

Scoping a long-term research programme on conflict, state fragility and social cohesion

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Executive Summary

1. The purpose of this scoping study is to provide evidence on the need for research on conflict, state fragility and social cohesion and to provide recommendations on the scope and focus of a long-term research programme in this area. It builds on the consultation for DFID's research strategy (2008-2013) undertaken in 2007 as well as initial consultations undertaken in August 2008 with DFID staff and partners. These consultation processes suggested that there was demand for further research in two key areas: (i) The drivers and sustainers of conflict and fragility – looking at the relevance of different structural factors to different forms of conflict and fragility and well as the relationship between state and non-state sources of power; and (ii) Prevention and recovery – looking at levels of resilience within states and societies with an explicit focus on state building, social cohesion and the impact of global dynamics, and considering key policy key trade-offs.

Mapping the state of play

2. In order to examine and develop these themes in greater depth, this scoping study involved a number of elements: (a) A literature review of key materials related to conflict, state fragility and social cohesion, focusing on the areas identified above; (b) A broad consultation process with over 60 stakeholders in DFID, other UK Government departments, other donors, academic institutions and NGOs – including where possible southern stakeholders; and (c) A mapping of existing and (where possible) planned research related to this area being undertaken by academic institutions, other donors and government departments.
3. **The key findings of the literature review were as follows:**

The drivers and sustainers of conflict and fragility

4. ***The state of knowledge:*** An important body of research has been built up over the last two decades, which has analysed the drivers and maintainers of conflict. This shifted from the greed vs grievance approach of the 1990s to a more nuanced approach recognising the multiple causes of conflict; using a political economy approach to look at the interaction of causes and the interests of different actors; looking at the linkages between (horizontal) inequalities, exclusion, poverty and conflict; and focusing on the central role of power and politics. More recent work has focused on the “micro” sources of conflict; analysed conflict and fragility as dynamic processes and focused on their transformative effects; and started to examine the “drivers of peace”. There has also been a renewed focus on the ways in which ethnic or religious identities, ideas and cultural values are constructed and manipulated to mobilise violence and fuel conflict and the roles and impacts of actors, structures and dynamics - including non-state actors (e.g. gangs, armed militia), structural challenges (e.g. urbanisation, migration) and transnational factors (e.g. arms trade, economic crisis) – over which the state may exercise limited influence, but that have an impact on the state's capacity and on a society's resilience to conflict and fragility.
5. ***Key research gaps***
 - *The role of non-state actors:* Research on gangs, criminal organisations, traditional authorities, grassroots social, political and faith-based movements; the ways these groups relate to the state and to citizens; strategies of engagement might be vis-à-vis these actors.
 - *Transnational drivers of conflict and fragility:* Impacts of international drugs trade as well as other activities of international organised crime networks; impacts of the recent economic and global crisis and changes in international economic, trade and related policies; impacts of foreign interventions on long-term prospects for conflict or instability.



- *The impacts of structural and exogenous factors:* Specific causal relationships between demographics, urbanisation, migration, conflict and fragility; policy options available to states and other actors to address these.
- *The proximate drivers of conflict and processes of mobilisation into violence* – the local and transnational dimensions of these processes; difference/similarities across contexts; the role of states in triggering or perpetrating violence.

Prevention and response

6. ***The state of knowledge:*** The relationship between conflict, fragility, state building and peace building emerges as an increasingly key area of focus in both the policy and academic literature including work on the critical steps of the state building process (i.e. political settlements, core and expected state functions); the need to take account of the perspectives of citizens and re-focus discussions on the negotiation of the social contract; examining the political settlement and processes of political transition in fragile and conflict-affected states; the effects of democratisation processes on conflict; and an increasingly critical strand of work on donor-driven state building approaches and the impacts of international interventions. There is also a growing literature, which looks at broader society and the different factors that render a society more susceptible or resilient to conflict and fragility. Although there is a lack of clarity about the meaning of “social cohesion”, and its linkages to other factors, there are limited strands of work on mechanisms to address inequalities and promote social inclusion; the management of identity and other differences and reconciliation in divided societies; and peace building focused particularly on the role of social capital and civil society organisations in building relations of trust, tolerance and cooperation.

7. ***Key research gaps***

- *A critical re-examination of donor state building approaches* - draw together insights from existing literature – in particular how to acknowledge the roles of and linkages to non-state sources of power and citizen’s perspectives.
- *How to do state building and peace building in practice:* trade-offs between state building and peace building objectives; sequencing and prioritisation of interventions; impacts of international engagement.
- *The political settlement, political institutions and democratisation:* - the types of political systems and institutions that are more resilient and effective at managing conflict peacefully; how democratic reforms should be managed and paced to reduce the risks of violence; how political settlements evolve, adapt and endure or unravel.
- *Social cohesion and resilience to violence* - unpacking key concepts and linkages; synthesising literature on identity politics, social inclusion, social capital etc; looking at what makes particular communities and societies resilient to fragility and conflict; examining linkages between local, regional, national processes of institution building and peace building.

