

**Helpdesk Research Report: Research on Conflict, State Fragility and Social Cohesion
10.07.08**

Query: Please provide a mapping of organisations (donors, academic institutions and NGOs) currently undertaking research on the linkages between conflict, state fragility and social cohesion, including an overview of their current work.

Enquirer: DFID

1. Overview
2. Key Organisations
3. Additional information

1. Overview

This query aimed to map long-term research programmes on the links between conflict, state fragility and social cohesion. However, there appear to be few programmes which link the three together. Most of the current work being undertaken centres either on the link between conflict and state fragility; or between conflict and social cohesion. This query focuses on the latter. However, this is still a very large area and can potentially encompass a diverse range of issues. While most of the research programmes identified during the course of this query cover wide-ranging topics, they can be broadly grouped as addressing three key areas:

- how social exclusion, particularly that which is identity-based – on gender, ethnic or religious lines – can provoke or exacerbate conflict. This can be as a result of various factors including discrimination, lack of participation and representation, and poor access to resources and services. (Please note that, as requested by the enquirer, only selected examples from the considerable number of research projects currently underway on the role of religious identity and movements have been included in this query);
- the processes by which people are mobilised into using violence; and
- the mechanisms which aim to address inequalities and promote social cohesion. These can include affirmative action, curriculum change, and transitional justice policies.

Note: The research projects below are organised by research institution and not by theme. In addition, this report does not cover DFID-funded projects. It also does not capture the significant amount of *individual* academic research that is also being undertaken in this area. In addition, as requested by the enquirer, only selected experts were contacted for comment on this query.

The descriptions included below are adapted from the project websites.

2. Key Organisations

United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD)

[http://www.unrisd.org/80256B3C005BB128/\(httpProgrammeAreasForResearchHome\)/44FC12E95F5E8D8E8025718B003C2B2A?OpenDocument](http://www.unrisd.org/80256B3C005BB128/(httpProgrammeAreasForResearchHome)/44FC12E95F5E8D8E8025718B003C2B2A?OpenDocument)

Contact:

Terence Gomez, Research Coordinator, UNRISD (Gomez@unrisd.org)

Research Programme:

Identities, Conflict and Cohesion: This programme aims to assess how processes of development and social change, as well as public policies, shape identities. The projects include:

- **Affirmative Action, Identity and Conflict** - This project examines affirmative action policies in selected multi-ethnic countries to assess whether targeting ethnic groups to resolve horizontal inequalities is the best mechanism to help resolve or reduce inter-racial conflict. The primary hypothesis of the project is that a policy based on a horizontal perspective reinforces racial identities and perpetuates ethnic differences which can, in the long term, hinder social cohesion. The second hypothesis is that the idea of the value of horizontal policies may contribute to the rise of the use of a 'politics of identity' by political parties to secure support that can exacerbate ethnic difference and lead to racial tension.
- **Religion, Identity and Business** – This study aims to address the relationship between religious identity, socio-economic change and conflict by looking at breakaway groups within all major religions, including Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism and Buddhism. The project focuses on the issue of intra-religious diversity of belief and divides through a study of the business enterprises formed by religious groups. An analysis of the evolution of the commercial ventures of religious groups and the impact of these firms in funding and spawning religious movements locally and internationally will provide important new insights into identity formation and reformation among members of these communities, as well as each group's capacity to mobilise support and capture power.

A Micro Level Analysis of Violent Conflict (MICROCON)

<http://www.microconflict.eu/projects/projects.html>

Research programmes:

Poverty, Inequality and Social Exclusion: This programme aims to examine the relationship between violent conflict and poverty. It looks at the inequality and social exclusion of individuals, households and groups, recognising that conflict is both a cause and consequence of poverty, inequality and social exclusion. The programme aims to identify how conflict impacts on absolute and relative poverty, and whether poverty and changes in inequality affect the onset of mass violence. This programme is made up of the following projects:

- **Livelihoods and land:** This project investigates the ways in which different land allocation systems, especially gendered systems, create and/or exacerbate conflict and how this translates to productivity, social exclusion and poverty in Eastern Europe. It will use data from three or more of the following countries: Romania, Kosovo, Albania, Bosnia, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

- **Ethnic violence and economic processes:** This project will investigate the strategic use of political violence as a bargaining instrument by political entrepreneurs, in the contexts of civil conflicts in countries such as Rwanda and Moldova. The project will explore the roles played by ethnic identity, external interventions (e.g. colonising powers, international pressure, corruption), and economic dynamics (e.g. growth and living standards, inequality and attitudes with respect to social justice, health and fertility and land productivity, and consequences for poverty).
- **Dynamics of poverty in conflict areas:** This project will analyse the dynamics of poverty after violent conflict using data from Rwanda. It will also explore the hypothesis that while the conflict and the accompanying shocks have destroyed economic opportunities for one or more groups of people (often geographically clustered) it has created new opportunities for other people.

