

Draft version, comments welcomed!

**THEORIZING THE SUCCESS AND FAILURE OF THE MODERN STATE.
Constitutive and infrastructural capacities.**

**Claudiu CRACIUN, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor,
Political Science Department,
National School of Political Studies and Administration
Bucharest, Romania
Povernei Str. No.6-8
Tel/fax: 021 / 3180858
E-mail: clcraciun@yahoo.com**

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Abstract

The scholarly literature on state development, inherently rich and diverse attempted to build the appropriate tools to understand the dynamic of state as institution during the modernity. However the bulk of the literature limited itself to analyze different configurations within the European state. Few extra-European countries were brought in. Moreover, significant attention was granted to the state as regime and not as an institution. The paper attempts to re-create a theoretical framework capable to describe the state as global institution, experiencing huge variations in form and performance. The paper draws extensively on the Weberian conception of state and builds on the current state historical sociological and comparative politics research agenda. I identify two types of capacities of the state, constitutive and infrastructural. The constitutive capacity describes the ability of the modern state to mobilize individuals, groups and social institutions and co-opt them in the governmental process. The variables describing the constitutive capacity are: segmental, organisational, identity and state form and regime. The infrastructural capacity describes the ability of the state to expand its institutional network, to penetrate and control territories and organize societal relations. The variables describing infrastructural capacity are territorial, economic, bureaucratic and functional. The modern state developed differently the two types of capacity function of the international influence and local dynamics. Using these analytical instruments I create a general typology of modern states, each experiencing a specific configuration of state capacity: functional, developmental, weak and failed. This comprehensive typology will be helpful to extend the analysis to all states, both European and extra-European and describe the differences in configuration and performance. A special attention will be given to various institutional pathologies of state weakness and failure as landmarks of modernity.

When and how modern states became modern?

During modernity states became the main arenas for organization and practice of political authority. They had to overcome various alternative forms of political organization as cities, feudal polities and religious groupings¹. As the state turned into a dominant form of organization it was confronted with various institutional pathologies related to its internal functioning. The perspectives on modern states and their transformation are extremely diverse. The main contention issues are the nature of state, the sources of strength and the ways it interacts with other actors and society in general. In this paper the theoretical accounts will be employed depending on their merit in explaining the degrees of state success in performing its core tasks. The state is not a European/occidental entity but a truly global institution which organizes social life in various societies and cultures. The theoretical and institutional template of the European state was used for inspiration by the majority of

¹ see Ertman, T. (1997). *Birth of the Leviathan: Building States and Regimes in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press and Spruyt, H. (1994). *The Sovereign State and Its Competitors*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

aspirants to statehood and independence. Historical developments of the European state have yet proven to be specific and difficult to reproduce in other contexts². After many decades from independence, failed experiments of states building still produce victims. If one looks forward is possible to see the state as limited, contested and weakened. Recent debates question the ability of states to preserve their authority and functions given the increase of global flows of information, resources and people³. The paper is implicitly answering this concern. States can loose their authority but only in areas explicitly assigned to them, as territorial control, monopoly on the use of violence or enforcement of decisions. As long as these functions are not taken over by a different set of actors, the states remain the only ,rulers in town’.

There are a number of definitions of the state, too numerous to mention in length here. Indicating key common features of most definitions will suffice. Inspired by Max Weber, Michael Mann sees the state as:

‘the differentiated set of institutions and personnel, embodying centrality, in the sense that political relations radiate to and from a centre, to cover a territorially demarcated area over which it exercises some degree of authoritative, binding rule making, backed up by some organized physical force.’⁴

Christopher Morris adds the continuity in space and time and the overriding character of the commitments to state against clan, local, religious or regional based loyalties⁵. Charles Tilly points that the state is differentiated from other organizations operating in the same territory⁶. It is difficult to pinpoint the historical moment states became modern. State transformation was continuous and multifaceted. The events that conventionally mark the beginning and ends of historical ages are of little help. Global or regional wars are useful to mark significant changes in international politics. Their relevance in marking changes in the internal organization of states is limited. Sensible historical observation shows that with every regime changed and war carried the states appear to be in constant expansion, becoming more strong, present and informed. Van Creveld asserts the modern state passed through three structurally distinct periods⁷. The state gained its core functions and instruments as known today in the period between the signing of the Westphalia treaties and French revolution. The process included the separation the ruler and civil groupings from the state institution, bureaucracy and infrastructure growth, army strengthening and the establishment of comprehensive internal security institutions (police, courts and prisons). The state matured its structures and functions during the second period between the French revolution and the Second World War. The institution mobilised the political community under the flag of nationhood, refined the ability to extract resources (through direct economic

² Badie, B. (2000). *The Imported State: The Westernization of the Political Order*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

³ Mann, M. (1997). Has Globalization Ended The Rise And Rise Of The Nation-State? *Review of International Political Economy* 4:3 autumn: pp.472-496 and Shaw, M. (1997). The State Of Globalisation: Towards A Theory of State Transformation. *Review of International Political Economy*, autumn 4:3, pp. 497-513.

⁴ Mann, M. (1993). *The Sources of Social Power. The Rise of Classes and Nation-States, 1760-1914*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 55.

⁵ Morris, C. (1998). *An Essay on the Modern State*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

⁶ Tilly, C. (1975). Reflections on the history of European state-making. In C. Tilly, (Ed.), *The Formation of National States in Western Europe*(p.70). Princeton: Princeton University Press.

⁷ Van Creveld, M. (2004). *The Rise and Decline of the State*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p.415.

activity and taxation) and increased the capability to wage total war. During this period the state concluded its control over individuals, groups and organisations. Finding increasingly difficult to cope with social and economic pressures, the state begins its decline in the last decades of the twentieth century. Through conquest and emulation the Western model of state is concomitantly transferred to Eastern Europe, North America, Latin America, Africa and Asia. Thus, state transformation has two distinct parallel histories of modernisation and diffusion.

The emergence of the modern state started as project promoted by monarchs who later lost it to the parliament and citizens⁸. The action of the centralist political elite was not inspired by a historicist vision of state becoming impersonal, rational and comprehensive. Modern states emerged as were considerably more fit than feudal polities to respond to changing economic and cultural conditions⁹. They transformed also because they had to develop functioning institutions capable to provide security and allow survival in a highly competitive international environment¹⁰. The task was not simple especially on the European continent. The institutional landscape of medieval Europe was complex. The Catholic Church was a much stronger actor than many of the existent political entities. The church had tremendous moral power; it controlled large resources and inhibited consciously the rise of viable secular administrative institutions. The most difficult task for the central leadership was however the removal of political, administrative and military power from the nobility and cities¹¹. The medieval state was in fact a conglomerate of political entities controlled by the second tier sovereigns. In order to govern, the centralist elites had to build the bureaucratic infrastructure of the state and control it through a loyal body of recruited, trained and remunerated administrative staff. During the emergence of modern states political violence used both internally and externally. The elimination of private sources of authority and violence was necessary as prerequisite in allowing the growth of other functions as administration, extraction and welfare. Charles Tilly asserts the modern states were involved in four types of violent processes. The state had to neutralize its external enemies, eliminate the internal rivals, protect the productive class, the bourgeoisie and ultimately extract the resources in order to support the first three activities¹². There are significant institutional consequences derived from this transformation. When small countries build large armies they are in danger of becoming militaristic and authoritarian. If the army is the most powerful institution in the state it can acquire autonomy and contest civilian rule. The types or armies formed also influence the way political regimes configure¹³. The costs of pursuing the establishment of strong political centres are varied depending on the structure of civil society. If the nobility, cities and religious groups are powerful they can resist centralization¹⁴.

