How does foreign aid increase or prolong conflict in fragile states?

By

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AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I, the undersigned hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. To the best of my knowledge this thesis contains no material previously published by any other person except where proper acknowledgement has been made. This thesis contains no material which has been accepted as part of the requirements of any other academic degree or non-degree program, in English or in any other language. This is a true copy of the thesis, including final revisions.

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ABSTRACT

Foreign aid can increase the likelihood of conflict or prolong it. "All aid...creates incentives and disincentives, for peace or for war, regardless of whether these effects are deliberate, recognised or not, before, during or after war" (Uvin, 1999). This thesis aims to investigate how aid may lead to increased or prolonged conflict in fragile states. A case study of Afghanistan and Iraq during five or more years of consecutive protracted conflict between 2007-2014, will be used to investigate the relationship between aid and certain factors.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

"We have witnessed the results of development approaches that are not designed to meet the challenges of fragile states in a timely and flexible manner. We know that in many of these countries, unrealistic expectations about capacities and ownership frequently cause delays in development assistance... This has a negative impact on the prospects of a successful transition... If we know all this, why has so little changed?...The question is how to engage in ways that are context-specific and do not come at an unacceptable cost."

- OECD, Rethinking Policy, Changing Practice

Fragile conflict states are the least likely to meet the Millennium Development Goals, despite approximately 86% of all UN funds being directed to them in recent years (UN OCHA, 2015). With the World Humanitarian Summit held in Istanbul in May 2016, and the Sustainable Development Goals finalised September 2015, the agenda on how to structure aid and development policy for conflict states is a current concern (ODI, 2015; CGD, 2015).

Policy-makers increasingly realise that investment in fragile conflict states may mean minimal returns, no clear benefits, yet financial and moral obligations that extend for more than a decade, notwithstanding deaths of military and civilians. Furthermore, the moral implications of giving aid is doubtful, with no certainty that any group is completely innocent of committing human rights abuses, practicing corruption, being financed by criminal activity, or involved in other illegal or immoral actions. Donors continue to only recognise the sovereignty of states, understanding the political minefield of funding sub-national groups where civil armed conflict is the catalyst for violence and instability.

This has implications for aid and development policies as diagnosis of the problem must be accurate initially for aid effectiveness to be maximised. However, as conflict situations shift between simple, complicated and complex scenarios, donors and implementers have to be willing to change their amounts, timing, projects, locations and modalities as the need arises. Risks can be substantially minimised if stakeholders agree on a) the nature of the problem b) the means to achieve objectives c) who is receiving aid d) conditions on receiving and using aid. Understanding that the degree of divergence is a key indicator of whether conflicts are reconcilable and may extend or progress to violence and war, and without working towards a broader political settlement agenda means protracted polarisation leads to different definitions and expectations of aid, different degrees of ownership and thus variable outcomes.

Research question

How does foreign aid increase or prolong conflict in fragile states experiencing protracted conflicts?

The question falls within the broad theme of aid effectiveness in fragile conflict states. OECD surveys from the Paris Declaration and Accra Agenda for action demonstrate that fragile states are the least effective in using aid. Apart from their institutional capacity limitations they are also often subject to greater unpredictability than other developing countries (OECD).

While aid may cause some positive results, the corresponding trade-off may cause high levels of inequity or distortion of existing norms or functions; produce only a short-term positive effect that is unsustainable; or the implementation process undermines its initial objective and instead results in considerable discontent between stakeholders (Slim, 1997). Conflict may also result when the nature of the problem is itself debatable. Uvin (1999) nominates four main categories where development programmes face entrenched polarisation: "short-term vs. long-term; internal vs. external; principle vs. pragmatism; and new goals vs. old tools". Internal versus external best describes my intended area to research, where donors and recipients struggle to find common ground and are thus polarised.

In particular, I challenge two core assumptions of external interventions to transform protracted conflict states. In short, citizens of conflict states have sources of governance legitimacy in their tribes, religious leaders or clerics, and other non-state actors which transgress national borders. These may be for historical, religious, or politically constructed reasons, but nonetheless hold more credence than the nation-state and a centralised government in the sense that developed nations perceive it.

As such, foreign aid in interventions used for state-building, conflict prevention, security purposes, etc, needs to be repurposed. Aid policies need to reconceptualise their objectives and assess viability based on these different assumptions. Until this happens, foreign aid will continue to have minimal, if any, effect on conflict states and may even prolong and increase conflict in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Hypothesis 1: Struggles for legitimacy between the state and religious non-state actors (NSAs) and/or subnational groups (SNGs) neutralises aid efforts, leading to prolonged conflict.

Hypothesis 2: Islamic thought and governance systems are interdependent. Western donors promote secular state-building, and thus aid can prolong conflict due to contradictory expectations.

CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS

This section will clarify how I define key terms in the report.

A useful model of *conflict* is Wallensteen's (2015) conflict spectrum:

Figure 1: Conflict escalation and de-escalation
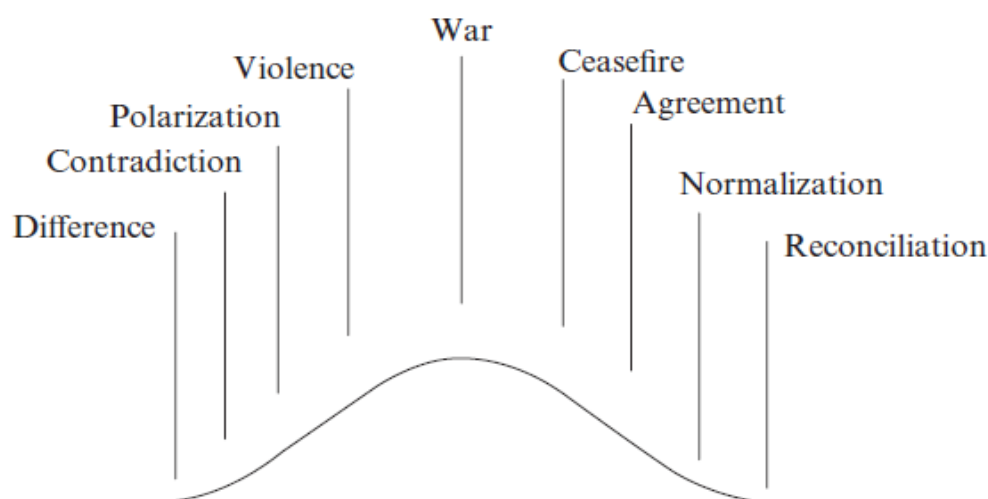
While it denotes a linear progression from one stage to the next, Wallensteen explains that this is a simplified visual as not only do conflicts fluctuate between the stages, multiple conflicts may be simultaneously occurring at different phases and locations, which influence each other's scope, scale and direction.

Ramsbotham and Woodhouse (1999) take this model a step further by allocating tentative corresponding conflict resolution processes to each phase in their hourglass model:

Figure 2: Hourglass figure of conflict phases and corresponding peace phases

Conflict transformation	Difference	Cultural peacebuilding
Conflict settlement	Contradiction	Structural peacebuilding
	Polarization	Peacemaking
Conflict containment	Violence	Peacekeeping
	WAR	War limitation
Conflict settlement	Ceasefire	Peacekeeping
	Agreement	Peacemaking
Conflict transformation	Normalization	Structural peacebuilding
	Reconciliation	Cultural peacebuilding

Supplementing these models, are some practical definitions:

Table 1: Key concepts

Conflict (here synonymous with divergent goals and polarisation):	The result of parties disagreeing and acting on the basis of perceived incompatibilities. This may be construed as both a negative and positive situation. For instance, non-violent conflict can lead to substantive change that is beneficial (Saferworld, 2012)
Conflict (violent):	Resorting to psychological or physical force to resolve a disagreement.
Conflict Sensitivity (CS)	The ability of an organisation to: 1) understand the context it operates in 2) understand the interaction between its intervention and that context and 3) act upon this understanding in order to minimise negative impacts and maximise positive impacts on conflict

My definitions below will be used to identify the cases to use and operationalise entrenched polarisation:

Protracted conflict:	More than five years of conflict and OECD aid provision of more than USD100 million per year on average. No permanent peace settlement. Triangulated from the State Fragility Index, Global Peace Index, and OECD rankings. Indeterminable stagnation (i.e. no significant progress towards MDGs or other development indicators).
Fragile conflict states:	States that experience civil war and extreme violence for sustained periods of time either consecutively or recurrently. They are political rather than geographical situations of fragility; differing from fragile states that require aid due to recurring natural disasters. Characterised by presence of sub-national or international politically legitimate groups that possess one or more of the following – coherent ideology, strong support base, financial resources, pseudo-government, territory – and, exist and function to challenge the nominal government's authority and thus ability to govern.

