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POLITICAL SCIENCES  
Thesis Summary**

**THE DYNAMIC OF FRAGILE STATES AND THE LEGITIMACY DEFICIT.  
EMPIRICAL AND ANALYTICAL PERSPECTIVES**

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## Summary

**Keywords:** fragile states, legitimacy, human rights, international community

The thesis entitled "The dynamic of fragile states and the legitimacy deficit. Empirical and analytical perspectives", is the result of a cognitive process which mediates the reflection of a reality through the separation, generalization and retention of theories related to fragile states and state legitimacy. By using this conceptual core, one has achieved a work which includes key aspects of the current condition of fragile states and details related to the pathological extension of state fragility, in terms of legitimacy deficit, in a pragmatic and original manner. The thesis distinguishes itself by the complexity and variety of points of view over the fragile states and by the evaluation of the relationship between legitimacy and both democratic and neodictatorial fragile states. One has examined the theories related to the state, human rights, legitimacy and state fragility through various cognitive lenses, from different ages, from illustrious thinkers of the Enlightenment to contemporary theorists, thus, building a comprehensive argumentative layout that ends with a number of applied methods of assessing state fragility: content analysis, literature review, institutional method, the historical method, the analysis of social documents, of primary sources (official documents of the organizations, articles of incorporation, agreements, decisions, etc., and official websites of the concerned institutions). The originality element lies in the approach of fragile states' dynamic and the contribution in theorizing the fragility phenomenon, to which one has provided a dichotomous valence.

The aims of this scientific process are the following:

- Identifying the causes of state fragility stagnation,
- drawing current scenarios related to the legitimacy deficit display,
- removing the assumption according to which fragile states are focused solely, on the African continent and Middle East,
- the validation of a theory related to the dichotomy of state fragility.

The thesis is based upon the next two hypotheses:

- Fragile states do not localise themselves solely in the conflictual zones, being detected in stable regions as well,
- state fragility is a dichotomous concept and phenomenon.

Considering these hypotheses, one has investigated the association of a new idea with an old fact, namely, the dynamic of fragile states as a new idea and its approach in terms of

legitimacy as a well known and examined fact, but without being considered an obsolete one. These two hypotheses interconnect themselves, so that, the first contradicts the existence of fragile states solely in conflict zones, but its confirmation depends directly on the confirmation of the second one. At the same time, the state fragility is ramified into two types (by keeping the basic meaning), and thus, it suggests its extension beyond the conflict areas.

The first two chapters enclose the literature review, synthesizing in a first part, the theories of fragile states and state fragility, followed by theories of legitimacy, political power and human rights. The complexity of state fragility as a phenomenon, suggests that this issue cannot be assessed in a comprehensive manner. The concept of state fragility is subjected to an ongoing debate, but its exploration is limited, the most discussed topic in the lexical field of ailing states being represented by failed states, therefore, one has recounted theories related to the state failure and its manner of manifestation and detection. The first chapter consists of the theoretical part with a reference to the concept of state fragility, thus, the first part is dedicated to theoretical constructs related to state decline and its causes, typologies and classifications of fragile states, several solutions to state-building and successful cases of state's consolidation. The second chapter highlights the state functions, because, before taking into account the fragile condition of a state, it is necessary to understand its role towards the citizens and the international community. Under these considerations, one has described the state as a political and administrative entity and as a provider of goods associated to statehood. The third chapter presents the indicators used in evaluating and measuring state fragility and the results achieved by several research groups and organizations.

Legitimacy is an immanent condition of a state and validates the national and international state prerogatives. In the beginning of the second chapter, one refers to the concept genesis of legitimacy and its multiple values, categories and circumstances, relating aspects indurated in history which in time have been diluted, improved, changed, etc. One has observed that the outward rigid particularity of legitimacy is a false impression, given the fact that the concept has roost and interpretations which currently revolutionizes the international political sphere. The first chapter presents the theoretical construction of legitimacy and its anthropological perspectives, followed by an introduction to the normative field of this topic and its practical implications, which describes the circumstances of dilution or strengthening the legitimacy and the institutional framework for its implementation. Last part presents two analytical elements of legitimacy on whose basis one has obtained a part of the results of this thesis. The political power and the human rights are points of reference in analysing the

legitimacy deficit, and they both have certain limitations when approached in an abusive manner. Thus, one has described the issues related to the justification of power, the legal basis of human rights, with references to the archetypal documents which have traced the idea of right at a cognitive level.