⁸ see also Anderson, P. (1974). *Lianages of the Absolute State*. London: New Left Books.

⁹ see the *'state as remedy'* perspective in Badie, B. and Birnbaum, P. (1983). *The Sociology of the State*. Chicago: University Of Chicago Press.

¹⁰ Skocpol, T. (1979). *States and Social Revolutions. A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia, and China*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

¹¹ Schulze, H. (1998). *States, Nations and Nationalism: From the Middle Ages to the Present*, Blackwell Publishers, pp. 11-96.

¹² Tilly, C. (1994). War Making and State Making as Organized Crime. In J. A. Hall (Ed.) *The State Critical Concepts* (p.519). New York: Routledge.

¹³ Hintze, O. (1994). Military Organization and the Organization of the State. In J. A. Hall (Ed.) *The State Critical Concepts* (p.202). New York: Routledge.

¹⁴ Rokkan, S., Flora P., Kuhle, S. și Urwin, D. (Ed.) (1999). *State Formation, Nation-Building and Mass Politics In Europe. The Theory of Stein Rokkan*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

The modern state has significantly adjusted its initial functions. If under the pressure of major conflicts the state privileged the security institutions and services it later extended its role in organizing the majority of societal spheres. The establishment of massive and permanent armies, publicly financed and conscripted nationally as opposed to temporary deployment of mercenaries obliged the state to look for stable sources of income and pools of resources. As a result it built central and local bureaucracies in charge with taxation, recruitment or education. The state construction went in two main directions, namely the cultural homogenization and containment of resources (capital, labour and technology) inside well defined state boundaries. The relation was not unilateral. The state also became the protector of individual rights. It accommodated popular pressures which forced the representative bodies to develop and extend the control over executive institutions. The provision of core service as protection and security were followed by the establishment of extended welfare arrangements. Interestingly enough, the origins of modern social policy are to be found in the protection of veterans and their families. The exchange between the citizens and the state, the first giving labour, money, goods and loyalty and receiving instead protection, rights and services gave substance to the process of state and nation building. The two processes were related but not identical. If the historical state building reached a significant level of maturity the nation building is incomplete. The nation state is not a reality but a continued program given the limits of demographic and cultural homogenisation¹⁵.

Towards a new sociological perspective on state.

The bulk of political science state theory was developed in direct reference to Western or the European states. The shortcoming was acknowledged and sometimes corrected. I contend the dominant perspectives on state, namely pluralism, Marxism and elitism, are lacking the instruments for describing and explain the patterns of modern state development in its diversity and variety in performance. Instead I propose a turn to Weberian and Neo Weberian literature as the most apt to facilitate the understanding of the state as institution. The perspective is particularly useful when looking at polities having fundamental difficulties in creating political authority, winning legitimacy and exercising power through state and its central institutions. The three perspectives are not the only ones producing valuable insights into state transformation during modernity¹⁶.

Pluralism, an influential perspective forged in Anglo-Saxon political theory, proved to be a strong presence in social sciences. Pluralism constantly provided the huge literature on democracy the necessary elements of a supporting state theory. The development of civil society, the plurality of groups and the limited and neutral state are ideas specific to the pluralist perspective which made it into mainstream reflection on democracy. The perspective pushes the state at the margins of society and contests its autonomous quality, namely the endowment with own interests and capacities. The state is not an actor but a space where social groups enter into competition to influence public policy. The state does not exist per se but is composed by aggregating various interests and actions. The need for

¹⁵ Tilly, C. (1995). *European Revolutions, 1492-1992*, Blackwell Publishing, p.46.

¹⁶ see Hay, C., Lister, M., Marsh, D. (Ed.) (2006). *The State. Theories and Issues*. Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan.

organization is fulfilled by the differentiated and competitive action of multiple power groups spread in various spheres of social life. The social groups engaged in disputing the state are diverse having own distinct interests, agendas and resources. Political decisions are taken as a result of the dynamics between all groups. The spread of power and resources at all levels of society prevents one group becoming dominant. The influence of the groups is constantly redefined in the dynamic interaction between them and environment. Thus the state and social groups function as a social system, unitary and relatively coherent¹⁷. The equilibrium between state and social groups and the primacy of the later was configured by two modern democratic trends: the emergence of contestation from social groups and extension of participation which increased the pressures on political institutions¹⁸. Recent uses of pluralist thinking on state are to be found in the growing literature on governance, social capital and multiculturalism¹⁹. These directions are very slowly moving into explaining political processes in the extra European space. The critiques of the pluralist perspective are varied. Pluralism has underlying normative constructs behind its argument. It tells not only how politics works but also how it should work. Secondly it is theoretically and empirically contingent to specific cultural and political space, the Anglo-Saxon liberal democracies. Thirdly, the critiques contend that pluralist perspective is structurally incapable in understanding the modern state, its power and its instruments.

The Marxist perspective on state and power remains seductive even though its agenda is in constant retreat. The state is a space where instead of social groups, as in the pluralist perspective, the social classes are competing. The states are the institutional forms through which the economic order produces the social order. The state is configured by accommodating the huge conflicts of human societies, between feudalism and capitalism and capitalism and communism. At the time of building the theory the state was dominated by the rich capitalist class the bourgeoisie. The dominant class is using the state as an instrument to coerce the poor classes to accept the existing social order. The state is 'the executive of the modern state is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie'²⁰. Compared with pluralism, in the Marxist perspective the state has an important power instruments at his disposal, ranging from force institutions as army police to cultural ones. The force of the state is both physical and ideological. In the later refinements of Marxist theory the state takes a mediation role between bourgeoisie and proletariat by managing redistribution through welfare arrangements. Compared with pluralism, the Marxist state enjoys more centrality. Its control is exercised exclusively by one group, either the bourgeoisie or in a later stage the proletariat. The Marxist state is more powerful, complex and efficient. The Marxist perspective is useful as creates the relation between economy, state and power. The modern states have the main role in preserving the economic order regardless of its kind. They also engage in redistribution as a way to preserve social order. The inconveniences of this perspective on the state are shared by the general Marxist theory. It practices economic reductionism considering the political institutions as

¹⁷ Easton, D. (1965). *A Systems Analysis of Political Life*. New York: Wiley.

¹⁸ Dahl, R. A. (1972). *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition*, Yale: Yale University Press.

¹⁹ Smith, M. (2006). Pluralism. In Hay, C., Lister, M., Marsh, D. (Ed.) *The state. Theories and issues* (pp. 31-36). Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan.

²⁰ Marx, K. and Engels, F. (1969). *Manifesto of the Communist Party*. From Marx/Engels Selected Works, Volume One, Progress Publishers, Moscow, USSR, , pp. 98-137, Marx/Engels Internet Archive (marxists.org) 1991, 2000, 2004.

function of the economic ones. Moreover, it seems unable to explain political processes in societies where the fundamental class conflicts were pacified

Elitism took the state from the influence of social groups and social classes and placed under the domination of elites. The elitist state has its own agenda and power given the special definition of the ruling groups. The elites are cohesive, organized and minority groups which govern a majority mass of individuals²¹. They base their dominance on property of significant resources in external spheres as economy, culture, military or religion. Their position is enhanced by projecting their capacity in the political realm, taking over the state and its institutions. The political influence is also used to preserve the dominance of the elite inside and outside the state. As in the first two perspectives state is inherently determined by external processes and actors. Yet the elitist perspective is granting more autonomous capacity for the state than the previous two. The elitist state appears to be a rational and powerful actor in relation with the society and the other states in the international realm.