It is thus necessary to focus on countries where negative conflict is persistent. While war is often defined as number of battle deaths per year, and violence as number of coups or rebellions, bomb attacks or personally violent actions against the government, civilians or aid workers including death threats, kidnappings, hijackings, and sexual assault, etc (Uppsala Conflict Data Project, 2016), polarisation stages are yet to be classified in any systematic manner and more difficult to assess as they do not manifest tangible events to identify them.

Hence this thesis will investigate cases of countries in protracted conflicts, assuming that entrenched polarisation is a precursor to violence and war, is an important and underestimated reason as to why aid may intermittently increase or prolong conflict. These states may also be in the violence, war or ceasefire stages as all these are considered to include polarisation. This also accommodates the idea that different conflicts can be concurrently occurring in different parts of the country, and conflicts can transition between these stages rapidly. Not all conflict is necessarily bad, yet negative conflict can persist and obstruct any progress between parties when fundamental terms, principles and objectives cannot be resolved.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section will summarise the current literature in aid causing conflict, and how the proposed research can contribute to the existing discourse.

This paper does not deal with other sources of non-Western aid that are significant. Foreign aid is not only given by formal processes between states and multilateral mechanisms, and not just from European, Western and Japanese donors. Increasingly the BRICs and Middle Eastern countries such as Saudi Arabia are having an increasingly influence that sometimes counteracts OECD donors. However there is limited documentation on the disaggregated amounts and what they are allocated for, although there is some data on which countries and regions these new aid donors prioritise.

Furthermore, remittances have been identified as an increasingly important mechanism to transfer money to developing countries. Although the transfers are much smaller and go to individuals and households, the overall effect is significant. As this is a burgeoning area of research, the paper has not dealt with this source of funding to conflict areas.

While these two trends are already having an impact on how governments and families behave, i.e. at the micro and macroeconomic levels, there is still not enough consistent and reliable data to ascertain whether they are having an impact in fragile conflict states.

Does aid increase, prolong or catalyse conflict in fragile states?

The answer is yes – and no; both large-N and smaller comparative or singular case studies, have demonstrated that aid can indeed increase or prolong conflict but just as many conclude there is no positive or statistically significant relationship, and others contend there is significant negative relationship. There were no conclusive studies stating that aid had a direct and immediate relation to starting armed conflict, however.

Types of aid

Narang (2015) argues that humanitarian aid can inadvertently prolong conflict in four main ways – by providing material resources that indirectly assist rebels to continue fighting i.e. by misappropriation (corruption, outright theft) of food, shelter, and donor funds; by providing logistical support in the form of shelters and camps for bases; sustain domestic costs of basic services so money is diverted and justified for use to fund wars; and as aid organisations create or distort local micro-economies.

Qiao and Nunn (2011) argue that food aid tends to be highly politicised as it targets specific people (usually called beneficiaries) that have been interviewed and deemed eligible to receive food assistance. The process is prone to corruption and food aid can be misappropriated, and encourage rent-seeking behaviour. They further posit that increased food aid is positively related to wheat production in the U.S. However, other critics have used the same data with different assumptions to show there is no significant relationship. More pragmatically, Blouin and Pallage (2008) assume that food aid will be stolen, and this trade-off is necessary if it is to be delivered to prevent starvation. They design a basic model to demonstrate how an optimum rational choice arrangement can be determined to minimise harmful effects. Nonetheless, their research emphasises the necessity of recognising the reality rather than idealising aid; trade-offs are the norm and the best outcome is risk management for short, mid- and long-term. Crost (2014) maintains that aid increases short-term conflict as it induces rent-seeking behaviour by insurgents when first provided.

On the other hand, democracy promotion aid which is usually given to non-state actors or even local governments as well as national governments, has been posited as influencing increased democratisation and reduces uncertainty (Savun and Tirone, 2011). De Rees and Nillesen (2008) also found that there was a negative effect of foreign aid increasing civil conflict duration, and that there was no statistically significant relationship between foreign aid catalysing civil conflicts. Both studies controlled for endogeneity and other statistical errors. Steinwand (2014) concluded that aid for stability purposes can reduce risk minimally while Rajan and Subramanian (2005) re-tested the Collier and Burnside hypothesis but found that there was no conclusive evidence that certain types of aid work better than others. This is despite other critics arguing that humanitarian aid is more effective than development aid, or on-budget aid more prone to rent-seeking and fungibility (itself debatable whether it is a hindrance or an enabling factor), than off-budget aid.

Where aid is targeted

Aid should be neutral and independent, yet politicisation of aid determines where funds are disbursed and how. Rather than being those with the highest poverty rates, greatest human rights atrocities, etc, research illustrates that aid is usually provided to countries that have a specific democratic agenda and are open economies and/or promote free trade (Alesina and Dollar, 2000), and are in the donor state's national strategic security interests (Kang and Meernik, 2004). Within countries, secure access to sites as well as political factors determine where aid is delivered.

At the sub-national level, allocating where aid should be given is likewise a highly political process and can lead to conflict but as most conflicts are localised, analysis at this level is necessary (Strandow, et al, 2010; Bailey, 2011). Bailey (2011) states that provinces such as Bandundu, Bas Congo, Kasai Occidental and Kasai Orientale in DRC receive virtually no humanitarian assistance while North Kivu, South Kivu and Ituri are key recipients showing that "neither stability nor the absence of humanitarian assistance incentivises development and economic recovery assistance and reveals how flawed 'continuum' models are". Crost et al (2014) documents increased rent-seeking behaviour in the preparation stage, at local village level in the KALAHI-CIDSS programme in the Philippines. Meanwhile, Berman et al (2013) maintain that in the case of Iraq, small grants under USD50,000 with a high troop presence and technical support, allowed aid to be effective as opposed to large-scale projects and funding.

Despite Collier and Dollar's (2002) seminal study whose recommendations were adopted into World Bank policy, several economists admit that aid does not require a 'good' policy environment to be effective (Rajan and Subramanian, 2005). For instance, Easterly, Levine, and Roodman (2003) found that correlation between aid and policy was insignificant in the expanded sample including new data, indicating no support for the conclusion that "aid works in a good policy environment".

Aid modalities and timing of aid

Svensson (2000) notes that the uncertain disbursement of aid, regardless of commitment by donors in agreements, increases the likelihood of rent-seeking behaviour. If parties perceive that aid may not be forthcoming over the committed period, or may be reduced, there is increased competition to access rents. Commitment to aid that is predictable both in terms of timeframe and amount, could be a more effective policy. Midtgaard et al (2014) also find that aid shocks contribute to uncertainty of funding such as the global financial crisis. This could potentially increase fungibility. Fungibility of aid can be high if used to fund military operations which are traditionally costly (Strandow, et al, 2010).

Providing aid via different mechanisms is often discussed as a primary way of reducing corruption and thus improving effectiveness. Off-budget aid is favoured, and direct cash transfers to beneficiaries or implementing agencies rather than through government, or aid-on-delivery, are current trends. There has been very little research conducted on the impact of loans versus grants to fragile conflict states, yet there is a growing debate that loans are not only unethical but less cost-effective than grants.

Amount of aid

Much of the literature focusses on determining an economic threshold or optimal amount of aid to give, usually calculated as a percentage of aid to be provided as a ratio of GDP per capita (Collier and Dollar, 2002; Clemens and Radelet, 2003; Feeny and McGillivray, 2010). Determining the marginal rate of return, and the saturation point (where economic growth or GDP per capita equals amount of aid as a percentage of GDP per capita) at its maximum amount is the main priority in order to give a finite, definitive figure for donors who require certainty for forecasting and planning purposes.

These macroeconomic concerns regarding the impact of large amounts of aid inflows are valid: they can distort the balance of imports and exports, the exchange rate, and be a substitute for other sources of revenue such as taxes and FDI. When the aid is provided in loans rather than grants, and other sources of funding for repayments are not factored in sufficiently, this can cause unsustainable and dangerous levels of deficit. Such infractions have a multiplier effect in transition states.

Yet such studies minimise the political aspects of implementing aid. A suggested level of aid for fragile conflict states is between 15-45% of total GDP (Clemens, 2003). However, determining the amount of aid to give is more difficult than predicted. Clemens (2003) ambiguously claims it is a matter of judgment, while Collier and Dollar (2002) admit that calculating the marginal rates of return (MRR) and net profit value (NPV) of aid to fragile states is a difficult task, notwithstanding data quality issues. Conducting regressions to determine a percentage of aid to be provided can only indicate broadly to policy makers.

In the absence of any other relatively reliable or comprehensive data, most of these studies rely on OECD or World Bank data. The CPIA, which Collier and Dollar and Feeny and McGillivray use, is fraught with bias issues (Feeny, 2009). And that they depend on panel data econometrics (ibid). Despite many other economists acknowledging the deficiencies of large-N and panel growth regressions in this context (Rodrik, 2005), such studies continue to be done, often repeating key studies with different assumptions, omitting or adding different variables, or increasing the number of cases but providing hugely different results.

