) acute demographic pressures, (3) inequitable distribution of resources and power, (4) militarism, (5) low national affiliation, (6) state corruption, (7) trans-boundary population flows, and (8) environmental stress. If this is true then each of these factors should be evident, to a greater or lesser degree, in collapsing states. Second, abrupt changes in the domestic balance of threat will make state collapse more likely. Therefore, when states are primed for collapse, we should observe that state collapse will result from abrupt changes in the balance of threat, specifically, through domestic power vacuums or marginal power differentials. Third, collapsed states should be international orphans, having a record of low strategic, economic or political interaction with the international system. As a corollary to this, abrupt cessation of support from donor governments will increase the likelihood of state collapse. Fourth, in failing states, national leaders, acknowledging the instability of the regime will exploit,

²⁹Regarding the future of the current regimes in Syria, Jordan and Saudi Arabia, see: Peter Waldman, "Taboo Topic: As Arab Rulers Age, the Succession Issue Isn't Raised in Public; Looming Contests for Power Threaten Area's Stability," *The Wall Street Journal*, Jan. 9 1996, A1.

or even oversell, their real or perceived strategic assets, in an attempt to secure financial, economic and military assistance, possibly to ward off domestic challengers. Fifth, since domestic power vacuums are less likely in states which have institutionalized power transfer mechanisms, then state collapse should also be less likely under these conditions. Sixth, and finally, leaders of sub-national entities will attempt to consolidate their power in the face of regime weakness, using ethnicity, ideology or political affiliations to rally support.

Chapter 5

Linkages to Conflict

5.1 Overview

How and why do collapsed states fall into violent conflict? This chapter attempts to answer this question. State collapse is often presented as the effect of civil conflict, however, I contend that in such cases, conflict, in keeping with the theory presented in the preceding chapter, is a manifestation of changes in the domestic balance of threat.¹ It is these changes in the balance of threat that push states over the brink.

The breakdown of legitimacy and the absence of central authority prime the state for conflict, via two dynamic pathways. First, the domestic security dilemma will generate mutual distrust and invite opportunistic power challenges from sub-national groups in the post-collapse period. Second, the intervention dilemma will act to dissuade the international community from reacting to state collapse, thus exacerbating the security dilemma, and increasing the possibility of violent conflict between rival groups. In analyzing the behavior of sub-national groups, the post-collapse state can be seen as a microcosm of the international system. Domestic anarchy following breakdown is analogous to the persistent systemic anarchy. Also, in this chapter, the role of nationalism in conflict is outlined explicitly, and finally, this chapter provides the foundation for developing strategies to sever the causal nexus between collapse and conflict in Chapter 8.

¹See: Joseph A. Tainter, *The Collapse of Complex Societies*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988); Steven R. David, "Internal War: Causes and Cures." *World Politics* 49, no. 4 (1997) : 552-576.

5.2 An International Relations Analogy

The realist paradigm is based on several key assumptions: (1) the international system is anarchic, (2) states are the primary actors, (3) states are unitary, rational actors, (4) national security is number one, and (5) given the anarchic nature of the system, states will act to maximize their relative gains over other states.² Neorealism, or structural realism, is pessimistic regarding the possibility for cooperation among states. Conflict is likely as states will strive to maximize their relative security. In Chapter 4, balance-of-threat theory was presented as an appropriate model for explaining the actions of sub-national groups which lead to state collapse. Here, the presumption is that the state has collapsed.

In the absence of central authority, the internal structure of the state resembles the anarchic international system, with one key difference. In the international system states are defined by mutually recognized territorial boundaries. Therefore, even under systemic anarchy, states have sovereign control over specific territories. In the collapsed state, there are no institutionalized territorial boundaries separating sub-national entities. On the contrary, there may be significant 'mixing' of opposing groups. Once the central institutions of the state have collapsed, authority will be relegated to sub-national groups. As in the theory of state-making which posits that "*war made the state, and the state made war*", sub-national groups will consolidate to increase the marginal utility of providing security for members of the group.³ As groups consolidate to provide protection they will seek control over a territory which, at the minimum, constitutes the common 'homeland', and optimally encompasses the maximum area which can be controlled without excessive occupation costs. Moreover, in collapsed states ethnic affiliation becomes the default mode of political affiliation. Each of these groups therefore will be preoccupied with maximizing their relative position in the domestic system, fearful that opposing groups will exploit the absence of authority to increase their relative security.

Neorealism is pessimistic regarding cooperation between states in the international

²Joseph M. Grieco, "Anarchy and the Limits of Cooperation: A Realist Critique of the Newest Liberal Institutionalism," *International Organization* 42, no. 3 (Summer 1988) : 485-507.

³Charles Tilly, ed., *The Formation of National States in Western Europe* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1975).

system. Despite the anarchic nature of the international system, states recognize the territorial boundaries and sovereignty of other states, and there are institutionalized mechanisms for entering into interactions with other states (international institutions and the United Nations, for example). In post-collapse states, domestic anarchy operates without the mutual recognition of sovereignty or territoriality, and hence cooperation between opposing groups will be less likely. Furthermore, once the state disappears, no institutionalized framework exists which can 'guide' these groups towards collaborative interaction.

The application of neorealism to the study of internal conflict has been criticized on the basis that it does not adequately explain how domestic anarchy emerged in the first place. Also, critics of this approach stress that in most cases of internal conflict governments continue to exercise some degree of control. A third criticism often voiced against neorealism in the domestic realm is the fact that it does not explain why several internal wars are fought by groups against strong governments at almost impossible odds.⁴ However, these criticisms are not valid when neorealism is applied to state failure and collapse. First, anarchy emerges in collapsing states due to the erosion of legitimate central authority. The working hypothesis outlined in this thesis identified eight condition variables which prime the state for collapse. By identifying the causal pathways towards collapse, one can track the emergence of anarchy. Second, while it is true that in most cases of internal conflict the government maintains some element of control, this is not the case in state collapse. Even when the state persists, effective penetration of authority may be absent, therefore, anarchy may be present in some or all of the territory. The situation whereby the 'state' cannot effectively exert control in the periphery, I have termed a *garrison* state. Finally, the third criticism of neorealism is also misplaced: as in the case of states in the international system, realism considers sub-national groups to be rational actors. Therefore, small groups may decide that it is logically preferential to wage war against a strong opponent, if the alternatives (possible continued oppression) are less appealing.

Given the anarchic nature of the collapsed state, systemic theories of the causes of inter-state war should map well onto the internal system. Such systemic theories

⁴The three criticisms outlined here are those presented by Stephen R. David, in a review article on the causes of internal war. Stephen R. David, "Internal War: Causes and Cures," *World Politics* 49, no. 4 (1997) : 552-576.

have at their core the anarchic nature of the system. Balance-of-power, balance-of-threat, offense-defense theory, and theories of alliance formation fall in the domain of systemic theories. The following sections propose two causal relationships between state collapse and conflict: the security dilemma, and the intervention dilemma.

5.3 Dilemmas of State Collapse

The causal pathways from state collapse to violent conflict are dynamic in nature. In Chapter 4 the security dilemma and the intervention dilemma were identified as processes linking cause and effect in state collapse. The same processes exist linking collapse to conflict, albeit in a different context.

5.3.1 The Security Dilemma

In international politics, actions by a state to increase its security, may inadvertently weaken the state's position in the long term, as this will compromise the security of other states in the system. This is the core proposition of the *Security Dilemma*.⁵ Offense-defense theory posits that war is more likely in the international system when offense has, or is perceived to have, the advantage, and when offensive and defensive strategies and weaponry are difficult to distinguish. Central to this theory are two variables: offense or defense dominance, and the ability to distinguish offensive from defensive weapons.⁶

In the international system, there are two primary factors which dictate whether offense or defense dominates: technology and geography. Technology will determine the dominant strategy, although this may be misinterpreted by national leaders. Prior to the First World War, offense was seen as the dominant strategy and European leaders were subsumed by the "cult of the offensive", the mistaken belief that military victory in Europe would be swift and decisive.⁷ The attrition tactics inherent in trench warfare proved that, in fact, the machine-gun and other technological advancements

⁵The classic work on the security dilemma in international relations remains: Robert Jervis, "Cooperation Under the Security Dilemma," *World Politics* 30, no. 2 (January 1978) : 167-214.

⁶Jervis, "Cooperation Under the Security Dilemma," 186-187. ; See also: Steven Van Evera, "Offense, Defense, and the Causes of War," *International Security* 22, no. 4 (Spring 1998) : 5-43.

⁷Stephen Van Evera uses the period prior to the First World War to test Offense-Defense Theory. Van Evera, "Offense, Defense, and the Causes of War," 29-30. Also, for an assessment of the offensive posture of European statesmen prior to WW I see: James Joll, *The Origins of the First World War* (New York: Longman, 1992), 69-108.

had given primacy to the defense. The perception of defense dominance prevailed until the beginning of the Second World War. Again, European statesmen drew the erroneous conclusion that the defense dominated, only to be shaken from slumber by the Blitzkrieg tactics employed by the German army and air force.

— Geography may also dictate whether the offense or the defense dominates. Clearly, the United States, and to a lesser extent, Britain, were blessed with geographical isolation which provided a natural barrier to invasion and conquest. Other geographical features such as open desert, marshlands and mountain terrain may make invasion more difficult, however current military technology is making the role of territory in doctrine dominance less salient.

— Returning to the collapsed state: in the domestic realm, the combination of offense dominance and the inability to distinguish offensive from defensive actions or intentions will make the situation doubly dangerous.⁸ Under domestic anarchy offense will dominate due to three factors: (1) technology, (2) geography, and (3) misperception.⁹ First, within the state, there is less likely to be a disparity between the technology available to various groups. Often opposing groups are armed with relatively simple weapons, which will however give a strong advantage to the group which can secure even a moderate technological advantage. Since opponents will usually not previously have been required to defend themselves from internal threats, there will be relatively few internally-oriented defensive installations. In addition, heterogeneity of opposing groups may make it difficult, if not impossible, to employ defensive technologies.

Second, domestic geography will make the offense dominant. Following collapse, territorial control is seen as a prerequisite to establishing a national entity. In situations where sub-national groups occupy separate territorial regions within the state there will be incentive to launch an offensive action to secure more territory, safe in the knowledge that the groups 'home' territory will be easier to defend and extremely difficult for opposing groups to conquer. Alternatively, when there are islands of a

⁸Robert Jervis proposes a 'matrix' of four outcomes based on possible combinations of offense or defense dominance and the indistinguishability of offense and defense. War is *most* likely when offense is dominant and offense and defense are indistinguishable. Jervis, "Cooperation under the Security Dilemma," 211. The seminal article on the application of the security dilemma to the domestic arena remains: Barry R. Posen, "The Security Dilemma and Ethnic Conflict," *Survival* 35, no. 1 (Spring 1993): 27-47.