These perspectives were focusing mainly on the normative content of state action and the way groups, classes and elites competed in appropriating state decisions and instruments. The basic puzzle is what kind of group is controlling the state and by extension the whole society. What identifies the state as modern institution, namely the extensive institutionalization through control, resources and infrastructures, is constantly ignored. These perspectives ignore administrative / bureaucratic and technological aspects of state transformation and practice an undisclosed euro centrism. Apart from being theoretically disputed and normatively charged these theories ignored the generalization and transformation of state in the dominant political institution. The challenges to explain the diversity and structure of the modern state are better faced in the writings of Max Weber and his successors. The task could be performed by restoring the centrality of state in the explanation of political processes and its possible autonomous goals²².

The Weberian contribution has left a clear mark on modern social science. Relevant to this discussion, Max Weber opened the way in understanding the state as institution regardless of its objectives. Weber takes the state from where the other perspective left it, after having defined a set of values and objectives to follow. He initiates the sociological study of the modern state exploring its capacities, instruments and basic functions compared with other historical forms of organization as medieval entities or churches or other organisation in the society²³. Widely referred to in the literature, Weber was sometimes misinterpreted. His emphasis on state as agent of violence is not justifying state violence in itself but differentiates it functionally from other organizational and institutional structures. Weber contends that the hallmark of state is its exclusive position to use the force in order to attain the social goals of the community:

„...a state is a human community that (successfully) claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory.”

²¹ Mosca, G. (1939). *The Ruling Class*. New York: McGraw Hill, p.50.

²² see for his „state-centred understanding of the state” Poggi, G. (1978). *Development of the Modern State: A Sociological Introduction*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

²³ see for a detailed description of the comprehensive state monopolization of key social activities Elias, N. (2005). *The Civilizing Process*. Oxford: Blackwell.

„...the state is a relation of men dominating men, a relation supported by means of legitimate (i.e. considered to be legitimate) violence.”²⁴

The basic mechanism of domination which allows the state to exist is possible only when individuals are accepting it as legitimate. The justification for domination come in three forms: traditional, derived from the historical practice and used by royal or religious figures; charismatic, based on the exceptional features of individuals and used by warriors, demagogues, party leaders and legal, based on the use of norms and competence in the process of government and used by the ‚servants of the state’. Even accepted the domination has to produce results. As Weber explains it,

„ Organized domination, which calls for continuous administration, requires that human conduct be conditioned to obedience towards those masters who claim to be the bearers of legitimate power. On the other hand, by virtue of this obedience, organized domination requires the control of those material goods which in a given case are necessary for the use of physical violence. Thus, organized domination requires control of the personal executive staff and the material implements of administration.”²⁵

Based on concepts as political community, power, domination, legitimacy, monopoly on legitimate violence and administration/bureaucracy, Max Weber initiated a new way of understanding the modern state²⁶. The Weberian perspective has to be interpreted sequentially. Political community is the central concept as it represents the human universe of organization. In order to survive and prosper the political community builds a state which is a compulsory political association. The political community trough state organizes the process of domination which regulates political relations and decision making. In order to produce the desired results the state is endowed with resources. The last resort of state action is the exclusive right to use force for attaining the societal goals.

The twentieth century confirmed most of the Weberian insights into the modern state transformation. The states became ubiquitous in the sense that every individual is largely constrained to accept formal interactions with state institutions. The domination is as well ubiquitous and permanent. Domination is not however exclusively based on coercion. The individuals may and do cooperate and comply from conviction. The legitimating of domination allows individuals to accept it as desirable and not necessarily imposed. In some instances the community can resort to the use of force. It is indeed an exclusive instrument more potential than manifest. Weber includes the force in the tools of the sate only as an exceptional measure. The monopoly on the use of force does not constitute a default justification of its use. Not every state and every state action is justifiable and consequently able to be supported by force. Force must be used when the course of action imposed is itself legitimate. The emphasis on monopoly on violence correctly identifies the coercive nature of power in modern societies yet does not exclude the desirability of consensus. The weight of the Weberian analysis of domination and power resides not in indicating the

²⁴ Weber, M., (1946) From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology. New York: Oxford University Press, 1946. pp. 77-128.

²⁵ Weber, *From Max Weber*; pp. 77-128.

²⁶ Weber, M. (1978). Economy and Society. An Outline of Interpretative Sociology. (Ed.) Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich. Berkeley: University of California Press, vol.2, pp. 901-10.

instruments of state actions but to assert the importance of the mechanism of legitimization. Thus he opens the way to explore the quality of authority and governance and their contextualization in the modern politics.

The Weberian perspective on state must face the challenges of explaining its current variation in structure, functions and performance. There are few elements which facilitate this task. Firstly it emphasizes the relevance of legitimacy of domination and authority, overriding the historical tension between divine and popular legitimacy. Its sociological analysis of legitimacy paves the way to exploration of various forms of legitimacy constructs present in extra-European states. In the conceptual triangle of domination – legitimacy – force, legitimacy stands as central. The use of force is never disconnected from or overriding legitimacy. The implications of this idea are important. When judging the success of international interventions one should not focus on the extent of disarmament or the ending of hostilities but on the viability and legitimacy of governance new structures. Secondly, Weber identifies what are key features of the state regardless of the cultural and historical context of its existence. It shows the state has its own logic of expanding boundaries and responsibilities when the prerequisites of authority and legitimacy are fulfilled. By doing that, it shows that the modern state model is not institutionalized by imitation and imposition only. The internal dialectic of society is of equal importance. Thirdly, it emphasises the importance of resources and personnel employed by the modern states in support of its policies. For the governing process implementing efficiently course of actions is as important as arriving in a legitimate way to a decision. Acknowledging the structural difficulties of a significant number of modern states to build and use the proper infrastructures the merits of Weberian analysis are becoming obvious.

His seminal work on modern state was not properly projected. Weber did not witness the extraordinary expansion and differentiation of the state in the late twentieth century. The effort to update his thinking to the twenty-first century may be rewarding. We have today a complete image of state trajectories including in the habitually obscured extra-European areas. In dealing with this task the use of historical sociology and comparative politics is beneficial²⁷. The historical sociology of the state thoroughly explores the cases and processes of state and national formation. The end point is placed somewhere when the state is becoming modern, stable or democratic. The theoretical tools remain however valuable. The comparative politics field significantly advanced the knowledge on societies and states from all parts of the world. Its developmental strand was specifically concerned with the process of state and political regime formation of new states arising from imperial and colonial order²⁸. Although developmental theory is a thing of the past in political science it had the merit to highlight fundamental tensions and challenges for the new states. The refutation of this approach showed that political transformation is complex and reversible in term of stability and quality of governance. Many postcolonial states failed not only as regimes, derailing in authoritarianism and dictatorship but as polities and states also. Many of them became extinct, split or fictional entities.