The existing literature is thus inconclusive when answering how aid prolongs conflict, however it can be ascertained that it can under certain circumstances. These contradictory findings demonstrate that several factors contribute to aid increasing or prolonging conflict. Whether it is also providing substantial benefits and these override the negative externalities is another and much bigger, question. This thesis aims to build on how aid may increase or prolong conflict by looking at how antagonistic principles, norms and values, concepts and thus

expectations, contribute to consolidating polarisation, and thus potential violence and negative conflict.

Challenging dominant assumptions

In this section I critique dominant concepts and standpoints in the existing literature, and implications for my research and methodology.

The focus on the national level and state governments as primary agents in fragile conflict states is tenuous.

The national government's legitimacy is contested and other groups may hold more, or at least equal, political power. "Legitimacy refers to the extent to which the governing regime enjoys public loyalty and support for government legislation and policies along with international recognition of that support" (Carment, 2008). The assumption that working through the government as the key agent of change in development, is flawed and could lead to prolonging of conflict. While governments must be involved in peace settlements, whether they should be the primary stakeholder or the only one, is questionable. As conflicts are now overwhelmingly intra-state (civil), the emphasis on the national level seems somewhat redundant. Given the international community only recognises sovereign states, policies are predominantly aimed toward how national governments engage in the development process, rather than other sub-national or international actors that influence the conflict, often counteracting the government's goals.

Fragile states are sometimes incongruously labelled.

Implicit in definitions of fragility is weak governance. Rather, I assume that governance systems are stronger and more resilient in 'fragile' states than Western donors would like to admit. There are many strong, but simultaneously functioning, governance systems existing in fragile states, and governments recognised internationally may not be considered legitimate by the majority of the population, or at least not as the only legitimate authority. Fragility should rather be viewed as internally highly polarised. Furthermore conflict within states is variable, for instance, while Sudan and South Sudan are considered conflict states, does not mean the entire country has stopped functioning or is fighting (Leonardi, et al, 2010). The same can be said of Afghanistan where there are areas which are relatively peaceful and stable (Barfield, 2010).

The focus on economic growth as the key parameter to measure aid effectiveness is erroneous for many fragile conflict states.

These economic models assumption that aid should be calculated as a function of economic growth, specifically GDP (or income) per capita, is problematic. While some acknowledge aid as a function of its impact on poverty reduction is more relevant, studies predominantly focus on economic growth as a proxy for poverty reduction, and sometimes even for peace, stability, and strength of democracy. This precludes the idea that economic growth may lead to greater inequity reflecting Gurr's concept of relative deprivation (Gurr, 1970 & 1993). While it may assist those who have savings, collateral or political connections (and do so exponentially), those who are living hand-to-mouth, may not benefit or in fact, may be further marginalised from participating in the formal economy and hence economic growth can have a destabilising effect in fragile states (Berman, 2011).

Trying to typologise such a diverse group of countries, that are also widely heterogenous at the sub-national level, seems unsubstantiated by doing panel-level analyses. One nation's path to success does not mean other countries should follow; these groups are not necessarily fragile in the same way.

Reinterpreting these assumptions shows the importance of the sub-national level in understanding protracted conflict, contests the focus on technical aspects of aid and conflict, and how fragility in conflict states can be seen as persistent struggle between powerful groups rather than vulnerability. These shortcomings present a gap that the proposed research aims to fill.

CHAPTER II: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY

CONCEPTUALISING CONFLICT STATES AS COMPLEX SYSTEMS

Complexity theory is useful to describe and analyse fragile conflict states which demonstrate chronic instability due to permutations of variables that lead to unpredictability and thus inability to devise risk management strategies quickly or adequately enough. When donors continue to look at foreign aid producing predictable pathways in a linear, teleological way, and as a simple situation with x leading to y, it discounts the many variables that could have led to a certain result, and in various ways.

Borrowed from science where complex systems have been used to apply to how organisms develop and co-evolve, complexity theory has also been used to apply to business management systemic problems. Its application to development is a burgeoning field of study, however some analysts have begun to use it to describe and predict how development policy and interventions could be designed and implemented, as well as adapted after iterations (Ramalingam, 2013; Barder, 2013;).

Certain concepts help define complexity. These include self-organisation and non-linearity.

Self-organisation

Complexity theory assumes that there are any number of variables that can be combined and lead to any number of scenarios, and especially when a system is dynamic (permeable to change over space and time quickly) new sub-systems will form of their own accord to adapt to a given situation.

Non-linearity

It also assumes that systems may evolve in a non-linear fashion. Thus systems may form, then sub-divide, or revert to a former shape and then reform into new structures with different properties and functions. These two features of complexity contribute to such situations being difficult to manage due to their inherent unpredictability.

The typology below assists to understand how complex situations can be differentiated from other situations in development.

Table 2: Typology of simple, complicated and complex situations

Simple	Complicated	Complex
when the core features are known to all actors and there is a high degree of agreement among them about what needs to be done. The relationships between an action and its consequences are known and predictable.	When the core features are not necessarily known to those within the situation, and there is some disagreement about the nature of the situation and what needs to be done (e.g. different theories of change). The relationship between an action and its consequences is knowable by bringing in relevant expertise, although not fully predictable.	When many features of a situation are unknown, and there is not only considerable disagreement about the nature of the situation and what needs to be done, but also about what is happening and why. The relationship between an action and its consequences is unknowable beforehand, depending considerably on context.

Source: Hummelbrunner, R. and Jones, H., 2013

In these contexts, complex situations in developing country contexts demonstrate the following key characteristics (Jones, 2011):

"1. Distributed capacities: the knowledge and capacities required to tackle problems are spread across actors without strong, formalised institutional links.

2. Divergent goals: inherent to many problems are divergent interests, competing narratives or conflicting goals.

3. Uncertain change pathways: it is unclear how to achieve a given aim in a given context, or change processes involve significant, unpredictable forces."

Furthermore, complex situations are not static, hence are liable to shift between simple and complex situations. Some components may also demonstrate simple features but as a whole be complex. Not all contexts in designing and delivering aid in fragile conflict states will be complex problems, and it should not be immediately assumed they are, but a key assumption here is that fragile conflict states are more likely to possess all three features of a complex system, and to a greater degree, with even low probability events being more likely to cause huge disruption

quickly. Given this, significant negative conflict exacerbates unpredictability and uncertainty when situations shift to complex situations, and if unresolvable, helps to prolong it.

Similar models

Marshall and Cole (2008) and Carment et al (2008) use similar models to view fragile conflict state dynamics. They triangulate three elements that focus on different aspects. "Basic societal-systems analysis must take into account the interconnectedness of three key dimensions: conflict, governance, and development". Nonetheless, they emphasise that changes in one aspect necessitates changes in the others, and this interdependency creates dynamic sub-systems. If the societal-system is to function, then this depends on its capacity to be coordinated and thus effective, and inspire voluntary participation and legitimacy (Marshall & Cole, 2008). Carment et al (2008) emphasise authority, capacity and legitimacy (ALC), arguing that most analysis has thus far only, and mistakenly, investigated authority and capacity. Aid allocation by donor states is usually based on perceptions, whether verified or not, of the authority and capacity of the recipient government rather than its legitimacy. Kang and Meernik's (2004) research supports this conclusion, finding that the OECD give aid based on economic and political priorities, and the onset of conflicts do not radically alter their strategy of who to give to as it is essentially premised on those they think can use aid effectively. Carment et al's focus on legitimacy is valid, but their analysis also looks only at the macro level and national government.

METHODOLOGY

Based on the premise that protracted conflicts represent complex situations, the question calls for a qualitative approach. Data reliability is at the core of many debates about measuring aid effectiveness. Recognising the majority of fragile state citizens reside outside of formal state structures and thus have a tenuous social contract with the state (through taxes and/or voting), poses issues for data collection and recording as these are the main ways a state can track demographics. As data is invariably difficult, if not impossible, to obtain from highly insecure environments, can be gathered only intermittently or at best is a conglomeration of different datasets with proxy indicators, the likelihood of data on conflict states to be accurate, available and current, is low. Even if it can be obtained, using it for comparison not only within provinces or districts, but between provinces to extrapolate a macro-level nation-wide perspective, is difficult to justify given the diversity within most conflict states.

Since large-N and panel data studies have failed to provide consistent conclusions regarding how aid may prolong and/or increase conflict, and there is minimal or insufficient data at the subnational level to conduct quantitative research, descriptive inferences will be made based on literature regarding subnational governance systems, non-state actors, and the informal economy that provide a more realistic picture of "fragile" conflict states.

I will use the case study methodology to compare between two selected countries that are high conflict and have been persistently high conflict for more than 5 years, have been given high levels of aid for more than 5 years (more than USD100 million per year), yet have not appeared to achieve much progress in terms of development or peace during that period. As the theoretical framework does not aim to isolate one independent variable as causing an effect, but rather proposes that a few key variables have a combined influence on the dependent variable, most similar cases will be selected and tested for all three hypotheses, and descriptive inferences drawn rather than causal ones.