The third chapter represents the core of the research, paving the way to new debates related to the condition and structure of modern states. State fragility is a phenomenon and a characteristic of a state and the first aspect noticed after the partial exploration of this issue is the dichotomous nature which has not been observed until now. The dichotomy of state fragility presented and argued in this thesis, gives answers to some questions related to the manner of manifestation of fragility in different parts of the world. The existence of a moderate and a severe state fragility represents a starting point for other scientific approaches and offers the required originality note. The validation of this theory opens new frontiers of knowledge, by eliminating cliches that confuse fragile states to poor states or failed states with fragile states. There are boundaries for each concept and phenomenon, and the third chapter demonstrates and highlights this issue. This chapter summarizes some results of this thesis, the first of which is the discovery of state fragility complexity as a phenomenon and the different manner of its manifestation. State fragility may be found in developing countries as well, a fact that was not far enough emphasized. In countries such as Yemen, Sudan, Guatemala, Haiti and many others, violence and poverty are immanent elements of statehood and the fragility is self-evident, but the dynamic of political tensions, economic and social crisis provides vulnerable facets for Western states as well. Therefore, the state fragility does not limit itself to penury and insecurity, and other factor carry enough weight to the extension of this issue. At present, countries such as Romania, Greece, Portugal, Spain etc.. can be called fragile, but as there are details that make the difference between a failed state and a weak state, there are issues that differentiates the fragile states from conflict zones of fragile states from relatively stable areas. Within this context, this study introduces two terms that have not been used so far and may be the subject of debate regarding the state's performance: moderate fragility and severe fragility. Table 1 displays the differences between the moderate fragile states and those facing a severe fragility.

Table 1. Differentiating elements of state fragility

<i>Moderate fragility</i>	<i>Severe fragility</i>
Ideologies and cultural factors superficially	Ideologies and cultural factors divide the

contribute in consolidating the society	society
Sporadic violations of human rights	Massive human rights violations
Peaceful social movements	Violent protests
Weak Government	Oppressive Government
Warnings from international community	External sanctions
Democracy requires improvements	Democracy requires a reinvention
Persuasion by argument	Coercion by force <sup>1</sup>

Within this context, one has confirmed the hypothesis according to which, fragile states do not limit themselves in the conflict areas. According to the intensity of several indicators, one may set the level of state fragility and this latter topic represents the second part of the third chapter, along with the application of the indicator related to the human rights abuses. By applying a model called *who did what to whom*, which is frequently used by *Human Rights Data Analysis Group*, one has noticed the lack of human rights insertion as a normative task. This model highlights the issue of human rights violations and their effects over the society, their impact over the state as a political actor and the manner of determining the type of fragility based on the number of cases of violation of rights. The tool involves indexing the number and the type of actors involved, the manner in which the human rights were violated and the type of victims. The purpose is to discover the relationships between crime, the offender and the victim, and the proportion and frequency of human rights violations. One has collected data for a specific period of time, namely, 2007 to 2011. One has used six points of reference, three moderately fragile states (Romania, Greece and Spain) and three severely fragile states (Sudan, Yemen and Syria). The last part consists in tracing the line from moderate fragility to collapse and one has conducted an analysis of the severe embrittlement process and the affected state elements and the circumstances of crossing the stage to a fatal point. The *Who* section consists of the main actors which have contributed to human rights violations and the section *Did What* displays the actions taken by the actors over the victims which are listed in the final section *To Whom*. For each model, one has mentioned the frequency of human rights violations.

The application of this model has led to the discovery of different frequencies of human rights abuses in fragile states, but this observation is not sufficiently relevant in determining the level of fragility. The most important issue in analysing state legitimacy and

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<sup>1</sup> Both persuasion by argument and coercion by force are the two notions of authority claimed by Hanna Arendt.

state fragility lies in the type of actors who commit human rights abuses and the type of abuse. The number of cases is useful to determine the percentage of the population affected, but it cannot determine the level of legitimacy deficit. By checking all items from Table 1, one notices that Sudan is a state with a severe fragility, but the number of abuse cases is smaller compared to the number of inhabitants, than in Greece, for example. In 2011, Sudan's population was estimated to 30,894,000, and up until this year, it has already recorded around 775 cases, which reported to the number of inhabitants, would result that around 0, 002% of the population is affected. On the other hand, Greece's population is estimated at 10,787,690 inhabitants which reported in 350 cases of human rights violations, would result 0.003% of the population affected. The frequency of cases is relevant, but not reported to the population, because there are situations where state authorities have violated the rights of a few citizens several times. For example, in 2011, 13 arbitrary arrests of human rights defenders have been occurred in Khartoum, and they were tortured and detained incommunicado at the same time, which doubles the number of facts.

The frequency of human rights abuses has been analysed separately, because it is one of the most important item from Table 1 and it totals the other items according to the intensity and contributing to the assessment of legitimacy. Thus, there are situations when ideologies and cultural factors are an indicator for the analysis of human rights. One notes that states with moderate fragility deal with the social and cultural rights abuses over the minorities, with a different frequency from the severely fragile states. The latter must cope with a thorny issue, due to the divization of society according to ideological and cultural criteria, and the human rights abuses occur in these circumstances. The third item from table 1, i. e. the protests, is closely related to the second issue, namely, human rights, because social movements may occur due to massive violations of human rights. A weak government meets some limits in monitoring the respect for human rights, as observed from this point, and an oppressive government suggests by definition, a lack of respect for all three generations of human rights. Democracy is also influenced by this issue, and sometimes it needs a reinvention accompanied by an awareness of the importance of human rights and an accountability from the institutions which are created in order to provide them.