²⁷ See for a plea for a contextual understanding of state in its historical dynamic and domestic-international intertwining Skocpol, T. (1985). *Bringing the State Back In: Strategies of Analysis in Current Research*. In P.A. Evans, D. Rueschmeyer and T. Skocpol (Eds.) *Bringing the state back in* (pp. 4-29). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

²⁸ Shills, E. (1960). *Political Development in the New States*. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol. 2, nr. 3, Apr. pp. 265-292; Huntington, S. (1965). *Political Development and Political Decay*. *World Politics*, nr. 17, vol. 3, apr., pp. 386-430 and Huntington, S. (1968). *Political Order in Changing Societies*. Yale: Yale University Press.

The modern state. Constitutive and infrastructural capacities.

Max Weber's work inspired many valuable contributions on state transformation. In his massive study of power, Michael Mann identifies 4 types of structural powers exercised in human societies: ideological, economic, military and political. Adding to these there are two types of functional powers, despotic and infrastructural. The despotic power describes the asymmetric relation between state and civil society, the first being in position to force the latter in the process of government. This power derives from the exceptional and unique feature of the state to sit at the centre of human organization and be able to make binding decision for the whole society. In order to preserve this type of power the state has to avoid being dominated by civil society through representative institutions. The second type of power is infrastructural and describes the ability of the state to penetrate territories, organize and control communities in order to implement its authoritative decisions. The infrastructural power is largely based on the capacity to build complex and efficient bureaucracies and produce or facilitate economic wellbeing. It is unclear however in what relation the two types of power stand to each other. Mann uses the two types of power and their possible variation, on a continuum from substantial to weak, to create 4 ideal types of states: feudal, imperial/absolutist, bureaucratic -democratic and authoritarian²⁹. Feudal polities have low despotic and infrastructural powers while imperial/absolutist has low infrastructural but substantial despotic power. The bureaucratic - democratic state has low despotic power but substantial infrastructural one and the authoritarian have both substantial despotic and infrastructural power.

The classification is certainly valuable. It identifies the two types of modern power, irreducible one to another and able to cover the complexity of relation between state and society. It creates a comprehensive theorizing of pre-modern and modern states. The perspective allows the understanding of change in institutions during large periods of time and identifies the features which made the modern states modern. The states with low infrastructural power became extinct leaving the ones with substantial one to survive in the twentieth century. Mann's model has yet shortcomings. It doesn't allow variation inside the states having substantial infrastructural power, thus making difficult the explanation of significant differences in performance of present states. Secondly, it inadequately interprets the general relation between state and civil society extending a temporal contingent type of relation (despotic power) to a period in which its nature is completely different. Thirdly, it creates not a classification of states but a classification of regimes. This limits the possibilities for building a sociological understanding of state as institution.

The model can be refined in several directions. It is necessary to eliminate the confusion between states in regimes, rethink the meaning state power by returning to the original Weberian ideas and update the interpretation of state - society relations to accommodate the extension of representation and democratic rules in the modern politics. Mann's understanding of infrastructural power is largely adequate and thus built into the new perspective. At the end it is possible to look at the modern state as institution and identify the variations in structure and performance. First we should engage in discussing the understanding of power in portraying the relation state - society and state - territory. The state power in the real world is limited, contested and dysfunctional, even though it has the potential to impose itself. Seeing state power this way it condemns it to become a

²⁹ Mann, *The Sources of Social Power*; p.60.

teleological concept, depicting a potential and finality and not a reality. Regardless of the weakness to its institutions state power has to prevail. Mann overlooks the processes taking place inside the state and highly influencing the level and quality of power. State power is a product of internal functioning and not only a result of successful interaction with society. The way out of this analytical trap is to replace the term power, allowing for greater attention for its internal functioning and variation in performance in a mutually constitutive relation with society. Using capacity instead opens the way for a proper understanding of the state as a dynamic, competitive and differentiated actor.

If the term power is abandoned we have to reconsider also its despotic nature. Despotic power is a normatively charged concept. It used to depict a certain form of government/style of rule which is extinct and temporally /historically contingent thus making it inappropriate to recount modern institutions, especially in states having democratic regimes. Mann understands in a peculiar way the despotic state power. If it is reasonable to portray the state as advancing, coercive and violent entity in its early modern construction phase, maintaining the same for the late modernity would be exaggerated. Democratization totally reversed this relation³⁰. In the sixteenth-seventeenth centuries it was natural the central power to outstrip the authority from the landed nobility, rulers of cities or religious congregation and concentrate in the hand of the monarch. Next in line, the representative institutions outstripped of authority the monarch and place it in the hands on the new sovereign, the people.

This understanding of state as power against or from society overemphasizes the coercive nature of modern states, obscuring the processes through which individuals and organisations constitute, more or less consensually, and the institutional texture of the state. State power and its emphasis on coercion presuppose the social actors are exterior, opposite and lacking resources in relation with the state. Even totalitarian regimes as Soviet Union or Germany had to co-opt various groups and organizations to legitimize and instrument their rule. It is necessary then to make a concession to groups, organization and society in general as indispensable component of states and their power³¹. State power is institutionalized and preserved due to the support of groups, organization and classes. The regimes can change their main support base from one group to another, from landed nobility to urban bourgeoisie or between ethnic groups, but their persistence and essentiality remains intact. States become stronger as they are supported and constituted by individuals and organizations acting in a certain territory. Thus, the power of state in relation with society is constitutive.

The state is a semi-autonomous actor whose strength is depending on the extent it is co-opting groups and organisations to support the making and implementation of rules and policies³². The state has its own internal dynamics which can influence the performance and relation with its constitutive actors. It is relational and embedded actor, being to the same extent vulnerable and advantaged by the cultural, political, technological and environmental changes. It influences and converts them only if it uses strategically its resources. Studying

³⁰ see for a reflection on state-democracy-rule of law nexus Poggi, G. (1978). *Development of the Modern State: A Sociological Introduction*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

³¹ see for a similar argument Bendix, R. (1964). *Nation-Building and Citizenship*. Studies in Our Changing Social Order. New York: John Wiley & Sons. p. 28.

³² see also Migdal, J. S. (2001). *State in Society. Studying How States and Societies Transform and Constitute Each Other*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

constitutive and infrastructural capacities can help acquire a new understanding of modern state. The two types of state capacity need a further detailing for empirical use.

Type of capacity	Variable	Indicators
Constitutive	Segmental Organisational Identity State structure and regime	Differentiation of social groups Adherence of social institutions Identification through citizenship and nation Vertical distribution of authority, legitimacy of political institutions and their policies
Infrastructural	Territorial Economic Administrative Functional	Effective control of the territory Extraction and management of resources Administrative penetration of the territory Public services provision

Table 1. Two types of state capacity.

