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A Political Geographic Analysis of Developing State Systems

Jason E. Strakes[*]**-** Associate Researcher, Department of Modern History and Politics of the Middle East, Ilia State University, Tbilisi, Georgia

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Abstract

This study examines the evolution of state systems in seven developing world regions, including Central and South America, North and Sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East, and Central and Southeast Asia, from the date of political independence to the early twenty-first century. The theoretical framework incorporates two propositions: that the central problem of Third World state formation has been the relative absence of the consolidation of geographic boundaries in response to external military threats, and the limited ability of governments to project their authority over sparsely inhabited territories. Additional hypotheses address the role of population and topography in public administration; the impact of ethno linguistic divisions on governance; the dynamics of domestic protests and violence; the political effect of external challenges to territorial integrity; and the relationship between boundaries and interstate conflict. These are applied at three levels of analysis. The domestic-level model introduces a measure of internal power projection capability that indicates the ability of political elites to administer taxation across territorial space. A second international-level model estimates the impact of these domestic structural variables on the extent of state participation in militarized interstate disputes. The final level addresses possible interdependence between internal and external variables. The outcomes suggest that while several predictors have had a significant impact on trends of consolidation and conflict across systems, there is considerable variation in effects between regions, calling into question common generalizations about the intrinsic qualities of developing states.

Keywords: Conflict, Developing world, Evolution, Political Geography, State systems.

[*]E-mail: jason.strakes@iliauni.edu.ge

Introduction

Geopolitical structure of the world into four levels: local (within the country), national level, regional level and spherical has been established. Each of the levels, characteristics, territory, nature, and their specific functions.

How do variables such as population density, topography, ethnic difference, domestic political conflict and external threats affect the ability of the state to project its authority across territorial space? Further, how do the relationships between these domestic physical and social structures in turn affect the external behavior of states, such as participation in international conflicts? Finally, how do interconnections between these variables allow one to establish generalizations about similarities and differences in state systems across world regions? The academic literature on the formation of states (or "state-building") has produced a vast and diverse collection of theoretical discourse, but relatively few conclusive empirical findings (Bremer with Ghosn, 2003: 22-23; Lemke, 2003, 2004). Discussions of state development in the areas traditionally known as the "Third World"[1] have especially lacked cohesion or systematic cross-national coverage, being largely limited to country-specific evaluations using various analytical schemes (Geddes, 1991, 2002, 2003). While this does not manage to negate the contribution to intensive knowledge made by individual case studies, at the same time it must be considered: how much have they succeeded in explaining about the functioning of low and middle-income states as social and political mechanisms that makes them normatively

1. In the post-Cold War era, there has been a certain amount of controversy in the social sciences as to whether the highly integrated characteristics of the contemporary international environment preclude the continued division of states into distinct "worlds" representing differing levels of political and economic development (Lewis, 1999; Fawcett and Sayigh, 1999; Handelman, 2005). The term is applied here in order to describe a diverse group of evolving post-colonial and/or formerly socialist states in which the problematic issues of national identity, social conflict and political stability remain in various stages of resolution (Gurtov, 2007: 2, 143-8).

different from that of the "preponderant" nations (the United States, European Union, and Russian Federation) and the emerging and potential major powers (China and India)?

Additionally, while a particular body of research in world politics has addressed the role of domestic factors in the evolution of international systems (Choucri and North, 1975; Organski and Kugler, 1980; Gilpin, 1981; Rasler and Thompson, 1989; Maoz, 1989, 1996; Spruyt, 1994; Cederman, 1997; 2003), little if any has done so comparatively across geographic areas, and with insufficient attention to the internal processes through which their constituent states came into being (Herbst, 2000: 22-23; Lemke, 2002, 2003). Much related empirical work in international conflict studies has emphasized unit-level variables such as economic productivity or the accumulation of military capabilities as indicators of potential change in global resource distributions, and the initiation of war between the great powers (Houweling and Siccama, 1988; Kim, 1992; Lemke and Werner, 1996; Werner and Kugler, 1996). Yet, historically such transitions constitute only the most rare and least probable events in international politics, while both national foreign policies and interstate disputes operate on a continuum of varied forms that do not typically escalate to the level of major war(Kadera, 2001: 36-40). At the same time, armed violence within the past half-century has been concentrated not among the most powerful nations, but within and between lower-income and post-colonial states (Singer, 1996; Marshall, 1999; Gurr, Marshall and Khosla, 2000; Henderson and Singer, 2000), while attendant evidence suggests that future conflicts will be increasingly likely to occur in and among the developing countries (Holsti, 1996; Snow, 1997, 1999: 39-40, 49-50, 52-53; Gleditsch et al, 2002; O'Loughlin, 2005: 100-102).[1]

1. A 3rd degree polynomial trend analysis which compares the total conflict involvement of OECD and non-OECD countries from 1946 to 2001 indicates that developing nations exhibit a higher probability (between less than .2 and .3 percent) than developed states (between less than .1 and .25 percent) of experiencing all types and levels of armed

These distinctions demand a more substantive inquiry into the associations between the basic composition of states and their conduct in both interior and exterior environments. The present study therefore intends to integrate the issues and assumptions addressed by previous approaches into a unified theoretical foundation, from which a series of testable hypotheses may be generated. It will then evaluate these propositions systematically in three separate stages of econometric analysis, which together represent the domestic, international and interactive (internal, external and "intermestic") dimensions of state formation and conflict in the developing regions of the world.