Contact:

Dr Julie Litchfield, Work Package Leader, Poverty Research Unit at Sussex, University of Sussex (j.a.litchfield@sussex.ac.uk)

Publications:

Justino, P. and Verwimp, P., 2008, 'Poverty Dynamics, Violent Conflict and Convergence in Rwanda', MICROCON Research Working Paper 4, Brighton
http://www.microconflict.eu/publications/RWP4_PJ_PV.pdf

- **Poverty, exclusion and violence in South Africa:** This project aims to uncover important (potential) links between poverty, exclusion and violence in the post-apartheid South African context, focussing on Cape Town. The project will look specifically at the links between perceptions of distribution and distributive justice, and norms around the use of violence.

Contemporary Conflicts and Ethnic-Religious Tensions: This programme explores the role of ethnicity and religion in mobilisation in violent conflicts. It links the sociological, economic and political aspects of collective action, with analysis of psychological categories of group identity and perception and key historical processes of religious and ethnic integration inside and outside Europe. Although forms of internal communal unrest may not necessarily result in mass violence, they are often responsible for the destruction of livelihoods, increases in economic and social uncertainty, loss of trust between communities and the waste of significant human and economic resources. Persistent forms of civil unrest have also often constituted the preliminary stages of more violent conflicts, including civil wars. This programme aims to provide concrete evidence on micro-level processes linking communal conflicts grounded in religious and ethnic divides and mass violence, through the following projects.

- **From violence and conflict to models of integration of Muslims in Europe:** This project will examine key aspects of Muslim integration in Europe, based on selected case studies in Belgium, Bulgaria, France, the Netherlands, Russia, Spain, Sweden and the UK. These countries have significant Muslim populations that participate to varying degrees in local and national political processes with reference to their religious identity.
- **Muslim integration in Bulgaria and Serbia:** The aim of this project is to analyse the ways in which Muslims and non-Muslims in Bulgaria and Serbia manage their interreligious relationships on individual, household and local levels.

- **Religion, caste and communal violence in India:** This project addresses the role of ethnicity and religious identities in explaining the onset of communal violence in three Indian states: Maharashtra, Kerala and Tamil Nadu. The project will examine the role of ethnic divisions along caste and religious lines (Hindu, Muslim, Sikh and Christian) in explaining contemporaneous and dynamic inequalities of access and outcomes that result in violent conflicts.

Contact:

Michael Emerson, Work Package Leader, Centre for European Policy Studies (michael.emerson@ceps.eu)

Group Formation, Identities and Mobilisation: This programme focuses on key questions about who the actors of conflict are and why they choose to join in violent activities. It comprises four individual projects which include:

- **Determinants of individual participation in collective violence:** This project will analyse reasons leading individuals to participate in collective action leading to group violence.
- **Motives for fighting and group mobilisation:** This project examines questions of formation of group identities and mobilisation of fighters in Nigeria and Niger. A particular focus will be placed on young men, who account for most of the fighting forces. A subcategory of this area of research will explore the factors behind such mobilisation amongst the rural peasantry.
- **The users of force:** This project analyses the origins and foundations of armed militias in the Mano River Countries (e.g. Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea). The project will aim to inform policy debates around international responses to conflict, particularly the policies and practices that seek to 'demilitarise' politics, or encourage the transition of armed groups to more peaceful forms of political and social competition.
- **Recruiting child soldiers - vulnerability, agency and reintegration:** This project focuses on the mobilisation of children as fighters. It aims to identify patterns, processes, and mechanisms of recruitment of children and adolescents to armed groups, and examine why children join armed groups.