⁹This analysis builds on Posen's application of the security dilemma to the study of ethnic conflict, adding misperception as a factor which ensures the primacy of offense over defense. Posen, "The Security Dilemma and Ethnic Conflict," 31.

given group located within opposition territory, offense will again dominate as geographical isolation will encourage preemptive war to 'liberate' the trapped brethren, or at least to prevent capture of the isolated islands.

Third, misperception will act to give primacy to the offense. In the collapsed state, normal modes of institutional communication and hierarchical control will be absent. Furthermore, following collapse, each group will be uncertain regarding the opponents intentions, and hence there will be more incentive for maintaining an offensive posture. Institutional breakdown will magnify uncertainties regarding the future of each group and the pre-collapse state. In scrambling to provide protection for its members, each group may underestimate the fact that this will be seen as offensive action to the opponent, thus setting off a spiral of offensive actions.¹⁰

The second main variable in offense-defense theory is the ability to distinguish between offense and defense. In the post-collapse environment, equal access to weaponry, coupled with difficulty in assessing the relative power and intentions of other groups will blur the distinction between the two strategies. As groups emerge rapidly from domestic anarchy, they may not have an hierarchical command structure, and may be subject to changing doctrine depending on the perceptions of threat posed by other factions.

In post-collapse states offense dominates, offensive and defensive postures are difficult to distinguish and as a result the security dilemma is particularly intense. Mutual suspicion and spiraling security concerns conspire to embroil competing groups in violent conflict.

5.3.2 The Intervention Dilemma

The intervention dilemma rests on two core propositions. First, following collapse, inaction by external actors due to the high financial, political and military costs of intervention, will signal low systemic interest in the plight of the state, exacerbate the security dilemma, and therefore make civil conflict more likely. This further reduces the likelihood of external action. Second, the international community recognizes the sovereignty of states, which by its exclusionary nature, will restrict the range of

¹⁰Robert Jervis presents several theories of misperception: Robert Jervis, "Hypotheses on Misperception," in Robert J. Art and Robert Jervis, eds., *International Politics: Enduring Concepts and Contemporary Issues* (New York: Harper Collins, 1992), 472-490.

options available to external actors by which to act within the state.

With the collapse of central authority within the state, the international community will be hesitant to act, either politically, economically or militarily. Foreign intervention is a costly business! When the core institutions of the state have collapsed, the mechanisms for coordinating, allocating, and distributing foreign aid, will be absent. Also, foreign military intervention may face a situation of domestic anarchy. Other states, balancing the costs of intervention, will be reluctant to take action. Domestic pressures within foreign states may dictate a non-interventionist stance, especially if the collapsed state is of marginal interest in terms of economic, strategic and political status. This indifference to the plight of the fallen state will increase the belligerence of sub-national entities competing for power in the wake of collapse. Opposing groups will act with impunity, making abuse of human rights more likely. International indifference will exacerbate the domestic security dilemma, as the population, not only having no supreme authority within the state, will observe a lack of an effective supreme body in the international system. The prospects of external intervention will enter into the conflict calculus of opposing groups. In addition, non-intervention will exacerbate the security dilemma since groups may perceive that offensive actions will not be punished by external actors. In post-collapse states there may be a 'refractory' period following the breakdown of central authority, during which sub-national groups will assess the intentions and capabilities of external actors. Indeed, in some cases, sub-national groups will 'probe' external actors to determine a threshold, beyond which intervention will be more likely.

The preceding sections have presented the security dilemma and the intervention dilemma as two causal mechanisms by which violent conflict can occur in the wake of state collapse. Both causes are tightly coupled. The intervention dilemma exacerbates the security dilemma and vice versa. Violent civil conflict, then, will be most likely in cases where the security dilemma is intense, and is exacerbated by a non-interventionist stance by external actors.

5.4 Collapse and Ethnic Nationalism

At several points in this work thus far I have alluded to the fact that when the state collapses, individuals will seek to satisfy their basic security and economic needs by affiliation to some political entity other than the state. As Jack Snyder notes, "*Ethnic nationalism ... appears spontaneously when an institutional vacuum appears.*" Ethnic nationalism, according to Snyder, becomes the 'default option' following state collapse.¹¹ Nationalism will be particularly intense when a group has a reduced capacity for collective action, particularly protection, in the face of a rising threat to the group's military or economic security. When the state collapsed, the vacuum of authority promotes nationalism in one group, which then ignites the security dilemma. Groups will be anxious to use the "window of anarchic opportunity" to stake a territorial claim for the ethnic. Apart from basic security and economic needs as stimulants for ethnic nationalism, sub-national leaders may use nationalism as a rallying call to gather support for political ends.

Nationalism, of itself, is not sufficient to induce conflict in the post-collapse state. Rather, the relative intensity of competing nationalist ideologies, within the boundaries of the pre-collapse state, makes conflict more likely. If strong nationalism was universal within the state it would actually consolidate the society, to align the 'nation' with the state. In conclusion, domestic anarchy offers an environment in which competing ethnic nationalist ideologies are particularly intense, thus making conflict more likely.

¹¹Jack Snyder, "Nationalism and the Crisis of the Post-Soviet State," *Survival* 35, no. 1, (Spring 1993) : 5-26.

Chapter 6

Collapse and Disintegration

6.1 Overview

State collapse results in the rapid breakdown of established political structure, which must be reconstituted in some form to facilitate representation of the pre-collapse state population within some (possibly) altered territorial entity. When considering the fate of the pre-collapse territorial entity, two possibilities present themselves. First, the territorial state may fragment to reflect the outcome of a new political structure. Second, the territorial state may persist and endure a transition phase during which central authority will be re-established. This political transition may take the form of revolution, civil or interstate conflict, or the birth of a new regime. This chapter briefly explores the two different paths, and proposes, but does not test, a cyclical hypothesis of state formation and collapse based on alignment of 'state' and 'nation'.

6.2 State Collapse and Fragmentation

State collapse has been presented as a political process - focusing on the breakdown of established political authority. Since a clearly defined territory is one of the universally accepted characteristics of the state, and a requirement for international recognition, the ultimate fate of the territory associated with the pre-collapse state is crucial to reconstruction. The territorial entity, therefore, will be the focus of this section.

Following collapse, the territorial state may disintegrate, or may persist in the pre-

collapse form, albeit with a transformed central authority. Following breakdown, the core attributes of the state, centralized power and control over a recognized territory, become the prizes in a domestic struggle for dominance. Three primary variables influence the prospects for territorial fragmentation: (1) the alignment of ethnies and territory, i.e. the degree of ethnic homogeneity, (2) spatial concentration of institutional capacity, and (3) international recognition.

Ethnic Homogeneity

The degree of ethnic 'mixing' within the state strongly influences the destiny of the territorial entity. In collapsed states, economic and security needs drive individuals to seek alternative affiliation groups once state institutions lose their effectiveness. The resulting political entities may seek to establish an independent nation, especially if there is a history of conflict between rival parties within the pre-collapse state. Ethnic consolidation is facilitated by ethnic homogeneity. The group will be stronger militarily as the ethnie will not be forced to defend ethnic islands. Calls for the establishment of a 'nation' will face less opposition within the proposed 'homeland'. The case of Czechoslovakia is indicative of the peaceful dissolution of the state, and the subsequent establishment of two ethnically-homogeneous entities: the Czech Republic, and Slovenia.¹

In an article investigating the possible solutions to ethnic civil wars, Chaim Kaufmann suggests that ethnic conflicts can end in only three ways: (1) complete victory by one side; (2) third party military intervention to suppress conflict, and (3) self-governance by separate communities.² The first two options essentially maintain the territorial state, while the third option implies the fragmentation of the territorial entity. Kaufmann argues that ethnic wars can only end when the populations are separated into defensible, mostly homogeneous regions. In post-collapse states, therefore, the role of ethnic homogeneity is that it is more conducive to *non-violent* fragmentation. Ethnic heterogeneity will augment the security dilemma, and therefore a lasting peace will be more difficult to maintain with intermixed populations. Finally, ethnic homogeneity facilitates more peaceful fragmentation of the state as it

¹William H. Leurs, "Czechoslovakia: Road to Revolution," *Foreign Affairs* 69, no. 2 (Spring 1990) : 77-98.

²Chaim Kaufmann, "Possible and Impossible Solutions to Ethnic Civil Wars," *International Security* 20, no. 4 (Spring 1996) : 136-175.

provides for more centralized state institutions, and obviates the need for population relocation.

Institutional Capacity

The complexity, and regional distribution of institutional capacity will have a direct affect on the prospects for fragmentation. In the case of the Soviet Union, institutional capacity resided with each of the Soviet republics, bound together in a federation. This facilitated rapid transition from the federal system to independence. Even in states where the institutional infrastructure is absent, the ability of the ruling elite to effectively establish, and manage, political institutions will affect the viability of newborn states. Therefore, in states that were previously governed externally, with little 'local' input into affairs of the state, the indigenous capacity for government will be very low. This further complicates matters for the newly independent state as it will impair the implementation of new policies and strategies. Also, poor institutional capacity in newly independent states will make the regime more prone to power vacuums (due to the absence of institutionalized power transfer mechanisms) and opportunistic challenges to central authority by sub-national groups.

International Recognition

Recognition of statehood rests on internationally acknowledged sovereign control over a specific territory. For any viable state to emerge from collapse will therefore require recognition by the international community, primarily through such international institutions as the United Nations. In the wake of collapse, sub-national entities will vie for control over some or all of the territory, as the basis for securing recognition.

In regions where there exist a coherent sub-national group, coupled with strong institutional capacity, formation of an independent state will be desirable as this will accord recognition and exclusive sovereignty to the holders of power.

Several factors influence the prospects for international recognition of new territorial entities. First, the institutional capacity of the new entity, combined with the demonstrated penetration of authority within the newborn state will determine whether the group is capable of governing. Second, concerns for regional stability and geo-strategic security will influence the prospects for recognition. The dominant states in the system, and international institutions will be cautious not to stimulate

similar calls for independence in the region which may lead to violent secessionist movements and/or population displacement. Also, international support for oppressive, yet legitimate states, requires that the international community should not attempt to undermine the viability of the state. Third, domestic political lobbies act to influence dominant states in their decision to recognize newly-formed states. Finally, if fragmentation appears as an option following a protracted, violent internal conflict, it may be seen as a means to bring an end to the conflict.

6.3 States in Transition

The preceding section investigated factors that make post-collapse state fragmentation more likely. This section assumes that the pre-collapse territorial boundary is maintained, despite a possible political restructuring within the state. The state may endure a transition stage characterized by: (1) continuing domestic anarchy, (2) intra- or inter-state war, (3) establishment of new central authority.

The case of Somalia (presented in detail in Chapter 7) illustrates how a territorial entity can be maintained in the international system, despite the prolonged absence of central authority. In Somalia, this anarchic domestic environment has resulted in periodic violent clashes between opposing factions, notably the Somali National Alliance (SNA) and the Somali Salvation Alliance (SSA).³ Following the collapse of the regime of Siad Barre in Somalia in 1991, the northern region of Somaliland declared independence as the Republic of Somaliland. However, this new entity was incapable of exercising control over the northern territory, even though political power was concentrated in the Somali National Movement (SNM), a political group drawing support from the Isaq clan-family. The Republic of Somaliland was not recognized by the international community as a viable 'state'.