While existence of strong non-state actors and subnational groups, and the influence of Islamic law and customs into governance systems, are by no means the only nor most important variables that may increase and/or prolong conflict, they have not been satisfactorily accounted for in previous literature, and are considered to be important yet hugely understudied in regards to aid policies.

CASE SELECTION

Since my hypotheses tried to identify what independent variables would cause prolongation of conflict, with the assumption that foreign aid invariably extends the duration of conflicts, the number of cases that could be selected were limited.

First I identified commonly used indices to narrow down countries that matched the criteria of being a fragile conflict state for 5 or more years.

- Country Indicators for Foreign Policy (2008)
- Index of State Weakness (2008) – Brookings Institute
- OECD (2007-2015)
- Global Peace Index (2015)
- State of Fragility Index (2013) – Foreign Policy

Although these indices did not measure the fragility or level of conflict in countries for the same periods of time and have different assumptions and methodologies, triangulation of sources to select cases was required since one criterion for case selection was the number of years a country has been considered to be a conflict state as I am looking at protracted conflicts i.e. more than 5 years.

From this I did a simple count to see which countries showed up most frequently. The results are as below:

DRC	
Afghanistan	
Somalia	Mentioned in all five indices
Chad	
Sudan	
CAR	
Burundi	
Zimbabwe	
Guinea-Bissau	Mentioned in four indices
Yemen	
Nigeria	
Niger	
Ethiopia	
Liberia	
Iraq	
Sierra Leone	
Haiti	Mentioned in three indices
Cote d'Ivoire	
Angola	
Myanmar	
Eritrea	

Those that were mentioned in less than three indices were not counted. Somalia was excluded because there was no data for level of development in the HDI for any of the years (2007-2015). While proxies could have been inserted, a decision was made to simply omit the country from

the case selection process as the ranking is comprised of very different indicators to measure various levels of development. Hagmann's (2009) detailed description of subnational units of governance and critique of using the nation-state as the primary unit of analysis is well-justified and explains the rationale to focus on understanding complex political, historical and social factors to better comprehend Somalia's situation, rather than as a nation that cannot improve due to internal weaknesses and incapacities. Haiti was excluded because it is a fragile state due to natural disasters, not political strife. Most of the indices only measure one year, hence results indicate more about the level of conflict rather than duration.

To find protracted conflict states that also received high amounts of aid, I used OECD data. The following table shows aid provided by OECD donors from 2006-2014. As can be seen, Afghanistan and Iraq are the top recipients, by a considerable margin. As noted in the literature review, the table demonstrates that more aid is not always given to the countries that have the lowest development, nor the highest conflict if compared to the indices where Somalia consistently tops the rankings yet is given relatively small amounts of aid. Chad, Niger and Guinea-Bissau do not even rank in the top 25 aid recipients despite their development and conflict levels.

Table 3: Top aid recipients (OECD ODA) 2006-14

Country Name	Total average USD (2006-2014)
Afghanistan	$50,606,590,000
Iraq	$41,676,870,000
Ethiopia	$30,224,520,000
Nigeria	$28,572,520,000
Congo, Dem. Rep.	$25,192,190,000
Pakistan	$23,776,770,000
West Bank and Gaza	$21,116,280,000
Mozambique	$18,563,050,000
Sudan	$17,401,380,000
Bangladesh	$16,555,030,000
Uganda	$15,534,820,000

Haiti	$11,964,960,000
Cote d'Ivoire	$10,739,750,000
Syrian Arab Republic	$10,624,960,000
Zambia	$10,345,260,000
Burkina Faso	$9,567,580,000
Rwanda	$8,702,700,000
Colombia	$8,643,280,000
Cameroon	$8,610,970,000
Myanmar	$7,868,220,000
Somalia	$7,148,450,000
Liberia	$6,938,730,000

Source: Aid averages 2006-2014 compiled by author from OECD database

To validate the assertion that the most protracted conflict states have not been alleviated by aid, I graphed the HDI rankings of the cases selected from the initial triangulation process. The HDI published each year by UNDP was used as it is considered the standard index with a relatively robust and consistent methodology and covers all countries since 2007.

Figure 3: Average HDI rankings for selected conflict states (2007-15)
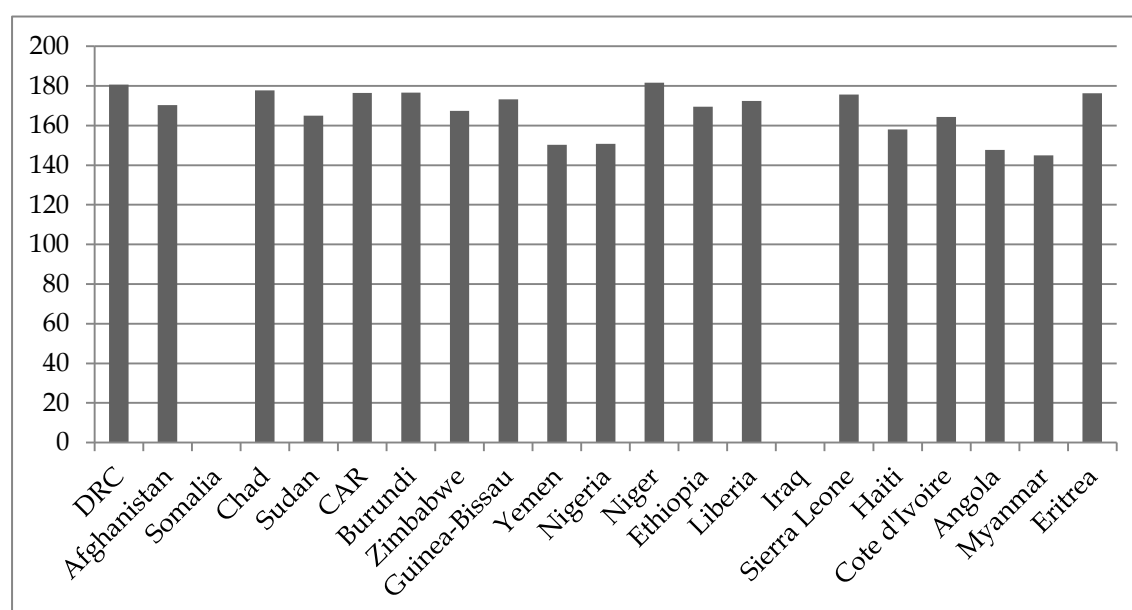
Source: Author's own compilation from averages of the UNDP Human Development Indices from 2007-2015

Figure 3 shows the average HDI scores (Niger with the lowest at 181.6 and Myanmar the highest at 145) from 2007-2014. Somalia did not have any HDI scores for any of the years, while Iraq was consistently ranked in the medium development category. As can be seen, the highest aid recipients are not always those that are a) those with the lowest development nor b) those with highest conflict. Bangladesh, Uganda, and Lebanon are considered to be still developing in many respects. Yet countries such as Chad, Guinea-Bissau, and Niger which are both consistently underdeveloped and have ongoing conflicts, do not rank in the list of highest aid recipients; Bangladesh, Uganda, and Lebanon to name just a few, are listed in the top recipients despite having higher levels of development and not considered to be high, consistent conflict countries comparatively. Conversely, Iraq which is considered to be medium development, has the second highest aid amount received over 8 years. It must be noted that this is OECD official development aid only, and aid from other sources and non-Western countries is not included. The table shows a bias towards geopolitical and foreign policy objectives to disseminate aid to locations considered more important strategically.

Some academics argue that certain criteria and conditions need to exist prior to fragile states being able to develop into stable nation-states (Collier, et al, 2002). This is flawed on several counts. First, not all societies can or want to, develop in the Westphalian sense. Second, such statements assume that fragile conflict states do not already have existing structures, norms, regulations and governance mechanisms, or that these are somehow irrelevant, dysfunctional or ideologically undesirable. Third, even when it is acknowledged, Western powers assert that there is a standard recipe for state-building i.e. that a democratic, liberal, capitalist state is the ideal model.

In order to choose the different cases, I looked at specific indicators that related to conflict specifically, rather than standard demographic and economic indicators, since these are used to measure level of development, level of democracy, etc as well as influence onset, degree or duration of conflict. Furthermore, as discussed earlier, these variables have been tested a number of times using different cases or in large-N studies.

The methodology here has been compiled of various indicators from the Fragile State Index, which was selected because it has published indices every year since 2006, and looks specifically at other variables that have been thought to cause, increase and/or prolong conflict – such as rule of law, group grievance and fractionalised elites – that other indices do not measure. There are also critiques of the use of these indices (Beehner & Young, 2014), and while there are clearly flaws in the methodology and a bias in the compilation, the index still serves a purpose in

generalising a country's status, and over a long period of time. Much of the criticism focusses on the terminology used – failed and fragile – and while not an advocate of either term as the literature review discusses, this is largely a matter of semantics. More should still be done to focus on sub-national factors, define exactly what they mean by fragility and why it is considered a negative term, and provide more information on their CAST data process for identifying and compiling information to feed into the index.

