

# Conceptual Variety of Terms, Characterizing State in Social Sciences

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**Abstract.** The presented article contains a brief comparative analysis of the terminology used in the social sciences that study public policy to describe the characteristics of the "strength" / "weakness" of the state, using North American, Latin American, and Russian sources as examples. The article states that in most of the cases under consideration, the descriptive characteristics of the state's weakness used by researchers evaluate the political regime and its "relations" with society through civil society institutions. The main focus of the study is the conceptual variability of the terms describing statehood in the social sciences, namely: "weak state" / "fragile state", "failed state" / "failed state", "anocracy", "absent" / "absentee state" and desert state / "estado desertor" in the context of the relationship of the characteristics of the political system and economic development of the state. The article indicates an increased interest in describing the so-called "weak state" or "failed state", as well as transitional and "hybrid forms", as opposed to the primary interest of 20th century social scientists in describing, studying and comparing democratic, authoritarian and totalitarian regimes in the context of their influence on the economic potential of the state.

## 1. Introduction

In the dynamically changing conditions of the world economy, one of the most important is the ability of the state and its institutions to respond to challenges and adapt to the new situation. In addition to macro-, meso- and microeconomic factors, the domestic political situation in the state and the ability of administrative authorities to interact with socio-political and socio-economic institutions (such as, for example, public organizations under the auspices of various political forces) are of decisive importance for these processes. and subjects of various forms of entrepreneurship, respectively) for the purpose of stimulating and supporting processes of economic and demographic growth.

The effectiveness of the impacts and the nature of the consequences of the deliberate or indirect influence of this activity of the authorities (in the broad sense of the word) in relation to the regulation of socio-economic processes in the state is largely determined by the nature of the interaction between society and the state as a whole.

In the framework of the presented work, this character of interaction is described using indicators of the "weakness" / "strength" of the state (in terms of the depth of state intervention in public relations, in the process of legitimizing power, in describing the features of the functioning of the political system, etc.) and its elements as organizations of social, economic and political institutions in society.

The mentioned set of characteristics “strength” / weakness of the state can serve as a tool for analyzing not only the stability of the political system and statehood as a whole, but also the potential for the development of various forms of private (mainly small and medium) entrepreneurship as an indicator of a normally functioning economy, developed entrepreneurial initiative and the level of quality of the so-called "human capital".

This paper provides a brief comparative overview of the characteristics used in analyzing the features of public policy, such as: weak state / fragile state, failed state / failed state, anocracy, absent state and deserted state.

The given characteristics of the "strength" / "weakness" of the state are considered in the context of the relationship between the potential for economic development and the stability of the political system and the degree and nature of the legitimating of power.

The Statehood or/and State, as object of study, received innumerable classificatory epithets: from the neutral state to the ethical or teleocratic State; from the minimum State to the welfare state; from the police state (gendarme) to the constitutional state; from the legal State to the cultural State; from the legislative State to the administrative State; from the social state to the post-social (or neo-liberal) state. There is also an increasing tendency to use the terms used in the analysis of public policies such as: “weak state”/ “estado fraco” / “fragile state”, “failed state”, “anocracy”, “absent state” and “deserter state”/ “estado desertor”. The increase in these terms is a sign of increased political interest and the other fields of the various sciences in describing and studying the phenomenon in context of economic development in particular.

According to Rodrigues [1], one can define the State as a set of complex, differentiated and coordinated institutions of government, which edit and apply the law and preserve the internal order, having armed forces for defense and attack. The state arose in response to the longing for the organization of human communities and as a source of superior power to compel obedience, ending or curbing the primitive forms of conflict resolution.

A society constituted by rational directives has individuals aware of their role and potentialities, with outstanding political participation. Such a structured way ferments the state entity, determining, the governing body and leader: civil society. By failing to follow this pattern, political society (state) tends to dominate and subjugate civil society, making political institutions fragile and often illegitimate, in certain cases affecting other public relations, like economic development and entrepreneurship.

According to Aguilar [2], there are changes in the state in Latin America, where it is possible to distinguish cyclical movements from strengthening and weakening the state in the capacity to propose public policies, to implement them and to make citizens take advantage of them.