Contact:

Frances Stewart, Work Package Leader, Queen Elizabeth House, University of Oxford (frances.stewart@qeh.ox.ac.uk)

International Peace Research Institute, Oslo (PRIO)

<http://www.prio.no/Research-and-Publications/Programmes/Ethics-Norms-and-Identities/>

Contact:

Gregory Reichberg, Senior Researcher, PRIO (greg@prio.no)

Research programme:

Ethics, Norms and Identities: This project comprises two broad and interrelated strands of research. The first addresses normative dimensions of conflict and peacebuilding, including questions related to the resort to armed force, norms of behaviour in conflict situations, and

issues of moral and legal responsibility. The second strand considers how different identities influence, and are influenced by, the dynamics of conflict and peace. Identities examined include those of gender, ethnicity and religion. The programme aims to:

- Increase awareness of normative issues relevant to peace and conflict research;
- Conduct research on perceptions of identity and belonging, as well as on beliefs about social, moral, legal and religious norms, insofar as these contribute to conflict and/or peacebuilding;
- Explore, often through fieldwork, local perceptions and factors that bear on conflict and conflict resolution.

The programme is organised into three research groups:

- Ethical, legal, and religious dimensions of armed conflict;
 - Gender, security and peacebuilding; and
 - Migration and transnationalism.
-

Households in Conflict Network (HiCN)

www.hicn.org

Contact:

Patricia Justino, Co-Director, HiCN (p.justino@ids.ac.uk)

Research programme:

The purpose of the HiCN is to undertake collaborative research into the causes and effects of violent conflict at the household level. In particular, it aims to:

- characterise various forms of conflict from a household level perspective;
- identify channels through which households are affected by conflict-induced shocks;
- quantify the impact of conflict at the household level, such as the loss of household members, livestock and land;
- analyse the feedback mechanism from household welfare to violent conflict, such as the effects of inequality and poverty on the incidence of conflict;
- develop methods best suited to analyse the impact of conflict on household welfare;
- derive policy recommendations based on research findings for supporting households and communities affected by conflict.

Publications:

- Justino, P., 2004, 'Redistribution, Inequality and Conflict', Poverty Research Unit, University of Sussex, Brighton
<http://www.sussex.ac.uk/Units/PRU/wps/wp18.pdf>
-

The World Bank

<http://go.worldbank.org/867RQS6BF0>

Research programme:

Post-Conflict Transitions: Political Institutions, Development and a Domestic Civil Peace: The Post-Conflict Transitions project aims to advance understanding of post-conflict development by identifying the obstacles to progress and some of the conditions under which post-conflict societies succeed. The output of this project consists of over 25 papers compiled by three research components: the World Bank Development Economics Research Group (WB), the Center for the Study of African Economies (CSAE) and the International Peace Research Institute of Oslo (PRIO).

The PRIO component focuses on the factors that favour consensus building in post-conflict states. These social factors (ethnic fractionalisation and polarisation) and the institutional choices made in democratising countries (majoritarian vs. consociational systems) often determine the amount of democratisation that can be accomplished. This in turn can ultimately determine the success of the state. Related to these issues of social organisation is the concept of credible government. Credible government (the perception that political competition and political institutions provide assurance that government actions will not swing arbitrarily against any particular group) is a necessary condition for political progress through consensus building. Further information is available at: <http://www.prio.no/CSCW/Research-and-Publications/Project/?oid=64382>

Publications:

- Østby, G., 2005, 'Inequality, Institutions and Instability: Horizontal Inequalities, Political Institutions and Civil Conflict in Developing Countries 1986-2003', Paper presented at the 1st PIDDCP (Political Institutions, Development and a Domestic Civil Peace), Oxford, 10–12 November.
http://www.prio.no/sptrans/2054483438/file47438_ostby_paper_pidhcp_oxford_2005.pdf
-

Clingendael Security and Conflict Programme (CSCP)

<http://www.clingendael.nl/cru/research/>

Contact:

Louise Anten, Head, CSCP (lanten@clingendael.nl)

Research programme:

Conflict Research Unit: The Conflict Research Unit (CRU) conducts research on the nexus between security and development with a special focus on integrated/comprehensive approaches on conflict prevention, stabilisation and reconstruction in fragile and post-conflict states. Research activities are structured along the lines of the three central components of an integrated approach towards fragile states, i.e. security and stability, governance and democratisation, and socio-economic development. Additional areas of special research attention are the role of HIV/AIDS in security and conflict; faith-based peacebuilding; gender and conflict; and the management of (international) aid in fragile and post-conflict states

Publications:

- Bouta, T., Kadayifci-Orellana, A. S. and Abu-Nimer, M., 2005, 'Faith-Based Peace-Building: Mapping and Analysis of Christian, Muslim and Multi-Faith Actors', Clingendael Institute, The Hague
http://www.clingendael.nl/publications/2005/20051100_cru_paper_faith-based%20peace-building.pdf
-

Chr. Michelsen Institute

<http://www.cmi.no/research/group/?peace-conflict-and-the-state>

Contact:

Are John Knudsen, Research Director, Peace, Conflict and the State programme (are.knudsen@cmi.no)

Research programme:

Peace, Conflict and the State: The main goal of this programme is to contribute to the theory and practice of ending violent conflict and building lasting peace, with a specific focus on the role of the state. The programme will examine key theories and paradigms of peacebuilding, post-conflict violence and religion in politics. There are three focus areas within the programme:

- **Post-Conflict Violence:** The programme will investigate under what historical, social and economic conditions 'peace' becomes more or less *violent*, as 'post-conflict' states are vulnerable to a range of old and new forms of violence. "Despite the shortage of knowledge in this field, the dominant paradigm for reconstruction after civil wars is the "liberal peace", which entails reliance on market forces, a minimal state and competitive politics. Yet in societies just emerging from civil wars war this reconstruction model can aggravate social tension while at the same time limit the capacity of the state to address old and new sources of violence."
- **Politics of Faith:** Taking a comparative look at different religious traditions, this programme investigates the entire span of contemporary religious politics, from moderate to militant movements. It aims to analyse how the recent resurgence of religious movements impacts on political developments in the South, whether political inclusion moderates militant religious movements, and under what circumstances faith-based and religious institutions can cause or prolong conflict. The programme will also investigate how religious actors may be active in promoting peace and reconciliation.
- **Peacebuilding:** The question of political inclusion and exclusion is highly relevant to the question of how to "build peace" in countries emerging from war. This programme seeks to explore the potential trade-offs between peacebuilding and statebuilding. Specifically, it examines the assumptions and theoretical underpinning of contemporary peacebuilding and the approaches adopted by key actors in the field..

International Centre for Participation Studies (ICPS), University of Bradford

<http://www.brad.ac.uk/acad/icps/research/>

Contact:

Jenny Pearce, Director, ICPS (j.v.pearce@bradford.ac.uk)

Research areas:

Violence, Participation and Peace: This area of work addresses the questions of how violence affects participation; how citizen participation minimises the likelihood of violence; how to move from violence to citizenship in post-conflict situations; and what the connections between gender, participation and violence are.

Identity, Deliberation and Participation: This area of work addresses the questions of whether participation in deliberative processes can address incompatible value systems; how identity (ethnic, cultural, religious) impacts upon participation; how initiatives to encourage community cohesion and social inclusion utilise participatory methods and practices; what the role of 'safe spaces' is; and how can these spaces be integrated into the fabric of participants lives.

Publications:

- Pearce, J., 2007, 'Violence, Power and Participation: Building Citizenship in the Context of Chronic Violence', IDS Working Paper, 274, Brighton: IDS
http://www.brad.ac.uk/acad/icps/publications/papers/citizenship_chronic_violence.pdf
-

Institute of Development Studies (IDS), University of Sussex
<http://www.ids.ac.uk>

Contact:

Robin Luckham, Research Associate, IDS (r.luckham@ids.ac.uk)

Research programmes:

Global Consortium on Security Transformation: The Consortium aims to:

- Explore how the voices and interests of the poor, marginalised, displaced and oppressed can obtain greater priority in security research and policy-making.
- Build bridges between policy and research, both (a) to ground policy in empirical understanding of realities in conflict-affected countries and regions, and (b) to diffuse research to new policy constituencies, especially in the South.
- Link Southern researchers, policy-makers and civil society organisations, thus empowering them to challenge Northern-dominated security discourses and practices.

Further information is available at: <http://www.ids.ac.uk/index.cfm?objectId=001EBDC6-9284-83B6-FD424F29E3AF2D79>

Strengthening Democratic Governance in Conflict-Torn Societies: This large research programme aimed to understand the conditions under which democratic institutions, in developing and transitional economies, are effective in resolving social conflict, broadening political participation, and delivering development. The objective was to generate concepts and empirical data that would enable policy-makers to formulate proposals for developing democratic structures which would be effective in the following three senses:

- Democratic effectiveness: capable of deepening democracy and democratic citizenship;
- Policy effectiveness: capable of tackling fundamental developmental problems of poverty and social equality
- Conflict-management effectiveness: capable of channelling conflicts and rendering them less destructive.

The democratic, policy and conflict-management effectiveness of experiments in political liberalisation was explored in four countries with a history of violent conflict: Bosnia, South Africa, Sri Lanka and Uganda.

