

Research & Evidence Division Evidence Products – LITERATURE REVIEW

A review of the evidence informing DFID’s “Building Peaceful States and Societies” practice paper¹

Paper 1: Political Settlements, Peace Settlements, and Inclusion

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This literature overview was produced by the UK Department for International Development’s Research & Evidence Division. The interpretation of the evidence expressed in this report is entirely that of the named author. The review does not necessarily represent the views of DFID as an institution. This is not a policy document, and is not intended to represent DFID’s policy position.

¹ DFID’s Research & Evidence Division produces or commissions four types of evidence ‘product’. These are: Rapid Reviews, Literature Reviews, Evidence Papers and Systematic Reviews. The current paper is a Literature Review, but one that limits itself principally to reviewing literature cited in DFID’s 2010 “Building Peaceful States and Societies” Practice Paper.

Contents

Acknowledgements & disclaimer	3
SECTION I: INTRODUCTION	
Summary	4
Key Findings	4
Method	5
Scope & Limitations	6
SECTION II: ASSESSING THE EVIDENCE BEHIND THE PEACE-BUILDING/STATE-BUILDING FRAMEWORK (OBJECTIVE 2)	
Context	6
Overview of Objective 2: Supporting inclusive political settlements	7
Defining the political settlement	7
A spectrum of meanings	7
Discussion	9
The inclusiveness of the political settlement	9
The inclusion of elites...	10
...and the inclusion of wider society	11
Democracy, democratic processes and peace in the PB/SB framework	12
Democratic states are more stable, and democracy is in high demand	12
Democratic states are more stable, but the democratization process can induce conflict	13
Democratization may not be developmental, and development may require exclusion	14
Opening up the political settlement: the PB/SB's treatment of democratization	15
Peace settlements in relation to political settlements	15
A gap between peace settlements and political settlements?	15
Is negotiating a peace settlement enough?	16
Inclusiveness: the critical determinant of success in a peace process?	16
Inherent tensions between peace-building and state-building	17
The treatment of peace settlements in relation to political settlements in the PB/SB	18
The role of institutions and institutional change	18
SECTION III: FURTHER DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS	
The nature and quality of the research evidence	21
The inclusiveness of peace processes and political settlements: the implications for the PB/SB	22
BIBLIOGRAPHY	24
ANNEX A	
A framework for grading research evidence	27

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SECTION I: INTRODUCTION

Summary

1. This paper is one of four exploring and analysing the evidence that underpins DFID's 2010 "Building Peaceful States & Societies" Practice Paper, referred to hereafter as the 'PB/SB (Peace-Building/State-Building) framework'. Taking each of the PB/SB framework's four guiding objectives, it appraises and synthesises the cited research evidence in that framework to offer guidance on the degree to which the core concepts and propositions are 'evidence based'. In some cases, it introduces additional evidence to place core concepts in their wider context. The paper was commissioned by DFID's Fragile States Policy Team, and is intended to contribute to ongoing efforts to refine DFID policy on fragile and conflict-affected states and ensure that it is evidence based.
2. Although the four key objectives of the PB/SB framework are interdependent, for practical purposes, this series of papers addresses each separately. The current paper considers PB/SB framework Objective 2, "Support inclusive political settlements and processes." Subsequent papers will consider the evidence supporting Objective 3, "Develop core state functions", Objective 4, "Respond to public expectations", whilst the final paper will pull together the findings of the previous three, with specific reference to the over-arching Objective 1, "Address the causes and effects of conflict and fragility, and build conflict resolution mechanisms."

Key findings

3. The current study offers the following key findings:
 - 3.1. The PB/SB framework's consideration of elites, and their criticality to the political settlement, is based on a substantial body of persuasive research;
 - 3.2. A combination of conceptual research and empirical evidence seems to support the claim that peacebuilding and state-building is underpinned by the formation of inclusive political settlements, *where the political settlement refers to the elite bargains at its heart*;
 - 3.3. The evidence relating to the ability of non-elites (i.e. wider society) to shape the political settlement is typically more empirical, but also more mixed. Based on the research surveyed, non-elites' capacity to change political settlements is uncertain. Even so, the PB/SB displays sufficient caution in its treatment of state-society relations to be adjudged as being consistent with the contested nature of the research evidence on this issue;
 - 3.4. The PB/SB fails to adequately consider the historical process of institutional change in its treatment of political settlements. Greater understanding of this process is required in order to appreciate why wider society's inclusion in the political settlement is often so difficult to achieve;
 - 3.5. Whilst this study suggests that many of the core components of the PB/SB framework are based on research findings, the framework is generally inadequately supported by footnotes and references demonstrating exactly which research evidence underpins particular concepts;
 - 3.6. The adoption of an evidence grading tool in order to assess the quality of research papers has been partially successful. The tool has helped identify research findings which are clearly empirical from those that are not, and has enabled the differentiation of good empirical papers from weaker ones. On the other hand, the validity of a significant body of non-empirical political science studies which informed the PB/SB, and which the current

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study adjudges to be useful, cannot be demonstrated by the evidence grading tool used. Further consideration of how to assess the quality of political science research is required.

Method

4. The method adopted to produce this paper has involved (a) a collation of the bibliographical references used to inform the PB/SB framework, and the “States in Development” DFID discussion paper (Whaites, 2008) which informed it; (b) the identification of the core principles and assumptions that constitute PB/SB framework Objective 2; (c) the classification and re-evaluation of the sources and references cited in the PB/SB; (d) the consideration of a small number of additional sources of evidence where appropriate; (e) building on the above, an analysis of the degree to which Objective 2 of the PB/SB is evidence-based.
5. The classification and re-evaluation of sources has been conducted with reference to a specific appraisal form, developed with DFID research partners.² The appraisal form is reproduced in Annex ‘A’. A basic summary of its key characteristics is offered below.
6. The appraisal form makes a basic distinction between publications which are:
 - 6.1. **Empirical works**, where the authors gather real world data (either quantitative or qualitative in nature) and analyse it using a clearly-described method;
 - 6.2. **Systematic Reviews**, a rigorous review publication, which uses systematic search strategies to source literature, employs transparent selection criteria to screen out research which is not empirically-based, and synthesises the remainder;
 - 6.3. **Theoretical, hypothetical enquiries**, or papers which more generally survey, **review or synthesise other literature** (without explicitly evaluating its quality).
7. In the current study, papers assessed as being empirical works are then evaluated according to (a) the data-gathering process, (b) the transparency of analytical methods used to evaluate the data, (c) the way in which conclusions are drawn from the data, and (d) the researcher’s consideration of potential weaknesses in his/her approach. Single scores on a four-point scale are aggregated to produce a grade between 1 (low quality) and 8 (high quality). Where authors use a combination of quantitative and qualitative empirical approaches, the average score for the two approaches is calculated.
8. On the basis of the grading systems described, I offer judgements about the quality of the research cited by the PB/SB framework. The following key is used to designate the type of research cited, and is typically accompanied by a written commentary on the quality of the evidence:
 - 8.1. **E**: Empirical study
 - 8.2. **QT**: Quantitative
 - 8.3. **QL**: Qualitative
 - 8.4. **SR**: Systematic Review
 - 8.5. **C/R**: Conceptual or theoretical paper, or a non-systematic review of other literature.
 - 8.6. Numbers **1-8** designate outputs from the scoring system described above, and are preceded with an ‘N’ to differentiate them from page numbers.³

² The evidence grading form is the result of collaboration with the LSE-led “Justice & Security Research Programme Consortium”. It is reproduced at Annex ‘A’.

³ So, for example, an empirical, qualitative study written by John Kimani and scoring 4 out of 8 on the grading system would appear as: Kimani, 2005 [E; QL; N4].

- 8.7. **N/R:** In some instances, research papers which have not been reviewed [N/R] during the current study, but *are* referenced in the papers that *have* been consulted, are also cited.
 - 8.8. * **[asterisk]:** Where additional research, not identified during the initial collation of references used for Whaites, 2008 or the PB/SB framework, has been consulted, it is marked with an asterisk. In the absence of an asterisk, readers can assume that publications were used in the drafting of Whaites, 2008 or the PB/SB framework.
9. The classification of research in this way provides some general guidance about its suitability for use in different contexts. For example, the findings of empirical studies and systematic reviews (where they can be shown to have been conducted robustly) are more suitable for demonstrating the likely efficacy of a particular aid instrument than are theoretical, conceptual and general review literature. Yet the theoretical and conceptual papers remain valuable, and unlike a systematic review, the current study does not include or exclude studies on the basis of the methodology through which they were generated: instead, it synthesises their findings, whilst offering a comment about their general character.