Considering the particularities of the object of Latin American state, we believe it is possible for academic purpose to make comparisons with states of other countries (with different characteristics).

It can be observed that there are existing cycles of approximation and distancing of the State, and that these cycles determine the configuration of the role of the State and its capacity to intervene. We can also assume, as a hypothesis, that in all of the aforementioned terms, this impossibility of State intervention is implied.

From the above follows that in Fragil State, explicitly the roots of demographic weakness are related to economics, political challenges, and state sovereignty.

According to Shulman [3], the regime can not be called autocracy, dictatorship or tyranny if there are at least two parties and regular elections in the country. According to Catherine Shulman, classic hybrid states are Russia and Venezuela (Venezuela is tending to be a failed state), noting that the states of Latin America, North Africa and the territory of the former Soviet Union can be analyzed together. Uganda, Iraq according to the researcher are failed state and Ukraine - "the so-called anocracy, or weak state".

By revising the lists of hybrid-states that was determined by the some significant researchers, Steven Levitsky and Lucan Way determined 35 of them, Barbara Geddes - 128 [4,5,6] - there is a impression that only thing matters to such a countries - if they are located in Latin America or Eastern

Europe, Asia or Middle East, they will someday be “democratized”. And whether in Africa or in the post-Soviet space - then most likely stagnate and crumble if steps are not taken to modernize both the political and economic systems of such a states.

In this case the hybrid regimes and pure regimes are considered more resistant than weak states, failed state and anocracy.

The general problem of hybrid regimes is the problem of the transfer of power - according to Shulman, no hybrid-state has a legal mechanism to transfer power. If it were existed, they would be democracies and they solve this problem in more diverse ways. The most ingenious are those with dominant parties, such as Mexico, where the ruling party wins elections again and again, but within it grows its elite and gradually passes power on to new generations of officials who, however, have gone through some elective training. This is, from some points of view, a variant of the Soviet Union political system, but without ideological side. At the same time, other parties also exist and can also win some voting seats. This political mechanism allows the regime to remain virtually endless, if the relevant elites provide their constant reproduction.

The most fragile regimes, according to aforementioned researchers (Shulman, Rodrigues, Aguilar and others), are the personalists. They concentrate power in the hands of a person and his closest associates, and then depend on the heir if there are children. And the successor can be physically eliminated causing the regime to fall. By the logic, this, with very high probability, may give to the hybrid-states the instability they are trying to avoid [7].

According to the definition given by various dictionaries (for example – by the Oxford English Dictionary) “absenteeism” is a habitual pattern of absences in the work process, duty or obligation, whether due to lack or delay due to some intervening motive. Absenteeism is absence or non-participation. And, in a broader political sense, absenteeism is the failure of a citizen to fulfill his or her civic duty. First of all, the non-election. Second, non-participation in other possible forms of political life, such as rallies, volunteering, participation in political parties, participation in clubs and so on. The global trend is an increase in absenteeism, that is, a worldwide decline in turnout, except in countries such as Brazil where voting is mandatory and absenteeism appears in the form of psychological absenteeism (null vote, unknown candidate vote, blank vote etc) [8].

But it can be also spoken about the of state absenteeism in public policies, abandonment of public relations in order to provide control or distribution of goods. Thus we arrive at the important term - deserting state.

According to Aguilar [9], "the situation of abandonment in which public sectors of the social reality of these countries (Brazil and Argentina) are increasingly important, especially since the last decade and after the return of democracy - motivated the intention to attribute the quality "Deserting" the State in the general context of decisive public policies of the social areas, and in particular in the national public education.

That research also emphasizes the role of the media in the construction of social representations and development of economics on the effectiveness of the State as part of the privatization process and describes the volume of the term through the following linguistic connotations: abandon, leave, resign, give up, absent, deviating, omitting, fleeing or withdrawing, abandoning the cause or ideas, making an important analysis of the macroeconomic context.

In other words, such country turned to state in which government is considered to have failed at some of its basic responsibilities, for example keeping the legal system working correctly, and providing public services (for example - electricity, water, education, healthcare, etc.).