Figure 4: Comparison of all high conflict states selected
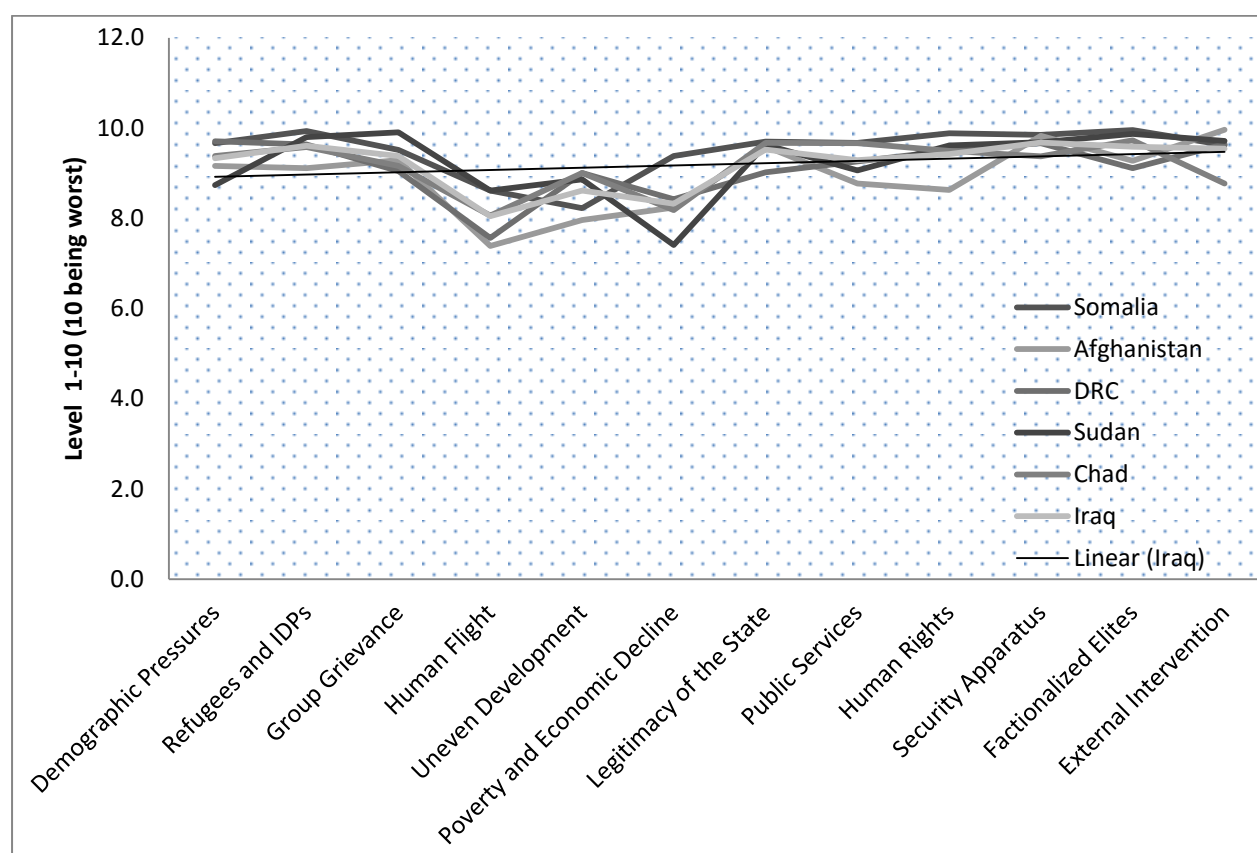
Source: author's own compilation from Fragile State Indices 2008-2015 (compiling the average for each indicator over the 7 years per case. I then compiled a table of the averages for case)

Despite the critiques, it must be acknowledged that there are few conflict indices that exist, and that the countries that consistently rank in the top 20 are relatively unstable compared to those ranked further down. It may not account for degree of instability and it does not deal with some much larger threats from non-state actors such as Al-Qaeda, ISIS, etc. However, the index should be read in conjunction with other analyses to gauge the details of the conflicts, particularly as many will be sub-national or transnational in nature.

This is what I aim to do here. To provide a more nuanced understanding of why Afghanistan and Iraq are different for instance, despite academia, the media, popular culture and governments alike all referring to them as if they are exactly the same, the following section will detail why the two countries should be compared only at a general level. From the graph, it can be seen that they lie within the high alert category as they score highly for each of the twelve indicators. They have both received the highest amount of ODA from 2006-2012 (OECD, 2015), far more than the next biggest recipient, and have been characterised as internally fractured, undemocratic and in need of intervention by the West which was legitimised by allegedly 'rescuing' citizens from dictatorial and repressive regimes. Neither state requested intervention, and had little control over the degree, duration, and scope of the interventions which arguably provided some long-term benefits such as improved infrastructure, capacity of governments to provide public services and opening up civil society, yet with many negative attributes. Although there are valid justifications to intervene in countries where human rights abuses are categorically occurring, and state sovereignty can be breached in such cases, there is a fine line as to when this is actually qualified.

Figure 4 shows that these countries are very similar in the rankings of fragility, making it hard to distinguish between specific factors that cause or influence conflict more than others. This may imply that aid policies for protracted conflict states should be designed homogenously, that a basic blueprint for stabilising conflicts and then rebuilding states will work. As the OECD (2015) has discovered however, this has not worked in the past. Thus, accounting for political, cultural and historical factors can uncover a number of variations that may provide insights so specific policies can be designed.

CHAPTER III: ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

"The chiefs derived legitimacy from the place of their genealogies in the tribal lore as the symbol of independence of the tribe from the central government. The claim of religious dignitaries to moral leadership was based on alleged descent from the Prophet or his companions,…both groups shared the credit of having successfully guided their followers in the struggle against the enemy of the nation and religion. Both were unwilling to accept the imposition of any limitation on their powers by an external authority, be it a foreign power or an Afghan central government"- Ashraf Ghani, current President of Afghanistan on tribes and clerics in the mid-19th century (Ghani, 1978)

This section looks at two key factors that may help to explain why aid may prolong or increase conflict in Iraq and Afghanistan. First is the challenge of legitimacy of tribal systems, and second is the legitimacy derived from *sharia* law interpreted by religious clergy, both of which continue to be underestimated and ignored by national governments and external interveners/donors.

Hypothesis 1: Struggles for legitimacy between the state and religious non-state actors (NSAs) and/or subnational groups (SNGs) neutralises aid efforts, leading to prolonged conflict

One of the key factors that needs to be analysed to sufficiently understand conflict in the two states and only implicit in the indices – both the HDI and the conflict measurement indices – is the impact and influence of subnational groups and non-state actors. In Afghanistan and Iran it could be argued that some NSAs and SNGs are more powerful – resource-wise, in terms of numbers, territory, and socially legitimately – than the host countries. Subnational groups are distinguished by historical connections due to family and cultural identity, including similar language and customs, while religious non-state actors typically refer to groups with a similar religious ideology and condone strategic efforts (including violence) to undermine the state. Both may have similar aims in terms of claims to territory, resources and/or recognition legally and politically.

The existence of socially and politically legitimate subnational and non-state actors internally may indicate that aid will be less effective in contexts where the state is not considered the primary authority of governance and may thus prolong and/or increase conflict. This is not the same as the previous assumptions by other authors that several non-state actors and subnational groups can mean a higher-degree of rent-seeking which can *increase* conflict, but rather that aid disseminated by the government will be implemented more easily if it is accepted as credible, that is, the existence of NSAs and SNGs groups prior to dissemination of aid renders

implementation ineffective and thus *prolongs* conflict due to contesting objectives of how aid is used.

While the FSI does include legitimacy of the state as an indicator as well as group grievance, and their methodology states power struggles are included in their rankings, there is no further information as to how exactly they have accounted for it. As such, I will look at existing major conflicts between non-state actors and the state.