Scope and limitations

10. Classed among the Research & Evidence Division's⁴ family of evidence products (which include rapid reviews, literature reviews, evidence papers and systematic reviews), the current paper stands as a literature review. It was not conceived to consider the quality of *all* available research relating to specific PB/SB framework objectives. It *principally* considers the quality and consistency of the research actually cited by the PB/SB framework or the "States in Development" discussion paper (Whaites, 2008) that heavily informed it (see bibliography). As such, it does not claim to be, and should not be considered a systematic review.
11. Additional sources (besides those used in DFID, 2010 and Whaites, 2008) were gathered following consultation with the PB/SB's authors, and after discussions with selected academic contacts. The partial, and incomplete nature of the literature search is recognised.

SECTION II: ASSESSING THE EVIDENCE BEHIND THE PEACE-BUILDING/STATE-BUILDING FRAMEWORK (OBJECTIVE 2)

Context

12. The first part of the current review places Objective 2, "Support inclusive political settlements and processes" in the wider context of the PB/SB framework.
13. Overall, the framework argues for an integrated treatment for building peaceful states and societies, one which draws on distinct bodies of peace-building and state-building research and practice.
14. At the highest level, the framework assumes the following theory of change:
 - 14.1. Strengthen state-society relations, in order to...>>
 - 14.2. >>...address conflict and fragility dynamics, in order to...>>
 - 14.3. >>...create environments which permit the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and the elimination of poverty.

⁴ A part of DFID's Policy & Research Directorate.

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15. More specifically, the framework views the bolstering of state-society relations as dependent upon achieving the following high-level state-building and peace-building objectives:
 - 15.1. Objective 1: Addressing the causes and effects of conflict and fragility, and building conflict resolution mechanisms;
 - 15.2. **Objective 2:** Supporting inclusive political settlements and processes;
 - 15.3. Objective 3: Developing core state functions;
 - 15.4. Objective 4: Responding to public expectations.
16. In the subsequent sections of this report, the evidence used to support Objective 2 is considered.

Overview of Objective 2: Supporting inclusive political settlements

17. The following section considers the core assumptions and concepts that constitute PB/SB Objective 2, which is summarised in the executive summary of the framework as follows:
 - 17.1. *Support inclusive political settlements and processes.* Political settlements define how political and economic power is organised. Exclusionary settlements are more likely to lead to instability. Supporting inclusive settlements means understanding the incentives of the elites and identifying when and how to empower different actors to push for a broader settlement. Peace processes provide windows of opportunity to reshape existing settlements, but may not address underlying power dynamics. Support to democratic and political processes can help promote more inclusive decision-making (DFID, 2010, p. 7).
18. The degree to which each of the core concepts that constitute Objective 2 are supported by the research evidence is now considered.

Defining the political settlement

19. The PB/SB paper defines political settlements as “the expression of a common understanding, usually forged between elites, about how power is organised and exercised” (p. 22, para. 46). This builds on Whaites (2008 [C/R], p. 4), who defines the political settlement as “the forging of a common understanding, usually among elites, that their interests or beliefs are served by a particular way of organising political power.”
20. Given that the current paper reconsiders and reassesses the literature actually cited in the PB/SB framework, it is to be expected that the PB/SB paper’s definition of political settlements is broadly consistent with the research identified through this review. However, the research offers some nuances that deserve greater attention. Because the PB/SB framework relates political settlements to *peace* processes, definitions of the latter are also considered below.

A spectrum of meanings

21. In the wider research literature, the term ‘political settlement’ has been defined in a number of ways, with variance in the range of groups and classes recognised as holding a stake in it.
22. At one end of the spectrum, the term political settlement is sometimes used to refer mainly to ‘bargains’ or ‘pacts’ between elites. In a discussion of exclusionary political settlements, Lindemann (2010a* [E, QT, N5.5], p. 5) defines the elite bargain as “the distribution of access to positions of state power between contending social groups.” Commenting on a related body of

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work, Di John & Putzel (2009* [C/R], p. 6-7) observe that elite bargains are “to be found at the centre of political settlements.” North *et. al.*'s work on social orders does not employ the term ‘political settlement’, but does observe that it is *elite* control over economic rents⁵ that holds particular social orders together (2007* [C/R], p. 6).

23. In other discussions, where the centrality of the elite bargain is more implicit, the term political settlement focuses on balances of power. For example, Khan (2004* [C/R] p. 168) defines the political settlement simply as the “distribution of organisational and political power between competing groups and classes”, and Di John and Putzel (2009* [C/R], p. 4) argue that political settlements are manifested through the structure of property rights and entitlements, and the way in which these are apportioned among elites, groups and classes. Recognised in each of these cited positions is the possibility that the political settlement can extend to new elites, new configurations of elites, or even beyond elite groups over time (see Khan, 2004* [C/R], pp. 176-181, and North, 2007* [C/R], pp. 6-7).
24. The more sophisticated treatments of the political settlement consider not just the distribution of economic, political and coercive power within it, but also its organisational and institutional evolution (i.e. who is included, and what are the rules that regulate inclusion). Again, Khan (2004*) and North *et. al.* (2007*) provide useful conceptual discussions here. Exploring the organisational and institutional aspects of political settlements, Barnes (2009 [C/R], p. 9) notes that the “political settlement shapes the field on which politics is played... setting out the nature and rules of the ‘game’ and setting conditions that determine which players are ‘in’ and playing what role.”
25. In yet other definitions, some observers explicitly consider wider state/society relations, and the social contract itself to be an extension of the political settlement. For example, Fritz & Rocha Menocal's “conceptually and historically grounded analysis” (2007 [C/R], p. 10)⁶ defines the political settlement as “the expression of a negotiated agreement... binding together state and society and providing the necessary legitimacy for those who govern over those who are ruled” (p. 27). Moreover, in a definition that spans almost the full spectrum of meanings, Di John and Putzel (2009* [C/R], p. 4) suggest that study of the political settlement “focuses attention on intra-elite contention and bargaining... on contention and bargaining between elites and non-elites... inter-group contention and bargaining... and on contention and bargaining between those who occupy the state and society more widely.”
26. This range of definitions is symptomatic of variance between those theories of state-building that focus on the forging of the elite pacts, on the one hand, and those that emphasise state-society negotiations and the development of the social contract on the other (Barnes (2009 [C/R], p. 10).
27. Whilst the term *political* settlements is most likely to be found in state-building literature, the terms peace agreements, peace settlements and peace processes are more typically associated with the separate peacebuilding literature. Within this literature, peace processes refer to a range of “initiatives intended to help reach and implement negotiated agreements ending armed conflict”, whilst the more comprehensive concept of peacebuilding refers to “multidimensional efforts to address the structural causes of conflict” (i.e. initiatives that reach deeper into society, beyond the negotiated agreement itself. See Barnes, 2009 [C/R], p. 14). Like the literature on political settlements, the peace settlements literature can be categorised

⁵ For a full discussion of rents, see Khan (2000a, p. 5). Broadly speaking, rents are economic incomes which are greater in value than would be expected from competitive market rates for the item or activity in question. Because they are typically the product of some special privilege (such as the granting of a licence or monopoly to a particular individual or group) rents are seen as a market distortion. Rent-seeking, then, is any activity aimed at capturing rents on behalf of special interest groups.

⁶ Cited on p. 12 of the PB/SB framework.

according to the scope of social groups it considers. Paffenholz and Spurk's typology of peacebuilding schools is instructive, describing 'conflict management' approaches as those which focus on the reconciliation of the top leadership (or elites) of belligerent parties, whilst the 'conflict resolution' and 'conflict transformation' approaches address the reconciliation of the state with society, and of different elements of society with one another ([C/R], pp. 20-22).

28. In some cases, the peacebuilding and state-building definitions of political settlements and peace processes are drawn together, sometimes confusingly so. Di John & Putzel (2009* [C/R]) observe that some studies use the term *political* settlements to describe either "a resolution reached after warfare, through negotiation rather than violence", or indeed "any agreement between contending parties that is peaceful rather than violent" (p. 6).