Violent civil and inter-state conflict may follow in the wake of state collapse. Civil conflict has been investigated in Chapter 5. Post-collapse states will be more prone to interstate war either due to predatory attacks by external states, or a desire to 'export' ideological, political or ethnic motives for expansion and consolidation.⁴

³ Virginia Luling, "Come Back Somalia? Questioning a Collapsed State," *Third World Quarterly* 18, no. 2 (1997) : 287-302.

⁴This argument is based on that by Stephen M. Walt in the context of inter-state war and revolution. Stephen M. Walt, "Revolution and War," *World Politics*, 44, no. 3, (April 1992) : 321-368.

External Predators

Post-collapse states may enter into conflict with neighboring predators, states that take advantage of the absence of central authority, the lack of organized military forces, and the absence of adequate intra-state communication to increase their relative security. The likelihood of intervention by external states will depend on: (1) ethnic affiliation between neighboring states and groups within the collapsed society, (2) a history of regional conflict involving the state, (3) aggressive intentions of surrounding states, (4) the strategic and economic importance of the state, (5) perceived post-invasion "garrison" costs, and (6) systemic deterrence.

Despite the prolonged absence of central authority in Somalia, neighboring countries have not exploited the domestic chaos to further their relative position. Ethiopia, at first glance, would appear to benefit from the domestic anarchy in Somalia. Ethiopia and Somalia have a history of territorial disputes over the Ogaden. However, Ethiopia was more concerned with domestic matters, with the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) toppling the authoritarian regime of Mengistu Haile-Mariam in May 1991. The Ethiopian population is approximately 6 percent ethnic Somali, however, in light of the clan-based affiliation in Somalia, it is unlikely that Ethiopia would have considered intervention in Somalia on the basis of ethnic affiliation.

Another example of possible predatory action by neighboring states exists in the uneasy neighborhood of the Persian Gulf. The Sunni regime in Iraq has lost territorial penetration of authority in some of the northern reaches of the state, essentially a Kurdish entity, and is faced with a large Shi'ite population in the South. The military forces of Iraq have been dissipated following the defeat in the Gulf War and extensive sanctions thereafter. Iran has a history of conflict with Iraq, has strong ethnic affiliation with the Shi'ite Muslims in the South, and appreciated the strategic and economic importance of the Shatt-al-Arab waterway separating the two states to the south. On balance, therefore, Iran would have been well poised to capitalize on Iraq's weakness in the years immediately following the Gulf War, by annexing the Southern marshlands of Iraq.

Export of Collapse

Apart from exposure to external predators, post-collapse states may engage in inter-state conflict which is initiated by the new regime or dominant factions. Fresh from the success of securing control over the territory, the reborn state may aim to "take it's fight" to neighboring states, either in the hope of securing additional gains, or due to misperception of capabilities, or from a desire to 'liberate' oppressed brethren in surrounding countries.

Apart from intra- and inter-state conflict the state may move directly towards the establishment of a new central authority. This may occur in cases where the challenger to the original regime becomes dominant within the state and essentially fills the power vacuum. Alternatively, central authority can be assisted from external sources, such as the intervention of an external state to establish control during a transition phase, or the intervention of the United Nations or regional inter-governmental organizations to effectively reestablish central authority and institutional capacity. The United Nations has employed such a scheme in the case of Cambodia.⁵

6.4 Forced and Voluntary Dissolution

The dissolution of the state may be voluntary or involuntary. Voluntary disintegration of the state following collapse, as observed in the Soviet Union, results in the formation of new states and the disappearance of the pre-collapse entity. Voluntary dissolutions also require strong institutional capacity, ethnic homogeneity and international recognition. Since there is generally mutual agreement over the fate of the pre-collapse state, the international community will be more responsive to calls for recognition.

Involuntary disintegration of the state will witness the secession and formation of new states, and an alteration in the status of the parent state. Yugoslavia, as a territorial entity, has changed since the breakaway of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia. Involuntary dissolution is more likely to result in violent conflict as one or more parties will strive to maintain the status quo.

⁵The strategy of United Nations Conservatorship is discussed by Helman and Ratner in an article on responses to failed states. Gerald B. Helman and Steven R. Ratner, "Saving Failed States," *Foreign Policy* 89 (1994) : 14-15.

6.5 Collapse as an Evolutionary Process

This chapter has outlined how and why territorial fragmentation can follow from state collapse. This fragmentation, and possible subsequent recognition within the international system, are mechanisms of state making. Theories of integration and state making can tell us much about the post-collapse trajectories of states. Hypotheses on state formation include: (1) consolidation in the face of external threats (war-making), (2) state-making as an extractive mechanism over a given population, (3) state-making as a means of capital accumulation, and (4) state-making as exclusionary power domination by the elite.⁶ I propose here a theory of state making and collapse, which can be stated succinctly as follows:

In the absence of an over-arching ideological, political or economic affiliation to the state, individuals will align themselves with alternative political ordering principles. State collapse, therefore, is an evolutionary process driven by the need for structural, ethno-national realignment.

In other words, in the absence of a dominant mode of affiliation to the state, the mis-alignment between 'nation' and 'state' will cause individuals to rationally choose alternative modes of political affiliation, predominantly ethnic groups. State collapse occurs in response to this need for structural re-adjustment between the state and nation. As ethnically-homogeneous entities form, the process of collapse and fragmentation will ultimately result in consolidation into loosely governed federations, as fledgling states recognize the increased marginal utility to be gained from re-integration. Contrary to the hypothesis of state making that suggests integration and consolidation as a response to external security threats, I suggest that newly formed states will, in the future, consolidate on the basis of the increased economic benefits, as well as security benefits offered by integration. This consolidation may take the form of a loose federation of sovereign states. State collapse and formation, therefore, is a cyclical, evolutionary process, involving four stages: state formation, collapse, re-alignment and federation.

⁶Charles Tilly, "War Making and State Making as Organized Crime," in, Peter B. Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol, eds., *Bringing the State Back In* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985) : 169-191.

Chapter 7

State Collapse in Somalia and Liberia

7.1 Overview

The effects of state collapse were nowhere more visible than in the cases of Somalia and Liberia. This chapter presents case studies of both Somalia and Liberia used to test the theory of state collapse proposed in this thesis, and has three core objectives. First, the case study method is presented in the context of its application to theory testing. Second, the cases of Somalia and Liberia are used to test the theory of state collapse, using a combination of process tracing and congruence testing.¹ The third objective of this chapter is to provide a methodological critique of this analysis, addressing possible case selection biases. These case studies are intended to provide an assessment of the theory advanced in Chapter 4.

This analysis illustrates that in the cases of both Somalia and Liberia, the states were primed for collapse, and breakdown followed changes in the balance of threat, coupled low levels of international strategic, political and economic interaction.

7.2 Case Study Method

The case study method is used here to serve several purposes, primary of which is to test the theory of state collapse proposed in Chapter 4. This analysis also attempts to identify antecedent conditions which prime states for collapse (Phase I). The third role of case studies as employed here is to explain important cases of collapse, in a

¹For a discussion of the case study method, see: Stephen Van Evera, *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), 49-88

geographical region which remains vulnerable to failure and collapse. The cases of Somalia and Liberia were chosen based on the following characteristics:

1. Collapse in both Somalia and Liberia has been well documented and the information is freely available.
2. Both states collapsed totally, witnessing true domestic anarchy. The dependent variable, state collapse, is therefore present in abundance in both cases.
3. The background conditions evident in the cases of Somalia and Liberia are similar to those present in other states, particularly African states.
4. Due to the rigid definition of collapse (see Chapter 3) the number of possible cases is small.

The following sections provide a brief overview of the events which preceded the collapse of Somalia and Liberia, prior to testing the validity of theoretical predictions outlined in Section 4.8. If the theoretical predictions are fulfilled in both cases, it will strongly support the theory of state collapse.

7.3 Somalia

From the latter stages of the nineteenth century until 1960, Somalia was under the rule of various colonial powers. In 1885, the British controlled the north-central region, the French controlled the northwest, the south was controlled by the Italians, the Ogaden was controlled by Ethiopia and a region in the southwest became part of Kenya. British Somaliland was invaded by the Italians during the early part of the second World War, but the colony was recaptured in 1941. At that time the British also extended their rule to include the Ogaden, which Britain returned to Ethiopia in 1948. Somalia gained independence in 1960 and faced economic and political problems due to the legacy of multiple imperial rulers. The first President, Abdirashiid Ali Shermaarke, attempted to consolidate the various Somali clans to form a Greater Somalia. However, the 1969 elections to the National Assembly highlighted the dissatisfaction within the military towards government corruption. President Shermaarke was assassinated in October of that year, and the army took control of Somalia, led by

Major General Mahammad Siad Barre. Primarily to improve its chances of securing aid from the Soviet Union, the new regime pronounced that it was pursuing scientific socialism.²

The Soviet Union continued to support Somalia militarily and financially through the late 1960's until 1977. When Soviet support began to fade, Siad Barre implemented development plans and drafted a constitution which would make the regime more palatable to the West. Under the Carter Doctrine, the United States and Somalia established a new relationship in 1977, as the latter was seen as a strategic staging platform for protecting U.S. interests in the Horn of Africa and the Middle East.³

Towards the end of the 1980's, however, detente between the Cold War superpowers diluted Somalia's strategic importance. Military assistance was cut-off in 1988, and economic aid shortly thereafter. Internal opposition to the regime had mounted following the Ogaden War, and Siad Barre directed his efforts to eliminate opposition within various clan groups. From 1988 to the fall of the regime in 1991, opposition groups entered into civil war with government forces, taking control of significant areas.

The Council for National Reconciliation and Salvation (CNRS) was formed by representatives of all clan-families in response to the killing of approximately 450 demonstrators in Mogadishu in July 1989. The primary role of this organization was to press for political change, calling for Siad Barre's resignation. The CNRS attempted to bring both government and opposition forces to the table in September 1990, in an attempt to chart a course for the future of Somalia. Neither party agreed to participate, and over the following months opposition groups concentrated on relations between the various factions, as the fall of the government appeared imminent. Civil conflict escalated and the government was defeated by a combination of opposition forces on January 27 1991, at which point the United Somali Congress (USC)

²For an historical perspective on Somalia, see: Helen Chapin Metz, *Somalia: A Country Study* (Washington, DC: Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, 1993). Other sources, specifically in the context of state collapse, include: Virginia Luling, "Come back Somalia? Questioning a Collapsed State," *Third World Quarterly* 18, no. 2, 1997 : 287-302; Hussein M. Adam, "Somalia: A Terrible Beauty Being Born?" in, Zartman, ed., *Collapsed States*, 69-89; United Nations, *The United Nations and Somalia 1992-1996* (New York: United Nations Department of Public Information, 1996).