Literature Review and Conceptual Framework

Recent scholarship that seeks to address the development of state systems in Latin America, Africa, the Middle East and Asia often underscores the debate as to whether these are to be better understood in terms of their cultural or historical peculiarities, or if they can be placed within a comprehensive explanatory framework (Young, 1994; Ayubi, 1999; Dunkerley, 2002; Luong, 2004). Arguments related to the first position maintain that certain structural precedents condition the origins of political units: those "Third World" nations which possessed a core of defined territory or centralized administration prior to the period of foreign colonization (Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia) were provided with a subsequent advantage in the establishment of independent polities, while those which were essentially constituted by outside forces or geopolitical events (Iraq, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Sudan) have struggled repeatedly with competing definitions of statehood (Anderson, 1986; El-Khazen, 2000: 101; Nasr,

violence, despite the initial decline of regional or "proxy" wars beginning in the late 1980s. In addition, significant peaks in conflict participation among OECD nations reflect recent military interventions in developing areas (i.e., the Persian Gulf in 1991, Kosovo in 1999 and Afghanistan in 2001), while at the same time conflicts involving the OECD countries during this period have been conducted almost entirely offshore (O'Loughlin, 2005: 99-102). The 2003 US-British intervention in Iraq would further extend this trend line.

2001).[1] This might be related to the theoretical problem of determining the boundary between the coercive or regulatory apparatus of the state (the Weberian criterion) and associational patterns within a society. In this sense, rather than there being a corporeal division between governing units and social classes or structures, the state could be conceived of as merely a "relation" or "effect" of other activities and organizations (Jessop, 1990; Mitchell, 1991).

A series of contending perspectives attempt to establish more general conclusions about the nature of the state in the Third World. These theories, which are concerned primarily with conceptualization and classification, dispute whether states should be recognized as singular, rational autonomous actors (Nordlinger, 1981; Evans, Reuschmeyer and Skocpol, 1985; Mann, 1986); or whether state and society are composed of a series of interlocking parts that compete with and transform one another (Migdal, 1988, 1997, 2001; Kohli, Migdal and Shue, 1994). An additional subset of literature emphasizes the definition and measurement of state capacity, or the ability of the central government apparatus to administrate effectively. While institutional explanations are concerned with the power of incumbent elites to create and implement new rules, allocate public resources effectively, or respond to societal demands (Geddes, 1994; Grindle, 1996; Waldner, 1999), political economy approaches stress the ability of the state to utilize appendages such as taxation to "penetrate" society and extract resources in the pursuit of its policy objectives (Kugler and Domke, 1986; Rouyer, 1987; Lee, 1988; Levi, 1988; Migdal, 1988; Snider, 1987, 1988, 1990; Arbetman and Kugler, 1997; Cheibub, 1998; Thies, 2004). An

1. The difficulty of producing generalizations about state trajectories from the examination of "relevant cases" is highlighted by the example of Lebanon: although one of the world's foremost archetypes of a weak or collapsed state, its origins as a successful semi-autonomous polity or *Mutasarrifiyya* (governate) established under Ottoman rule actually endowed it with a higher relative level of consolidation at the time of independence than various other post-colonial states in the Middle East region and the general Third World (Snider, 1983; El-Khazen, 2000: 99-102).

adjoining proposition is that polities in developing areas (Latin America, the Middle East and Southern Africa) suffer from an inherent weakness because they did not undergo the gradual process of state consolidation presumed common to early modern Europe, in which monarchical elites were motivated by external military threats to derive coercive or capital-intensive revenues from their subjects in order to finance protection by professional armies (Tilly, 1975, 1985, 1992; Herbst, 1990a, 2000; Porter, 1994; Desch, 1996; Centeno, 1997, 2002a, 2002b; Lustick, 1997: 656-57). Conversely, some have suggested that many Third World states are presently experiencing similar processes, although with different and often adverse political consequences (Cohen, Brown and Organski, 1981; Barnett, 1992; Jaggers, 1992; Ayoob, 1995, 1996; Sørenson, 2001; Taylor and Botea, 2008). While there is evidence to suggest that African states have undergone comparable aspects of formation through revenue extraction and urbanization, governments in the region have remained predominantly militarized rather than contractual (Kirby and Ward, 1991; Herbst, 2000). Comparative historical studies also conclude that the high frequency of warfare in regions such as the Middle East has had deleterious rather than galvanizing effects on the power and prosperity of their constituent states(Tilly, 1991; Gongora, 1997). Other empirical work demonstrates that there is an inverse correlation between the initial capacity of new states and the rate of state expansion through collective violence, while various scholars have asserted that Latin American and Middle Eastern states are characterized by a limited ability to extract resources from the societies which they seek to administer, and have therefore relied more extensively on coercive instruments (the military and security apparatus) as a primary technology of governance (Cohen, Brown and Organski, 1981; Lustick, 1997: 654; Ayubi, 1999; Heydemann, 2000; Holden, 2004).