8. **The consultation process** highlighted overall support for a research programme in this area. Most people felt that the “established” drivers of conflict and fragility (e.g. poverty, exclusion, inequality, competition over access to power and resources) had been well studied but that the “newer” and “proximate” causes could be further examined (e.g. crime, migration, urbanisation, global market forces). Many people also stressed the need to make better use of existing research findings. Beyond this, there were significant demands for knowledge in the following areas:

- Exploring the “how” as opposed to the “why” and “what issues i.e. researching policy options and trade-offs and the impacts of interventions.
- Context-specific research relevant to particular regions, countries and localities.
- State building in fragile and conflict-affected contexts: how international actors can engage more effectively; issues of sequencing and prioritisation; tensions/



complementarities/ trade offs between state building and peacebuilding approaches; political settlement; basic service delivery; security sector; justice sector; critiques of “template” “top down” state building approaches; negative state building processes and state as perpetrator of violence.

- The role of non-state actors and structures of authority in conflict or fragility: urban /“ungoverned” spaces; gangs, armed militia and criminal groups; potential positive role of traditional leaders and grassroots social or religious movements; linkages between non-state actors, the state and citizens.
 - The transnational drivers of conflict and fragility: links between local and global drivers; the regionalisation of conflict; Western foreign policy as a cause of conflict and instability; impacts of global economic changes and crisis; drugs trade; impacts of diaspora.
 - Linkages between different types of violence (e.g. political, criminal, gang, domestic, gender-based): importance of such violence; how various types linked; how they can be addressed.
 - Identity politics, ideology and mobilisation into violence: “trigger” factors in violent mobilisation (e.g. local and organisation dynamics); transmission of ideology and values and role in violence; how manage identity politics peacefully for positive outcomes.
 - Building social cohesion and resilience to violence: evidence on links between social cohesion, conflict and fragility; understanding “social cohesion”; why some communities are resilient to violence; role of social capital and associational organisations / CSOs in resilience; local institutions of mediation; transformative potential of violence and fragility.
9. **The mapping study** did not identify any other current or planned research programmes looking specifically at the links between conflict, state fragility and social cohesion, although some looked the linkages between two of these variables. The mapping identified some interesting differences in focus between northern and southern-based institutions. The former tended to focus on areas such as the state, governance, fragility, democracy-building and global security; whereas the latter focused more on the local causes of conflict and tension and efforts to build local capacity to prevent or manage conflict, promote peace and coexistence. In term of the themes identified in the draft PCN, the key findings of the mapping study were:
10. **The drivers and sustainers of conflict and fragility**
- There are several projects engaged in monitoring and analysing trends in levels and types of conflict and fragility globally.
 - There is increasing interest in looking at drivers at different levels and how they interrelate.
 - There have been a number of programmes looking at links between inequality, exclusion and conflict. Key gaps appear to be synthesis and research that examines in more depth some of the drivers of horizontal inequalities and exclusion and policy interventions to overcome them.
 - A number of research programmes, particularly in the south, focus specifically on conflict related to scarce resources such as land and water.
 - There is a lot of existing research looking at the links between resource scarcity, environmental issues and conflict and the challenge is to explore responses
 - Some work on violence in urban contexts was highlighted, but there is a need for more systematic work in this area on understanding causality and on prevention and response.
 - A number of new research programmes look at other forms of armed or everyday violence, but there is scope for further research to look at the linkages between these types of violence them and the options for prevention and response.
 - Very few initiatives were identified that looked comprehensively at different range of non-state actors and structures of authority operating in a society, how they relate to each other, the



state and citizens, and their role in driving conflict and instability or peace and stability.

- The mapping suggests that there are a limited, but increasing number of research programmes looking specifically at processes of violent mobilisation or “radicalisation”. The main gaps appear to be research on the exact processes by which people are mobilised into violence on the basis of identity and the role of ideology, values and beliefs in mobilisation.
- In terms of research on global and transnational factors affecting conflict and fragility, there are a number of programmes looking at global security and global governance issues
- Certain regional and cross-border dimensions of conflict and fragility seemed to be relatively under-researched e.g. the (negative) impacts of foreign intervention, the regionalisation of conflict, the impact of the drugs trade, organised crimes, global economic change and crisis.

11. Prevention and response

- There appears already to be a growing body of research on state building, reconstruction and peace building in fragile and conflict-affected contexts but this is contested in places and there are important gaps. Research includes international strategies of engagement and a more limited number of projects on regional capacities. There are also several projects critiquing current approaches. The challenges are to synthesise the conclusions and to look much more closely at the trade-offs, sequencing and prioritisation of interventions to build state capacity in practice. There also appear to be very limited current research on several key sectors including the justice sector and specific institutions like the police.
- Research on political reforms and democratisation in fragile and conflict-affected contexts is also growing, including on political settlements and power-sharing arrangements, but there is much less on the recent experience of elections and the role of political institutions and constitutional bodies ,
- There is a body of research on transitional justice and reconciliation. The main gaps in this area appear to be research, which looks at the operational experience and the linkages between local and national-level reconciliation and peace building initiatives.
- Citizenship and identity appears to be a recurring research theme for southern organisations.
- In terms of building social cohesion and resilience to violence, there is a growing body of research, particularly in the south, on the contribution of civil society and other community-based institutions to peace building, but this needs to be synthesised and operationalised.
- The mapping highlighted relatively limited work on gender dimensions of conflict and fragility.