³For an overview of U.S. interests in Somalia, see: Peter J. Schraeder, *United States Foreign Policy Toward Africa: Incrementalism, Crisis and Change*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Also: National Defense University, *Strategic Assessment 1997: Flashpoints and Force Structure*, (Washington, DC: NDU Press, 1997), 157-168.

announced the formation of a provisional government, with Ali Mahdi Mahammad as President.⁴

General Mahammad Faarah Aidid, an army commander, disagreed with the choice of president and formed a break-away faction of the USC. Other clan based groups felt ostracized and clashed with USC forces, now constituting the provisional government. In the north of the country the Somali National Movement proclaimed the independent Republic of Somaliland in May 1991.

In the Mogadishu area, civil conflict continued throughout 1991 between various political parties aligned with clans. The result was the disintegration of government and the abandonment of basic services in September 1991. During this civil war, the United Nations and the U.S. initially maintained a non-interventionist stance. Only in the face of the well publicized humanitarian disaster unfolding in Somalia did the United States intervene, in a humanitarian capacity, by launching a humanitarian airlift (*Operation Provide Relief*) in August 1992. The U.S. led two subsequent United Nations missions in Somalia: the United Task Force (UNITAF) which opened up major transport facilities within the country, and United Nations Operation in Somalia II (UNOSOM II) which continued operations following the departure of the main element of UNITAF. However, without a clear military mission, the U.S. operation in Somalia shifted in focus to combat local warlords, specifically General Farah Aideed. With the death of 18 U.S. soldiers in a gun-battle in Mogadishu in March 1994, domestic and congressional pressures forced a U.S. withdrawal. Without strong military backing, UNOSOM II was rendered impotent, and in December 1995 the mandate of UNOSOM II ended, not to be renewed.

Somalia can be said to have endured political transformation twice in rapid succession. The transition of authority from Siad Barre to the USC interim government marked the breakdown of established central control. However, the collapse of the provisional government resulted in a power vacuum which turned Somalia into an *anarchic state*.

⁴During the period leading up to the collapse of Siad Barre's regime, the Somali National National Movement (SNM) fought initially in the north, the Somali Salvation Democratic Front (SSDF) in the northeast, the United Somali Congress (USC) in the central region, and the Somali Patriotic Movement (SPM) in the south. In the final assault, the 'Abgaal' faction of the USC infiltrated Mogadishu and routed the government forces, without the assistance of the SNM or the SPM. See: Metz, *Somalia: A Country Study*, 168-170.

7.3.1 Causes of State Collapse

Was Somalia *primed* for collapse? If the theory of state collapse presented in this thesis is valid, then in the case of Somalia, the condition variables which prime the state for collapse should be observed empirically.

Socio-economic privation: During the 1980's the Somali economy was supported by aid packages from the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The Somali economy exhibited low GNP per capita and poor economic growth rates during this period, however, these statistics fail to capture the 'hidden' economy. This informal economy was supported by the export of labor and livestock, contributions from the rural subsistence sector, and high levels of government employment. While the Somali economy was far from buoyant, there was no evidence of widespread malnutrition and extreme poverty *prior* to the intensification of civil conflict in 1988. This conflict disrupted both internal and external trade, and as a result, the economy declined rapidly.⁵ Moreover, the civil conflict resulted in massive population displacements which in turn led to disruption in food production. According to a United Nations estimate, only 27 percent of the population had access to health services during the period 1988-1991, compared to the average of 81 percent for all developing countries.⁶

Acute demographic pressures: Population variables in Somalia are accentuated by the low percentage of arable land - only 2 percent, which is significant, since most Somalis are either farmers or nomadic livestock producers. The average annual population growth rate during the period 1990-1996 was estimated to be 2.1 percent, slightly above the average for countries in the same income bracket. The age distribution across the population is such that 45 percent of the population is under the age of fifteen.⁷ The large number of refugees in Somalia due to the Ogaden War accentuated demographic pressures, and put additional stress on core state institutions.

⁵In Somalia, in 1990, the per-capita Gross National Product (GNP) was US\$110. The economic growth rate between 1965 and 1988 was 0.5%. Source: World Bank, *World Development Indicators*, 1998.

⁶Source: United Nations, *The United Nations and Somalia 1992-1996*, 9-16.

⁷Source: World Bank, *World Development Indicators*, 1998. Also: Central Intelligence Agency, *World Factbook 1997*

Inequitable distribution of resources and power: Five major clan-families constitute the Somali population of roughly 9.8 million: The Hawiye, Darod, Isaq, Dir, and Digil-Mirifle clan-families. The regime of Siad Barre rested primarily on three clans from the Darod clan-family, and positions of power and wealth were filled based on a system of *clan-klatura*, that is, based on clan loyalty. Apart from consolidating state power within his own clan, Siad Barre engaged in a reign of terror against opposing clans, particularly the Hawiye and Isaq clans. Clearly, the concentration of power and wealth within the Darod clan excluded access by other clans.

The interim government which was established following the collapse of Siad Barre's regime in January 1991 was dominated by the USC, which proved inept as a political party. This clan-family was internally divided between two groups, and disagreements over the allocation of positions resulted in inter-clan conflict. Thus, both inter- and intra-clan conflict ensued from the mutual perceptions of exclusion from power.⁸

Militarism: The Somali armed forces grew from 3,000 following independence, to 37,000 in 1977, and burgeoning to 120,000 by 1982. The regime of Siad Barre was supported militarily by several Western countries after 1980, primarily the United States, Italy and West Germany. The availability of arms to opposing factions, both the remnants of the Siad Barre arsenal, and the influx of arms as opposition mounted, helped undermine any remaining state legitimacy. Also, as the conflict evolved, so too did powerful vested interests in maintaining the 'anarchic' environment, absent of law and order.

Low national affiliation: Somalia is one of the most 'ethnically' homogeneous countries in Africa, with ethnic Somalis constituting 85 percent of the population. However, Somali society is constructed along clan lineages, and therefore the primary affiliation of the individual is to a given clan.⁹ The need to consolidate the Somali 'nation', that is, to promote affiliation to a Greater Somalia, was acknowledged by the first post-colonial government. However, the authoritarian

⁸Helen Chapin Metz, ed., *Somalia: A Country Study*, 168-170.

⁹For a detailed description of clan affiliations, see: Luling, "Come back Somalia? Questioning a Collapsed State," 291-295.

rule of Siad Barre exploited and oppressed several clan groups, thereby stimulating defensive clan affiliation, and eroding the legitimacy of the state. As opposition groups rose against the military regime, they used clan-families as political rallying calls.

State corruption: The military coup of 1969 was partially a result of dissatisfaction with the overt corruption of the government, however, the regime of Siad Barre also became corrupt as foreign aid was siphoned off by the ruling elite during the 1980's. As a result, lower level government officials often resorted to some form of corruption to subsidize their income. This corruption, apart from impairing economic performance, had the effect of eroding the legitimacy of the state.¹⁰

Trans-boundary population flows: A massive influx of refugees followed the Ogaden War (1977-1978), and in 1990 there was estimated to be over 1.2 million refugees in several camps.¹¹ The refugee population, therefore, constituted approximately fourteen percent of the total population. Management of these refugees placed an additional strain on already inept state institutions, and aggravated socio-economic privation when civil war began in earnest in 1988.

Environmental stress: The predominant environmental factor which did not so much as cause, but aggravate, the collapse of Somalia, was the famine which engulfed the country in 1991-1992. This famine was due in part to crop disruption, which followed directly from conflict-induced population displacement, and the reduced institutional capacity to deal with this humanitarian disaster. The outbreak of famine occurred over approximately the same period as the collapse of the interim government. Therefore, while the famine itself was not a causal factor in collapse, the necessary conditions for famine were already in place.

Thus it would appear that Somalia was primed for collapse. In addition to these condition variables, changes in the domestic balance of threat, coupled with low levels of political, economic and strategic interaction with the international system, should

¹⁰Luling, "Come back Somalia? Questioning a Collapsed State," 291.

¹¹In 1990, the primary refugee camps and their occupancy were as follows: Gedo - 450,000; Hiiraan - 375,000; Woqooyi Galbeed - 400,000 and Shabeellaha - 70,000. Source: Helen Chapin Metz, *Somalia: A Country Study* (Washington, DC: Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, 1993) 112-113.

be observed in the period prior to collapse.

Domestic Balance-of-Threat

The theory of state collapse presented in this thesis predicts that one should observe abrupt changes in the domestic balance-of-threat prior to collapse. In Somalia, the military regime of Siad Barre faced increasing opposition in the wake of the Ogaden War of 1977-78. This opposition came in the form of political groups established along clan lines. The first opposition group was the Somali Salvation Democratic Front (SSDF), which established itself in Ethiopia following a failed coup attempt in 1978. Another group, the Somali National Movement (SNM), was founded in London in 1981, and derived support primarily from the Isaq clan-family. The SNM aided in forming the United Somali Congress (USC), an armed opposition group based on the Hawiye clan-family. In the central region, the Somali Patriotic Movement (SPM), an opposition group formed by army officers who had fought in the Ogaden War, was established in 1985.

Siad Barre moved to crush the opposition by employing terror-tactics and by adopting a 'divide-and-conquer' approach. The military regime targeted the Isaq, Hawiye, and Majeerteen clans. However, from 1988 to the fall of the regime in 1991, these groups engaged in intense conflict with the government, which resulted in the gradual erosion of state authority in the periphery. This coincided with the withdrawal of support for the regime by the United States. The formation of the Council for National Reconstruction and Salvation in 1989 signaled another threat to the regime. This group called for the resignation of Siad Barre and the establishment of an interim government which would guide the state towards a multi-party democracy. Siad Barre attempted to eliminate this threat by ordering the arrest of the key members of the organization. The relative increase in the domestic balance-of-power resulted in the de-legitimation of the state and the ultimate collapse of the regime in January 1991 in the face of a final offensive by USC forces in Mogadishu.

The interim government formed by the USC established a new threat environment. Opposing political groups, notably the SSDF, SPM and the SNM aligned themselves against the government as they feared exclusion from power (as they had been under Siad Barre's regime) and oppression by the new government, possibly due to the

history of clan-fighting stimulated by the ousted regime. Hence, to the opposition forces, the offensive power and aggressive intentions of the interim government appeared clear. Thus changes in the domestic balance of threat acted in the presence of the condition variables to push the state towards collapse.

The USC effectively filled the power vacuum following the termination of Siad Barre's rule. The multiple militarized factions which had toppled the government, however, created an environment without a strong centralized authority, thus precipitating state collapse.

International Interaction

In defining 'international interaction', I have concentrated on three components: strategic, economic and political interaction. Low levels of international interaction, according to the theory, will make state collapse more likely.