Figure 5: Main ethnic groups in Afghanistan

Pashtun East	Pashtun South	Turks	Tajiks
Egalitarian social structure	Hierarchical social structure	Hierarchical social structure	Egalitarian social structure
Achieved leadership brittle	Inherited leadership strong	Inherited leadership strong	Achieved leadership weak
Strong military tradition	Weak military tradition	Strong military tradition	Uneven military tradition
Resisted government control	Accepted government control	Accepted government control	Accepted government control
Subsistence agricultural economies	Irrigated agricultural economy and urban base	Pastoral subsistence economy	Urban trade and rural subsistence economy
Low population density, lack of urban centers	High population density in both rural plains and urban zones	Low population density	Urban population high density, low rural density

Source: Barfield, T, *Centralization/Decentralization in the Dynamics of Afghan History*, (2012:100)

Rather than the nation-state and a centralised government being the most important and legitimate level of authority and power in Afghanistan, a great deal of power still tends to lie at local level, and accorded to different tribal groups instead. This can be visualised in Figure 5. The main groups that identify most closely due to customs and language, are the Pashtuns – which

Barfield (2013) has divided into East and South Pashtun – the Turks and the Tajiks. They also tend to still live in the same geographical areas, although internal migration has occurred and larger cities such as Kabul, Herat and Mazar-e-Sharif are more diverse. Figure 5 shows the typology of each group in terms of their political and socio-economic differences demonstrating that each had their own model of governance. As discussed in the literature review, fragile and/or failed states, are conceptualised by the West and as such, are challenged here as being internally divided not due to a weak government or infrastructure, but because of very strong local groups that hold just as much or even more social and political legitimacy than the government. As such, the concept of fragile or failing is a misnomer in these contexts.

Barfield's typology is fairly broad. These general ethnic groups are further sub-divided into tribes, many of them recognisable by one's family name. The historical alliances and relationships between each tribe are of utmost importance. As Major Jim Gant (US Armed Special Forces) observes Afghanistan is "constituted of tribes. Not individuals, not Western-style citizens—but tribes and tribesmen…. Tribes understand protection. Tribes are organized and run to ensure the security of the tribe. But most important of all is preservation of the tribal name and reputation.... When honor is at stake, tribal members stop at nothing to preserve their tribe's integrity and "face"…Tribes have no 'strategic goals' in the Western sense. Their diplomatic, informational, military and economic priorities are almost without exception in reference to other tribes" (Larive, 2014:8).

Researchers of governance in other conflict states such as DRC and Somalia claim that viewing the countries at the national level only, is myopic and closer investigation of the disparities between various regions or provinces is needed to understand the various centres of power and dynamics (Bailey, 2011; Hagmann, 2009) This has serious implications for aid donors and implementers – if aid is not being effectively used at the national level, then perhaps it can be disbursed more wisely at these subnational levels, especially where robust governance systems already exist.

Furthermore, many conflicts are not new, but long-standing, and are categorised as conflicts due to ideological differences. Table 4 shows key current conflicts in Afghanistan. One is a classic realist conflict between two states over territory, that is, the border with Pakistan. The Taliban and other terrorist groups are arguably the most important conflicts occurring in Afghanistan, and are not only subnational, but are between the state and persistent non-state actors. The third conflict is between Kuchi nomads and the Hazara, over resources predominantly, but also subnational identity. The Kuchi nomads are landless peoples and one of

the poorest groups in Afghanistan, but also migrate to Pakistan, and are discriminated even more than other minority groups, often forced to be manual labourers for landowners. These conflicts demonstrate that state-state conflicts are no longer the main type of conflict, and implies that the nation-state should no longer be the main unit of analysis for conflict studies.

Table 4: Key conflicts involving Afghanistan

Name of conflict[1]	Conflict parties[2]	Conflict items	Start	Change[3]	Int.[4]
Afghanistan (Kuchi Nomads – Hazara)	Kuchi nomads vs. Hazara	subnational predominance, resources	2007	•	2
Afghanistan (Taliban et al.)	Taliban, Haqqani Network, Hezb-e Islami, Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, militant groups vs. government	system/ideology, national power	1994	•	5
Afghanistan – Pakistan*	Afghanistan vs. Pakistan	territory, other	1947	↘	2

Source: Conflict Barometer, 2015

Iraq

As the Conflict Barometer demonstrates, there are significant internal struggles that are just as likely to influence the likelihood and strength and duration of conflict in Iraq, regardless of how much aid is provided.

Table 5: Key conflicts involving Iraq

Name of conflict[1]	Conflict parties[2]	Conflict items	Start	Change[3]	Int.
Iraq – Iran	Iraq vs. Iran	territory	1969	END	1
Iraq – Kuwait*	Iraq vs. Kuwait	territory, resources	1961	•	1
Iraq (IS et al.)	IS, Sunni militant groups, anti-government Sunni tribesmen vs. government	system/ideology, national power	2003	•	5
Iraq (Kurdistan Regional Government)	KRG vs. government	secession, resources	1971	•	1
Iraq (opposition movement)*	opposition movement vs. government	system/ideology	2011	↓	1
Iraq (Shiite militant groups)	al-Mukhtar army, Asaib Ahl al-Haq, Mahdi army, Shiite militias vs. government	system/ideology, national power	2004	•	3
Iraq (Sunni opposition)*	sunni opposition vs. government	system/ideology, national power	2012	↓	1

Source: Conflict Barometer, 2015

ISIS is the most significant current threat to the Iraqi nation-state. The terrorist group is powerful not only because of its ability to incite fear by its clever use of social media and publicising of its violent acts, but because it has an ideology, vision, and strategy to achieve their aims to become a state. This includes how to acquire and sustain resources, accrue territory and maintain it, and recruit new followers. Originally derived from al-Qaeda, ISIS broke away and utilised terrorist and insurgency strategies but are also an organised and structured association. It

claimed itself a caliphate in June 2014 after taking over Mosul and Tikrit. Complicating matters, US forces have led airstrikes combined with groundforces led by the Kurds armed forces (peshmergas) to fight against ISIS. Iraq's legitimacy is diminished, yet they have no other option. While the Kurds aim to gain their own state as a result of their role, internal rifts may hinder their efforts: the two Kurdish rival parties the KDP (Kurdistan Democratic Party) and PUK (Patriotic Union of Kurdistan), are struggling to consolidate a united front to external actors and leadership of both parties is being contested. The Kurds have been petitioning for their own autonomous government and territory for decades. Their proposal is not limited to Iraq however; they are deemed as enemies by Turkey where a significant minority also live. International Crisis Group analyst Joost Hiltermann observes that the actions of ISIS and response by the international community has "entrenched intra-Kurdish rivalries, providing space for Iranian influence to grow;…undermining the Kurds' relations with Baghdad and increasing the local Sunni Arab resentment on which IS feeds. IS's defeat will depend on Kurdish parties cooperating in transforming the peshmergas into a professional military force and balancing their common interests vis-à-vis Iran and Turkey" (ICG, 2016).

Notably however, the Iran-Iraq War, and current animosity, is due to territorial disputes, not a Shia-Sunni division, and two are due to subnational/secession struggles. This is due to the fact that Shia Islam also comprises various identities that have equally diverse objectives, and are influenced by factors other than their beliefs and practices. This means that they will not necessarily ally with one another based on religious identity alone, but can form groups based on political, economic and social factors. During the Iran-Iraq War, Iraqi Shias comprised the majority of the army against Iran, while Shia sectarian groups Amal and Hezbollah have often competed for leadership and legitimacy throughout the Lebanese civil war.

As Malmvig (2015) states, while sectarianism cannot be dismissed wholesale as a political construct, neither is it completely validated as primordialists would believe. An instrumentalist concept of sectarianism (ibid), states that religious differences are politically manipulated by certain groups to retain or obtain power. A historical sociological perspective allows for a more nuanced reading where differences are validated, but also investigated and contextualised. This is evidenced by the fact that both dominant ideologies have a number of schools that do not naturally align with one another against a common threat.

For instance, in Iraq, certain groups such as the militants that would later be the founders of ISIS and some supporters of the Ba'athist regime, used Sunni ideology to counter increasing Shia power which prompted Sunni fundamentalists to attack Shia civilians and external forces in

response to al-Qaeda's call to fight America. The Shia, initially told to act with restraint by the Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, the primary Shia religious leader in Iraq, suffered thousands of deaths before eventually retaliating (Council on Foreign Relations, 2016).

Additionally, as Wehrey (2014) states, sectarianism is often symptomatic, rather than the cause of, underlying political, cultural, and socio-economic issues such as youth unemployment, gender inequality, and media censorship. Other issues may include the current low oil prices, much-needed reform of the government sector to streamline services including elimination or phasing out of subsidies, reform of the patronage and clientelism system and culture, and continued provision of substantial public services in education, health and infrastructure. Gause (2011) infers that sectarian conflicts have become prominent when the state has disintegrated or failed to legitimise its power and authority, in countries where sectarian identities have been internalised in social and political life, such as Iraq.

Aid policies to minimise and stabilise conflict in Afghanistan and Iraq should thus investigate trends of sectarianism and determine whether they are the root cause, are symptoms of deeper issues, religious divisions are being manipulated for political purposes, or all three to differing degrees. Subnational groups and their culture and customs should be validated and a national narrative that incorporates diversity promoted.

Hypothesis 2: Islamic thought and governance systems are interdependent. Western donors promote secular state-building, and thus aid can prolong conflict due to contradictory expectations.