Yet, another more contemporary branch of theorizing addresses the issue of defining “stateness” from the twin perspectives of political

geography and demographics. This posits that the primary difficulty facing governments in regions such as sub-Saharan Africa has been the limited ability of the state to exert its control over large, sparsely populated territories (Englebert, 2000; Herbst, 2000; Englebert, Tarango and Carter, 2002; Bratton, 2005). As the artificial borders produced by colonial administrations created political maps that were incongruous with indigenous structures and environmental conditions, and leaderships who inherited capital cities that were the seat of colonial governments (the bled-el-makhzen, or "zone of control") were separated from the regions in which a large proportion of the populace resides (the bled-es-siba, or "zone of dissidence")[1], successor regimes have faced significant challenges in their effort to manage the tasks of national politics (Boone, 2003; Schatz, 2003, 2004).[2] The phenomenon of capital relocation as a strategy of administrative enhancement by post-independence leaderships in Latin America (Brazil), Africa (Botswana, Cote D'Ivoire, Libya, Malawi, Mauritania, Nigeria and Tanzania) and Asia (Kazakhstan, Malaysia, and Pakistan) underscores the significance of this condition (Schatz, 2003: 5).

Further, because physical boundaries were often imposed arbitrarily over widely disparate territories and social groups, state-building processes have not produced relatively homogenous national units such as those prevalent in Western Europe (Nettl, 1968; Nettl and Robertson, 1968; Ben-Dor, 1983;

1. These analogical terms are drawn from classical Moroccan political history, which were used to describe the difference between those lands and tribes in the western part of the country that were assimilated by the royal administration, versus the inhabitants of the desert and mountain areas that remained effectively outside the influence of the central government (Parker, 1984: 22).

2. Herbst (2000: 145-161) establishes a categorical distinction between "geographically challenged states", in which populations are widely dispersed or separated from centers of political power; "hinterland countries", where the majority of the population is concentrated in urban areas while vast areas of the national territory are uninhabited; states with "favorable geography", in which populations are evenly distributed between urban centers and rural areas; and countries with "neutral political geographies", where population distributions have had little significant impact on problems of governance or internal conflicts.

Barkey and Parikh, 1991: 531).

The present study proceeds from the latter assumptions as an initial basis for comparing the evolution of the state across countries, regions and time. It chooses these as its foundation because they suggest a promising means of demonstrating empirically how the physical and social composition of states in interaction with their external environment—as opposed to simply national capabilities—influences the trajectory by which they develop. This erects a framework that seeks to both integrate and operationalize related strands of theory initially introduced by geographers in the mid-twentieth century, which link the physical characteristics of territorial spaces to political agencies, activities and structures (Hartshorne, 1950; Jones, 1954; Cohen and Rosenthal, 1971). The first of these is the functional approach, which relates the initial idea or concept of what constitutes statehood (raison d'etre) with the ability to manage centripetal forces, such as populations that are divided between dissimilar geographic regions within the national territory. The logical extension of this concept is an evolutionary process, consisting of 1), decision, such as a treaty or other formal legal recognition of political independence; 2), movement, or a resulting activity or transfer of resources, 3), field, or the creation of administrative areas of action such as tax collection, and 4), political area, or the governance of the multidimensional aspects of the landscape.

However, the premises do not maintain, as some might charge, that environmental conditions such as geography have a deterministic effect upon politics. Nor do they assume a necessary association between population densities and the level of political organization or institutional development (Vengroff, 1976; Robinson, 2002: 514-515). To be sure, historically the European colonizers introduced successful "extractive institutions" in previously sparsely settled states (Acemoglu et al, 2002), while colonial and post-colonial governments in inhospitable areas have created large and intricate bureaucracies, irrespective of their actual efficacy

or competence.[1]

Rather, whether or not a state will eventually experience "success" or "failure", or whether its international relations will be more often characterized by war or peace, is dependent on how its political elites confront and manage these structural constraints and influences over an extended period. Therefore, the primary purpose is to identify the degree of prospective impact that the aforementioned variables have upon the capacities of states—defined as the ability of elites to project their influence over physical space—in their respective settings. "Power" is therefore here understood as the degree to which a subject population can be administered within a given state entity, while "projection" implies the actual capability that elite has to reach into the areas under its nominal jurisdiction. Overall, the effort is intended to verify these posited relationships in order to provide a more comprehensive account of state formation and conflict behavior in developing areas.