In terms of strategic relations with the international community, Somalia, since the late-1970's, interacted primarily with the United States and Italy. This strategic support came primarily in the form of military assistance. The United States agreed to supply arms to Somalia in 1977, however, this decision was reversed the following year as the U.S. learned that these weapons were being used in the Ogaden War. This was a temporary measure, however, and strategic relations between the two countries were formalized in August 1980. The primary strategic concern to the United States was to establish a staging post for possible operations in the Persian Gulf, a desire which evolved out of the revolt, and subsequent fall of the Shah, in Iran. During the 1980's the United States provided significant military assistance.¹² U.S. assistance came in the form of sales and gifts of military equipment, training and even finance for a 220-bed military hospital.

As it became clear that the Cold War strategic environment was changing rapidly at the end of the 1980's, calls for continued military support by the strategic ally in the Horn of Africa were met with increasing scepticism in Washington, especially since concerns were growing regarding the use of these weapons by the regime to ruthlessly suppress potential opposition. Therefore, in the absence of an over-arching strategic threat, domestic and bureaucratic concerns in the United States forced a

¹²United States military aid during the 1980's: 1983 - US\$21.3 million ; 1985 - US\$80 million ; 1987 - US\$ 37.1 million. Source: Metz, *Somalia: A Country Study*.

re-appraisal of the relationship.¹³ By mid-1988 military aid to Somalia was reduced to training schemes.

Italian support for Somalia extended over roughly the same period as that of the the U.S., commencing in 1978 and peaking during the mid-1980's. Over this period, Italy was the largest single source of military assistance to Somalia in the West. This assistance came in the form of export credits, military sales, military training and weapons maintenance. However, in July 1990, Italy withdrew it's advisers and instructors citing delays in the national reconciliation program within the country. Thus, within the space of one year, and in the face of rising domestic opposition, the Somali regime was deprived of it's military support, and was thus severely weakened. It was not so much the fact that military assistance was terminated, rather the abrupt nature of the act which rendered the regime incapable of adapting to the new realities of suppressing domestic opposition without decisive military force.¹⁴

With the end of the Cold War, any remaining U.S. strategic imperative in Somalia evaporated. Fresh from dramatic victory in the Gulf War, United States military forces spear-headed United Nations operations in Somalia (UNISOM II). However, when U.S. Marines suffered casualties, domestic pressure forced a withdrawal, thus illustrating that in the post-Cold War environment, domestic concerns took precedence over foreign intervention, at least in the absence of a credible threat to U.S. national security. Without the military might of the United States, United Nations operations in Somalia floundered.

Apart from the abrupt cessation of strategic interest in Somalia, economic assistance was also reduced sharply at the end of the 1980's. International trade was curtailed by the civil war, as it was based primarily on the banana crop and live animals. Somalia's external debt is estimated to be US\$ 2.6 billion, however, since the outbreak of civil war, it is unlikely that this would have compelled intervention by the international community. Export of goods and services from Somalia fell from US\$ 204 million in 1980 to US\$ 58 million in 1988. Imports of goods and services fell

¹³The Defense Department voluntarily put a hold on lethal military aid to Somalia in July 1988, in response to growing congressional criticism, emanating primarily from the House Subcommittee on Africa. The ensuing debate sparked intensive infighting between the Dept. of State, the Dept. of Defense. Source: Schraeder, *United States Foreign Policy Toward Africa*, 161.

¹⁴This sentiment is echoed by Adam: "...In Somalia, an abrupt stoppage of all aid followed a history of too much aid." Hussein M. Adam, "Somalia: A Terrible Beauty Being Born," 75.

from US\$ 540 million to US\$ 380 million over the same period.

Prior to the collapse of the regime in 1991, Somalia was a member of the United Nations, the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the League of Arab States and the World Bank. Without support from the United States, the political interaction with the United Nations was insufficient to guarantee intervention when the state began to collapse. Chantel de Jonge Oudraat has demonstrated that, historically, the United Nations is more likely to intervene in internal conflicts depending on two factors: (1) the level to which one or more of the five permanent (P-5) members of the Security Council is engaged in the state, and (2) the degree of containment of the conflict within the state. In other words, U.N. intervention is more likely in cases where there is P-5 interest and the conflict threatens regional or international security.¹⁵ In the case of Somalia, P-5 engagement has been shown to be low, and the conflict was not seen as an excessive threat to regional stability, even though Ethiopia was in the later stages of a civil war during the same period.

In summary, strategic interaction was rapidly withdrawn by the United States and Italy beginning in 1988, economic interaction declined steadily during the 1980's and with the onset of civil conflict, international trade was disrupted and economic assistance was eliminated. Political engagement with the permanent member states of the Security Council was low, and the civil conflict was contained, thus reducing the likelihood of U.N. intervention prior to collapse.

7.3.2 Somalia - Assessment

Economic privation due to civil strife and agrarian dependency; demographic pressures which exacerbated institutional incapacity and economic malperformance; an inequitable distribution of power and wealth across clan lines; excessive external military support for a corrupt regime and readily accessible weapons; strong clan-based affiliation; corruption in core state institutions; mismanagement of refugees from previous conflicts, and recurrent drought and famine: these eight factors acted to prime Somalia for collapse. In addition, abrupt cessation of military and economic support, coupled with (and fueling) domestic opposition, led to the collapse of the regime

¹⁵Chantel de Jonge Oudraat, "The United Nations and Internal Conflict," in Michael E. Brown, ed., *The International Dimensions of Internal Conflict* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996), 489-535.

in 1991. The resulting power vacuum and the perceptions of sub-national groups accentuated a security dilemma which spiraled into conflict.

During the 1980's the regime of Siad Barre had demonstrated the ability to ruthlessly suppress domestic opposition. In terms of economic malperformance, demographic pressures, state corruption and inequitable distribution of power, the state was primed for collapse well before 1991. The critical factor in the demise of the Somali state was the inability of the regime to counter changes in the domestic balance of threat due to the abrupt cessation of support from external states, and the low level of interaction with the international community, which maintained a non-interventionist stance.

7.4 Liberia

Liberia gained independence in 1847, and the "Americo-Liberians", freed American slaves who had been resettled in Liberia since the 1820's, gained political control despite their minority status, constituting only five percent of the population. The True Whig Party of the Americo-Liberians remained in power until 1980, engaging in ethnic oppression, political domination and economic exploitation. This situation was aggravated by economic malperformance during the presidency of William Tolbert, due primarily to a drop in commodity export prices.¹⁶ Public dissatisfaction with government political and economic policies culminated in the mishandling of a protest march in Monrovia by police, ending with rioting.¹⁷

A military coup on April 12 1980, led by Master Sergeant Samuel Doe, finally displacing the Americo-Liberian elite which had maintained a ruling monopoly since the inception of the state. Doe, and his regime dominated by the previously marginalized *Krahn* clan, survived the 1980's with generous support from the United States, despite his oppressive rule and several coup attempts. In an attempt to preserve a semblance of civilian rule, Doe 'staged' an election in 1985, which left the leader with 50.9 percent of the vote. Christmas 1989 saw the emergence of the National Patriotic Front

¹⁶Tolbert replaced W.V.S. Tubman a president in 1971.

¹⁷For an historical perspective on Liberia in the context of state collapse, see: Herbert Howe, "Lessons of Liberia: ECOMOG and Regional Peacekeeping," *International Security* 21, no. 3 (Winter 1996/1997) : 145-176 ; Martin Lowenkopf, "Liberia: Putting the State Back Together," in I. William Zartman, ed., *Collapsed States: The Disintegration and Restoration of Legitimate Authority* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1995) : 91-108.

of Liberia (NPFL), a small force under the control of Charles Taylor which entered the country from Cote d'Ivoire and began military operations against Doe's forces. By August 1990, Doe's territorial control had eroded significantly. The NPFL spun-off a group called the Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia (INPFL), led by Prince Yourmie Johnson, and the three main factions, the Armed Forces of Liberia (government forces - AFL), the NPFL and the INPFL engaged in savage civil conflict. In April 1990 five members of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) formed a committee to find a peaceful solution to the Liberian conflict. This resulted in the establishment of ECOMOG, the ECOWAS Ceasefire Monitoring Group, which was mandated with both peace-keeping and peace enforcement operations. From its inception ECOMOG encountered financial, administrative and logistical barriers. ECOMOG, using Sierra Leone as a staging post, entered Liberia on August 25th.

ECOMOG's entrance into the chaos of Liberia marked the beginning of a chain of events: (1) fighting between ECOMOG and NPFL, (2) the murder of Samuel Doe and his bodyguards by INPFL forces, and (3) AFL destruction of sections of Monrovia. As the conflict continued, several more factions sprung up, notably the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), a spin-off of the NPFL which fought in Sierra Leone, the United Liberation Movement of Liberians for Democracy (ULIMO), and later, the ULIMO-K and ULIMO-J.

In the civil conflict that has raged since 1990, the United States has intervened twice, in both cases purely in Noncombatant Evacuation Operations (NEO's). These operations were: *Operation Sharp Edge*, June 1990 to January 1991, and *Operation Assured Response*, April to July 1996.¹⁸ ECOMOG, through aggressive peace enforcement, has brokered several ceasefires: the Cotonou Accord of July 1993, the Abuja Accord of August 1995.

7.4.1 Causes of State Collapse

Socio-economic privation: Soon after the ascension to power by Samuel Doe it became clear that the new regime was incapable of transforming Liberia into a

¹⁸National Defense University, *Strategic Assessment 1997: Flashpoints and Force Structure*, (Washington, DC: NDU Press, 1997) pp. 163-167

viable political and economic entity. Liberia, endowed with rich natural resources (mostly diamonds, iron ore, rubber and timber), had the potential, but not the authoritative capacity to develop it's economy. Moreover, economic malperformance was due mostly to widespread corruption and the flight of Americo-Liberians. The United States and several regional allies, such as Nigeria, provided substantial economic assistance to Liberia during the Doe regime. Economic malaise was further aggravated by the asymmetry of wealth allocation across ethnic lines. Economic indicators are not available for the years 1990-1996, and their accuracy in the preceding years is questionable.

Acute demographic pressures: The average annual population growth rate in Liberia for the period 1990-1996 was estimated to be 2.4%, slightly below the regional average. The Liberian infrastructure was not over-stressed by refugees, in fact, when civil conflict erupted, many refugees fled to neighboring countries.

Inequitable distribution of resources and power: Doe's regime concentrated power and wealth in the hands of the Krahn ethnic group, excluding the following groups: the Mano and the Gio in the north and the Mandingo in the west. In addition, Doe's regime stimulated inter-ethnic rivalry as a means of ensuring a fragmented opposition. Doe's oppression of rival groups stemmed from an obsession with ridding the state of the Americo-Liberian elite, who had dominated the government since the inception of the state. Doe was ruthless in his suppression of non-Krahn, or those who opposed the government, using Special Anti-Terrorist Units (SATU's) composed of ethnic Krahn, to systematically eradicate opponents.¹⁹

Militarism: The rapid growth in popularity of Taylor's forces in the first months of 1990, and the subsequent arming of his followers indicates the ease of access to light weapons in Liberia and West Africa. Often combatants were young teenagers, some estimates suggesting that as many as thirty percent of Taylors' combatants were under the age of seventeen.²⁰ Taylor's core fighters were trained

¹⁹United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, *Managing Arms in Peace Processes*, (Geneva: United Nations Publications, 1996), 10-11.