Each type of capacity is composed by variables which represent the structural and functional dimensions of the state covering both aspects of state legitimacy to efficiency. The segmental variable of constitutive capacity refers the extent the society is divided along specific lines and the extent the segments participate to the organization of the state and the implementation of its policies³³. The divisions could be ethnic, religious, linguistic, socio-economic and communal. The ends of the segmentation spectrum are represented by fictional societies having achieved either perfect homogeneity or complete segmentation. The move towards the centre of the spectrum displays various levels of segmentation and stratification. Profound segmentation and restriction from participation can together produce open state contestation³⁴. The organisational variable describes the extent social institutions cooperate with the state. The societies can have different levels of organizational development. Institutions as markets, churches, unions, political parties are indispensable to the functioning of the state. Where the institutions are strong and distinct state action can be significantly enhanced or inhibited³⁵. Religious institutions resisted for a long time to cede to the state the traditional monopoly on education. They also helped fostering the modern national identities. Trade unions nested alternatives for new regimes, be they socialist or democratic. The identity variable describes the extent individuals are primarily identifying themselves through citizenship and nation. The states where the crosscutting identities were too weak had experienced political instability³⁶. The modern state, especially the European space had success in generating national, civic and ideological identities. These are complementary and overriding identities linking the individuals with the political centrality of

³³ See Horowitz, Donald L. (2000). *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*. California: University of California Press, Lijphart, A. (1980). *Democracy in Plural Societies: A Comparative Exploration*, Yale: Yale University Press and Cohen, F. (1997). *Proportional versus Majoritarian Ethnic Conflict Management in Democracies*. *Comparative Political Studies*, 30(5): 607-631.

³⁴ Horowitz, Donald L. (1993). *Democracy in Divided Societies*. *Journal of Democracy*, (4), 18-38.

³⁵ See for historical references the classical ideas on relation between state and civil society in Durkheim, E.(1960). *De la division du travail social*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France and Tocqueville, Alexis de (1952). *L'ancien regime et la revolution*. Paris: Gallimard.

³⁶ I refer to the identities which separate groups according to functional criteria (class, profession, ideology) and not territorial or primordial (race, ethnic linguistic, religious, communal group).

the state and regime. Strong segmental and adversarial identities may inhibit the development of a functional state. The most important identity tensions were created in early modernity between religious and national identities. These tensions are still present as shown in the continuous debate between secularism and anti-secularism. Other enduring tensions were between regional and communal identities and the national ones. They survive through various forms of regionalist movements and platforms.

The state form and regime variable describe the variation in vertical organization of authority and the way the political institutions (constitutions, legislative-executive relations, party and electoral system) manage public participation and decision making. The federal and confederal designs and the special representation of minority groups in representative and executive institutions were used as instruments for mitigating conflicts and preservation of statehood³⁷. Pre-eminent examples are India, Lebanon, Switzerland and Belgium. The segmental, organisational and identity variables are intertwined with the state and regime one, which provide ultimate arena for political interaction. The literature on political institution and regimes is much too rich for being mentioned here. Suffice to say it was always sensitive to the issues of state legitimisation and institutionalization of authority. Signification attention was granted to the study of democracy and authoritarianism³⁸. In principle democracies are better endowed for accommodating segmental identities, channelling it through representative institutions. The authoritarian regimes using strong and centralized power alleviated segmental identities and divisions. The relation between democracy, authoritarianism and state capacity produced an apparent paradox: even with high human and moral costs authoritarian regimes had the capacity to maintain the order in segmented societies. When the power mechanism of authoritarianism disappeared many states plunged in anarchy and conflict creating a possible alternative between the 'authoritarian order' and the 'democratic disorder'. A good reference is Iraq who in only few years made this transition. The literature on legislative-executive relations made the distinction between presidential, semi-presidential and parliamentary as specific forms of interaction between legislative and executive institutions³⁹. Research showed that presidential regimes are more inclined to practice centralism and exclusion than parliamentary alternatives. Theoretical accounts on parties and party systems directly addressed the problem identity, organization and participation. This is more evident in the systemic inspired cleavage theory⁴⁰. Attempting to explain the origins and structuring of European party systems theorists put forward an explanatory model based on the institutionalization of

³⁷ Reynolds, A. (ed.) (2001). *The Architecture of Democracy: Constitutional Design, Conflict Management, and Democracy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, Filippov, M., Ordeshook, Peter C., and Shevetsova, O., (2004). *Designing Federalism: A Theory of Self-Sustainable Federal Institutions*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

³⁸ O'Donnell, G., Schmitter, P. and Whitehead, L., (eds.) (1986). *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Prospects for Democracy*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press. For democratic consolidation see Linz, J. and Stepan, A. (Eds.) (1996). *Towards Consolidated Democracies*. *Journal of Democracy*, January, 14-33, Linz, J. and Stepan, A. (1996). *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

³⁹ Blondel, J. (1982). *The Organization of Governments. A Comparative Analysis of Governmental Structures*. London, London: Sage Publications, Linz, J.J. and Valenzuela, A. (Eds.). (1994). *The Failure of Presidential Democracy. Comparative Perspectives*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, Shugart, M., Soberg, M., and Carey, J. M. (1992). *Presidents and Assemblies. Constitutional Design and Electoral Dynamics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

⁴⁰ Rokkan, S., and Lipset, S.M. (1967): 'Introduction'. In S. Rokkan and S.M. Lipset (Ed.): *Party Systems and Voter Alignments*. New York, Free Press, p. 1-64.

segmental identities through the party system. This perspective calls attention to the ambivalent nature of cleavages as both malign, potentially destructive for society and benign phenomena, creating competition and democratic alternatives. The electoral system is an institution highly influencing the constitutive capacity of the state. The majority system tends to facilitate exclusion of minority groups while the proportional system allows for a better representation. The comparative analysis of electoral systems shows the new independent states formerly British colonies borrowed the traditional majority system. The segmented character of those societies was in fact requiring a proportional model. In the end many countries operated corrections of their systems in order to increase the proportionality effect⁴¹.

The infrastructural capacity is composed by four variables covering the dimensions related to state efficiency (territorial, economic, administrative and functional)⁴². The territorial variable presents the extent a state is effectively controlling its whole territory. The effective control is related with the level of contestation and violence and is the precondition for the operation of the rest of infrastructural variables. The lack of control is translated by the permanent absence of state agents and institutions (police, army, courts, and intelligence services) in a given area. This variable designates the basic threshold of definition and identification of a state. During modernity borders became important and distinctive, clearly separating the jurisdictions of political authority. The separation of territories and the creation of parallel structures of authority is one indicator of state failure. There are numerous instances in the international politics where central government as state representatives lost the control of parts of its territory. In Columbia the governmental forces is struggling to eliminate the armed resistance formed by guerrillas and drug barons. Regional and tribal leaders or opposition movement are controlling significant parts of territory in countries like Afghanistan, Somalia and Sierra Leone.

The economic variable describes the state ability to extract and utilize the resources within a territory⁴³. This ability can be evaluated by looking at the capacity to raise taxes for example. The financial administrations were one of the first to become institutionalized during modernity as indispensable elements for supporting war waging. In time this capacity increased even though there are significant spheres escaping state control and monitoring. Rural economies are notable for their lack of adherence to fiscal state arrangements. In many countries the black/grey economy represents a large section of the economy. The governments are struggling hard to control the criminal financial activities as smuggling, trafficking and other types of trans-national crimes. The ability to raise taxes is doubled by the ability to effectively and transparently manage the public funds⁴⁴. The modern state used increasing amounts of money for public purposes. The initial focus on security and war activities was replaced with a focus on economic development and social welfare. The functions of the state are constantly expansion and transformation. There are huge variations of how states configure the taxation and spending ratio. The Scandinavian welfare state is

⁴¹ Lijphart, A. (1999). *Patterns of Democracy: Government Forms and Performance in Thirty-Six Countries*, Yale: Yale University Press.