Three Levels of Analysis

The main premise that this investigation seeks to examine is that the confluence of demographics, topography, ethnic difference and internal political conflict places greater restrictions on the state's domestic power projection capability (or "internal sovereignty") in territories in which national boundaries were artificially emplaced rather than gradually defined by a combination of elite agency, conflict and negotiation. This assumes, in part, that where colonial authorities delimited the borders of African, Middle Eastern, Central and Southeast Asian states (often in isometric lines without

1. This is exemplified by the manner in which intramural institutions created during the early Soviet era such as the native-staffed Central Asian Bureau established a modern administrative system in one of the most unstable, impoverished and culturally 'backward' regions of the world, despite having a relatively small number of poorly trained personnel (Keller, 2003). Similarly, weak but expansive bureaucracies have developed in states with harsh climates and vast underpopulated terrain such as Mongolia and Saudi Arabia (Othman, 1979; Sanders, 1987).

natural references), they encapsulated highly varied physical features and social structures within broad reaches of territory, some largely uninhabited(Clarke, 2002: 261-62).[1] In addition, the post-colonial state's ability to impose its control is presumably affected by variations in levels of external political or military challenges to the integrity of those boundaries.

However, another integral aspect of these relationships is the influence of such domestic structures on the international behavior of developing states, particularly in terms of the likelihood of their involvement in militarized interstate disputes (MIDs) either with their geographic neighbors or with regional and global powers. This refers to the question of whether state behavior is "spatially heterogeneous", or independent of local structural factors, or "spatially dependent", or affected by its geographic location and setting (Aneslin and O'Loughlin, 1990: 326). Related to this concern is the possibility of significant differentiation in types and levels of conflict participation across regions, due to the relative characteristics of their state systems (Lemke, 2002, 2003a, 2003b). In an indirect sense, this might additionally derive evidence of "regional conflict formations" (RCFs), or complexes of collective armed violence that occurs among groupings of contiguous states (Väyrynen, 1984; Wallenstein and Stoltenberg, 1997; Rubin, 2001; Leenders, 2007), or "zones of peace", in which the absence of substantial militarized interstate conflicts produces null outcomes (Katowicz, 1998; Solingen, 1998: 64-71). Therefore, the paths of the causal arrows are reversed as a means of investigating the exogenous effect of the

1. These assumptions regarding population characteristics at the same time recognize deviations or outliers in the distribution of developing world cases, such as El Salvador (a density of 327 persons per km2 for a total area of 21, 041 km2) in Central America, an area otherwise known for highly varied settlement patterns within small states; Egypt (a density of 74 persons per km2 for a total area of 1,001,449 km2) in North Africa and Rwanda (a density of 343 persons per km2 for a total area of 26,338 km2) in sub-Saharan Africa, both regions represented by large, sparsely inhabited states; and conversely, Laos (a density of only 25 persons per km2 for a total area of 236,800 km2) in Southeast Asia, a region which generally exhibits high population concentrations (CIA World Factbook, 2006).

internal qualities of nations on their external activities. This perspective further moves the scope of inquiry beyond the traditional emphasis on correlates such as regime type (the democratic or autocratic peace), military capabilities (the offense or defense balance) or economic development (power cycles or power transitions) in the literature on international conflict.[1]

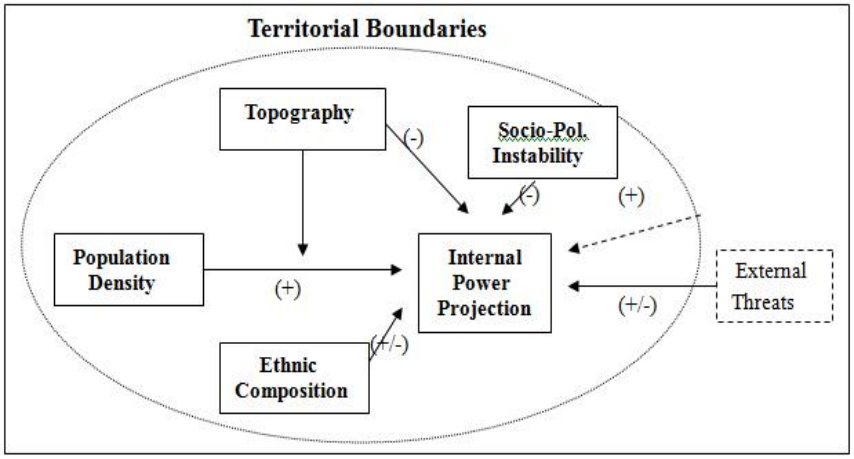
Finally, it is assumed logically that the process of state formation occurs simultaneously at both domestic and international levels, which necessarily involves interactions between internal and external variables. This addresses the issue commonly referred to in empirical social science as the "endogeneity problem", or the necessity of accounting for the presence of reciprocal rather than one-way causal relationships. Therefore, these assessments proceed from the assumption that large and small-N foci are not mutually exclusive, as the intricacies of political activities which transpire at the level of an individual state are linked to those which occur in the larger state and international system within which it is situated.