Guiding principles

12. In addition to the findings, from these three exercises, we have also been guided by a number of parameters in order to develop the scope of the proposed research programme. At a conceptual level, there is clearly a need for more work to clarify and set out the relationships between the different concepts, actors and processes. Nonetheless, we have been guided by the following parameters: (i) linking levels of analysis in order to understand relationships between the micro-meso-macro and local-national-regional-global; (ii) understanding the actions, perspectives and relationships between different groups: state actors, non-state actors and citizens; (iii) understanding both structural and proximate (or “trigger”) factors of conflict and fragility; and (iv) understanding conflict and fragility as dynamic processes.
13. We have been guided by the following general principles: (i) Ensuring research is relevant to policy and practice - including research that responds to shorter-term policy demands and longer-term ‘horizon-scanning’ research; (ii) Not over-determining the research questions - in order to leave scope for tendering institutions to define and justify further themes or respond to ‘cutting-edge’ issues; (iii) Recognising how research-based knowledge is generated i.e. through several academics working on the same questions, testing each other’s ideas and evidence; (iv) Striking a balance between creating new knowledge and



getting knowledge into use; (v) Delivering both global research and context-specific locally relevant research; (vi) Building on existing research; (vii) Complementing other areas of possible future DFID-funded research highlighted in DFID's recent research strategy.

Proposed research question and themes

14. On the basis of the above we have reviewed the proposed research question and themes in the terms of reference (TOR) and draft Project Concept Note (PCN). We would suggest amending the research question slightly and splitting it into the following two overarching questions:

- **How do local, national and international factors combine to drive conflict and fragility in specific states?**
- **How can states and societies be supported to manage competing interests peacefully and lay the foundations for resilience, stability and durable peace?**
- In terms of the research themes and sub-themes outlined in the TOR and draft PCN, overall our findings and analysis support the key areas of focus outlined. However, we propose to organise the various areas of research under the following three themes, the details of which are below:
 - Theme 1: Building resilient, effective and peaceful States
 - Theme 2: Non-state actors and exogenous drivers of conflict, fragility and peace
 - Theme 3: Building social cohesion and resilience to violence

Theme 1: Building resilient, effective and peaceful States

15. Much research has been conducted on state building processes and political settlements, demonstrating the potential for both positive trajectories towards resilience, social cohesion and peace and negative trajectories towards fragility and violence. Nonetheless, in some areas, theories and perspectives remain incomplete and contested, and in others, there is a need to better synthesise and operationalise the results of research. The biggest challenge is to develop a more multi-dimensional approach to state building in fragile and conflict-affected states, which incorporates the multiple objectives of elites, other groups in society, and of the international community, and is based on a firm understanding of processes of both state building and peace building over the short and longer term. It is proposed that this theme therefore support both research that builds on existing work and new areas of investigation. The proposed areas of focus are:

- (i) ***State building and peace building in practice in fragile and post-conflict states:*** A new research agenda could be developed to explore appropriate policy options and trade-offs for national and international stakeholders in fragile and conflict-affected states, inform decisions about the prioritisation and sequencing of interventions, and better understand possible impacts on the political settlement and social contract. The specific areas where there are identifiable gaps and demands for new research are:
 - *Improving security provision for citizens*
 - *Service delivery, the social contract and “peace dividends”*
 - *Promoting inclusion and cohesion through service delivery:*
 - *Justice sector reforms*
 - *Longer-term trade-offs: resilient vs developmental states*
- (ii) ***The political foundations of resilient and peaceful states:*** This sub-theme would gather empirical evidence about where and how different political systems and institutions have effectively mediated between competing interests to prevent violence escalating into more generalised conflict and state collapse. Specific areas for proposed future research include:



- *Deepening our understanding of political settlements*
 - *Democratic transition and the role of elections*
 - *The development and rebuilding of political society and citizenship*
 - *Enhancing knowledge of the politics of conflict*
- (iii) **How the state contributes to fragility and conflict and steps to mitigate this:** Research under this theme could involve both new work and the synthesis of lessons from existing research outputs in order to better understand how and why the state has actively engaged in or been a catalyst for conflict. Specific areas for proposed future research include:
- *Situations of deteriorating governance*
 - *The state as a perpetrator of everyday violence and insecurity*
 - *The role of sub-national and local levels of Government*
- (iv) **The international community and state building: roles, opportunities and challenges:** Further research could produce evidence on the incentives, capability and roles of various international actors (including the BRICS) in relation to fragile states, encompassing how they can reinforce state building or aggravate tensions, weaken national capacity and increase the potential for future violent conflict. Specific areas for proposed future research include:
- *Lessons from international interventions in specific contexts*
 - *Dealing with cross-border and regional conflict*
 - *Engaging with violent or repressive states*