⁴² My understanding of infrastructural capacity resonates with Giddens's conception of administrative power as increased communication and information storage and internal pacification in Giddens, A. (1985). *The Nation-State and Violence*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

⁴³ Ardant, G. (1975). *Financial Policy and Economic Infrastructure of Modern States and Nations*. In C. Tilly, C. (Ed). *The Formation of National States in Western Europe*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp 164-242.

⁴⁴ see Bates, R. H. and Da-Hsiang, D. L. (1985). A Note on Taxation, Development, and Representative Government," *Politics & Society*, 14: 54-70.

actively engaged in redistributing resources, rising significant taxes but also using the funds for better quality public services. Other states are not in position to reproduce the model regardless of their political option. The use of funds for welfare is not yet as common as one could expect. Many states choose to support huge force institutions as police, intelligence service or armies to wage war externally and internally⁴⁵.

The administrative variable describe the extent the state bureaucratically penetrates its own territory. If for the purpose of controlling the territory and extracting the resources the institution were of security and fiscal type, the penetration is carried by myriad of institutions that support the governing and administration at all levels. It includes complex and efficient bureaucracies organized vertically (central, regional, local) and horizontally (agencies). The main challenge of this activity is the fragmentation between levels of government. Central institutions are easier to build than effective local institutions. This is more problematic in the weak and failed states where local institutions are extinct or too weak to function properly. The last infrastructural variable of state capacity refers to the ability to provide public services as security, health, education welfare, transport and environmental protection⁴⁶. This activity places the state in societal context and highly influences the level of support for the state and regime. The modern states behave very differently in this respect. The variation is not explicable by the administrative capacity or level of available resources. There are cultural norms who guide state action. Individualistic societies stress the personal responsibility in creating well being thus trying to limit the involvement of the state in economy and redistribution. In more traditional society the family and community protect certain spheres like education or health services from state intervention. The provision of public services are very easily disrupted when political instability and conflict emerges. They are also very difficult to re-organize in the post-conflict reconstruction settings.

The relation between the two types of state capacity will not be detailed here. It is not yet clear whether a change in one will trigger a reaction in the other. Intuitively, a minimal level of constitutive capacity is needed to enhance the infrastructural one. The infrastructural capacity could facilitate the development of constitutive capacity trough the provision of services as education or social assistance. A negative relation could be also imagined: low levels of constitutive capacity permits infrastructural excess⁴⁷. It is difficult to imagine a state with zero state capacities. There will be always a minimal legitimacy of institutions and administrative organization due to inertia or contingent interests. At this moment it is safe to say the regime type becomes secondary. It is highly relevant for influencing both types of state capacities, but it is not in itself the building block of the state as institution. This perspective permits a new classification of modern states. These are defined as ideal types configured by the variation in levels of constitutive and infrastructural capacities.

⁴⁵ Dornbusch, R. and Edwards, S., (1991). The Macroeconomics of Populism in Latin America. The World Bank, Policy Research Working Paper No. 316, p.3.

⁴⁶ see Cerny, P. G., (1995). Globalization and the Changing Logic of Collective Action. *International Organizations*, 49 (Autumn): 595-626.

⁴⁷ Scott, J. C. (1999). Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed. Yale: Yale University Press.

Four ideal types of modern states.

Social science abounds with state classifications many of them being concerned more with the regime type than the state itself. The focus on regime and not the state is proving inadequate as one inquires the pathologies of state weakness and failure. The following state ideal-types built by associating different levels of constitutive and infrastructural capacities are not to be found in pure forms in history. The modern states can be described as belonging to one of the following categories.

Constitutive capacity	Infrastructural capacity	
	Low	High
Low	Failed state	Developmental state
High	Weak state	Functional state

Table 2. Four ideal types of modern states.

The failed state is essentially a state lacking a polity. These states are not necessarily poorly endowed with resources. Fundamental conflicts within prevents them from becoming stable. The failed states are usually segmented while the social institutions do not cooperate or even oppose the political authority⁴⁸. The essence of this type of state is its lack of political centre recognized and functional in making and imposing decisions. The identification with the nation is weak or nonexistent and the citizenship is lacking substance and procedures. The political regime is underdeveloped and undifferentiated failing in institutionalizing and limiting societal pressures and conflicts. The political institutions to the extent they exist or function are captured by particular groups and used against competing groups or society in general. The failed states do not control their whole territory usually the control being confined to larger urban areas as the capital and main cities. The extraction of resources is weakly organized, inefficient and coercive. The flow of income towards the state is highly dependant on easy to export commodities and raw materials, as diamonds or oil. The corruption prevents the funds from being used for public purpose taking the direction of top officials of the regime. At local level the administrative structures are either weak or inexistent. Essential public services are not provided at all or provided by traditional elites or political and military entrepreneurs who openly oppose state authority. Historically the failed states had a difficult start in modernity, being engineered by colonial states, regardless of the ethnic composition or traditional political cultures. Inside its borders there are a large number of distinct groups who are actively engaged in contesting political authority. This type includes states as Somalia, Rwanda, and Afghanistan (in certain periods), Burundi, Cambodia, Chad, Ethiopia, Liberia, Haiti, and D.R. Congo.

⁴⁸ Alao, A. (1999). The Problem of the Failed State in Africa. In A. Muthiah and I. Takashi (Eds.), *International Security Management and the United Nations* (p. 83-102). Tokyo, New York, Paris: UNU Press and Chesterman, S., Ignatieff, M. and Ramesh, T. (2005). *Making States Work: State Failure And The Crisis Of Governance*. Tokyo: UNU Press.

The weak state is not contested to the extent of having threatened its existence. In turn has a serious difficulty in securing the support of individuals and groups⁴⁹. Its limitations are mainly infrastructural. These states usually have to govern large territories and significant number of individuals. Compared with the failed state, its constitutive capacity is strong enough to prevent major political contestation/fragmentation. The society could be segmented but its detrimental effects are annulled by certain designs of political institutions, as federalism, consociation, and proportionality of representation or representation quotas. The organisations cooperate with the state but only in a minimal way. The individuals are identifying themselves as citizens and members of a nation but these are not prevalent identities compared with others of ethnic, linguistic or religious nature. The political regime can be either authoritarian and democratic offering formally or informally access to groups in the representative and executive institutions. The political regime is generally able to accommodate social pressures and conflicting agendas using a mix of coercion and consent. The main problem of the weak state is its inability to develop functioning institutions. The control of the territory is almost complete being limited by the strength of the institution and not by the presence of strong opposition/contestation. The economic performance, the administrative penetration and provision of public service are limited. The weak states are more numerous than the failed states but share with the later the colonial past. Countries like Pakistan, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Nigeria, Albania, Bangladesh, Benin, Ghana, Guatemala, Indonesia, Madagascar and Senegal can be included in this category.