The primary stage of this composite theoretical structure is specified in Figure 1 below. The first independent variable, the density of the human population within a given territorial space, is expected to be positively associated with the ability of a central governing unit to project its administrative influence. However, this relationship is additionally affected by the intervening impact of the type of natural surface cover (forests, dry lands or mountainous terrain) in the areas in which the inhabitants of a state are located. At the same time, the independent effect of difficult topography on elite power projection is assumed to be negative. Thirdly, the complexity of the ethnic makeup of the polity's population, with its attendant cultural, linguistic and religious variations is assumed to exert a possible dual effect on the central control of territory: positively in areas that are occupied by a

1. Such orthodoxy is particularly represented by structural accounts that suggest that the relevance of world regions in international politics and policy is indicated solely by their relative share of global population size and gross domestic product (Kugler, 2006: 37-38).

plurality of a politically dominant seminary group, and negatively where identities are more highly fractionalized. The next explanatory variable, which represents the level of collective protests, violent internal uprisings and resultant political crises that occur within the national territory, is also assumed to exert a directly negative effect on internal control. The degree to which the physical or politically defined boundaries of the national unit are clearly demarcated is assumed to increase the power projection of state elites. Lastly, the level of threats to the state's territorial integrity in the form of military force that originates from outside of the domestic system is expected to increase or decrease the scope of elite control, contingent on its degree of cohesion and the quality of its existing infrastructure.

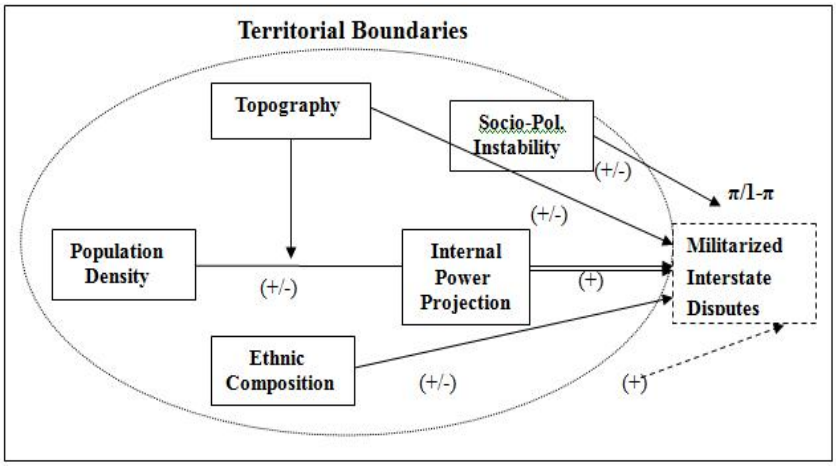
Figure 1: Domestic-Level Model of State Formation and Conflict Involvement



The secondary stage of the state formation-conflict synthesis is established in Figure 2. Here, the concentration of populations within a given territory is expected to be positively associated with the probability of involvement in military activities beyond national boundaries. Topographic features are again assumed to exhibit an interactive impact on population density. Yet here, these are also presumed to exert a direct influence on the probability that national armed forces will engage in international

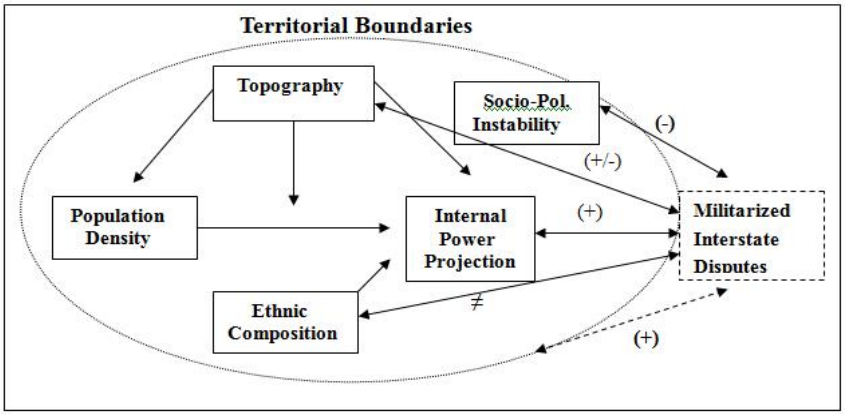
militarized disputes, with differentiation in effects between terrain types. Thirdly, the ethnic composition of the national population is also assumed to exert a varying effect on the likelihood of militarized disputes. The ability of a central governing unit to project its administrative influence across territory is additionally expected to increase the likelihood of participation in international conflicts. Fourth, the relative level of collective protests, violent internal uprisings or political crises is also assumed to exhibit varying effects on external conflict involvement. Finally, the level of demarcation of state boundaries is assumed to positively affect the likelihood of participation in international conflicts.

Figure 2: International-Level Model of State Formation and Conflict Involvement



The final stage or the presence of simultaneous and interactive relationships among the complex of Variables defined above, is presented in Figure 3. However, in this system, mutually significant associations are logically assumed only between four sets of predictors and the probable incidence of international conflict: the level of collective protests, internal violence and political crises, areas of difficult topography, the level of internal power projection of domestic elites, and political decisions affecting the demarcation of territorial boundaries.