Here I assume that values, identity and history play a significant role in determining governance systems and processes, and models that do not include or fail to sufficiently acknowledge and accommodate these worldviews will be rejected i.e. cause persistent polarisation and potentially violent conflict. Since ODA is generally given to reform countries in a particular way – according to a democratic, secular, neoliberal model – there are usually conditions placed on aid to encourage such reform.

Given that Afghanistan and Iraq are both Islamic societies – albeit influenced by different Islamic strands – this plays a major role in their formation of governance systems. Furthermore, their history of imperialism and later intervention, is important to understand and may lead to aid not having the intended effect as the Western, modernist model is antithetical to basic values and identities in both societies.

Middle Eastern societies developed differently according to what parts of Islamic law they decided to incorporate into their political systems at different periods, often justified by the current leadership and their objectives to achieve and maintain power. The split between the Prophet Muhammad's followers gave rise to the Sunni and Shia Islamic ideologies and their subsequent schools of thought, and many permutations and offshoots of these are now institutionalised in the Middle East. As Aslan states: "…there can be no question whatsoever that the *sharia* was developed within a clear historical context, that it evolved in response to specific historical circumstances, and that it was privy to the same social, political, and economic factors that have influenced all legal codes in all cultures and in every part of the world"(p.193-94). The West has often perceived political Islamic thought to be rather homogenous, when in fact it has been extraordinarily diverse (Black, 2011) evident in the variety of societies in the Middle East (see Figure 6).

Figure 6: Branches of Islam
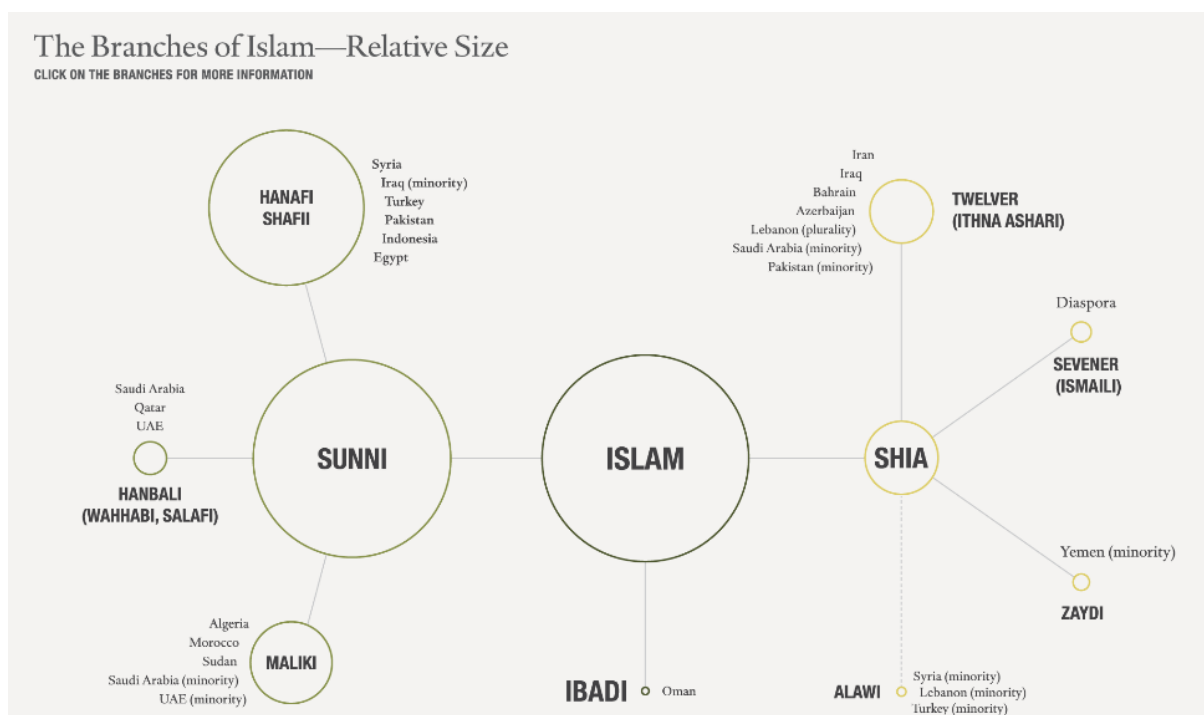
Source: Council on Foreign Relations, 2016

Sharia refers to regulations that guide personal life and shape public life, namely to do with marriage, divorce, inheritance, finances, and religious obligations. There are numerous interpretations of how *sharia* is manifested in practice, and likewise how it should be enforced.

Aslan (2014) contends that Iraq, with a Shia majority of the Twelver school, but significant Sunni minorities the largest of which follow the more liberal Hanafi strand, is the only
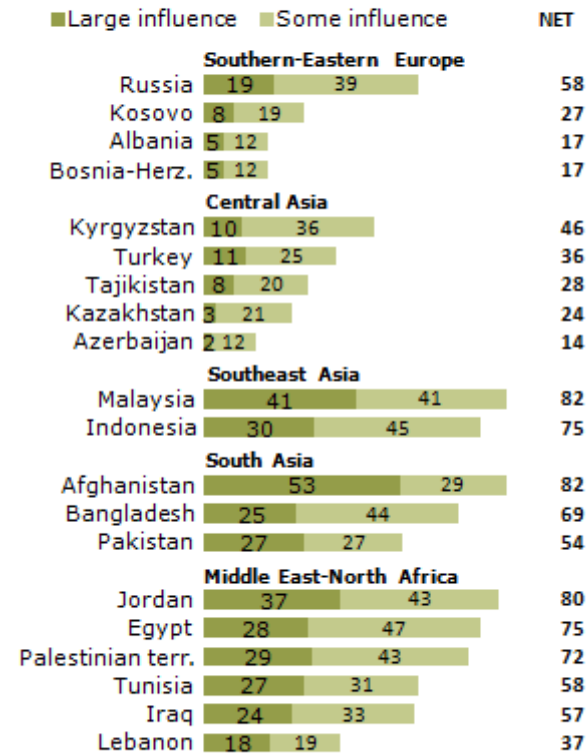
state that is attempting to establish a fusion of more democratic elements with *sharia* custom and law in the Middle East. Meanwhile Afghanistan, established a society based on fundamentalist and conservative traditions and this remains to a large extent today. The Taliban attempted to assert a Wahhabist tradition of rule, similarly to Saudi Arabia, which adheres to a more literal reading of the Koran and incorporates some elements considered extreme or radical. There is also a large Shia minority (the Hazaras for instance) in Afghanistan, as well as Sufi elements. These differences have had a significant impact on how the societies and governance systems have developed. Iraqi society also incorporated elements of Arabic society pertaining to clan and tribal patronage networks, which gives rise to the nepotistic relationships in government that are seen as valid and credible albeit highly inequitable. Tribal systems and networks are also extremely important in Afghanistan although they operate in different ways to Iraq.

The goal of separation of religion and state, and more specifically, the elimination of the institutionalisation of fundamentalist Islamic customs and practices, may be considered one of the key reasons for Western intervention (Travis, 2005). Hence the constitutions of both Iraq and Afghanistan which based their legitimacy in *sharia* law, caused angst in the Western world. Furthermore, it is prohibited to enact legislation that contravenes Islam in Iraq (CFR, 2016). As recent opinion polls show, citizens of both these countries demonstrate that a majority believe that religious leaders should have political influence. The largest percentage of respondents that agreed came from Afghanistan (82%) while 57% of Iraqis agreed (Pew Forum, 2013). Although there are some secular countries with a majority Islamic population such as Senegal, Chad and Somalia and others have dual legal systems, for example Kenya, secularisation of the state is not currently a popular option in Iraq and Afghanistan. Furthermore, an overwhelming 99% and 91% in Afghanistan and Iraq respectively, believe *sharia* law should be their official law (ibid).

Figure 7: Opinion poll of political influence of religious leaders

How Much Political Influence Should Religious Leaders Have?

% of Muslims who say religious leaders should have ...