George Sorensen [10] uses the concept of "fragile states" to describe a set of states with weakened economic and political institutions and processes, reserving the term "failed state" for cases where this fragility intensifies. Robert H. Jackson [11] uses the term "failed states" to characterize states that, although internationally recognized as sovereign territories, are unable to guarantee the internal conditions of peace, order and proper governance, conditions traditionally associated with political independence.

The US non-governmental organization “Fund for Peace” publishes an annual ranking called “The Fragile States Index” [12]. Factors such as increasing demographic pressure, massive refugee movement, chronic and constant population decline, severe economic crisis, criminalization or delegitimization of the state, progressive deterioration of public services, continuous human rights violations, configuration of security appliances as a state within the state, among other factors [13].

Anocracy is a regime of government with inherent characteristics of political instability and governmental inefficiency, also being defined as a junction of democracy with dictatorship or as a “mixture of democracy with autocratic features” [14]. This type of regime is particularly susceptible to the emergence of armed conflicts and unexpected or adverse changes of leadership [15].

By using the results of the analysis of the aforementioned researches and the research conducted by the authors, including comparative studies of economic statistics and classifications, it is possible to put forward the assumption that the factors causing the potential instability of political systems (turning them into a «fragile», «weak», or a «fail» states), also affect the economic and demographic development in such states.

## **2. Methods**

The aim of the study is to reveal a possible correlation between the political stability of a state that has signs of “weak” and its effect on the economic development.

To achieve the intended goal, the following tasks were set:

1) To analyze relevant approaches to the description of the characteristics of political systems and the stability / instability of statehood (on the examples of works by authors from North and Latin America and Russia).

2) To identify the relationship between the indicators of “strength” / “weakness” of statehood and the potential for economic and demographic development of countries with economies in transition / developing (Latin America, Russia and the post-Soviet space and the countries of North Africa).

3) To propose ways to overcome the negative impact of the characteristics of the functioning of the political system on the economic and demographic development of states.

The following methods are used in this study.

Theoretical:

*Analysis* - the study of the characteristic features of the stability of the political system.

*Synthesis* - for the definition of a complex of factors characterizing a state as “strong” or “weak”.

*Generalization* - the postulation of a possible relationship between the characteristics of the “weakness” / “strength” of statehood and its economic and demographic development.

*Classification* – for the assignment of the studied states to determine types of the status of the political system.

Empirical:

*Comparison, analogy* - a comparison of economic and demographic indicators of the state and the characteristics of the “weakness” / “strength” of the political system.

*Observation* - the study of the economic and demographic indicators of the states mentioned in the study for certain time periods.

*Description* - terminological description of the stability complex of the political system based on the signs of “weakness” / “strength” of power institutions.

## **3. Results and discussion**

Based on the results of the research, it can be established that the state, characterized as having signs of instability and instability of the political system (weak state, fragile state, etc.) in many cases also has problems of an economic and demographic nature.

It has also been established that the so-called “hybrid” states, although more politically stable, nevertheless have similar economic and demographic problems as the “weak” states in the long run.

In addition, it was found that a side effect of the instability of the political system and the presence of the status of a “weak state” in the country (which is less, but also relevant for hybrid ones) is a

slowdown in economic development, caused primarily by the difficulty in implementing an entrepreneurial initiative due to overbureaucratization and “oligarchization” of key sectors of the economy, as well as reducing of the amount of resources dedicated by ruling power to protect private property and stimulate small and medium enterprises in favor of protecting the interests of “natural” monopolies, large corporations with state participation and subjects of economic activity interconnected with the authorities.

#### **4. Conclusion**

Based on a further interpretation of the results obtained in this study, based on the classical works of M. Weber and their modern interpretations, it is possible to conclude that, even if there is a negative impact of an unstable political system on social, economic and demographic processes, it is possible to use mechanisms and means of regulation affecting mainly economic social relations.

Thus, by increasing the involvement of citizens in entrepreneurial activity by stimulating it, for example, through tax incentives, subsidizing interest rates on bank loans, introducing quotas for insignificant government orders, and, also, through the simplifying of supervision and accounting procedures, it is possible to reduce the social tension and, to some extent, strengthen the position of the current government regarding to the "strength" / "weakness" characteristics of the state, without resorting to “risky” (fundamental reforms, repressions, changes in the foundations of the state system, etc.) means of public administration.

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