Figure 3: Interactive Model of State Formation and Conflict Involvement



In summation, these models representing three successive and complementary levels of analysis are used to generate twenty-two main propositions that address both the direct (first-order) assumptions and related (second-order) implications of the theory.

Data and Methodology

This study applies a series of multiple regression analyses to a pooled time series cross-section (TSCS) data collection containing indicators for 88 geographically contiguous or proximate countries from Latin America, Africa, the Middle East, formerly Soviet Central Asia and Southeast Asia, for a total of 42,195 observations (see Table 1 below). This spatial domain is determined in relation to the selection of global areas that most clearly exhibit the structural conditions or challenges of governance identified in the theoretical framework. A survey of changes in world demographic characteristics (population density per square kilometer) from the 14th to the mid-twentieth century's reveals significant similarities between these regions in terms of population dispersion, while within the same time period, European, North and South Asian areas exhibit high levels of residential concentration (Clarke, 1971; Herbst, 2000: 15-16). These habitation patterns can also be related to the relatively weak

connections between urban-based administrations and rural locales in many developing or post-colonial states.

Table 1: State Systems included in Database by Geographic Location

Central America	***Sub-Saharan Africa***	***Middle East***	***Central Asia***
Belize	Angola	Israel	Kazakhstan
Costa Rica	Benin	Iran	Kyrgyzstan
El Salvador	Botswana	Iraq	Tajikistan
Guatemala	Burkina Faso	Jordan	Turkmenistan
Honduras	Burundi	Kuwait	Uzbekistan
Nicaragua	Cameroon	Lebanon	
Panama	Central African Republic	Oman	
	Congo	Qatar	
South America	Côte D'Ivoire	Saudi Arabia	
Argentina	Djibouti	Syria	
Bolivia	Equatorial Guinea	United Arab Emirates	
Brazil	Ethiopia	Yemen	
Chile	Eritrea		
Colombia	Gabon	**North Africa**	
Ecuador	Gambia	Algeria	
Guyana	Ghana	Egypt	
Paraguay	Guinea	Libya	
Peru	Guinea-Bissau	Morocco	
Suriname	Kenya	Tunisia	
Uruguay	Lesotho		
Venezuela	Liberia	**Southeast Asia**	
	Malawi	Burma (Myanmar)	
	Mali	Cambodia	
	Mauritania	Laos	
	Mozambique	Malaysia (Peninsula)	
	Namibia (1990-)	Thailand	
	Niger	Vietnam	
	Nigeria		
	Rwanda		
	Senegal		
	Sierra Leone		
	Somalia		
	South Africa		
	Sudan		
	Swaziland		
	Tanzania		
	Togo		
	Uganda		
	Zaire (DRC)		
	Zambia		
	Zimbabwe		

The state systems identified in Table 1 rely on the naturally occurring location of countries in macro geographical/continental regions and sub-regions rather than on other types of diplomatic, political or economic groupings as a standard of definition (United Nations Statistics Division, 2006, 2008). This is applied in order to obviate the tendency toward "fuzziness", or arbitrary or uncertain criteria for categorizing individual cases, as well as for determining the boundaries of individual systems. Exclusion of other regions or country cases that could also be classified as "post-colonial" or "developing", such as Southeastern Europe (Albania and the former Yugoslav republics), the former Soviet Southern Caucasus (Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia), and Northeast Asia (the Korean peninsula) is justified due to qualities such as high and even population densities and distributions, relative or general ethnic homogeneity (in the range of 85 percent or greater), or extensive periods of prior national independence (including the cores of former empires) in which territories were periodically annexed or occupied rather than essentially constituted by external forces or imperial powers. However, in order to maintain empirical accuracy, certain temporarily conquered states or protectorates that were never directly or formally colonized (Ethiopia, Iran, Oman, Saudi Arabia and Thailand)[1] but are pivotal components of their respective state systems are retained.[2] Lastly,

1. To maintain consistency with the temporal range under scrutiny, the data record for former empires or conquered territories begins in the historical period in which they were restored or converted to independent statehood after foreign influence or domination: e.g., Saudi Arabia through the Treaty of Jeddah which granted full separation from the United Kingdom from 1927-1932; Ethiopia through the East African Campaign and the Anglo-Ethiopian Agreement which ended the Italian occupation from 1941-44; Iran through the Tehran Conference and the final withdrawal of Soviet troops from the northern provinces from 1943-1946; Thailand after the disarmament and withdrawal of Imperial Japanese and British troops in 1945; and Oman through the British-backed coup led by Qaboos bin Said and the establishment of the Sultanate in 1970.

2. For these purposes the State of Israel is similarly included in the analysis of the Middle East regional system, as it shares the typical characteristics of many developing nations: boundaries which were imposed by British and French colonial authorities; low initial levels of economic development and political capacity; and a protracted state-building process pursued by a nationalist founding elite (Barnett, 1992: 14-15).

archipelago and small island states (Bahrain, Madagascar, Micronesia, insular Southeast Asia and the Caribbean/West Indies) are additionally omitted due to the need to for broader conceptualization in order to assess maritime rather than land boundaries as well as to identify them as constituent or independent state systems.