Discussion

29. Notwithstanding the diversity of definitions, the following common points emerge. First, most definitions position elites and elite bargains at the heart of political settlements... but they also recognise that political settlements may extend very much further than that: they suggest that a political settlement can shape, or be shaped by state/society (or elite/constituency) relations. Next, the difference between the 'elite bargain' and the 'state/society' aspects of the political settlement is nevertheless important, because it has implications for our subsequent discussions of inclusiveness. Third, definitions of political settlements recognise that they are subject to change over time. A political settlement captures a balance of power, rights and interests at a particular 'moment', and is constantly the focus of efforts to modify it, both by those it includes and those it excludes. Lastly, whilst it makes sense to position peace settlements and processes in relation to political settlements and processes, these concepts ought not to be considered as being identical.
30. In general, the PB/SB's definition of political settlements (see para. 17.1, above) is well-supported by the research. The framework appears to have drawn on a variety of research literature, although of the sources explored above, only Fritz & Rocha Menocal (2007 [C/R]), Whaites (2008 [C/R]) and Barnes (2009 [C/R]) are directly cited.
31. The framework's definition of political settlements suffers from only one substantive weakness which is its failure to distinguish more clearly between the 'elite pact' and 'state/society' aspects of the concept. The implications of this are considered at greater length below.
32. The following sections consider the degree to which the inclusion of elites, on the one hand, and wider elements of society, on the other, are important in the forging of sustainable political settlements, in the first instance, and peace settlements in the second.

The inclusiveness of the political settlement

33. The concept that *inclusive* political settlements are likely to be more sustainable features frequently in the PB/SB framework. For example "Exclusionary settlements are more likely to lead to instability" (p. 7); "The inclusiveness of a settlement, and public perceptions of its fairness, is critical to state legitimacy and the sustainability of the settlement in the long term" (p. 23, para. 49); "Our aim is to promote inclusive settlements that meet public expectations and address the underlying causes of conflict and fragility" (p. 24, para 51). These propositions echo the general sweep of the review literature. For example, Fritz and Rocha Menocal (2007 [C/R], p. 27) note that "[s]ince the 1990s in particular, there has been general agreement (at least in principle) that political settlements need to be broadly inclusive and representative and to incorporate those who have traditionally not had a voice."

34. But to what extent are these propositions and claims fully supported by the research evidence? It would appear that the case for more inclusive political settlements (particularly in the short- to medium-term) is more easily substantiated by evidence when adopting a narrower focus on elite bargains and pacts than it is when addressing wider state/society relations and the social contract. This assessment is discussed below.

The inclusion of elites...

35. The strongest empirical evidence that the inclusiveness of the elite bargain or pact is critical to the durability of the political settlement, and to state-building more generally is provided by Stefan Lindemann's analysis of inclusive elite bargains in Zambia, and exclusionary elite bargains in Uganda (Lindemann, 2010a* & 2010b* [E, QT, QL, N5.5]). Early iterations of Lindemann's work (which informed Whaites, 2008) hypothesized that "the persistent and systematic exclusion of key elites from rent-sharing arrangements will produce large-scale violent conflict" (Lindemann, 2008 [C/R] p. 21). Following on from his subsequent empirical analysis of Zambia and Uganda (which uses historical records to construct a quantitative framework for measuring elite access to positions of political, military and economic power), Lindemann (2010a* [E, QT, QL, N5.5] p. 59) claims to present evidence for the following:
- 35.1. Civil war onset is especially likely where a group has recently experienced a relative loss of power as a result of shifts in the elite bargain;
- 35.2. The propensity for peace or conflict depends on degree to which the 'inner core' of state power is shared between competing social groups;
- 35.3. The likelihood of civil war depends on the scope of the elite bargain, i.e. the extent to which all the different spheres of state power (political, economic, military, territorial) are shared between competing social groups;
- 35.4. Propensity to civil war depends on the degree to which included elites are considered as legitimate representatives of the social groups to which they belong.
36. Based as it is on just two case studies (albeit conducted in depth), Lindemann's work ought not to be considered definitive. But nor should it be considered an 'outlier' supported as it is by additional case study analysis (see for example Hesselbein *et. al.* (2006 [E, QL, N4.5], p. 17) and the argument that state collapse in several African states has been driven by "systems of political organisation [that were] based on exclusion"). Moreover, Lindemann's work provides some important support to a body of institutional and historical political economy analysis that also stresses the importance of elite bargain inclusiveness right at the heart of the political settlement.
37. For example, evidence for the criticality of elite inclusiveness is also consistent with the work of North, Wallis & Weingast (see 2006⁷ [C/R] and 2007* [C/R]). This work is, by its authors' own admission, only a "skeleton of a conceptual framework" (2006, p. 4). The framework is based on a general(!) survey of ten thousand years of recorded human history (mainly Western European and North American history), and provides few clues as to its analytical method, inevitably raising questions about the way in which such huge tracts of history and their events have been interpreted.⁸

⁷ Note that the 2006 version of the North *et. al.* LAO work was consulted in the drafting of Whaites, 2008. In the current review, the 2007 version of this work has been preferred.

⁸ The reception for the 'Limited Access Orders' (LAO) framework of North *et. al.* (2006, 2007) has been cautious, perhaps because of its authors' involvement with 'New Institutional Economics' (NIE) thinking of the early 1990s. NIE has been much critiqued owing to its use to justify early 'good governance' policy prescriptions. Even so, Mushtaq Khan, one of the fiercest critics of NIE, engages with the LAO framework in a contributory chapter (see

38. Even so, in the current reviewer's opinion, the conceptual explanations of the North *et. al.* thesis are valuable. The work sees the 'Limited Access Order' (LAO) as a societal response to the problem of violence among elite factions. Rents are created and allocated as a means to control violence (North *et al.*, 2007* [C/R], p. 3), creating incentives for elites to compete peacefully rather than fight (*idem.*, p. 7). Within LAOs, access to resources (land, labour and capital) and to activities and rights (contract enforcement, property rights enforcement, trade, worship and education), is limited to elite groups (*idem.*, p. 8). By contrast, it is only in the so-called 'Open Access Orders' (OAOs) of modern market economies, that access to resources, activities and rights is open to all citizens⁹ (*idem.* p. 17).
39. Of note, then, to our wider discussion of political settlements (even though this is a term that North *et. al.* choose not to employ) is that most forms of social organisation (particularly in pre-capitalist or developing countries) are more evidently dependent upon balancing elite interests (*idem.*, p. 9), than those of society more widely. Moreover, North *et al.*'s reference to "self-sustaining" societies and "social equilibrium" (*idem.*, p. 9) indicates that according to this framework, there is nothing that inherently renders LAOs prone to collapse or automatic progression: on the contrary, the emergence of OAOs requires the emergence of very particular "doorstep conditions" (*idem.*, p. 21) which are difficult to attain, and emerge only over time. Di John and Putzel make a similar point about the resilience of certain types of political settlement founded on elite bargains, which present a barrier not just to reform of the settlement itself, but also to development as a whole. In short, the emergence of more stable states owes much to the initial inclusion and satisfaction of elites, and perhaps rather more than it does to the satisfaction of wider society's interests.
40. A focus on elites is also congruent with Khan's analyses of rents, rent-seeking and patron-client relations. Indeed, North *et. al.*'s work (2007*) cites and deliberately builds on Khan's work (cf. Khan, 2000a* [N/R]; Khan, 2000b* [N/R]; Khan, 2004* [C/R]), which considers development and the emergence of states through competition for rents. For example, Khan (2005 [C/R]) argues that political stability in developing countries is achieved through the selective accommodation of factions organised along patron-client lines (p. 711). Khan's rent-seeking and North *et. al.*'s LAO approaches are effectively 'married' in Khan, 2010* (C/R) which addresses Bangladesh's struggle for political stability by using the LAO framework, and specifically by considering the difficulties elites have encountered in agreeing on the distribution of rents.
41. Overall, there is an extensive and sophisticated literature regarding the importance of elites, and of the inclusiveness of elite bargains in the forging of political settlements. The literature contains both empirical studies and more conceptual papers. The PB/SB paper would appear to be on solid evidential ground when stressing the criticality of elites, and the inclusiveness of the elite bargain, in the formation of political settlements.

... and the inclusion of wider society

42. But what of the PB/SB's consideration of the inclusion of *non*-elites? The framework is explicit in its recognition of the difficulties in modifying exclusionary political settlements forged by elites. It notes that "movements to challenge an exclusionary political settlement can often lead to short-term instability or conflict" (p.18, para 30) and that the promotion of inclusive settlements "requires understanding the opportunity cost to elites of different types of reform" (p. 24, para. 51).