The developmental state succeeded in building a strong institutional system based of hierarchical organization and control and extended functions⁵⁰. This is the state which dominates and coerces the society. The society can be segmented but the divisions are strongly combated by the political institutions. When organizations are strong they are maintained under strict supervision and control. The identification through citizenship and nationhood is imposed through socializing institutions as education, mass-media, cultural activity. The identities are ideological constructs practiced in a demonstrative manner. The regime is strong and the political institutions are active and effective in imposing an organization and identification model. The participation is open and encouraged but lacks the democratic substance. It follows and not precedes decision making having a post hoc validation role. The representative institutions are well organized but weak in comparison with the executive ones which are built around a leader, a party and/or military. The constitutive capacity of this state is weak despite the image of unity, strength and legitimacy displayed by the elite and their institutions. Citizens are alienated and minorities are forced into becoming part of a political community. The infrastructural capacity of the developmental state is in turn significant. These states undertook massive projects of institutional and economic development, being capable of mobilization of huge human and

⁴⁹ Jackson, R. H., Rosberg, C. G. (1982). Why Africa's Weak States Persist: The Empirical And Juridical In Statehood. *World Politics*, Vol. 35, No. 1, p. 1-24, Forrest, J. B. (1994). Weak States in Post-Colonial Africa and Mediaeval Europe. In M. Dogan and A. Kazancigil, (Eds.): *Comparing Nations: Concepts, Strategies, Substance* (p. 260-296). Oxford, Cambridge: Blackwell, Commission on Weak States and US National Security (2004). On The Brink: Weak States and US National Security. Washington D.C.: Center for Global Development Report.

⁵⁰ See Collier, D. (Ed.) (1979). *The New Authoritarianism in Latin America*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, Waldner, D. (1999). *State Building and Late Development*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, Huntington, S. P. and Nelson, J. M. (1976). *No Easy Choice: Political Participation in Developing Countries*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

material resources⁵¹. The control of the territory is complete and undisputed. The state is the main economic agent extracting and using the majority of societal resources. Central and local administration is well developed assuring to large number of citizens access to a wide range of public services. Their quality is not uniform as they have to be offered in distant areas or in difficult terrains. The states qualifying as developmental could be Iraq before 2004, Iran, Egypt, Cuba, and the majority of Arab countries, Russia and the central Asian countries of former Soviet Union.

The functional state succeeded in securing the participation and support of citizens, groups and social institutions and developed a working administrative system in charge with extensive provision of public services⁵². Even though the history of functional states was as problematic as the one experienced by the weak or failed states they have managed to correct their constitutive and infrastructural dysfunctions. The society can be segmented but the political institutions allow the participation of all groups. The organisations are well developed and cooperative towards the state, taking over a part of state functions as a complement to it, usually in the realm of education, social assistance, local development, business and innovation. The identification with the nation can be limited. In turn, the identification though citizenship is strong allowing the inclusion in the political process. The citizenship is substantial guaranteeing the protection of a wide range of rights. The political regime is well organized giving a reasonable chance to every group to influence decisions. The infrastructural capacity of the functional state is high and it tends to increase with time. The control of the territory is complete even in the absence of strong force institutions as army or police. The functional states are those internally pacified. The ability of extracting and managing resources is significant. The state maintains equilibrium with the economic system which is partially autonomous from state influence. The central and especially local administrative institutions are well developed and organized. The state provides or facilitates the private provision of extended and quality services to citizens. The functional states are spread in all regions but they are largely concentrated in the north Atlantic sphere and some areas from Asia (Japan, South Korea).

The classification proposed covers a wider spectrum of state structures and performance. The countries tend to stay for long period of time in their respective category. A functional state does not transform into a failed one instantly and not the other way around. The state transformation takes significant amounts of time to produce. Regardless of the direction from functioning to failed or failed to functional the process takes time and is reversible. Weak states can become functional and functional states can become developmental.

⁵¹ Kohli, A. (2004). *State-Directed Development: Political Power and Industrialization in the Global Periphery*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

⁵²Dahl, R.A. (1982). *Dilemmas of pluralistic democracy*. New Haven: Yale University Press, Rueschemeyer, D., Huber, E.S. and Stephens, J. D. (1992). *Capitalist Development and Democracy*. Cambridge: Polity Press, Dalton, R. J. (1996). *Citizen Politics: Public Opinion and Political Parties in Advanced Industrial Democracies*. Chatham, NJ: Chatham House, Fraga, L. R., Messina, A.M., Rhodebeck, L. A., Wright, F. D. (1992). *Ethnic and Racial Minorities in Advanced Industrial Democracies*. New York: Greenwood Press.

Modern states: pathologies of weakness and failure.

All types of states have difficulties in performing given the demanding societal and international pressures. This is more obviously the case with the weak and failed states whose capacities prevent them from fulfilling their roles. There is a large and continuously expanding literature on this subject, especially framed in an international perspective⁵³. The regional and global security is greatly affected by the fall of states and their central governments as they produce migratory flows disrupt economic circuits and spread criminality and violence. The black holes of security absorb communities, states and international organizations.

In 1914 there were 55 recognized states whereas their numbers reach 199 in 2006. Many of them emerged as independent entities following conflicts with colonial or imperial states. The frequent lack of common political identity and experience in running the complex state bureaucracy reduced the prospect for orderly transition and institutionalization. While formally protected by the international laws, these countries experienced internally serious conflict, chronic poverty and corruption. The terms collapsed and failed entered the social science vocabulary starting with the early nineties for countries like Somalia, Bosnia- Herzegovina, Liberia or Afghanistan. The failed state term was used as an instrument of political rhetoric and not as a fledged and operational academic concept. The substance of the term was however well known. The problems of stability and institutionalization of states and regimes in extra-European area enjoyed extensive treatment in the developmental strand of American comparative politics. Apparently the term was become popular and started to be used for a larger number of countries from central and Latin America, Africa and Asia. In recent study the most vulnerable regions were sub-Saharan Africa (32% countries experiencing problems) closely followed by Middle East (22%) and central and eastern European and former Soviet Union with the same proportion⁵⁴.

The scholarly literature recuperated soon the grounds of exploring state failure. There are numerous classifications of state weakness and failure. Three strands emerge as dominant. The classification could be one-dimensional, based on incidence and intensity of conflict/violence or multidimensional, based on variable state capacity to offer a wider range of public goods to its citizens⁵⁵. The international perspective on state failure questions the role of the international environment in triggering and recovering state failure⁵⁶. The first type of definition is used in a comprehensive the research program on state failure⁵⁷. State failure means the occurrence of four different kinds of internal conflicts, revolutionary, ethnic, for regime change and genocide/politicide. The revolutionary conflicts are conflicts

⁵³ See Debiel, T. (Ed.) (2002). *Fragile Peace: State Failure, Violence and Development in Crisis Regions*. London: Zed. Kingston, Spears, P. and Ian, S. (eds.) (2004). *States-Within-States: Incipient Political Entities in the Post-Cold War Era*. Houndmills, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, Milliken, J. (Ed.) (2003). *State Failure, Collapse and Reconstruction*. Oxford, Malden: Blackwell, Rotberg, R. I. (Ed.) (2003). *State Failure and State Weakness in a Time of Terror*. Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, Rotberg, R. I. (Ed.) (2004). *When States Fail*. Princeton, Oxford: Princeton University Press.

⁵⁴ Gurr, T. R., Harff, B., Marshal, M.G. (2003). *State Failure Task Force Report: Phase III*. Center for International Development and Conflict Management (CIDCM).

⁵⁵ Zartman, I. W. (1995). *Collapsed States: The Disintegration And Restoration Of Legitimate Authority*. Boulder: Lynne. Rienner.

⁵⁶ Helman, G.B. and Ratner, S.V. (1992). Saving Failed States. *Foreign Policy*, 89 . pp. 3-20.