The results presented in chapter 4 reflect the empirical and analytical note which has been mentioned in the title of the thesis. In the first part, one has detected three types of legitimacy distortions, namely, the early stage development of state institutions, the "state within a state" system and the irrelevant institutions. One has also considered the influence of non-state international actors whose actions carry much weight in a multipolar world, and the

relationship between fragile states and the international community has been discussed according to the level of states' development. State legitimacy, as a condition claimed by the state's citizens and the international community, it is analysed at this rate, according to the events which have occurred in both European and Muslim states. In this process of presenting the legitimacy, one has used a series of tension parameters which reflect the graphic image of legitimacy. At this rate, one attempted to advance an argument of supporting the existence of abuse of power in democratic states and its form of expression, by invoking the influence of non-state international actors. The tension barometers were designed to express the intensity of the events surrounding the protests, the external interventions and the internal political crisis. As regards the European countries, one has analysed the circumstances of triggering the economic, political and economic tensions, but one considered necessary the application of barometers over neodictatorial states, in order to consolidate the theory related to the dichotomy of state fragility and to observe the impact of tensions in other regimes than the democratic one. One has attempted to approach the legitimacy from social, political and economic perspectives and placing it in an era of meta-national interests. All in all, the tension barometers have measured the pressures to which several states have undergone in the last five years, and the values corresponding to the tensions are expressed by the number of the significant events that have contributed to the deficit of legitimacy. The numerical values are from 0 to 5, the latter representing the maximum number of events that took place in Greece, Romania, Spain, Sudan, Yemen and Syria. For example, three tensions in a given year correspond to three events with an impact over the institutions, the society and the international community. One has aimed to analyse the situation of economic, political and social risks for a period of five years, i.e. 2008-2012. The aforementioned countries were found representative for the type of problems they face with. For example, the chosen European states proved to be the victims of the financial crisis and the Muslim states proved to be victims of insecurity and despite the different social and political structure of these states, all these countries have met a legitimacy deficit. On the other hand, the European states are relevant in terms of development level accompanied by their reaction in the face of economic and political challenges, and the presence of Spain is justified by the intention to critically analyse a state that has reached the threshold of development, but which meets some limits in coping with the current economic challenges. The tensions' nature and their association with the events is based on the their impact over legitimacy:

- political tensions: external pressures, motions of no confidence, governments' falls
- economic tensions: implementation of austerity measures

- social tensions: protests against the power, violent acts.

At an abstract level, one has detected an incompatibility between the state legitimacy under neodictatorship and the structure of the modern state, and in practice, one has detected three circumstances of legitimacy deficit, which mainly concerns the institutional framework of the state. This part reveals the manner in which the legal and political order of the institutions is damaged by the abuse of power or by the governmental inertia, thus resulting in the legitimacy deficit. The criticism regarding the irrelevance of institutions and the early stage of their development, provides another originality note and it expresses the comprehensive nature of applying the qualitative research methods. The tension barometers helped making the difference between fragile states and fragile moments. At this rate, one has displayed a graphical representation of legitimacy deficit and the avoidance of generalizations. The debated events from severely and moderate fragile states, have drawn the attention to the fact that certain situations which contribute to the social, economic or political destabilization of a state, do not cause a fragile situation as well.

The last chapter summarizes in a comprehensive manner, the results obtained at this stage of the thesis and it also presents several particularities extracted through a content analysis of reports, statistics and documentaries related to territorial and social insecurity from unstable areas. The first subchapter contains, as the title suggests, other situations and examples of stimulating and maintaining the fragility process. These situations refer to specific behavioural patterns created within states, which occurs to both societal and institutional level, designing pathogen systems of the erosion of state structure. These situations are analysed in order to highlight the issues that contribute to the legitimacy deficit. The second section addresses certain features which once again confirm the complexity of fragility and the unpredictability of its progress or stagnation, caused by the forced transformations of some decisions or behaviours, at the national and international level. One of the features is the existence of several issues of moderate fragility within severely fragile states or issues of severe fragility within moderate fragile states. One has also detected several social anomalies belonging to disrupted societies where violent minorities dominate passive majorities. Another feature has emerged from the analysis of the oppressive government with its political violence: the paradoxical impartiality of the opposition. At this rate, one refers to the Syrian state, i.e. to the dissident groups who opposed the popular uprising against President Bassar al Assad. A large number of Syrian citizens claim for a fully democratic governance, but their efforts are limited in achieving this goal, due to the apprehension of being unprotected after a coup d'état. Another feature draws from the analysis of human rights through the authorities'

control over the population. The leadership maintains control over the population through consent or coercion, and it depends what control is required and what types of abuses are undertaken. The proportion is: more abusive control means more selective killings, less control means more human rights abuses and under lack of control, the situation becomes indiscriminate, generating civil war. The lack of control generates civil war, anarchy and thus, both human rights violations and selective killings occur. The latter issue matters especially when the main actors are members of state institutions and civil wars are the main circumstances of their operation.