Khan, 2010) to a forthcoming publication by North, Wallis and Weingast, suggesting that the LAO analysis is more convincing than previous NIE concepts.

⁹ Note that even in the OAO, North *et. al.* do not equate 'citizens' with 'all people'. In some OAOs, citizenship may only be accorded to around a third of the total population.

43. At the same time, the PB/SB framework is also clear that political settlements that cater only to the interests of elites are likely to generate grievances that will lead to conflict (p. 23, para 48; p. 26, para. 57) and that “strong state-society relations underpin effective states and durable, positive peace” (p. 15, para 24). As such, the PB/SB framework is clear in its commitment to the involvement of wider society (i.e. not just elites) in the forging of the political settlement.
44. But what does the evidence say on the matter? Does wider societal participation in the forging of the political settlement make for more stable states? There are a number of ways in which this issue is discussed, both in the PB/SB and in the research literature. For example, perceptions of *legitimacy* are critical to state-society relations. The capacity of the state to perform *basic functions* and meet the expectations of society through the *provision of public goods* is also likely to be fundamental to the development of the ‘social contract’. These issues will be covered in subsequent papers’ discussions of core state functions (Objective 3 of the PB/SB) and the state response to public expectations (Objective 4 of the PB/SB). Here, we will limit ourselves first to a discussion of the degree to which democratic processes can help shape more inclusive political settlements (given that democracy is often seen as being critical in giving society a ‘voice’) and secondly to a consideration of how post-conflict peace processes and negotiations enable wider societal participation in the revision of the political settlement. Finally, we focus specifically on institutions and institutional change, and consider their implications for the evolution of the political settlement.

Democracy, democratic processes and peace in the PB/SB framework

45. The idea that democratic processes are an important factor in peace-building and state-building is a recurrent theme in the framework. It proposes that “Support to democratic and political processes can help promote more inclusive decision-making” (p. 7); that “Evidence suggests that important factors [in explaining why some states become more or less effective] include... free and fair elections” (p. 13); that “Work on deepening democracy can help ensure that the relationship between the state and societal groups is mediated in a peaceful way” (p. 21) and that during the state-building process, “There may... be expectations about the quality of governance, such as an open political system with fair elections...” (p. 32).
46. To be absolutely clear, the framework does *not* plainly assert that ‘democracy builds peaceful states and societies’. Moreover, in considering a range of literature, it does *not* blindly follow the much criticized ‘liberal peace thesis’, which holds that “democratization and marketization foster peace in countries just emerging from civil wars” (as described by Paris, 2004 [N/R], p. 41). Indeed in citing Paris (2004), Snyder (2000 [E, QL, N5.5]), and Walter (2002 [E, QT, QL, N7]) as it does on p.26, the PB/SB paper references three works that critically interrogate the assumed relationships between democracy, democratic processes and peace. Moreover, the framework explicitly recognises that elections (a particular aspect of wider democratization efforts) “can also destabilise an already fragile situation by renewing contestation for power” (p. 26, para. 56). In this sense, the framework demonstrably begins to engage with the mixed evidence in this field.
47. Nevertheless, given that the framework does still afford a considerable space to the role of democratic processes in state-building, and in wider societal participation in political processes, a review of the evidence is merited, particularly given that none of the propositions offered by the PB/SB (noted above), is directly referenced or footnoted, or traceable to a particular research paper.¹⁰

¹⁰ There are footnotes and references in the framework, but in this case, they were not used to support the specific propositions I have quoted from the PB/SB framework. It is a general observation of the current paper

Democratic states are more stable, and democracy is in high demand

48. A robust finding of the research evidence on the relationship between democracy and state stability (though one not cited in the PB/SB framework) is that democratic states are less likely to make war with each other (Doyle, 1983 [N/R], cited in Leftwich, 2005 [C/R], p. 687), and are more likely to be internally stable (Hegre *et al.*, 2001 [N/R], cited in Paris, 2004 [N/R]). These findings, derived from quantitative analyses, have been repeated and are considered robust in the wider literature (Leftwich, 2005 [C/R], p. 687, and Khan, 2005 [C/R], p. 710).
49. In some quarters, this finding is itself considered sufficient to support democracy-promotion programmes in developing countries (Goldstone & Ulfelder, 2004 [E, QT, N6.5], p. 17). In arguing in favour of particular types of democracy as mechanisms for peace-building and state-building, Luckham *et al.* (2003 [E, QL, N6], p. 40) state that "...there is little point in polemical disputes about whether democracy promotes conflicts or resolves it." Carothers (1999 [E, QL, N5.5], p. 313) argues that because democracy is the political system "most associated with prosperous, just and peaceful societies", it is worth supporting. He also rejects the notion that democratic reform should be postponed until such time as perfectly functioning political institutions are in place (Carothers, 2007 [C/R], cited on p. 27 of the PB/SB framework). Arguing in similar terms, Papagianni (2008 [C/R], p. 59) notes the legitimacy 'gap' which may develop if a state does not hold democratic elections in good time after radical political change.
50. With regards the impact of democracy on more inclusive decision-making, there is some evidence to suggest that political transitions in Africa, at least, are increasingly occurring through regular institutional means (Posner & Young, 2007 [E, QT, N5]). Whilst remaining generally cautious about the scope of democratic institutions to constrain the actions of rulers, this study observes that coups and assassinations on the continent are gradually being superseded by elections and voluntary resignations (p. 129), and that elections are being held more frequently and are more genuinely contested (p. 130). In this sense, there do appear to be some signs that constraining institutions, democracy among them, are having some impact on inclusive decision-making.
51. Moreover, there is also strong evidence that demand for democracy is high, and support for it is strong. Initial results of the Afrobarometer¹¹ cross-national survey research project appear to demonstrate this without much doubt (see Bratton *et al.*, 2005 [E, QT, QL, N6.5] p. 66).¹²
52. There is thus some strong empirical evidence that peace thrives in democracies, and that demand for democracy is high. Some have taken these findings to justify the policy of promoting democracy *in order to build* stable states.

Democratic states are more stable, but the democratization process can induce conflict...

53. However, whilst there may be strong empirical evidence that democratic states are more stable, and indeed that societies want democracy, there is also strong empirical evidence that the introduction of democracy is likely to induce conflict.
54. The PB/SB framework cites convincing quantitative research (p. 23, para. 28) by the Political Instability Task Force showing that partial democracies are the most unstable regime type. This

the PB/SB's basis in evidence could be significantly strengthened simply through the use of more careful referencing and footnoting.

¹¹ Afrobarometer and its Latin American counterpart, Latinobarometro informed Whaites, 2008. They are not cited by the PB/SB itself.

¹² NB the robustness of this finding requires cross-referencing with the results of subsequent Afrobarometer surveys, and with the Latinobarometro project, neither of which were reviewed in the current study.

quantitative research (see for example Goldstone, Gurr, Marshall & Ulfelder, 2004 [E, QT, N6.5]) is based on a cross-sectional statistical analysis of 130 political crises occurring over 48 years, and concludes that (a) weak, partial democracies, (b) weak full democracies, and (c) autocracies with limited (but not entirely uncontested) levels of political competition are at greatest risk of instability.¹³

55. Snyder, cited in the PB/SB framework (though not with regards this particular point) (2000 [E, QL, N5.5]) refers to statistical studies¹⁴ showing that the chance of war in the 'average' state in any given decade is one in six, but is one in four for states during the decade following their transition to democracy (p. 28). Snyder deploys these findings, other statistical studies (p. 28) and historical case study analysis of Germany, the Balkans, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, India, Burundi and Rwanda to argue that the promotion of democratization in states where political institutions are weak is very likely to open up space for conflictual and potentially violent identity politics, either national or ethnic in character.
56. Parallel to, and partly in response to this emerging body of evidence, Paris (2004 [N/R]), also cited in the PB/SB framework, argues that the liberalisation of markets and political competition before robust political institutions are in place is likely to induce conflict (p. 187). Lastly, we note Ottaway's comment that "the historical record suggests that state formation has never been a democratic process" (2003 [E, QL, N5.5], p. 172).
57. Many of the difficulties associated with democracy's adoption are likely to be a consequence of its *partial* adoption, and the resistance that develops to what Ottaway terms "semi-authoritarian regimes" which respect the forms of democracy but reject its content. As such, the issue is not with 'pure' forms of democracy, but rather with the difficulties of grafting democracy onto authoritarian or semi-authoritarian regimes. Even so, the evidence surveyed here indicates that whilst democracy is 'good' for the maintenance of peace when established, its evolution or introduction is frequently associated with conflict. The challenges in leveraging democratic processes as a mechanism for peacebuilding and state-building are manifest. Instead, the desire for democracy may result in conflict.