The data sets utilized in the empirical analysis cover a variety of temporal ranges, beginning from the point of national independence or entry into the international system (c. 1930-75 for the majority of African and Middle Eastern states, c. 1991 for the former Soviet Central Asian republics) to the most recent year for which numeric figures are available. Certain qualifications will be necessary for Latin American states, which save for Belize, Guyana and Suriname began the process of decolonization significantly earlier as the Spanish and Portuguese empires dissipated during the early to mid-nineteenth century. Therefore, these cases are also evaluated according to the earliest date for which there is recorded information for the relevant indicators. First, the empirical tests of the models demonstrate that the level of average population density per administrative unit is positively and significantly associated with internal power projection across a majority of regions, generating support for the first-order proposition that policy instruments such as tax administration are inherently affected by the habitation patterns of territories. Second, forest cover, dry lands and mountain terrain present a widely varying influence on internal power projection between state systems. Most important theoretically is the influence of topographic interactions with population according to differences in terrain type. For all but one of the systems in question (Southeast Asia), at least one of the first three hypotheses is confirmed. The first is rejected in Central America, where forests and jungles serve as a disperser rather than as an attractant and the second and third in Central Asia, where dry land populations negatively impact power projection, and mountainous terrain is associated with greater human activity and elite control.

Next, the hypothesis that ethno linguistic and religious makeup of states has

a varying impact on the exercise of governance across territory is confirmed for a majority of regions, advancing the analysis of social heterogeneity beyond traditional questions of intergroup conflict or its impact on the prospects for economic development or civil war. In both the Central American and North African state systems, ethno linguistic composition has had a positive effect on the ability of political elites to administer

National territories where cleavages approach a plurality, while the reverse is indicated for South America, the Middle East, sub-Saharan Africa and mainland Southeast Asia. In contrast, despite the highly complex and intricate ethnic composition of the Central Asian states, the fractionalization of identity groups does not seem to present a significant effect on the administration of territory when evaluated in the aggregate. The least successful propositions in the domestic-level model involve the potential dynamic impact of socio-political instability (SPI) on elite influence. The lack of substantive significance of collective protests in affecting elite control is confirmed across systems. However, in only one region (South America) were the indicators of both violent internal uprisings and political crises shown to be substantively significant in influencing internal power projection. The significance of violent internal uprisings in Central and South America and Southeast Asia is reflective of the prevalence of assassinations, purges and guerrilla warfare in their regional histories, while in Central Asia, it is the composite level of cooperation among domestic and international actors that is positively associated with elite influence. While the lack of substantial support for this segment of the theory may be attributed to the quality and coverage of the SPI data, an alternative interpretation is the possibility that specific administrative functions such as revenue collection, as opposed to other crucial features of governance, are not as significantly affected by internal conflict in developing nations as is conventionally assumed. This is a particularly true in that many modern armed insurgencies typically subsist through parallel economic activity which allows them to establish territorial fiefdoms (or, —states within states) separate from

the reach of central authorities.

To a far greater degree, the eighth hypothesis regarding the level of definition of territorial boundaries is also shown to significantly and positively affect the ability of elites to exercise their administrative influence within the areas under their jurisdiction, in all systems excepting Central America. This outcome provides support for the central assumption of the importance of demarcation in consolidating territorial units, which additionally promotes an understanding of the physical aspect of state formation as an observable process that unfolds across time. The final domestic-level proposition on the varying significance of external military threats to the integrity of territorial space confirms the complexity of this dynamic as a feature of international relations in different regional settings. A positive effect on internal power projection in indicated in Central America, North Africa and mainland Southeast Asia, while the relationship is negative in South America and the Middle East. Yet, this association is shown to have no significant impact in sub-Saharan Africa and Central Asia. The first hypothesis linking variation in domestic structural characteristics to involvement in international conflict is supported for the majority of regional cases. The level of internal power projection is shown to increase the likelihood of participation in interstate war in sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East, while the probability is decreased in Central America and Central and Southeast Asia. Hypothesis number eleven is shown to have comprehensive empirical support across regions, as average population density per administrative unit is consistently negatively associated with the likelihood of participation in interstate disputes across each state system.