Theme 2: Non-state actors and exogenous drivers of conflict, fragility and peace

16. The state operates as part of a wider society and there are a range of other non-state actors, structures of authority and sources of power – both formal and informal - that can exert influence on the State and its citizens and, in some cases, operate beyond the authority of the State. Much more research is needed to understand the nature and interests of these non-state structures and actors, their role in driving different forms of violence, conflict and fragility, their relationship to the State, and how the State and international actors can best engage with them to prevent violent conflict, build peace, social cohesion and resilience. Equally, there is demand for more work to look at certain transnational drivers of conflict, fragility and “bad governance” and the impacts of global economic and geopolitical changes on the potential for fragility and conflict in specific countries, regions and localities. Finally, there are a number of structural and exogenous factors that are posing challenges for policy makers, particularly in fragile states and countries emerging from conflict, and need to be better understood. The proposed areas of focus under this theme are:

- (i) **Non-state actors and informal sources of power:** Specific areas for proposed future research include:
- *“Ungoverned” (or non-state governed) spaces.*
 - *Understanding non-state political, socio-cultural and religious movements/ sources of authority*
 - *The proximate causes of violence*
 - *Options for engagement with non-state actors*
- (ii) **The linkages between different forms of violence:** There is a need for a better understanding of the linkages between and impacts of different kinds of violence that may or may not be related to conflict (e.g. political, interpersonal, household, inter-communal, political, criminal, gang etc) - perpetrated by state or non-state actors. Specific areas where research could focus include:
- *The importance of different forms of violence across diverse contexts (e.g. post-conflict, weak governance, political transition, recession).*
 - *The drivers and impacts of these wider forms of violence*
 - *Options for addressing different forms of armed violence*



(iii) Transnational drivers of conflict, fragility and resilience: Existing research could be extended to explore the causal links between various transnational drivers of conflict and the political, administrative and security weaknesses within nation states and how different actors and processes (including international criminal gangs) beyond state boundaries can undermine or increase incentives for more responsive and accountable governance. Specific areas for proposed future research include:

- *The transnational drivers of “bad governance” and fragility*
- *The transnational drivers of resilience and responsiveness*
- *Responding to the regionalisation of conflict*
- *Exploring the linkages between global and local drivers of conflict*

(iv) Responding to structural and exogenous factors: Developing countries are vulnerable to a combination of structural and exogenous factors (e.g. demographic pressures, migration trends, urbanization, resource scarcity/abundance, under/unemployment and climate change) that can simultaneously undermine social cohesion and state resilience and lead to violence and conflict. Specific areas where further research could add value might include:

- *The demographic challenge*
- *Local impacts of increased competition for resources*
- *Regional management of scarce resources*
- *Building resilience to structural and exogenous pressures*

Theme 3: Building social cohesion and resilience to violence

17. Over the last few years, there has been increasing interest in the academic and donor communities in the relationships between social cohesion, fragility and conflict, but the linkages and their policy implications still need to be clarified. In particular further work is needed on specific dimensions of social cohesion such as social inclusion, identity and values and social capital in order to better understand both processes of violent mobilisation and why certain communities and societies are more resilient to violence. The proposed areas of focus under this theme are:

(i) The links between social cohesion, conflict and fragility

- *Unpacking the concept of social cohesion*
- *Examining the causal relationships between (a lack of) social cohesion, fragility and conflict*

(ii) Breaking the links between inequality, exclusion and violence: Further research could build on the work of CRISE in a number of specific areas:

- *The global and national drivers of inequalities at a local level*
- *The relationships between political systems, inequality, exclusion and violence*
- *How does violent conflict affect inequalities and exclusion?*
- *Interventions to reduce horizontal inequalities*

(iii) Violent mobilisation: Identity, ideology and violence: There are still a number of gaps where further research and synthesis could produce new insights:

- *The mobilisation of groups on the basis of ethnic or religious differences*
- *The role of ideas, ideology and values in processes of violent mobilisation*
- *The inter-generational transmission of conflict*
- *Gender differences in the motives for and experiences of violence*
- *Managing identity politics to promote responsive governance and stability*

(iv) Social capital and resilience to violence: Existing literature emphasises the transformative nature of violence, its impacts on social and political institutions, and the importance of building social capital to prevent violence, but has yet to influence mainstream policy processes. There are a number of specific areas where synthesis and further research could be valuable:



- *The transformative dynamics of violence and conflict*
- *What makes societies and communities more or less resilient in the face of instability, conflict and insurgency?*
- *Building resilience to violence*

1.0 Introduction

1.1 DFID's Central Research Department (CRD) proposes to establish a six-year research programme to increase understanding of the relationships between conflict, state fragility and social cohesion. The proposed central research question to be addressed by the programme is: **Why are some states prone to fragility and conflict and what are the foundations of durable peace and stability?** DFID is currently funding research on conflict, fragility and human security through two research programmes: (i) The Centre for Research in Inequality, Human Security and Ethnicity (CRISE) due to close in June 2009 and (ii) The Crisis States Research Centre (CSRC), due to close in 2010. However, given that this is still a relatively new area of research, the consultation for DFID's Research Strategy 2008-2013 highlighted the need to extend research on rebuilding fragile and collapsed states – in particular to look at what has worked and not worked in terms of empirical assessments of post-conflict policies and their contribution to conflict prevention and recovery, and the role of political power and economic resources distribution between groups.