²⁰Howe, "Lessons of Liberia," 149.

by Libya and supplied by Burkina Faso (using Libyan weapons).

Low national affiliation: Any aspirations for a Greater Liberia in the wake of Americo-Liberian dominance were dashed by the ascension to power of Samuel Doe. The ethnic oppression which was characteristic of Doe's rule, galvanized the society into their ethnic groups, since they were excluded from identifying with the 'state'. Also, do the the corruption and economic exploitation, the population sought alternative collectives, and turned to their ethnic origins.

State corruption: Widespread state corruption under the Doe regime resulted in economic malperformance, and alienated the non-Krahn population. In February 1987 the U.S. General Accounting Office released a report which highlighted the misuse of U.S. financial aid by the Liberian government. It was this overt corruption, and misappropriation of funds that led the United States to withdraw it's financial support in late 1988.²¹

Trans-boundary population flows: With the onset of civil war in December 1989, many refugees fled the fighting to neighboring countries. In fact, concerns regarding the effect of trans-boundary flows on regional stability was one of the motivating factors behind the intervention of ECOWAS.²²

Environmental stress: Liberia did not suffer environmental pressures to the same degree as Somalia, which was more susceptible to crop failure and drought.

The case of Liberia does not exhibit environmental stress, acute demographic pressures, or trans-boundary population flows prior to collapse. However, state corruption, inequitable distribution of power, militarism, socio-economic privation and low national affiliation were sufficient to prime the state for collapse.

Domestic Balance-of-Threat

Throughout the 1980's the regime of Samuel Doe brutally suppressed domestic opposition. From the outset, Doe had demonstrated this brutality with the gruesome

²¹See: Michael Clough, *U.S. Policy Toward Africa and the End of The Cold War* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1992), 94-95.

²²An estimated 750,000 refugees fled the civil war to neighboring countries. Source: Central Intelligence Agency, *CIA World Factbook 1997*, 272.

murder of President William Tolbert.²³ In 1985, following the 'rigged' elections, Brigadier-General Thomas Quiwonkpa staged an abortive coup d'état which resulted in his murder by Doe's forces, and a viscous reprisal against members of the same ethnic group, the Gios.²⁴

Doe was therefore capable of suppressing insurgencies during the mid 1980's. Possibly for that reason, Doe paid little attention to the NPFL when it entered Liberia in December 1989. At that stage, the group constituted scarcely more than 100 fighters. Taylor's NPFL gained support rapidly as it stood in opposition to the Krahn. Doe's balance-of-threat calculus changed radically on seeing the growing support for Taylor. The AFL dispatched a battalion to the region where Taylors forces were concentrated, and by victimizing the Gio and Mano ethnic groups, the troops actually generated more support for the NPFL.²⁵

By June 1990, AFL forces were practically confined to installations in Monrovia. Taylor controlled approximately 90 percent of the territory. At this point, it is clear that Liberia had turned into a *garrison* state, still legitimate in the international community, but incapable of exercising territorial control.²⁶ Taylor's offensive against government forces stalled in August 1990, with the intervention of ECOMOG to end the conflict. The multi-factional civil conflict that followed the ECOMOG intervention signaled the descent into domestic anarchy. The murder of Samuel Doe in September 1990 marked the end of any form of constitutional government, and turned the state into an *anarchic* state.²⁷

International Interaction

Much as in the case of Somalia, Liberia's strategic interaction with the international system was predominantly with the United States, as a strategic staging post. The United States maintained access to airport and communications facilities and U.S. support was predominantly financial. Nigeria also courted Liberia, motivated by a

²³Doe and his followers murdered President Tolbert and some prominent members of government just as they were about to leave for a meeting of the Organization of African Unity (OAU). In the following days, the new regime televised brutal executions of former government officials. UNIDIR, *Managing Arms in Peace Processes*, 8.

²⁴Ibid., 9.

²⁵Howe, "Lessons of Liberia," 149-150.

²⁶In this instance, Liberia was truly a *garrison* state - Doe was confined to the presidential mansion, both by opposition forces and the reluctance of his own supporters to let him leave without security guarantees!

²⁷Two types of collapsed state were described in Chapter 4: the *anarchic* state, where central authority is non-existent, and the *garrison* state, where the state is nominally functional but is unable to project authority into the periphery.

desire to counter French influence in West Africa, and to this end, to ally with, and support, anglophone states in the region.

Widespread state corruption with Doe's regime, and misappropriation of financial assistance, forced a withdrawal of U.S. assistance in late 1988. In the changing geo-strategic environment, Liberia was no longer seen as a strategic asset, and this was reflected in U.S. attitudes to requests for further assistance.²⁸

Throughout the early stages of the civil war, intervention by the United States and United Nations was notable by its absence. Fearful that regional security could be weakened by refugee flows and spillover of civil conflict, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) established a peace-keeping and peace-enforcement force, ECOMOG, which intervened militarily in August 1990. From the outset, however, ECOMOG suffered from administrative, logistical and command problems. Even though ECOMOG did stabilize the domestic environment somewhat, it also came under attack from competing factions and was incapable of fulfilling its mandate.²⁹ Non-intervention by the United Nations prior to collapse can be explained by the fact that: (1) none of the P-5 states were deeply engaged in Liberia, and (2) even though the conflict was not contained, the United Nations at the peak of the civil war, was preoccupied with events in the Middle East, namely the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq at the beginning of August 1990. Given the strategic importance of the Middle East, civil war in Liberia was left in the hands of ECOWAS.

7.4.2 Liberia - A Summary

Economic privation due to state corruption and ethnic marginalization; an inequitable distribution of power and wealth across ethnic lines; excessive external economic support for a corrupt regime and readily accessible weapons; strong clan-based affiliation; extensive corruption in core state institutions: these factors acted to prime Liberia for collapse. With the erosion of state legitimacy, the abrupt change in the balance-of-threat, due to the meteoric rise of the NPFL, coupled with the abrupt cessation of support by donor states, and an isolationist approach to events in the state by the United Nations and the dominant states in the international system, resulted in

²⁸Clough, *U.S. Policy Toward Africa and the End of The Cold War*, 95.

²⁹Howe, "Lessons of Liberia," 152.

state collapse. Regional interaction proved ineffective in preventing collapse.

7.5 Methodological Critique

In both Somalia and Liberia, collapse occurred when these states were primed for collapse and the government, due to low systemic interaction and, in particular, the abrupt cessation of support from external sources, was unable to counter changes in the domestic balance of threat. It has been demonstrated that both regimes were previously in a position to suppress domestic insurgencies, however, collapse eventually occurred due to the fatal combination of factors. Table 7.1 provides a summary of the causal factors at work in Somalia and Liberia.

	SOMALIA	LIBERIA
Antecedent Conditions		
Socio-economic privation	YES	YES
Acute demographic pressures	Ogaden refugees	NO
Inequitable distribution of resources / power	<i>Darood</i> -dominated	<i>Krahn</i> -dominated
Militarism	HIGH	HIGH
Low national affiliation	Clan-based	Ethnic groups
State Corruption	Barre's regime	Doe's regime
Trans-boundary population flows	YES	NO
Environmental stress	Famine	NO
Domestic Balance of Threat		
Power vacuum	YES following overthrow of Barre's regime	NO
Marginal domestic power differentials	Competing groups: USC/SSDF/SNM etc.	Competing groups: AFL/NPFL/INPFL
Institutionalized power transfer mechanisms	NO	NO
Systemic Interaction		
Strategic interaction	LOW (post-US)	LOW (post-US)
Political interaction	LOW P-5 interest	LOW P-5 interest
		Inept ECOMOG
Economic interaction	LOW	LOW

Table 7.1: Theoretical Assessment: Somalia and Liberia

This section addresses possible criticisms of both the theory and the methodology, focusing on: (1) case selection bias, (2) historical effects, (3) maturation effects, and (4) threshold effects. In addition, the eight causal factors which predispose states to collapse are re-assessed in an attempt to determine the relative importance of each i.e. a causal hierarchy.

Case Selection Bias

Both cases selected for this analysis share some common characteristics:

1. African states
2. Experienced authoritarian oppression
3. Client states of the United States during the Cold War
4. Each society had strong clan- or ethnic-based structure
5. State collapsed completely

These common traits may bias the analysis and reveal a competing explanation for collapse. First, the fact that both cases were African states does not bias the analysis as collapse has also occurred in other regions, Afghanistan, Yugoslavia and Haiti, for example. Also, the mere fact of being African states, as opposed to post-colonial states, does not impart any special characteristic that predisposes the state for collapse. Unless some unique aspects of the African state can be linked to collapse, this criticism is invalid. Second, the fact that both states experienced authoritarian oppression may sow the seeds for domestic discontent, yet by itself is not sufficient for collapse. On the contrary, the state must be strong to effectively suppress insurgencies. Third, the fact that Somalia and Liberia were client states of the U.S. during the Cold War does not compromise the analysis. State collapse also occurred in Afghanistan following the rapid withdrawal of Soviet support. This was also the case in Yugoslavia, following the breakup of the Soviet Union. State collapse can not therefore be linked with a specific strategic partner. Fourth, the fact that each society had internal structures based on ethnic or clan frameworks is not a cause of collapse in itself. Rather, inequitable distribution of resources and power across these cleavages pushed the state towards collapse. Finally, in the two cases examined here, the state collapsed completely. This fact should indicate that the causal variables were present in abundance, and that is precisely what is observed.

Historical Effects

Historical occurrences over the experimental measurement period can mask, or influence, causal relationships. Both Somalia and Liberia collapsed shortly after the

end of the Cold War. However, it is precisely this fact that resulted in a re-ordering of the geo-strategic landscape, with the subsequent withdrawal of support for both regimes. Therefore, the empirical fact of the end of the Cold War is reflected in the causal logic as a reduction in the level of strategic interaction with the international community.

Maturation Effects

Critics of the theory of state collapse presented here will suggest that collapse is a normal process in the development of the state, that it reflects a certain stage of development, or re-alignment within the state. This argument would be more credible if both states were at the same point in political development, however, Liberia was one of the first African states to gain independence, while Somalia only gained independence in 1960. Therefore, it can not be argued that collapse is purely a phenomenon of the post-colonial state, yet it may be an event to which states at a certain stage of development are more prone to collapse.

Threshold Effects

This thesis does not attempt to quantify threshold levels above which each of the eight condition variables prime the state for collapse. No degree of intensity is implied. However, in the case of Liberia, it was observed that 'demographic pressures' and 'environmental stress' did not contribute significantly to the collapse of the state. A *large-n* study would be more appropriate for determining the relative importance of the causal factors, however, the number of states which have, or have the potential to, collapse may not facilitate *large-n* analysis.