Democratization may not be developmental, and development may require exclusion

58. In addition to the problems associated with its emergence, there is an additional tension relating to democracy that merits consideration here, namely that democracy itself may be conducive neither to the re-shaping of the political settlement nor to the forging of a pro-poor developmental state.
59. First, we note that democracy is not itself a political settlement. Instead, democracy is a particular institutional framework that governs relations between particular political forces. If the settlement is the distribution of wealth and power, democracy is simply one mechanism for the regulation of change to the political settlement (Di John & Putzel, 2009* [C/R], p. 5). It is an *outcome* of political bargaining, rather than the foundation on which political settlements are initially based.

¹³ The PITF collection of studies also provide a number of other conclusions regarding the relationships between economic development, democracy and conflict. For example, Ulfelder & Lustik (2005 [E, QT, N5] conclude that autocracies with higher levels of civil liberties are more likely to transition to democracy, that autocracy is more likely to transition to democracy following a decline in economic fortunes, and that whilst economic development does not appear to have a large effect on the timing of a country's first attempt at democracy, higher levels of overall economic development can counter-balance the effects of short-term economic trends when a country is at risk of 'back-sliding' from democracy.

¹⁴ Gurr, T. (2000). *People versus States: Minorities at Risk in the New Century*. Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace Press. Gurr went on to become a member of the Political Instability Task Force.

60. Next, we consider inherent tensions between democracy and development. These issues are highlighted by, amongst others, Leftwich (2005 [C/R]), and Khan (2005 [C/R]), in what amounts to a rejection of new institutional economics-school advocacy for the developmental capacity of democracy. Both these papers informed Whaites (2008). In a paper which refers cursorily to Cuban, Chinese, South Korean, Singaporean and Malaysian experiences, as well as to Western liberal ideals, Leftwich (2005 [C/R]) argues that the characteristic features of democracy (consensus, compromise, the exercise of restraint, respect for the rule of law, conduciveness to incremental change) make it fundamentally unsuited to achieving the “far-reaching and rapid change in the structure and use of wealth” that is required for development to occur. Instead, transformation of such structures will require the taking of “non-consensual steps” (p. 693).
61. For his part, Khan argues that a state’s democracy or authoritarianism is not the critical determinant of development rates (e.g. Khan, 2005 [C/R] p. 711). He cites empirical research to show that in fact “rises in per capita incomes precede the emergence of democracy, and not the other way around” (Khan, 2004* [C/R], p. 174). In a broader thesis that stresses the importance of a state’s dynamic and transformative power, rather than its observance of democracy, Khan argues that “all the evidence of democratization in developing countries shows that competition, transparency and electoral contests do very little to undermine the dominance of patron-client politics” (p. 714).

Opening up the political settlement: the PB/SB’s treatment of democratization

62. To what extent is the PB/SB consistent with the literature on democratic processes and democratization? The framework is rightly cautious on this subject. The pitfalls of premature elections, including the potential risks of instability, are made explicit (see p. 26, para 56). In addition, the framework limits itself to advocating for democratic *processes* (rather than ‘full democracy’), and in so doing wisely hedges its bets. Overall, the referencing and footnotes of the framework demonstrate an awareness of the key outlines of the debate. Moreover, the PB/SB does not advocate for the introduction of democratic processes as the *sole* strategy for strengthening state-society relations and opening up the political settlement. The development of core state functions, increasing the state’s responsiveness to wider society, and also efforts to bolster its legitimacy, are even more prominent. The PB/SB also considers the possible role of peace processes and their ability to shape political settlements, a notion to which we now turn.

Peace settlements in relation to political settlements

63. In addition to the consideration of democratic processes as a mechanism for the broadening of the political settlement, the PB/SB framework considers the capacity of peace processes to revise political settlements. For example, the executive summary of Objective 2 (p. 7) notes that “[p]eace processes provide windows of opportunity to reshape existing [political] settlements” (repeated on p. 23, para 49). Meanwhile, the ‘definitions and frameworks’ section of the PB/SB asserts that “[a]n inclusive peace process aims to achieve a peace agreement that lays a strong foundation for a new political settlement” (p. 15, para 23). In further discussion of DFID’s potential contribution to the formation of inclusive political settlements, the paper asserts that “[p]eace processes should engage all parties that are sufficiently powerful to prolong conflict, but should not be limited to armed groups” (p. 25, para. 54).
64. Two points are of note. The first is that the PB/SB paper posits an assumption that peace settlements can lead to the revision of the political settlement. The second assumption it makes is that inclusive peace settlements are likely to be the most sustainable. These points are now subject to a review of the evidence.

A gap between peace settlements and political settlements?

65. First, we consider the notion that peace settlements can contribute to the revision of the political settlement. On this point, the PB/SB framework draws heavily on Barnes (2009 [C/R]). Barnes notes that “the war to peace transition has the potential to be a defining period in the development of a state” and that “[w]hen the state is in crisis, there is an opportunity to alter the terms of the political settlement and/or shift how it functions” (p. 13-14). This proposition assumes that inherent flaws in the existing political settlement (such as its exclusion of particular groups) are likely to lead to political instability and violent conflict where there are no mechanisms to reform the settlement by non-violent means. It follows, then, that violent conflict has the potential to *challenge* this political settlement, and peace processes have the potential to *reconstitute* it (Barnes, 2009, p. 9-12).
66. Barnes’ assumption seems to be based more on argumentative logic than it is on empirics.¹⁵ This logic nevertheless seems sound: if violent conflict has occurred as a consequence of a fundamentally unsatisfactory political settlement, then it seems reasonable that expansive peacebuilding efforts, addressing the balance of political, economic and military power, and which go far beyond the agreement of a mere ceasefire, have at least the potential to re-cast the political settlement. That said, this assertion, and its use in the PB/SB framework, requires further substantiation. Moreover, the research on this issue suggests that there are several practical issues which may hamper the sustainability of peace settlements, and their ability to re-shape political settlements.

Is negotiating a peace settlement enough?

67. The first issue is the question of whether or not negotiated peace settlements (as opposed to the outright military victory of one side over another) are likely to endure. A body of research literature, thoroughly surveyed by Licklider (2009* [C/R] pp. 203-204), explores this issue and considers specifically the relative success rates of negotiated peace settlements. It offers highly mixed results:
- 67.1. Several quantitative studies, among them Licklider (1995* [N/R]), Carment & Harvey (2001* [N/R]) and Toft (2009* [N/R]) found that peace secured via negotiated settlements was less likely to hold or endure than peace secured as a consequence of outright military victories on one side;
- 67.2. Other quantitative studies, among them Doyle & Sambanis (2006* [N/R]) and Hartzell (2004 [N/R]) found that there was no difference between the durability of negotiated settlements and military victories.¹⁶
68. This mixed evidence does not allow for the rejection of negotiated peace settlements as a mechanism for conflict resolution: there may be circumstances in which negotiated peace settlements *will* hold. However, nor does the evidence allow us to conclude that mere negotiation is in itself sufficient to achieve lasting peace. In fact, it is necessary to look elsewhere in the literature for the determinants of successful peace processes.

Inclusiveness: the critical determinant of success in peace processes?

69. Rather than looking at negotiation in and of itself, some of the literature looks more specifically at *power-sharing*, and the degree to which negotiation of a peace agreement is *inclusive*, either

¹⁵ The paper generally seems well researched, with an extensive bibliography, but on the key point regarding the inter-relationship between peace negotiations and political settlements, the Barnes argument is not supported by clear empirical findings.

¹⁶ The variance in the results of these (mainly quantitative) studies are attributable to fundamental weaknesses in the data, the use of different datasets, differences in the coding of datasets, and in the quantitative methods use to interrogate them.

of the elites of the belligerent parties (the conflict management school) or of wider elements of society (the conflict resolution and transformation schools).