1.2 Initial consultation with DFID staff and partners in follow up to the Research Strategy suggested the following two themes for research:

- **Theme 1: The drivers and sustainers of conflict and fragility.** This could include research on the drivers of different forms of conflict and fragility, as well as seeking to understand the incentives for states to participate in violence themselves. These include civilian violence, cross-border violence and regional dynamics, intra-state fragility and post-conflict violence. This theme could also assess the relevance of structural factors to patterns of conflict and fragility, including the role of young people, the impact of urbanisation, and the relationship between the availability of natural resources, climate change and patterns of conflict and fragility. Research could also look at the relationships between state and non-state sources of power, including interaction between formal and informal justice systems.
- **Theme 2: Prevention and Recovery.** Under this theme research could focus on levels of resilience within states and societies, with an explicit focus on the role of state building and social cohesion agendas. This would include looking at the different dimensions of state function, including the establishment of a political settlement, basic state functions, and other demanded/ expected functions, as well as the dynamic relationship between wider society and the state¹. This could also include research on the nature of security sector reform and the impact of different approaches to popular reconciliation. With a focus on practical application of research findings, this theme could also look at the implications of potential policy trade-offs associated with a focus on achieving peace and security. It could also generate evidence relating to global dynamics, including the role of the international system and regional bodies, as well as the changing role of the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) in fragile and conflict-affected countries.

1.3 CRD therefore commissioned this scoping exercise to provide evidence on the need for research in these and related areas and to draw together recommendations on the scope and focus of a long-term programme on conflict, state fragility and social cohesion. CRD wishes to ensure that the research programme is based on an assessment of current evidence gaps, demand from partners and potential uptake.

¹ Whites, A, 2008, States in Development: Understanding State Building, DFID Working Paper, page 23



1.4 The full terms of reference (TOR) for this scoping study are at annex A. The key elements of work undertaken during the study included: (i) A literature review of key documents related to conflict, state fragility and social cohesion; (ii) A consultation process with DFID staff and a range of external stakeholders; and (iii) A mapping of current and planned research activities being undertaken by academic institutions, donors, UN agencies, OECD-DAC, NGOs and other UK Government Departments in this field. The results of these three components of the study are presented in section 2.0. Section 3.0 then outlines the proposed scope of the research programme including the overall principles we propose guide the research programme as well as a detailed breakdown of the themes and sub-themes we propose the research programme should cover. The full literature review is attached at annex C; Annex D gives an overview of the people we consulted during this study as well as the consultation questions; and annex E contains the complete mapping of existing and planned research. We have also produced a separate annex F, which discusses and makes recommendations on the modalities of the research programme based on the consultation process and our analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the existing research centre model.

2.0 Mapping the current state of play

2.1 Literature review: The state of knowledge and key research gaps

2.1 The first step of the scoping study was to conduct a literature review of recent research relating to conflict, state fragility and social cohesion in order to assess the state of knowledge on the linkages between conflict, state fragility and social cohesion and identify the key research gaps. Given this is a huge area of literature, and that we only had 11 consultancy days to conduct the literature review, we were mainly guided by the thematic areas identified in the draft PCN and primarily relied on synthesis literature, working papers and reports published by donors, existing DFID-funded research centres and other key academic research programmes in this area. We were, however, able to draw on a limited number of individual academic papers and books where these were recommended or already known to us through our own work. The literature review is attached at annex C and this section summarises key findings in terms the state of knowledge and research gaps under the two themes in the draft PCN: (i) The drivers and sustainers of conflict and fragility; and (ii) Prevention and response.

2.1.1 The drivers and sustainers of conflict and fragility

The state of knowledge

2.2 An important body of research has been built up over the last two decades, which has analysed the drivers and maintainers of conflict, and, increasingly, of fragility. In the late 1990s, academic interest focused on the “**greed vs. grievances**” approach (Kaplan 1994, Kaufmann 1996, Huntington 1997, Kaldor 1999, Stewart 2002, Keen 1998), which profoundly influenced policy circles. More recent approaches - whilst recognising the importance of ethnicity and economics, in particular issues of access to resources, - have placed more stress on a nuanced approach to understanding the causes of conflict, including linkages between (horizontal) inequalities (Stewart 2006), exclusion, poverty and conflict and on the central role of power and politics. There has been increasing recognition of the **multiple causes of conflicts** and the need to use **political economy analysis** to analyse a range of structural causes (poverty, inequality, exclusion, weak governance, demographic pressures, urbanization, resource abundance/scarcity) and the complex interaction between them in specific contexts as well as the **different actors, their incentives and interests**.