The fact that only five of the eight condition variables were active in the case of Liberia suggests that there exists a causal hierarchy, or priority ranking, of causal factors. Primary and secondary classifications can be applied to the condition variables. The dominant pre-disposing factors in state collapse are: (1) socio-economic privation, (2) inequitable distribution of resources and power, (3) low national affiliation, (4) state corruption, and (5) militarism. Secondary factors are: (i) acute demographic pressures, (ii) trans-boundary population flows, and (iii) environmental stress. This classification of causal factors increases the clarity and enhances the structure of the

theory. The secondary factors act to exacerbate the primary variables. Acute demographic pressures act to increase socio-economic privation. Trans-boundary population flows also exacerbate socio-economic conditions and alter the domestic balance of threat. Environmental stress accentuates poor socio-economic conditions. This restructuring of the causal logic is reflected in Figure 7-1.

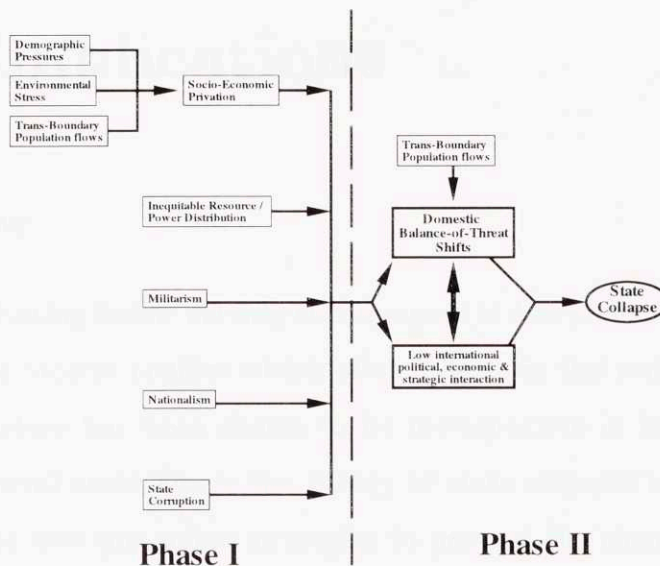


Figure 7-1: Modified causal pathways towards state collapse. Phase I now constitutes 'primary' and 'secondary' causal factors.

A final, yet important, criticism of the theory presented here, is that it does not account for situations where the level of international interaction is directed at *causing* state collapse, either by sponsoring insurgencies, or by applying sanctions to weaken the regime. In such cases, the goal may be to actually induce collapse. The, "primed states coupled with balance-of-threat changes and low international interaction causes collapse", theory does not account for this behavior. The theory must therefore be restricted to cases in which the external actors did not have an explicit interest in causing state collapse.

Chapter 8

Policy Implications

8.1 Overview

The primary motivating factor driving this research is the prevention of the humanitarian disaster and violent conflict which often follows in the wake of state collapse. Much of the literature has been shown to be retrospective in its focus. This section highlights several areas where the theory of state collapse outlined in Chapter 4 can be translated into pro-active strategies to prevent the chaos that follows from breakdown. Specifically, this chapter focuses on early warning systems and conflict prevention.

A conceptual framework is presented to ensure that responsive strategies are applied across all stages of state collapse (See Figure 8-1). The international community can exploit "windows of opportunity", i.e. the initial post-collapse period, in dealing with breakdown. While indicators and early warning systems are imperative to effective policy choices, they are impotent in the absence of political motivation to act. The role of non-state actors in state collapse, and specifically the United Nations and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's), is investigated. Finally, some mechanisms to break the coupling between the security dilemma and the intervention dilemma, and hence prevent post-collapse conflict, are suggested.

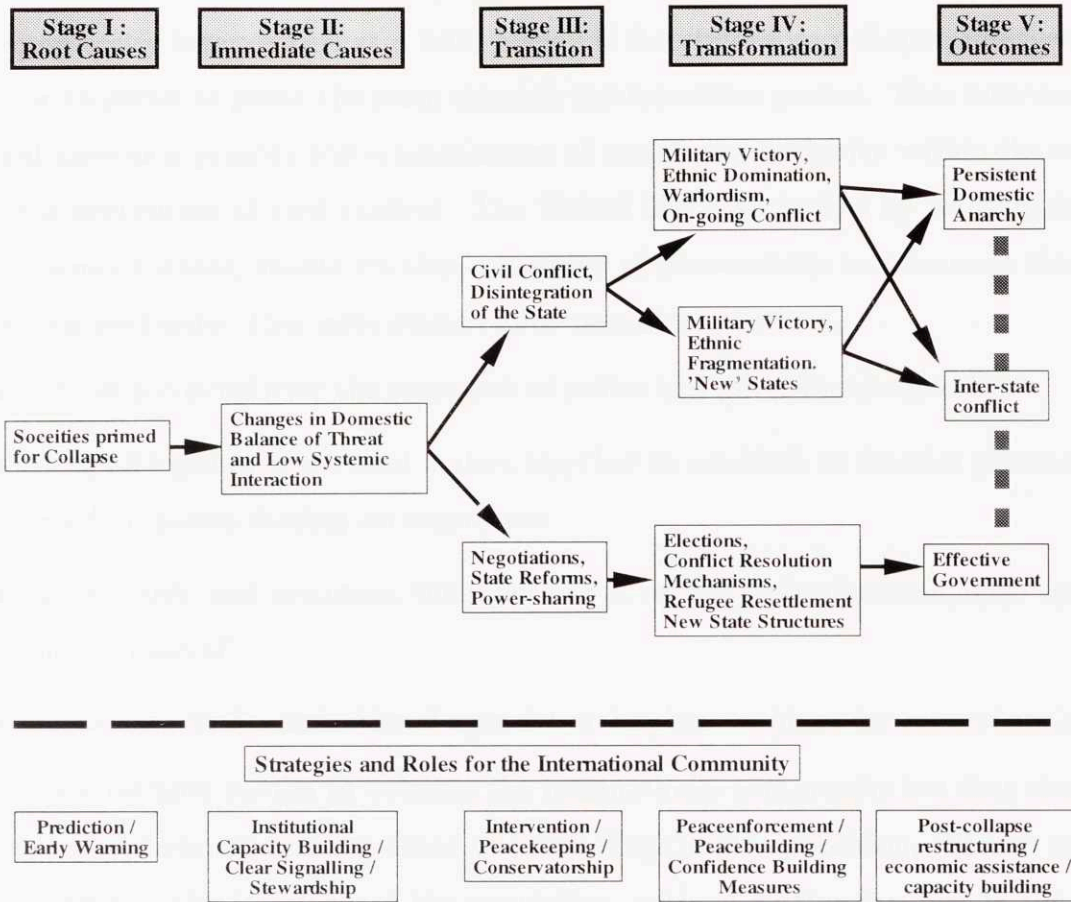


Figure 8-1: Conceptual Framework for Analyzing State Collapse

8.2 Framework for Analysis

Figure 8-1 provides a conceptual framework for structured response to state collapse.¹ Five temporal stages of state collapse are identified in this framework, from root causes to the final outcome. Strategies and roles for the international community have also been identified to complement each stage of collapse. Early warning systems can be employed to identify 'at risk' states. When troubled states have been identified, strategies for the international community should focus on institutional capacity building, clear signaling of intention, and economic and financial support for unstable, yet legitimate regimes. The role of signaling cannot be underestimated.

¹This framework is a modified version of that proposed by Baker and Ausink for analyzing ethnic conflict. See: Pauline H. Baker and John A. Ausink, "State Collapse and Ethnic Violence: Toward a Predictive Model," *Parameters* (Spring 1996) : 19-31.

Clear enunciation of intent on the part of the external actors may eliminate the need for more costly intervention at a later stage. If the state does collapse, intervention may be required to guide the state through the transition period. This intervention should have as a priority the establishment of an interim authority within the state, and the prevention of civil conflict. The United Nations, backed by military forces from member states, should employ a strategy of *Stewardship* to take over the role of central authority. This intervention force would:

- Establish control over the remnants of police and government agencies
- Bring all legitimate political parties together to establish an interim government based on power-sharing arrangements
- Re-establish, and maintain, the functions of core state institutions, both central and peripheral
- Coordinate with international agencies to implement plans for reconstruction

If state collapse results in conflict, the international community has four choices: (1) use overwhelming military force to crush illegitimate opposition, (2) use peace-enforcement tactics to safeguard the population, without getting involved in the conflict, (3) provide strong financial support to one side to end the conflict quickly and re-establish central authority, or (4) do nothing - i.e. wait for the conflict to end. In the immediate post-collapse stages, a priority must be the establishment of some form of central authority and the provision of security for the population. Over the longer term, the international community will focus on strengthening state institutions, providing economic assistance, and re-integration of any displaced population.

8.3 Windows of Opportunity

The period between the collapse of the state and the re-establishment of authority (not necessarily central authority) provides a 'window of opportunity', for sub-national groups to increase their relative position in the anarchic environment, but more-so for the international community to intervene without facing the objections of a sovereign government. Thus, this period can be used by external actors, primarily the United Nations, to establish an interim internal structure which will inhibit

opportunistic domestic power challenges. Mechanically, this would mean intervention to rebuild existing institutions and to guide the state towards a more stable existence. Furthermore, such an intervention would be enhanced by the existence of an institutional framework on the ground. Intervention on this scale would require the agreement, if not the support of, the majority of sub-national groups.

Response to collapsed states must be prompt, as several conditions will act to inhibit intervention at a later stage. First, as sub-national groups mature in the post-collapse environment they will evolve into extractive and protective institutions, and will therefore be more resistant to change when, and if, central authority is re-established. Second, with increased time, defunct institutions will be more difficult to re-energize. Infrastructure decays, employees of the previous government diffuse and institutional knowledge is lost. This inhibits the process of reconstruction. Third, prompt response to collapsed states is important since external actors, much as in the case of humanitarian relief operations, may develop 'donor fatigue': with increasing time the situation within the post-collapse territory may become the 'norm'.

8.4 Early Warning Systems

Two predictive models of state collapse were discussed earlier in this thesis (See Chapter 2). Indicators of state collapse proposed by Baker and Ausink were found to be problematic, in that they could be both causes and manifestations of collapse. The research conducted by Esty et al. developed a predictive model which also highlighted several key variables which correlated positively with state failure, as defined by the authors. However, the predictive capabilities of this model were limited due to the broad scope of cases included in the analysis.² Despite these criticisms, both works are valuable as they provide a starting point for developing more accurate models.

The theory of state collapse presented in this thesis identified eight condition variables which make state collapse more likely. These parameters, therefore, can be used as the basis for developing indicators of state collapse. The difficulty in using metrics to capture the extent of variables such as 'socio-economic privation' has already been

²Pauline H. Baker and John A. Ausink, "State Collapse and Ethnic Violence: Toward a Predictive Model," *Parameters* (Spring 1996) : 19-31. Daniel C. Esty et al., *Working Papers: State Failure Task Force Report* Central Intelligence Agency, 1995.

noted, and so a more qualitative assessment may be required based on country-specific knowledge. Predictive indicators will also require that the level of international interaction with a given state be quantified. This may be achieved by examining the level of support from specific strategic partners, the level of trade and foreign investment, the degree of participation in international regimes etc. Changes in the domestic balance of threat are difficult to assess, as a key component of balance-of-threat is the *offensive intention* of the adversary. The primary role for indicators of state collapse, therefore, may be to identify states prone to collapse, without attempting to predict outcomes.