⁵⁷ Gurr, Harff and Marshal, *State Failure Task Force Report*.

between government and opposition, the ethnic ones between ethnic groups and the states/governments while the regime change represent conflicts between supporters and adversaries of particular political orders. Politicides and genocides are conflicts where the state is using the violent in order to physically eliminate distinctive groups. Defining state failure based on conflict has some advantages. When there are violent conflict taking place in a society one can expect with a degree of certainty that the state is on the verge of failure. The conflict signal or trigger state failure. The political violence is correctly framed as a constitutive problem, marking dysfunction of the state authority, legitimacy and stability. Violence can be used as indicator of the state failure as authoritative and uncontested holder of authority. What is more relevant is that it places state failure in political context and not economic or cultural. However, the perspective has some drawbacks. It leaves out other forms of political violence (social revolts, terrorism) which can be of relevance. Secondly the classification may use artificial distinctions between conflicts as some interactions are in the same time revolutionary, ethnic and produce genocides or politicides. These are specific limitations of this particular classification. Conflict based definition disregard causes, forms and consequence of state failure. There are states which failed in the absence of significant conflicts. There are also states which failed and the result was not a fully fledged internal war. In some cases political conflicts can leave the states stronger than they were before. In the case of politicide and genocide, if successful, it means the state and the regime have removed an important source of contestation. The change of regime even violent could affect to a lesser extent the stability of the state on medium and long term.

A multidimensional definition is proposed in the methodology of the State Failure Index elaborated by the Fund for Peace organisation⁵⁸. The methodology lists 11 indicators grouped in 3 categories, social, economic and politic. It includes indicators as increasing demographic pressures, segmented economic development and economic decline or criminalization or capture of the state. This is a step forward as it is identifying processes usually associate with state failure. The distinction between types of indicators is another advantage. The inclusion of infrastructural indicators as segmental economy and progressive deterioration of public services creates a more complete picture of state failure. The inclusion of an international indicator, namely the intervention of external actor is appropriate but is not making the distinction between malign actors who enhances conflict and the benign one who are trying to pacify it. The limitation of this definition is that it mixes the causes and consequences of state failure. Demographic pressure could accelerate degradation of state functions but not produce or is state failure. Another type of multidimensional definition of state failure is proposed by Robert Rotberg⁵⁹. In his analysis state weakness, failure and collapse is distributed on a spectrum. The differentiation is not a matter of substance but degree. Political violence may be part of the failure equation but is not indispensable. The weak state is failing accidentally for a short period of time due to the economic, physical and geographic constraints. The associated factors with this type of state failure are internal antagonisms, mismanagement, greed or the despotism of the leaders. State failure can be identified through inter-communal tensions, corruption and civil society harassment. The infrastructure of the failed state is very poor. The failed state has serious problems of contestation of central leadership or enduring segmental divisions. The

⁵⁸ Fund for Peace (2006). Failed States Index 2006. Indicators. Accessed 26 July 2006. Website: <http://www.fundforpeace.org/programs/fsi/fsindicators.php>

⁵⁹ Rotberg, R. I. (2003). State Failure and State Weakness in a Time of Terror. World Peace Foundation, pp.1-26.

collapsed state experiences the disappearance of central authority and state structures and the rise of communal leaders. The territory becomes fragmented and private quasi - authority structures emerge. The public goods and services to the extent it exist are offered by private actors. The infrastructure is almost destroyed. Rotberg's model is systematic and comprehensive. However the distinction between weak, failed, and collapsed is difficult to be maintained. Placing them on a continuum seems to be supported only by differentiation of infrastructural capacities. At constitutive level the features of each type of state are artificially treated as distinctive. Jean Martin Gross proposes a qualitative definition and classification of state failure⁶⁰. Even though he is not using consistently the same indicators for describing different types of states his analysis is contextually rich and insightful. He identifies few types of states as anarchic (Somalia), phantom (Zaire), anaemic (Haiti), captured (Rwanda) and abandoned (Bosnia Herzegovina). The classification used by Gross shows that state failure is a very diverse phenomenon with various courses and form of manifestation.

The definitions and classifications mentioned are interesting but they do not solve the problems of defining state failure. A definition of variation in capacity of states must fulfil some conditions. It has to be complete in the sense that one can define both state failure and success. Secondly, it has to use the same set of variable and indicators throughout the description and explanation effort. Thirdly, one must question whether the terms currently used have substantial meaning or they derive from the common language and thus having weak analytic value. The classification of modern states in the previous section could perform this task. Making the distinction between the two types of state capacity and various variables it is possible to create an image of state failure phenomenon. The weak states have both types of capacity at a low level. The political community is a fictional and so is the state. The infrastructural capacity is either non existent or very poor. The weak state is constitutively strong enough to keep the society relatively pacified. The control is difficult to maintain and its infrastructural capacity is weak. Even though there are a large number of countries experiencing state failure the conditions that facilitate it can be extremely diverse. The state can recuperate from failure advancing on one or both of the capacities identified. There is number of countries which succeeded in stabilizing as Lebanon, Nigeria and Tajikistan. The state can plunge into failure also as Zimbabwe did. The only repeated global research on state failure, even though questioned in this section do provide with some telling figures about the phenomenon⁶¹. In 2006, from 146 countries included, 28 are susceptible of being failed (level alert). Compared with the previous year there are five countries less. Ten countries went out and 5 countries went in this category. Almost 15 % of the countries explored and 20% from the total number of states can be considered to be failed. In absolute terms the figure is not that relevant. Yet if one thinks in human terms and estimates how many people are in danger to be affected by violence and poverty then the situation is very serious. The figures are of relevance in other respects. Many countries went out an in the danger zone in only one year. This shows that the dynamic of state failure and recovery is fast and that there is large pool of countries which can go in the vulnerable area in a very short period of time.

⁶⁰ Gross, J-G. (1996). Towards Taxonomy of Failed States in the New World Order: Decaying Somalia, Liberia, Rwanda and Haiti. *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 17, Nr. 3, pp 455-471.

⁶¹ *Fund for Peace (2006). Failed States Index 2006*

Conclusion

The paper presented a new way of looking at the modern state as an institution, using the analytical tools forged by Max Weber and his successors. His sociological analysis of the state remains central in the study of modern political institutions. Further exploring the Weberian domination/legitimacy/administration nexus I identified two types of state capacities. The constitutive and infrastructural capacities are irreducible one to another and describe the two directions for state actions: legitimacy and performance. Depending on the variation capacities the modern states can be placed in four ideal types. However there are few issues that can to be further explored. The relation between the two types of capacity can be studies more carefully. Preliminary analysis shows that state capacities tend to increase on average in modern times⁶². This might come as a surprise for the ones announcing state's obsolesce or impotence. Another preliminary analysis grants state capacity with a central role in explaining for example the dissolution of colonial and imperial forms of organization. One interesting avenue for research would be the link between state capacity and the production and intensity of political violence. In the end the ultimate test of this perspective would be the use of state capacity both as independent and dependent variable in future research designs⁶³.

⁶² see Foucault's arguments on state development and governmentality in Burchell, G., Gordon, C. and Miller, P. (Eds.) (1991). *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*. Chicago: University Of Chicago Press.

⁶³ See also Nettl, J.P. (1968). The State as a Conceptual Variable. *World Politics*, vol. 20, pp. 559-592.