70. In a study bringing together game theoretical methods with quantitative analysis and case studies, Walter (2002 [E, QT, QL, N7]¹⁷) finds that the brokering of power-sharing agreements (together with the third-party provision of security guarantees) has a major impact on the likelihood of a civil war being peacefully resolved (p. 72). In yet more nuanced studies (summarised by Licklider, 2009*) Mukherjee (2006* [N/R]) finds that power-sharing agreements contribute to peace when they are associated with military victories, but are likely to end in civil war when they are the result of negotiated settlements, whilst Hoddie & Hartzell (2007* [N/R]) find that power-sharing is useful only for the first few years after civil war cessation, after which its limitations (discussed below) outweigh its benefits.¹⁸
71. The notion that conflict can be resolved by reconciling elites has attracted criticism. For example, Sisk (1996* [N/R]) and Horowitz (2000* [N/R]) argue that ‘consociational’ power-sharing pacts between elites, may result in arrangements which are fundamentally “undemocratic”, may “lack grassroots backing”, and represent the “ultimate form of elite manipulation.” They may also “exclude important parties that were not major players in a war” (as summarised by Walter [2002], p. 167). Moreover, one of the major references for the PB/SB framework observes that whether it is negotiated or imposed, mere “elite pact-making” between the hierarchies of belligerent groups provides insufficient scope for the shaping of more broadly-based political settlements (see Barnes, 2009 [C/R] pp. 17-18, 23).
72. However, the evidence surrounding the importance of more inclusive peace processes (the conflict resolution and conflict transformation schools) is again mixed. On the one hand, Wanis-St. John & Kew’s quantitative analysis of 22 peace negotiations over 15 years finds evidence of correlation (though not necessarily causation) between the greater involvement of civil society and the sustainability of peace agreements (2008* [N/R], cited by Barnes, 2009 [C/R]. p. 21. See also Wanis-St. John & Kew (2006*), cited by Paffenholz & Spurk, 2006 [C/R], p. 23]). Paffenholz & Spurk’s support for the importance of civil society involvement in peace processes rests largely on the Wanis-St. John & Kew results (p. 34).
73. But Paffenholz and Spurk (*idem.*, p. 21) also note research evidence suggesting that the impact of civil society involvement on the negotiation and consolidation of peace at the macro-level appears *not* to be significant (see Atieh, 2004* [N/R], cited on p. 21 of Paffenholz & Spurk, or Aall, 2001* [N/R], cited on p. 30). Moreover, there may be circumstances in which the inclusion of civil society in peace negotiations is simply impractical, and may make the reaching of an agreement near impossible. Overall, Paffenholz & Spurk note that “simple civil society enthusiasm” is insufficient, and that there are a number of complex dynamics likely to determine whether or not civil society plays a useful role in peace-building and state-building (p.i).

Inherent tensions between peace-building and state-building

74. Besides being symptomatic of the inherent difficulties in designing robust research to explore these complex issues, the very mixed nature of the evidence surrounding negotiated and/or inclusive peace settlements is most likely a sign of a more general tension between peacebuilding and state-building processes. Rocha Menocal (2009 [C/R], p. 12-15) synthesises some of the critical inconsistencies. First, given that historically, violent conflict has often been

¹⁷ Cited in the PB/SB framework (p. 26, para. 56).

¹⁸ The variance in the results of these (mainly quantitative) studies are attributable to fundamental weaknesses in the data, the use of different datasets, differences in the coding of datasets, and in the quantitative methods use to interrogate them.

crucial to the reformation of the political settlement, its termination through somewhat artificial or premature peace processes may be counter-productive in the long-term, since the very dynamics that drove the conflict may not have changed. Violent conflict is likely to have arisen as a consequence of two or more parties' refusal to make concessions: the violence itself may very well have encouraged these parties to become yet more committed to these positions, and the assumption that differences can be 'negotiated away' is simplistic.

75. Secondly, in arguments that are reminiscent of the Khan and Leftwich state development theses explored previously, Rocha Menocal observes that the compromises required for a peace deal (e.g. the inclusion of belligerents, the offering of amnesties to belligerents, the design of complex power-sharing agreements) may be at odds with what is required for longer-term state-building and for the formation of accountable and responsive polities. In essence, there are some circumstances in which some groups will have to be marginalized or excluded for the achievement of a common good (see also Paris & Sisk, 2007 [C/R], p.4).
76. This discussion of peace processes demonstrates that the evidence is mixed, and complex. It has not proved possible here to provide a straightforward 'meta-analysis' demonstrating which approaches are most likely to be successful. On the one hand, there is no doubt that the notion of greater inclusion in peace processes is an attractive one: the risks of ignoring potential peace 'spoilers' would appear considerable. At the same time, however, the research evidence suggests that there few are hard and fast relationships between negotiations, inclusiveness and the sustainability of peace processes, or indeed their ability to re-shape the political settlement. The conceptual evidence is persuasive, but theoretical. The empirical evidence is contradictory.

The treatment of peace settlements in relation to political settlements in the PB/SB

77. As previously noted, the PB/SB broadly follows the major outlines of the Barnes thesis, namely that peace settlements can re-shape political settlements, and that inclusive peace settlements are more likely to be more sustainable. Nevertheless, it does recognise some of the critical caveats to this position. It rightly observes that that peace processes "may not address underlying power dynamics" (p. 7, for which read 'political settlements') and that the "informal arrangements that define the underlying political settlement and allocation of power may be highly resistant to change" (p. 23, para 49).
78. The PB/SB framework also considers the cases of Guatemala and Kenya (p. 24, para. 50) where it notes that inclusive peace agreements have failed to re-shape the political settlement. In addition, the PB/SB framework offers a summary of some of the principal tensions between state-building and peace-building processes (p. 18, paras. 30-32) in a discussion which clearly takes into account the Rocha Menocal (2009 [C/R]) consideration of the issue, covered above. As such, the PB/SB is wisely cautious on this matter, and is generally reflective of the highly complex and sometimes contradictory linkages between peacebuilding and state-building.
79. A general recommendation following from this discussion is that the PB/SB, or 'how to notes' relating to it, should explore more forensically the (a) circumstances in which peace negotiations have successfully provided space for the renegotiation of the political settlement and (b) the circumstances in which different models of inclusion (of losing parties, elites, and civil society more generally) have led to more sustainable peace settlements and state-building processes. Such exploration will require further consideration of the sources briefly summarised above.

The role of institutions and institutional change

80. Before offering some concluding remarks on the PB/SB's overall treatment of political settlements, we turn to the issue of institutional change.

NOT POLICY

81. The PB/SB's summary of Objective 2, 'Support inclusive political settlements and processes' (p. 7) does not mention institutions or institutional change. Nor do the summaries of the other three key objectives (also p. 7). In general, the framework dedicates comparatively little attention to this area.
82. This is not to say that the framework does not consider institutions. It defines them as rules (p. 12), consistent with the classic Douglass North definition. It differentiates institutions from organisations (such as executives, legislatures, judiciaries, bureaucracies, ministries, the armed forces and tax authorities). It notes their role in regulating political, economic and social engagement across a particular territory (p. 12; also p. 22, para. 46). It also recognises the existence of formal institutions (constitutional laws and regulations) and informal institutions (unwritten agreements and bargains) (p.12), state institutions and non-state institutions. The framework also notes that the achievement of peace requires political institutions "that are able to manage change and resolve disputes without resorting to violent conflict" (p. 14, para. 19). It goes on to observe that international actors may have a role in "supporting national institutions and regulatory frameworks to protect property rights, contracts, and other market institutions" (p. 33, para. 78).
83. However, despite having differentiated between institutions and organisations, the framework conflates or confuses them in a number of places. For example, it states that DFID and its partners "provide long-term support to political institutions and processes, including parliaments and political parties, the judiciary, the media, civil society, human rights bodies and the electoral cycle" (p. 21, para. 44). All but the last of these are not institutions, but organisations. Referring to the Sierra Leone Security Sector Reform Programme, the framework states that this programme "embraces a wide range of state and non-state institutions. These include the Office of National Security, intelligence, defence, police, internal affairs, and accountability institutions (parliament, civil society, media and academia)" (p. 28, Box 8). Again, these entities are not institutions if we adopt the definition proposed by the framework itself.
84. But the more substantive problem with the PB/SB framework's treatment of institutions is its tendency to assume their existence, or at least to assume that the basis for these rules is commonly understood. Moreover, whilst it is reasonable to argue that in "a responsive and accountable state... there is mutual agreement on the rights and obligations shared by society and the state" (p. 29, para. 63), the framework does not devote sufficient attention to exploring just *how* this 'mutual agreement' is typically secured. For its part, the literature that explores this issue of institutional development suggests that the very emergence of institutions is effectively the hardest part of the state-building enterprise.
85. It is beyond the scope of the current review to offer a thorough explanation of institutional change as explored by the research literature. Nevertheless, reference to one particular explanation of the process may be instructive here.
86. At the crux of the issue of institutional change is the degree to which institutions or rules are independent incentive structures that govern and mediate a polity's organisations and their activities, as opposed to being regulatory structures clearly representative of, expressive of, and evidently *servicing* those organisations and their activities. In some studies, this distinction has been couched as a divergence between new institutional economics (NIE) approaches, and historical political economy approaches. Di John & Putzel (2009* [C/R], p. 8) note that "[w]hile those working within NIE conceptualise state institutions simply as incentive structures, an historical political economy approach argues that institutions incorporate distributional advantages in line with the reigning political settlement."
87. In fact, even North, closely associated with the NIE school, observes that "institutions are not necessarily or even usually created to be socially efficient; rather they, or at least the formal