A word of caution is required regarding the use of early warning systems. Such systems, while invaluable to policymakers in highlighting states at risk, are only as useful as the political will to act which must back them up. The United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA) was established in 1992 specifically to coordinate response, both within the U.N. system and by external NGO's, to complex humanitarian emergencies. Part of the DHA mandate was to establish an early warning system which would provide real time information to emergency response coordinators. While an effective early warning system was established, it did little to avert the complex humanitarian disaster that unfolded in Rwanda in 1994, primarily due to a lack of political motivation to intervene.³

8.5 Alternatives to the State

Traditional conceptions of statehood may be inappropriate in dealing with collapsed states, as there may be poor alignment between the 'state' and 'nation'. Interaction within the international system demands a central authority which extends control over the territory. In the two cases examined in this thesis, it was not the territorial nature of sovereignty, but the oppression of various groups within the state that prompted these groups to look elsewhere for protection and economic security. Ethnically heterogeneous states *do* work, as long as there is not exploitation of any group(s) due to ethnic affiliation.

³For an overview of 'lessons learned' in the context of early warning systems for complex humanitarian emergencies, see: United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs, *Humanitarian Report 1997* (New York: United Nations Publications, 1997)

The two core attributes of the state are sovereignty and territoriality, which become possessions of the state when recognized by the international community. One alternative in dealing with states that do not provide for the basic human rights of the population is to employ 'sticks' and 'carrots' in dealing with these states. The positive inducements may come in the form of access to economic support for states that value the human rights of their citizens. The negative inducements may center on restrictions on access to international regimes and financial assistance, in addition to negative security threats to opposing factions.

Alternative concepts of sovereignty and recognition are required, for example:

1. International recognition based on protection of human rights
2. Sovereignty and international recognition for sub-national entities, albeit as part of a federal 'state'
3. Negative political sanctions imposed on corrupt or oppressive regimes
4. A supra-sovereign, state-assistance role for the United Nations

8.6 Preventive Diplomacy

If low levels of strategic, economic and political interaction with the international community contributes to state collapse, then this is one area where external influences can have a definite impact. External donors should be selective in providing assistance to states. In many cases financial and military support was provided to states with poor human rights records. States should learn from the experience of Somalia and Liberia, where the abrupt cessation of support for corrupt regimes induced collapse. Post-collapse intervention, if it does take place, should have the primary objective of re-establishing central authority within the state in which all legitimate groups have access to political representation.

Signaling of intention on the part of external actors reduces misperception and ameliorates the intervention dilemma. Credible negative security guarantees can be used to constrain opportunistic and oppressive groups during and after collapse. Increased flexibility of international institutions, particularly the United Nations, with aid in responding promptly to the state collapse.

8.7 Non-State Actors

Non-state actors can play a pivotal role in state collapse. Since non-state actors are not sovereign entities, their involvement will be less of a threat to domestic groups in the post-collapse state who fear exploitation, and territorial appropriation by other states. Specifically, two types of actors are discussed here: (1) the United Nations, and (2) Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's).

United Nations

International recognition for statehood is accorded primarily through the United Nations, which constitutes the vast majority of global states in a single inter-governmental organization. The role of the United Nations in responding to state collapse should be to:

1. Establish reliable early warning systems for collapse
2. Engage in trans-national institutional capacity building in 'at-risk' states
3. Monitor external military support to corrupt and oppressive regimes
4. Establish *credible* international human rights tribunal with supra-sovereign jurisdiction
5. Establish a multi-national rapid-response force to intervene in collapsed states for the purpose of protecting the civilian population. This force would require independent funding, free from the control of dominant states in the system
6. Employ a system of *Stewardship* in collapsing states to manage the transition through this period
7. Recognize viable non-state groups as sovereign entities

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's)

The primary role of NGO's may be in responding to state collapse on the ground. Since these non-state entities are more likely to be seen as non-partisan to any internal conflict, they provide a means of engaging with opposing factions directly. As such, an NGO which would coordinate the activities of the multitude of aid agencies, in

the form of a transition authority, would assist in maintaining, and strengthening institutional structure within the state.

8.8 Dealing with Dilemmas...

The coupling between the intervention dilemma and the domestic security dilemma has been shown to be a cause of conflict in the post collapse state. The security dilemma is aggravated by the intervention dilemma and vice versa. One 'focal point' for conflict prevention strategies in state collapse, therefore, should concentrate on mechanisms by which this spiraling dynamic can be broken. The following are some guiding strategies aimed at preventing conflict in this manner.

- Credible protection of ethnic islands in post-collapse states using military force. This will reduce the intensity of the domestic security dilemma
- Universal arms embargoes on 'at-risk' states to block access by militant groups to weapons, which will also ameliorate the security dilemma
- Credible negative security threats to deter opportunistic threats from oppressive leaders
- Coordinated response within the United Nations to reduce the intensity of the intervention dilemma
- Access to negotiation and conflict mediation facilities and services by opposing groups, which will reduce misperception in the post-collapse state

Chapter 9

Conclusion

9.1 Summary

This thesis posed three questions at the outset: What are the causes of state collapse? What dynamic feedback processes operate along the causal pathways to collapse? What are the linkages between state collapse and violent conflict, and how can they be severed? This concluding chapter provides a summary of this thesis, answering these three questions explicitly, in addition to some suggestions for future research.

State collapse is a political event characterized by the rapid breakdown of established central authority, the loss of a monopoly on the use of coercive force by the state, and the erosion of territorial penetration of authority. The existing literature on the breakdown of socio-political entities includes the collapse of complex societies, ancient civilizations, empires and modern states. A selective review of the literature on state collapse highlights four deficiencies: (1) ambiguities in the definition and use of the term 'collapse', (2) bias towards internal causes, (3) retrospective focus of literature, and (4) absence of rigid theoretical analysis of collapse. The causes of collapse identified in the literature can be grouped into four main themes: (a) Domestic socio-economic, (b) Domestic socio-political, (c) Geo-political, and (d) Multiplier effects.

For the purposes of studying collapse, the state can be viewed through four lenses: the state as dominant actor in International Relations, the 'normative' state, the 'nation' versus the state, and the state as political institution. When the state collapses, it ceases to be the unitary actor for a recognized territory, fails to perform the duties of the state, stimulates nationalism and results in the breakdown of the core polit-

ical institutions. State failure is a process of decay which may ultimately result in collapse.

States are primed for collapse by eight inter-dependent factors: (1) socio-economic privation, (2) acute demographic pressures, (3) inequitable distribution of resources and power, (4) militarism, (5) low national affiliation, (6) state corruption, (7) trans-boundary population flows, and (8) environmental stress. Given this propensity for collapse, alterations in the domestic balance of threat, coupled with low levels of political, economic and strategic interaction with the international system, make state collapse more likely. This is the primary working hypothesis on the causes of state collapse advanced in this thesis.

Violent conflict results from state collapse due to two mechanisms: the security dilemma and the intervention dilemma. Both of these causal pathways are tightly coupled: the security dilemma stimulates the intervention dilemma and vice versa. Post-collapse states intensify competing nationalist ideologies, then making conflict more likely. State disintegration may follow from collapse, and three variables increase the likelihood of fragmentation: (1) Ethnic homogeneity, (2) Previous institutional capacity, and (3) International recognition. Collapse may lead to voluntary or involuntary fragmentation.

In the context of fragmentation, an hypothesis of state-making and collapse has been advanced, but not evaluated. The core proposition states that in the absence of a dominant mode of affiliation to the state, the mis-alignment between 'nation' and 'state' will cause individuals to rationally choose alternative political ordering principles. State collapse occurs in response to this need for structural readjustment between nation and state. As newly formed states realize the benefits (primarily economic) of consolidation, these sovereigns will integrate to form federal, possibly supra-sovereign entities.¹

Both Somalia and Liberia were primed for collapse, and changes in the domestic balance of threat coupled with abrupt cessation of external support and low systemic interaction resulted in breakdown. Both cases support the theory of state collapse

¹ An example of a 'supra-sovereign' entity is the European Union. The member states are still considered sovereign entities, however, increasingly, new legislation, rules and norms are being adopted at a national level, yet have originated at the institutional (EU) level, *transcending* national sovereignty.

presented in this thesis: “*primed states, which experience abrupt changes in domestic balance of threat, coupled with low systemic interaction, are more likely to collapse*”. One obvious criticism of the theory of state collapse presented here is that it does not account for cases where external interaction was intended to cause collapse.

A framework for analyzing state collapse, at all stages, provides a structure for ensuring that effective strategies will span the spectrum from early warning systems to state reconstruction. Prevention should not be directed at collapse, but at the negative consequences of collapse. The fact that the oppressive, corrupt regimes in Somalia and Liberia came to an end was a positive aspect of the collapse. This was outweighed by the negative aspects, namely civil conflict. Conflict prevention strategies should focus at breaking the spiral connection between the intervention dilemma and the security dilemma.

9.2 Suggestions for Future Research

While this thesis set out to investigate three core aspects of state collapse, namely causes, dynamics and linkages to conflict, the analysis highlighted several areas for further research.

Theories of State Collapse: A parsimonious theory of state collapse linking internal and external causal factors was presented in this thesis, and the cases of Somalia and Liberia support the core hypothesis. However, the theory does not address cases of collapse where international intervention was intended to *induce* collapse. In addition, the eight condition variables could be consolidated to provide a more concise hypothesis. The scope of this theory is limited to the tight definition of collapse used in this thesis. A more broad-based analysis would adapt this hypothesis to investigate the causes of state failure, short of collapse.

Evolutionary Hypothesis on State-making and Collapse: This thesis has advanced, but not evaluated, an hypothesis of state-making and collapse, based on a cyclical, structural process of re-alignment between nation and state.² This

²See Section 6.5

represents an elegant, parsimonious theory on state formation and breakdown and, as such, warrants further investigation as a dedicated research topic.

Policy Implications: Several policy implications of the research have been identified in Chapter 8, however, they are intended purely as a starting point for more in-depth policy-specific research.

Alternative Conceptual Frameworks: Several attempts have been made throughout this thesis to 're-orient' the intellectual focus when dealing with state collapse, whether it be in alternative conceptions of the 'state', new hypotheses on state-formation and state collapse, innovative policy instruments etc. Clearly, more pragmatic, innovative approaches are required to dealing with such complex events in international relations.

Case Studies: Two preliminary case studies, Somalia and Liberia, support the theory of state collapse advanced in this thesis. In order to better identify the relative importance of the antecedent conditions which prime state for collapse, the number of cases, and the depth of analysis should be augmented. Due to the limited number of collapsed state, this analysis may be expanded to failed states, looking at different stages in failure.

"Sir, there is a lot of ruin in a state"

Adam Smith

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