2.3 More recently, there have been shifts to focus on the “**micro**” **sources of violence** (Stewart 2008, Justino 2006, Kanbur et al. 2007) as well as to start to examine the **proximate or “trigger” causes** of conflict and fragility including rapid changes such as economic shocks and political events, looking in particular at the role of governance, the state and other stakeholders in fomenting or preventing conflict (Bloomfield and Ropers 2005, Lederach 2001, Mitchell 2002, Wulf, Lund 2006). There has also been a recognition that **conflict and**



fragility are dynamic processes and that original grievances may change or be replaced by new sources of tension. Furthermore, there has been a focus on the **transformative effects of conflict and fragility**, recognising that they can significantly transform social and political structures, institutions and power relations. There is also a recent strand of work, which examines the “**drivers of peace**”, seeking to identify the stakeholders and dynamics that can lead to constructive ways of dealing with conflict and social change.

- 2.4 Given the recent increase in global “terrorist” attacks, there has also been a renewed focus in the literature on group identity and the **ways in which ethnic or religious identities, ideas and cultural values are constructed and manipulated to mobilise violence and fuel conflict** (e.g. Sen 2006, Brubaker 2004, Hale 2006). In this respect, there has been an acknowledgement of the range of actors and forces that shape the political, social and economic context in a specific country and research has begun to look at the **actors, structures and dynamics - including non-state actors, structural challenges and transnational factors – over which the state may exercise limited influence**, but that have an impact on the state’s capacity to perform its core and expected functions and on a society’s structure, including its resilience to conflict and fragility.
- 2.5 Recent research has therefore started to look at a number of non-state actors that operate within state boundaries, exploring, in particular, **the role of armed groups and private military and security companies**, in exacerbating human rights violations and undermining the capacity of the state to guarantee the security of its citizens, especially in unstable countries. Whereas issues such as **demographic change and youth marginalization** were previously mainly addressed by anthropological and sociological research, new political economy as well as multi-disciplinary work is now looking at how these phenomena interact with the political process, potentially increasing the potential for conflict fragility and impacting on state building and peace building efforts (Ebata et al. 2005, Kemper 2005, Newman 2005, Sommers 2006). An agenda of research around **climate change, environmental degradation and resources scarcity** is also gaining momentum in research and policy circles, as is research on **migration and urbanisation** (WGBU, Oxfam, IA, IOM, International Alert, Harir 1994; Prunier 2005; Srinivasan 2006, DeWaal and Flint 2006, Lemarchand 2005).
- 2.6 Research by Kaldor (1999) and Duffield (2001), among others, has shown that ‘new wars’, although increasingly intra-state, are embedded within **complex military, financial/economic and political transnational networks** (e.g. roles of diaspora in financing and political support; trading of natural resources through illicit trafficking networks to finance war, etc). Similarly, new work by Stewart (2008b) on the global aspects of horizontal inequalities suggests that inequalities faced by a group in one part of the world (e.g. Muslims in Western societies) may become a source of grievance and mobilization elsewhere. This links up with emerging work on the **drivers of extremism and radicalisation** (Ladbury 2005, 2008). In view of recent events, the impact of **global economic and financial crisis** is also interesting an increasing number of researchers, including non-economists – especially given that cross-border **flows of goods, people, arms, drugs and “conflict commodities”** embed conflict countries deeply in the global economy more now than ever. Finally, there is a nascent literature on global security concerns and renewed interest in “new interventionism”, especially unilateral interventionism (following on from Mayall 1996 on the United Nations).
- 2.7 Finally, in terms of the type and methodologies of research, an analysis of recent literature suggests renewed interest in **more historically and culturally contextualized, in-depth explorations** of the root causes of particular conflicts, of their dynamics and transformative potential as opposed to ‘generalized’ meta-theories, which have dominated for a while.

Key research gaps

- 2.8 Whilst knowledge of the drivers of conflict and fragility is now extensive and stresses the need to examine how multiple factors interact in specific contexts, there are a number of specific areas where research is contested or incomplete:





- (i) The role of non-state actors: Although there is increasing research in this areas, especially on armed groups and private military and security companies, there appears to be a lack of research on the **ways these groups relate to the state (and in some cases capture the state) and to citizens and what the strategies of engagement might be vis-à-vis these actors**. This literature review was not able to review the complete literature in this area, but did not come across any research that looks closely at the impacts of the activities of **gangs and criminal organisations** on conflict and fragility. Equally, it did not uncover much work on the role of **traditional authorities, and grassroots social, political and faith-based movements**, how they affect state-citizen relations and their role in conflict and fragility or in conflict prevention and peace building.
- (ii) Transnational drivers of conflict and fragility: There has been a recent increase in research in areas such as international competition over scarce natural resources and trade in arms and conflict commodities. However, the literature review uncovered almost no research on the impacts of **international drugs trade** as well as other **activities of international organised crime networks**, such as money laundering and people trafficking – and the ways in which instability may benefit these groups. Equally, although a few articles have been published on the **impacts of the recent economic and global crisis** on fragility in developing countries, there is not yet a comprehensive body of literature in this area – especially that takes a longer term view of **global economic change** and the impacts of changes in international economic, trade and other related policies. Finally, although there are a number of recent articles on current (Western) **foreign interventions**, there is not yet a comprehensive literature examining the impacts of these interventions on long-term prospects for conflict or instability.
- (iii) The impacts of structural and exogenous factors: The literature has identified some work on factors such as **urbanisation, demographics and migration**, but the literature in this area does not appear to be comprehensive – especially in terms of the specific causal relationships between these factors, conflict and fragility or regarding the policy options available to states and other actors to address them.
- (iv) The proximate drivers of conflict and processes of mobilisation into violence: Although the literature on the structural causes of conflict and fragility in extensive, there is a more limited literature on the **proximate or “trigger” causes of conflict and fragility** – in particular on what leads groups and organisations to decide to use violence as a means to achieve their objectives. There are recent strands of work on “radicalisation” and “violent extremism”, but this appears quite limited in scope and tied to the counter-terrorism agenda. There seems to be very little comprehensive literature on **processes of mobilisation of groups and individuals into violence**, the local and transnational dimensions of these processes, and the similarities across contexts (e.g. Muslim vs non-Muslim, ethnic vs religious tensions). Also, (although the literature review did not looks specifically at this area), although there is some recent work on the **role of the state (or state actors) in triggering or perpetrating violence**, this literature is neither comprehensive nor conclusive.

2.1.2 Prevention and response

The state of knowledge

2.9 The **relationship between conflict, fragility, state building and peace building** emerges as an increasingly key area of focus in both the policy and academic literature (e.g. Ghani and Lockhart 2005, 2008, Whaites 2008, OECD-DAC 2008, Putzel, DiJohn 2008, Stewart 2008). One line of research explores the critical steps of the state building process, i.e. political settlements, core and expected state functions, and, through exploring these, tries to identify what characteristics of the process make a state and a society resilient to conflict and fragility. A number of more recent publications highlight the need to take account of the **perspectives of citizens and re-focus discussions on the negotiation of the social contract** (DFID 2008, Eyben and Ladbury 2006, OECD-DAC 2008).



- 2.10 Other literature looks at **the political settlement and processes of political transition and democratisation** in fragile and conflict-affected states (e.g. Reilly, 2008, Norris, P, 2008, Jarstad, 2008, Reynolds, 2006, Soderberg and Ohlson, 2003, Paris, 2007, Carothers 2007). Debates regarding the **potential effects of democratisation on conflict** are ongoing: some academics believe that democratisation may increase the risk of conflict. Others argue that it is the weakness of institutions that causes democratic reform to fail (countries never exit the 'transition' stage) and violence to occur and that the timing of elections needs to be considered carefully (Carothers 2007). Equally, there seems to be no consensus on whether particular political institutions are more or less likely to contribute to a democratic state with the capacity to manage conflict peacefully (Bastian and Luckham 2003).
- 2.11 There is also a strand of **literature that is increasingly critical of donor-driven state building approaches**, which questions altogether dominant understandings of the state (e.g. Walby 2003, Gupta and Ferguson 2002), the use of a state-building framework and the appropriateness of focussing on the State itself in fragile and conflict affected contexts (e.g. Hesselbein et al. 2006). There is also a literature looking critically at other donor frameworks and approaches such as **security sector reform** (e.g. Abello and Pearce, pending, Luckham 2007, Stewart 2004) Some authors suggest that more attention should be paid to non-state actors and alternative sources of power. In this respect – and related to points made above – some of the literature stresses that the roots of conflict do not simply lie within state boundaries and sources of tension can be further aggravated by numerous factors that transcend the territorial boundaries of the state. In this respect, some work looks critically at how **different international actors influence “state building” processes** (Bickerton 2007, Chandler 2007, Ghani and Lockhart, 2008b).
- 2.12 There is also a growing literature, which looks at broader society and the **different factors that render a society more susceptible or resilient to conflict and fragility**. This includes consideration of the importance of **social cohesion**, although it is difficult to identify a clear strand of literature on social cohesion, due to the lack of a clarity surrounding this concept and its linkages to other factors (Beauvais and Jenson 2002). There is however some evidence of a correlation between high levels of social cohesion (measured variously in terms of levels of social inclusion and social capital), more effective governance and greater stability (e.g. Easterly et al 2006, Colletta and Cullen 2000). Otherwise, three main strands of literature can be identified:
- A limited literature on **mechanisms to address inequalities and promote social inclusion** (e.g. through affirmative action, curriculum change, and transitional justice policies)(e.g. Stewart 2007, UNESCO 2004, 2005);
 - A literature on the **management of identity and other differences and reconciliation in divided societies** (e.g. Luckham et al 2006, Lederach 1998, 2001, Brubaker 2004);
 - A literature on **peace building focused particularly on the role of social capital** (differentiating between bridging and bonding capital based on Robert Putnam’s work), associational and civil society organisations in building relations of trust, tolerance and cooperation (e.g. Lederach 1998, Nelson, Kaboolian and Carver 2003)