NOT POLICY

NOT POLICY

rules, are created to serve the interests of those with the bargaining power to create new rules” (North, 1993* [C/R]). Khan, for his part, and commenting on the durability of institutions, observes that their effective enforcement requires not just institutional capacity, but also their *compatibility* with the interests of powerful social groups (2004* [C/R], p. 183).

88. The issue is important because if (and here we return to the logic of the previous analysis) elite bargains are at the heart of the political settlement, and if it is elites that are responsible for the institutions which govern political and economic exchanges within a state, then it requires a very particular configuration of elites to develop institutions which serve not only themselves, but also wider society. Moreover, where institutions from one political system are grafted onto another, the outcomes (in terms of stability and economic and political development) are very uncertain where those institutions are insufficiently representative of the pre-existing distribution of coercive power and wealth among elites (i.e. with the political settlement) (See Khan, 2004* [C/R], and North *et. al.*, 2007*, p. 41 [C/R]).
89. The complexity of institutional change, and the way in which it gradually leads to the reconfiguration of the political settlement is explored at length in North *et. al.* (2007* [C/R]). I offer only a brief outline.
90. According to North *et. al.*'s interpretation, so called 'limited access social orders' are controlled by, and constituted by coalitions of elites or elite organisations. The motivation for the very formation of the social order is to allow those controlling it to harvest rents. Elites place limits on the number and types of organisations able to participate in such orders. The social order will remain 'limited access' for so long as the elites who occupy it, and harvest rents from within it, perceive it to be in their economic and political interests to keep it so. Even 'limited access' social orders require rules (formal or otherwise) to regulate the relationships between elites within them, hence institutions develop. Moreover, given that violence is likely to disrupt the capture of rents, institutions are principally focussed on controlling such violence. At first, institutions will be able to sustain only elite organisations that constitute part of the state. But over time, and in certain conditions, the existing elite organisations may recognise that the inclusion of new organisations, specializing in particular economic or coercive activities, will optimise their own ability to harvest rents. As the social order begins to incorporate more organisations, so it requires more sophisticated institutions to regulate their more diverse activities and to maintain order. Consequently, institutions develop such that they are able to sustain (a) organisations that are not part of the state, but are nevertheless *sanctioned* by it and (b) organisations independent from the formal state. It is this incremental institutional change that gradually leads to the emergence of the Open Access Order, where barriers on the formation of organisations, and on political and economic activities they engage in, are relaxed, and where the rule of law, initially a privilege enjoyed only by the elites, is enforced impartially on behalf of much wider elements of society.
91. North *et. al.* argue that limited access orders are not static: innovation in the quest for new forms of rent-seeking generates the aspiration for elites to generate new organisations. Nevertheless, the limited access order is 'stable' in the sense that it remains rooted in the logic of rent capture and the preservation of elite control of rent capture. Moreover, he argues that there is nothing inherent in limited access orders that impels them to progress to greater levels of maturity.
92. This discussion of institutional change is necessarily brief. The North *et. al.* interpretation is just one explanation for the process of institutional change. But it is explored here because it offers an approach to addressing the difficulties that we have discussed with regards the broadening of the political settlement. The PB/SB framework, and the analysis in the current enquiry, have drawn attention to the importance of elites in political settlements. They have demonstrated the difficulties of opening up the political settlement through democratic processes alone. They

NOT POLICY

also show that whilst peace negotiations offer opportunities for the reconstitution of the political settlement, they frequently fail to live up to these expectations. Our consideration of institutional change has explored one line of reasoning as to why the expansion of the political settlement, from elite bargain to a more comprehensive agreement between state and society, is so problematic. The process of institutional change requires considerable further scrutiny if future iterations of the PB/SB are to describe more successfully the means by which states achieve stability and then strengthen state/society relations.

SECTION III: FURTHER DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The nature and quality of the research evidence

93. As outlined in the 'method' section, above, the current study has sought not simply to explore in greater detail the evidence that sits behind the PB/SB, but has also made deliberate efforts to determine the quality of that evidence. It has done so through the categorisation of research evidence (differentiating between conceptual or review papers on the one hand, and empirical studies on the other), and through the application of an evidence 'grading' framework to studies adjudged as being empirical.
94. The criteria against which empirical research is assessed in the framework assumes that researchers seek to construct accurate (reliable and consistent) representations of specific phenomena (in this case, state formation, state-building, and peace-building). It assumes that they construct these representations by testing hypotheses against data gathered from the real world (i.e. through empirical methods). The hypotheses tested should themselves be based upon observations and descriptions of natural (i.e. real world) phenomena.
95. In its favour, the grading framework has allowed the identification of studies which are clearly empirical in nature. Moreover, through posing questions about sampling, data quality and analytical method, it has enabled the differentiation of some strong and some weaker empirical studies.
96. However, a very significant proportion of the literature assessed as part of the current review does not sit easily within the categories defined by the grading framework. None of the review literature (designated C/R) studied was systematic in nature. That means that it did not adopt, or at least did not demonstrate that it had adopted exhaustive search strategies in sourcing the literature it discussed. Consequently the review literature surveyed here may have omitted the results of key studies. Moreover, the review literature was not systematic in the sense that it did not apply screening or quality assessment criteria to the studies it synthesised. In turn, this could mean that good studies and bad studies may have been given roughly equal credence.
97. A significant proportion of the literature reviewed in the current study was primarily discursive and conceptual in nature (also designated C/R). Much of it drew on a huge range of secondary sources. Sometimes the nature of these sources (empirical, quantitative, qualitative etc.) was indicated, but often it was not. Many studies were loosely 'empirical' in that they focused on real world historical events, but their analysis of such trends was rarely based upon any particular analytical method. Many papers offered examples to substantiate key points. Sometimes these examples took the form of case study analysis which was sufficiently detailed to merit a study's classification as empirical work. Often it was not. A number of studies developed theory on the basis of claims of observed phenomena (without substantially describing or illustrating these phenomena). Such political science or historical political economy analysis is neither experimental nor quasi-experimental in nature. It does not follow the conventions of the scientific method. It is difficult to assess with any great confidence whether

or not the authors of such studies have drawn the 'right' conclusions from their combined study of history and their intellectual cogitations.

98. Compounding this issue is the fact that a grading framework cannot by itself confer a weighting for the increments in quality which may reasonably be expected from a single researcher's continued study of a particular area. As a result, the grading framework may not adequately differentiate between the credibility of one-off analytical studies, on the one hand, and papers which are produced as the result of several years' consideration of a social phenomenon, on the other.
99. Issues relating to the quality of the political science and political economy literature inevitably raise questions about the benefits and risks of its inclusion in literature surveys such as this one. Ought not those studies marked [C/R] be discounted simply because they do not present primary empirical data? For its part, the current study has indicated that a number of these studies are valuable in making sense of complex political and economic phenomena.
100. Two key conclusions regarding data quality are offered here. The first is that the dilemmas associated with certain types of political science literature require reviewers to reconsider appropriate mechanisms for judging research quality. Grading frameworks that are too deeply rooted in the tradition of the physical sciences risk dismissing or undervaluing the contributions from this body of work.
101. The second conclusion is that whilst the PB/SB fairly accurately reflects the key lessons from the research on which it is based, that research itself is variable in character, and there are significant areas where greater empirical testing is required in order to bolster confidence in some of the stated PB/SB positions. Moreover, it is worth recalling that since the current review is not systematic, we are unable to make an assessment of the degree to which the PB/SB accurately reflects the evidence from the *entire* research literature on peacebuilding and state-building.
102. A final, general comment about the PB/SB is that its referencing and footnoting were inadequate. Although it would appear that many of the core concepts can be substantiated by research, and frequently by some sound evidence, in many cases critical statements were not substantiated by references. Given the importance of developing evidence based policy and interventions, this is a serious weakness.