Further information is available at: <http://www.ids.ac.uk/go/research-teams/governance-team/projects-and-outputs/strengthening-democratic-governance-in-conflict-torn-societies/governance-research-strengthening-democratic-governance-in-conflict-torn-societies>

Please note: This is a completed project. It has been included as an example of the diversity of perspectives through which the links between conflict and social cohesion can be addressed.

International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ)
<http://www.ictj.org/en/research/projects/research6/index.html>

Research programme:

Identities in Transition - Challenges for Transitional Justice in Divided Societies: This 18-month research programme aims to address the impact of ethnicity and religion on transitional justice efforts in areas such as Iraq, the Balkans, Guatemala and elsewhere. “In recent months in the Hague, expert testimony was given at the trial of Serbian nationalist Vojislav Šešelj concerning the systematic destruction of cultural sites during the war in Bosnia—mosques, churches, libraries, and other physical heritage so crucial to the maintenance of communal identities. But once these sites are gone, and communal bitterness and patterns of segregation have set in, what can be done to repair the damage and help foster trust?...In post-conflict societies, histories of exclusion, racism, and nationalist violence often create divisions so deep that finding a way to agree on the atrocities of the past seems near-impossible”. This project aims to ensure that transitional justice measures are sensitive to the ways in which targeting people on the basis of their ethnic or religious identity may cause distinctive harms - as in the case of destroying cultural heritage dear to them. It also aims to clarify the political challenges that arise in societies where communities are not ready to cooperate, or even agree on a definition of who the victims are.

UNESCO International Bureau of Education (IBE)

<http://www.ibe.unesco.org/en/conflict-social-cohesion.html>

Contact:

Carolina Belalcazar, Research Fellow, UNESCO-IBE (c.belalcazar@unesco.org)

Research programme:

Curriculum Change and Social Cohesion in Conflict Affected Societies: This programme looks at how curriculum policymaking can contribute to a shared and inclusive sense of national identity and citizenship or to the exacerbation of social divisions, tensions, and identity-based conflicts. The programme follows on from the IBE’s Curriculum Change and Social Cohesion in Conflict-Affected Societies project (2002–2003) which looked at Bosnia and Herzegovina, Guatemala, Lebanon, Mozambique, Northern Ireland, Rwanda, and Sri Lanka, and examined the extent to which the educational system itself has been a potential source of the very conflict it is expected to prevent and remedy. “The challenge is to explore not only the way schooling relates to violent conflict, but also to understand how this relationship is rooted in contested and/or changing conceptions of national cohesion and how it impacts on identity formation.”

International Conflict Research (INCORE)

<http://www.incore.ulst.ac.uk/cgi-bin/projects.pl?task=theme&theme=rds>

Research programme:

Researching Divided Societies: This project focuses on the actual processes and methods of conducting research in violently divided societies, and the ethical and methodological challenges of researching in societies experiencing ethnic conflict and other violent upheavals. Made up of an ongoing programme of workshops and research, it aims to open the debate on the methodological and ethical challenges involved in conducting research in violently divided societies. In particular, it seeks to:

- Build networks of interested scholars;
- Document the experiences of indigenous researchers in conflicted societies; and

- Build local research capacity through the workshop and through the preparation of research resources and training materials.

6. Additional information

Author

This query response was prepared by **Seema Khan**: seema@gsdrc.org

Contributors

Patricia Justino, Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex
Huma Haider, Governance and Social Development Resource Centre
Lyndsay McClean Hilker, Social Development Direct

Websites visited

Brookings Institution, Carnegie Corporation of New York, Center for Global Development, Centre for Research on Inequality, Human Security and Ethnicity (CRISE), Chronic Poverty Research Centre, Clingendael, Columbia University, Conflict Prevention Partnership, Crisis States Research Centre, Danish Institute for International Studies, Eldis, European Centre for Minority Issues, German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ), German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), Global Development Network, Google, Google Scholar, Governance and Social Development Resource Centre (GSDRC), Institute for Conflict Research, International Centre for Transitional Justice (ICTJ), Interpeace, International Conflict Research, London School of Economics Development Studies Institute (DESTIN), Overseas Development Institute (ODI), Swisspeace, University of Bradford, University of Cambridge Centre for International Studies, University of Manchester Institute for Development Policy and Management (IDPM), University of Sussex Institute of Development Studies (IDS), UNESCO, Uppsala University, World Bank.

Need help finding consultants?

If you need to commission more in-depth research, or need help finding and contracting consultants for additional work, please contact us again at consultants@gsdrc.org (further details at: <http://www.gsdrc.org/go/consultancy-services>)