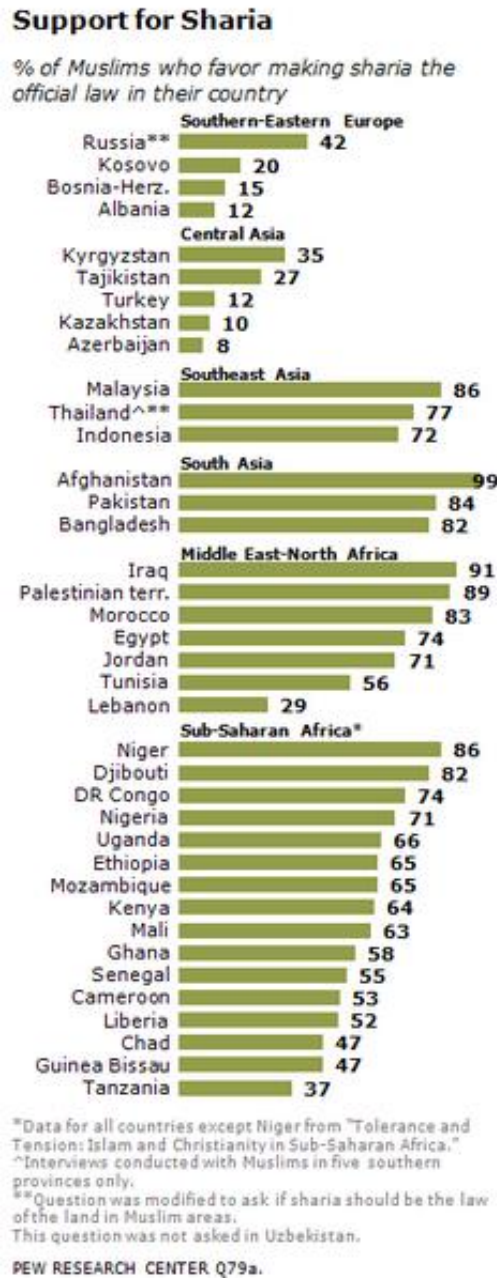|	Large influence	Some influence	NET
Southern-Eastern Europe			
Russia	19	39	58
Kosovo	8	19	27
Albania	5	12	17
Bosnia-Herz.	5	12	17
Central Asia			
Kyrgyzstan	10	36	46
Turkey	11	25	36
Tajikistan	8	20	28
Kazakhstan	3	21	24
Azerbaijan	2	12	14
Southeast Asia			
Malaysia	41	41	82
Indonesia	30	45	75
South Asia			
Afghanistan	53	29	82
Bangladesh	25	44	69
Pakistan	27	27	54
Middle East-North Africa			
Jordan	37	43	80
Egypt	28	47	75
Palestinian terr.	29	43	72
Tunisia	27	31	58
Iraq	24	33	57
Lebanon	18	19	37

This question was not asked in sub-Saharan Africa.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Q15.

Source: Pew Forum 2013

Figure 8: % of Muslims that support *sharia* as the official law

Support for Sharia

% of Muslims who favor making sharia the official law in their country

Southern-Eastern Europe
Russia** — 42
Kosovo — 20
Bosnia-Herz. — 15
Albania — 12

Central Asia
Kyrgyzstan — 35
Tajikistan — 27
Turkey — 12
Kazakhstan — 10
Azerbaijan — 8

Southeast Asia
Malaysia — 86
Thailand^** — 77
Indonesia — 72

South Asia
Afghanistan — 99
Pakistan — 84
Bangladesh — 82

Middle East-North Africa
Iraq — 91
Palestinian terr. — 89
Morocco — 83
Egypt — 74
Jordan — 71
Tunisia — 56
Lebanon — 29

Sub-Saharan Africa*
Niger — 86
Djibouti — 82
DR Congo — 74
Nigeria — 71
Uganda — 66
Ethiopia — 65
Mozambique — 65
Kenya — 64
Mali — 63
Ghana — 58
Senegal — 55
Cameroon — 53
Liberia — 52
Chad — 47
Guinea Bissau — 47
Tanzania — 37

*Data for all countries except Niger from "Tolerance and Tension: Islam and Christianity in Sub-Saharan Africa."
^Interviews conducted with Muslims in five southern provinces only.
**Question was modified to ask if sharia should be the law of the land in Muslim areas.
This question was not asked in Uzbekistan.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Q79a.

Incorporating *sharia* law in modern legal systems take on generally one of three models. Governments can apply a traditional interpretation of *sharia* to the state with no attempt to adapt it to current norms of law and society such as Afghanistan and Saudi Arabia. Contrarily, in countries like Egypt and Pakistan, *sharia* law is considered the legitimate source of law but in practice is only referred to in cases regarding marriage, divorce and inheritance. Finally, states can opt to combine *sharia* law contextually, understanding it is always evolving and ultimately defined by humans of which only Iraq has attempted (Aslan, 2005).

Yet other robust mechanisms and processes that already exist should also be taken into account rather than wholesale replacement or strident reform into liberal democratic forms. For instance, local *shuras* (consultation or meetings) are still seen as the most effective way in which to have a dispute listened to and resolved. They are legitimised by both the national government and *sharia* law, and the "judges" and officials that oversee them are increasingly seen as intermediaries between the government and local citizens. Normatively, they are socially validated as opposed to the courts and judiciary, which are seen as bureaucratic and corrupt. This form of governance does not follow Western structures and processes, and is thus not necessarily seen as a valid form of governance despite being democratic and being accepted by the local communities.

In several developed countries, government institutions are the legitimate providers of governance, but this is not necessarily the case in either Afghanistan or Iraq due to Islamic law and norms being mutually constitutive with political governance. These existed before there were formal government institutions and particularly in rural areas, these are considered the most credible, effective and accessible forms of governance. "People resolved disputes and organised themselves politically by drawing on local institutions. These were often based on local solidarity groups (*qawm*) formed on the basis of kinship and descent, locality or ethnicity" (Barfield, 2013: 132-33). Measuring rule of law by taking into account only formal courts and the judiciary system thus fails to capture all legitimate and effective processes and systems of justice.

Additionally, Islamists prioritise leadership in governance, as well as *shura*. The desire for a charismatic leader (*amir*) that can cohere diverse peoples by his personality is a recurrent theme in Islamic histories regardless of the school or sect, although "the more radical the party, the more central is the figure of the *amir*. Such a person would be *a religious as a well as a political leader*" (Roy, 1994: 43-44 emphasis added). Hence moral, political and legal authority is ideally vested in one person in Islamic societies, as opposed to Western-centric ones, where religion and state, public and private, are attempted to be kept as separate as possible, and multiple checks and balances on power dispersed through political and legal institutions, representatives and independent bodies.

Black (2011) elaborates further, explaining that liberty as a political concept and value was introduced into Islamic governance systems due to European influence. Yet the promotion of liberal values necessitates partial separation of religion and state given that most liberal values focus on the individual as the main agent, not society or a group in society. However, for fundamentalists and traditional Islamists, the primary role of the state is to enforce religious values in public life (ibid). Thus secularism and the deep integration of liberal values in Islamic

societies is unlikely to occur anytime soon, and Western donors should base future policies on this assumption.

Some Western scholars, statesmen and diplomats acknowledge the futility of assuming the nation-state is the primary source of power in Iraq and Afghanistan. Larive (2014) argues that intervening based on the assumption that a) these states wanted to develop in the model of the West and b) that certain preconditions existed that enabled this form of state-building, has led to the complicated and ultimately unsuccessful intervention in both countries, from the perspective of the West at least. Travis (2005) details the history of Afghanistan to demonstrate how secularism and the legitimacy of the state can often be a difficult goal to obtain, and only in situations where the leaders were able to co-opt religious institutions and norms to justify their rule, were they considered legitimate and credible. Meanwhile Chuck Hagel, the then US Secretary of Defense, asserted in August 2011 when discussing the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan: "We've got to get out of those wars. Let the people [local populations] decide what they want. If they don't want what we wanted for them,…then we can't control that" (Larive, 2014).

CHAPTER IV: CONCLUSION

Given that fragile conflict states are complex mechanisms and given the assumptions on which aid is given are ultimately flawed, providing aid with such ambitious goals to transform cultures, values, laws and norms comprehensively and centralise authority in such societies can lead to increased and prolonged conflict. The main assumptions challenged in this thesis, are that the nation-state is the most legitimate unit of analysis and valid actor in managing aid appropriately, and that state-building is an activity that occurs in a space of limited or weak governance systems already existing.

The implications for foreign aid are clear. Understanding more deeply how a country already is, rather than hoping it will magically metamorphose, is the foremost challenge for Western donors. Assuming enormous amounts of aid and the lofty ideals of democracy would be enough incentive to catalyse such seismic changes, is the next.

Perhaps it is not because these states are fragile or failing, but because the Weberian ideal of a rational nation-state does not fit (and thus cannot fix) many of the societies deemed as such. Many of them suffer from bad leadership, cronyism, and chronic development issues, yet these factors in themselves do not necessarily mean that they are confined to be "fragile" or "failed" states. Writing them into the narrative of teleological development may mean that they are in fact more constrained to develop in a way that is seen as valid, controllable and acceptable according to Western donor interests, creating a vacuum for Russian, Chinese and other donors that do not adhere to ensuring recipients transform into democratic, neoliberal nation-states. Scott's (1999) contention, that states are legitimised when its citizens have been sedentarised, taxed, land titled, categorised demographically, and otherwise sufficiently organised to be controllable, is valid here. To this list "ranked and indexed"can also apply.

Although this thesis has looked at two cases to understand fragile conflict states and the reasons why external ODA may not be having the intended effect, or in fact may be assisting to prolong or increase conflict, further studies should focus on single case studies over longer periods of time. These are more valuable than comparisons as each conflict state is incredibly complex and dynamic, and hence generalisations extrapolated from them and classed as common trends may not necessarily hold true.

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