Fragile states' peculiarities and their seismic events they face with internally and externally, cause some confusion in the distinction between a fragile state and a fragile moment. At this rate, one removes some ambiguities which are based on the lexical field of fragile states. The fragile moments may occur in stable states, the latter being prone to unpredictable tensions as well. Therefore, the fragile moments are not a suitable indicator of assessing state fragility, where they are sporadic and do not destabilize the society for the long-term. All in all, fragile moments do not settle the fragile condition of a state, because a low frequency of social and political episodes may be considered as elements of fragilization, but they define a short term, which may be successfully passed. Where fragile moments show an increasing frequency, they may determine the fragility state. Therefore, one must clearly define the next concepts: fragile moment, fragility state, fragilization. The fragile moment is the political, social or economic event like, which is repercussive over the state, highlighting its lack of capacity in preventing instability scenarios and reducing its power in taking action strategically, against certain challenges. The fragility state is defined as a condition of a state given by certain social, political or economic parameters, and it may persist or it may be passed in a short time, depending on the actions taken by the state authorities and civil society. The fragilization is the state pressure process, which affects the state's ability to provide solutions and services at the request of citizens or the international community. The fragile moments and the fragility states are not always particular to fragile states, but their stagnation affects the state structure and may induce a moderate or a severe fragility.

The last section returns to several theories related to the optimal legitimacy and the manner in which the legitimacy may go down to deficit. This last part is an evaluation of the results, by using an analytical "slider", in order to set the causes of fragile states' dynamics, the legitimacy deficit stagnation and ultimately, to set the configuration of legitimacy deficit. The peculiarities and fragile situations have been obtained from a qualitative analysis, in order to highlight the fact that fragile states are empirical reference points, most often

versatile. The items of dichotomous fragility do not change themselves, other items and patterns might emerge; on the other hand, fragile states' features may pass off, may advance, or they might metamorphose themselves.

## **Final considerations**

The thesis is based on a consistent bibliographic support to which reference was made by 312 footnotes and a series of epistemological tools of political thought, all serving to form a challenging and complex intellectual product. The theory advanced in this thesis, namely the existence of moderate and severe fragility, claims a dichotomy due to the two-part division of the concept. The issues of these two types of fragility interconnect themselves, and, as a future direction of research, one recommends the discovery of other differentiating factors that could contribute to the welding of this theory. The severe and the moderate fragility, do not stand alone, due to the singularity of fragility and its ambivalent feature. Conceptually, the dichotomy of fragility remains valid, but there is a possibility that some states to change their social or political configuration, which would require changes in the elaboration of the theory advanced in this case. It is possible for a fragile state to become a stable one, but the items from Table 1 may keep their validity. Judging by the new challenges of humanity, the fragility will not volatilize itself, and plotting future scenarios, even if they involve advanced forecasting methods, it is possible under these conditions, at the same macro level to which this research was conducted. In terms of the expression of fragility and the dynamics of its indicators of assessment, one learns that the ideologies and cultural factors will always be subjected to controversial debates in terms of social identity, and the consent seen as a solution for the amelioration of some tensions, depends on the relationship between the state and society. Without drawing a pessimistic note, a society cannot be based solely on obedience and consensus. The government effectiveness is a permanent goal, both globally and nationally, but as the tension barometers suggested, the fortuitous changes of power, the spontaneous reactions of citizens and the political interests which place themselves beyond moral norms, impede the penetration of a good governance into a political sphere. From this point, the fragility state becomes difficult to overcome.

The western interventions upon severely fragile states will not solve the regional and global insecurity, all the more so, when the fragile state concept is often associated to state failure, or, when the analysis of fragile states is based upon generalizations and questionable

assumptions. One recommends a more constructive debate in terms of consolidating several regional or international conventions, since the external interventions are rather seen as interferences. This issue it is possible, if only the whole international community would understand that terrorism and poverty are not the only issues of a fragile state. Where states are a source of violence and oppression, then the fragility states will be fuelled by the latter issues, and the given state is prone to collapse. States matter as political actors, but they are also difficult to be monitored. The aim is to observe and examine the states dynamic in meeting the international responsibilities and maintaining the internal order. A greater attention over the severely fragile states, might divert the attention from the risk that moderate fragile states are subject to.