Propositions number twelve, thirteen and fourteen that posit the positive and negative impact of different terrain types on the likelihood of the use of force in militarized disputes find varying degrees of support across systems. Forest cover and structure has the expected effect in Latin America and Central and Southeast Asia (a negative impact on the likelihood that militaries will engage in the use of force), but is shown to enhance the probability of military actions

in North and sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East. In contrast, mountainous terrain positively influences armed activities in South America, North Africa and the Middle East, while exhibiting only partial significance in the context of population in Central and Southeast Asia. The assumed negative relationship between ethnic and religious fractionalization and the likelihood of interstate disputes is fully corroborated by the empirical evidence across state systems. While this outcome may lend support to skeptical views regarding the role of ethnic or religious identity in international conflicts among developing states, the distinction is that it reflects the social composition of the polity rather than the significance of existing ethnic conflicts. Hypotheses pertaining to the internationalization of domestic conflict receive support only in South America, where collective protests are shown to increase the likelihood of interstate war, and sub-Saharan Africa, where internal violence is positively associated with the probability of involvement in interstate disputes. The proposition of a relationship between territorial demarcation and international conflict, finds support in all regions excepting Central and Southeast Asia, which indicates a distinction in the character of national borders and protracted territorial disputes in these systems.

The final stage of the theoretical exercise of this study, the simultaneous or interactive level, is represented by several findings. The proposition on the linkage between boundaries and interstate hostilities finds support only in Central America and the Middle East, in both settings exhibiting positive mutual significance. Amutual association between participation in interstate disputes and internal power projection is supported only in Central Asia, while the endogeneity of SPI is supported only in the Middle East and North and sub-Saharan African state systems. Collective protests both positively increase and are in turn influenced by external military actions in the latter region, while internal violence both increases and is fostered by external conflict in the Middle East and North Africa, and reduces and is negatively impacted by state involvement in interstate disputes below the Sahara. Finally, topographic

features are positively and significantly mutually associated with interstate disputes in Central America and North and sub-Saharan Africa, and variously in South America and Central Asia, while in Southeast Asia terrain types share a negative simultaneous relationship with international conflicts.

Results and Interpretation

At the conclusion of any social scientific enterprise, one is naturally compelled to return to the initial theoretical questions, puzzles or fascinations that first motivated the investigation. In the present instance, the question to be considered is: To what extent has this effort accomplished its stated goal of advancing both the subfield of Third World studies and studies of the state by subjecting these to systematic and varied methods of analysis?

The numerous challenges involved in the processes of state formation, consolidation of territorial control, and management of military force which are experienced by political elites in developing nations have typically been addressed in the prevailing literature by two primary queries: 1), whether the presumed dynamic of prevalent international conflict in galvanizing leaders to engage in coercion, regulation and extraction has operated differently (if at all) outside of the Western European realm, and 2), how and to what extent the capacity for governance of a state‘s territory is affected by characteristics such as geography, resources or population. However, the scope of the concerns addressed in the present study have been far more expansive, as it has sought not only to evaluate these basic questions, but also to overcome the separation of comparative and international perspectives in political science, to interrogate contemporary understandings of how states and the actors that inhabit them should be defined and understood in the context of domestic and international politics, and to construct and verify empirical models that account for these related processes. The preliminary results suggest that disaggregating states into their essential components may offer deeper insights into their behavior than has been provided by an emphasis on the classical indicators of economic, political and military power.

An additional contribution of these outcomes is to present the ―reverse image‖ of contemporary structural perspectives of world politics. Power-based theories identify particular developing states in South and East Asia (i.e., India and China) as the harbingers of peaceful or conflictual global transformation due to their dynamic economic and population characteristics, while assuming that societies in regions such as the Middle East demonstrate low productivity and demographic stagnation, and thus have little significance in assessing future international financial and security relationships (Tammen, et al, 2000; Kugler, 2006: 37-38). Yet, the finding that average population density per administrative unit is positively associated with a government's ability to project power within its territory among states that possess some of the most uneven and highly concentrated settlement patterns in the world, and the additional negative impact of the ongoing demarcation of their territorial boundaries on the probability of peace, invites one to reconsider prevailing definitions of power and conflict potential. At the same time, one of the primary objectives of the project, to capture the natural and physical composition of states as constituent elements of their politics, presents a somewhat greater challenge. While a reasonable number of significant outcomes are in evidence, it is at the same time not certain that the available format and treatment of the data is the most optimal for empirical assessment, and whether possible transformations or investigation of other functional forms might improve its usage in this regard.

Finally, as in any social scientific enterprise, it eventually becomes necessary to approach the frontier of the body of knowledge that has been produced thus far, and to consider the future directions for research that lie beyond. One possible dimension that has not been directly addressed in this study is the question of agency in the behavior of political elites, or the conscious decision-making activity of the authorities that are embedded in their respective territorial situations. Formal modeling approaches, either spatial or computational, might allow a more direct and powerful assessment of

interactions between the structural elements of states and the agents involved in governance, and the evolutionary patterns which are revealed by iterated analyses. More specific to the quantitative results displayed above is the need to retrace the paths of the hypothesized associations in order to account for the wide variations in outcomes that are region or country specific. Accounting for these distinctions by returning to the level of individual states, or moving down Sartori‘s “ladder of abstraction”, might bring one closer to determining what correlates set state formation patterns within regions apart from one another. In summation, this study has demonstrated that the systematic analysis of state evolution in the world‘s developing areas is an unfolding effort, much like the ongoing crises and transformations that transpire year after year in the approximately 200 geopolitical entities of the world.

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