The inclusiveness of peace processes and political settlements: the implications for the PB/SB

103. Following from our discussion of the quality of evidence, and its consideration of political settlements, peace processes and democratic processes, we may now ask what are the implications of this review of the evidence for the PB/SB? To what extent does the reviewed evidence (its limitations notwithstanding) substantiate the core concepts of the framework, namely that inclusive political settlements will help build states, that democratic processes have a role to play in opening up the political settlement, and that sufficiently broad peace processes can help reform the political settlement?
104. There appears to be persuasive research that political settlements must at their very core provide a framework for the inclusion of multiple elites in order for violence to be regulated. The PB/SB is consistent with this finding.
105. With regards the inclusion of non-elites in the reformation of the political settlement, the generally more empirical research offers mixed findings. On the subject of democracy, the research seems to suggest that whilst democratic institutions have proved a sound model for

the non-violent regulation of more mature political settlements, they have not been instrumental in the development of these same settlements. In fact, democratic systems do not seem in themselves to incentivise the emergence of developmental states, and the mere grafting of democracy onto authoritarian or semi-authoritarian regimes dominated by a few unprogressive elites can simply raise popular expectations without enhancing the developmental capacity of the state. In some cases, the state's failure to respond to public expectations renders it more, rather than less fragile.

106. Although the PB/SB framework does advocate support for democratic processes, it nevertheless provides suitable levels of caution on this point. It recognises the risks that may be associated with certain democratic forms, notably elections. Moreover, because the framework also makes the case for the bolstering of core state functions, and the need to address underlying conflict dynamics (such as unsustainable political settlements), it ought not to be considered to be overly reliant upon democratic processes for the strengthening of state-society relations. On balance, the PB/SB's coverage of this issue seems to be adequately measured.
107. On the subject of the potential contribution of peacebuilding to state-building, and specifically the role of peace processes in the revision of political settlements, the evidence is once again very mixed. The assumption that peace processes offer a window of opportunity for the reform of the political settlement seems logical, but studies of the relative successes of negotiated peace settlements, and even the more *inclusive* negotiated peace settlements, seem to indicate that this potential opportunity is infrequently taken. In addition, the research also outlines notable tensions between the objectives of peacebuilding, and the requirements for successful state-building.
108. The PB/SB framework is, again, relatively well positioned on this issue. It recognises that peace processes are merely an opportunity for the revision of the political settlement. It also notes that they can equally produce forms of agreement that do *not* change the underlying political settlement. Moreover, the PB/SB framework recognises that the power dynamics of those settlements may be very resistant to change. Lastly, the PB/SB framework expressly explores some of the principal tensions between state-building and peace-building processes.
109. As such, on a number of the key questions, the PB/SB framework appears to take into account research findings which pose what appear to be genuine, and very problematic dilemmas. Stability requires elite inclusion, but the limitation of the political settlement to unprogressive elites is unsatisfactory in the long-run. Democracy is desirable, but may not contribute to state-building, and its application in some contexts may actually generate instability. And peace negotiations may, in theory, offer opportunities to address the political settlement, but often they fall short. The PB/SB includes sufficient caveats to show that it is cognisant of these issues.
110. Where the PB/SB appears to be weaker is in its treatment of institutional change. Whilst it makes reference to the importance of robust institutions and their role in controlling instability, the paper remains relatively silent on the way in which such institutions have historically emerged. There is a body of research, of which only a small amount has been considered here, that stresses that the durability of institutions is only as great as their compatibility with the interests of those who hold power. In many developing countries, power remains confined to relatively limited elite configurations. The challenge is to understand the conditions under which these elite configurations will pursue interests that in turn require them to develop institutions likely to serve not just themselves, but also wider society. It is in this area that additional research, preferably empirical in nature, is required.

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NOT POLICY

Combined Government Social Research Service // LSE Justice & Security RPC approach to grading evidence – abbreviated

The following section reproduces those questions that form the basis of the evidence grading template used to inform the current study. These questions draw from (but do not completely replicate) the UK Government Social Research Service's "[Rapid Evidence Assessment](#)" toolkit. They have been adapted by the London School of Economics' "Justice & Security Research Programme Consortia" for the purposes of a set of Evidence Papers produced in 2011-2012.

The full grading template (an xls. spreadsheet, enabling the calculation of evidence quality scores on the basis of the responses provided) features the following sections:

TYPE OF DATA/INFORMATION

1. How much original evidence data/information does the research paper contain?
 - 1.1. Roughly how much of the work being assessed presents empirical data/information rather than theory, hypothesis or (non-systematic) reviews of other literature?
 - 50% or more?
 - Between 10% and 50%
 - 10% or less.
2. What are the main categories of empirical data/information that the work uses/presents?
 - 2.1. Quantitative, using existing dataset
 - 2.2. Quantitative, gathering own data
 - 2.3. Qualitative, interview based
 - 2.4. Qualitative, ethnographic/participatory observation
 - 2.5. Other primary sources.

QUALITY OF THE METHODOLOGY

3. With reference to the category of empirical data/information selected above, indicate whether you strongly disagree (score = 0), disagree (score = 1), agree (score = 2), or strongly agree (score = 3) with each of the following statements:

For quantitative studies:

- 3.1. **Validity:** the indicators used accurately capture the phenomenon the author is aiming to draw conclusions about (i.e. does the test measure the thing it sets out to measure?)
- 3.2. **Transparency:** the process of compiling the data is transparent. The author provides the source of his/her data and describes how data is collected by a third party.
- 3.3. **Acknowledgement of bias:** potential biases in the data are acknowledged. Data are not missing at random, and where data is missing, explanations are offered.
- 3.4. **Conceptual relationships:** the author distinguishes between associations and correlations (on the one hand) and causation on the other. Where causation is claimed, the author

NOT POLICY

credibly demonstrates the direction of causality (i.e. addresses 'reverse causality' issues). Robustness checks (e.g. sensitivity analysis) are conducted.

- 3.5. **Conclusions:** the conclusions offered are supported by the data. The author considers whether the findings only apply to the specific data presented, or whether or not they can be applied to other cases.

For qualitative studies (including ethnographic/participatory observation, and other primary sources, such as archives, government documents, reports, photographs etc.):

- 3.6. **Validity:** the information collected is adequately representative of the population/group that the research aims to draw conclusions about.
- 3.7. **Transparency:** where data is gathered through interviews, the method for interviewing is clear (i.e. questions sets are presented), the time over which the interviews were conducted is stated, and the number of interviewees consulted is stated.
- 3.8. **Acknowledgement of bias:** potential interview biases are acknowledged and limited/controlled for. E.g. the way in which the respondent may be influenced by the characteristics of the interviewer, or is affected by perceived gains to be made through answering in a particular way.
- 3.9. **Conclusions:** the study shows that the findings are reflective of a good proportion of the interviews.
- 3.10. **Consideration of wider context:** the analysis is contextualised in a broader literature/history. The degree to which findings can be generalised across contexts is considered.

Scores from these different questions can be aggregated to provide an overall score for the credibility of empirical findings. Such a scoring framework cannot be applied to work which is merely conceptual in character.

APPRAISER COMMENTS AND JUDGEMENT

4. In comparison to other literature you have reviewed, how insightful do you consider this work to be in terms of the **data/information** it presents?
 - 4.1. The work presents no new significant data/information
 - 4.2. The work presents some new data/information
 - 4.3. The work presents a considerable amount of data/information
5. In comparison to other literature you have reviewed, how insightful do you consider this work to be in terms of **analysis** presented?
 - 5.1. Offers no significant new analysis/insight
 - 5.2. Offers some new analysis/insight
 - 5.3. Offers a considerable amount of new analysis/insight

The grading template also contains a large 'free text' field for the appraiser to record comments and observations on the research, covering both the methodology employed, and the substantive arguments of the research.

NOT POLICY