Key research gaps

- 2.13 There is now a substantive literature on state building and peace building, including an increasing body of work on the specific challenges and complexities in fragile and conflict-affected states. Furthermore, although the concept of “social cohesion” is still not clearly defined, there is a significant literature looking at specific elements of social cohesion in conflict-affected and fragile societies including on promoting social inclusion, peaceful identity politics and building social capital. Nonetheless, there remain significant gaps in the literature and areas where existing knowledge and approaches are contested:



- (i) A critical re-examination of donor state building approaches: Firstly, there are still a diversity of views on “the state” with a range of critiques of standard models of the state that lay emphasis on the informal power relations and values that underlie formal institutions. A key gap is the synthesis of these diverse perspectives in order to develop a more nuanced and multi-dimensional model of the state. There is also a need to draw together insights from existing literature criticising donor state building approaches – in particular how to acknowledge the roles of and linkages to non-state sources of power and citizen’s perspectives.
- (ii) How to do state building and peace building in practice: Although there is a new strand of literature focused on practice, this is still weak on areas such as the complementarities, tensions and **trade-offs between state building and peace building objectives**, and on the **sequencing and prioritisation of interventions**. There is also a limited amount of work on specific sectors such as **service delivery** and the **justice sector**, In areas such as the **security sector**, there is a growing critical literature, but this still needs to be operationalised in terms of what international, regional and national actors need to do differently. Despite recent work on the **impacts of international engagement**, there is still more work to be done to draw out definitive lessons form recent experience, particularly on how to tailor interventions to specific political, economic and socio-cultural contexts.
- (iii) The political settlement, political institutions and democratisation: Knowledge in these areas is still contested. For example, the literature is not definitive on what types of political systems and institutions are more resilient effective at preventing and managing conflict peacefully or on how democratic reforms should be managed and paced to reduce the risks of violence. Equally, there still appear to be gaps in understanding of how political settlements evolve and what makes them adapt and endure and allow for non-violent political secession rather than leading to their unravelling and potentially to instability and violence.
- (iv) Social cohesion and resilience to violence: Literature in this area is fairly scattered and this partly reflects the lack of clarity in terms of defining social cohesion, unpacking its elements and relationships to other variables. A first task would be to unpack these concepts and linkages and then synthesise the disparate literature on identify politics, social inclusion, social capital etc in order to identify areas for further research and analysis. There appear to be particular gaps in terms of developing together knowledge on what makes particular communities and societies resilient to fragility and conflict and examining the linkages between local, regional and national processes of institution building and peace building. Also there still appears to only be limited knowledge on specific interventions to address social exclusion and identity-based divisions and the different means to manage identity differences positively and peacefully – and synthesis in this area would be useful.

2.2. Demands for new knowledge: results of the consultation process

2.14 As part of this scoping study, we assessed the demand for new knowledge relevant to the proposed programme through a consultation exercise with key stakeholders in DFID (headquarters and overseas), other UK Government departments, other bilateral and multilateral donors, academia and NGOs. In the three-week timeframe available for consultations, **we managed to consult a total of 65 individuals** (see annex D), mainly through face-to-face or telephone interviews and in a few cases via group discussions or written email feedback. We also attempted to consult another 40 or so people (also listed in annex D), but these people declined to be interviewed or were not available in the timeframe.

2.15 The **biggest challenge given the time and resources available was to consult southern stakeholders**. Despite multiple attempts to contact particular organisations and individuals, we only managed to consult two southern academics and one southern civil society representative. However, we did also manage to consult the coordinator of the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC), a civil society network representing many southern NGOs; the former coordinator of the Global Consortium on Security Transformation, a southern-led consortium on security and development issues; and the directors of four DFID-funded Development Research Centres (DRCs) with



southern partners. These were useful ways to get an initial indication of southern perspectives on these issues, but it needs to be stressed that these perspectives are not comprehensive.

2.16 We conducted the interviews on the basis of a background note and a common set of questions (annex D), which, as appropriate, gathered feedback and views on:

- Their institution's current and planned research
- Their use of existing research
- The proposed research question and themes (in the PCN)
- Other research priorities and gaps
- The communication and dissemination of research
- The building of southern research capacity.

2.17 **This section synthesises** their feedback on (iii) and (iv) – **their views on the proposed research themes and the areas that they feel are priorities for future research**. This section also draws on a number of other existing documents summarising the views of various groups in DFID on research priorities, which were gathered during the consultation process for the recent DFID research strategy 2008-2013.²

2.2.1 Comments on the relevance of the proposed research question and broad themes

2.18 The vast majority of people interviewed **agreed that further research on the themes of conflict, state fragility and social cohesion would be beneficial** and several people commented on the value of bringing together different perspectives (e.g. social development and governance; political science, IR, anthropology, law; northern and southern etc). A small number of people expressed concerns about how valuable such a programme would be, given the extensive research on the issues in question, and the challenge of ensuring existing research influences policy debates.

2.19 **Views were divided on the relevance of the proposed research question** “why are some states prone to fragility and conflict and what are the foundations of durable peace and stability?”. Whilst some people liked its breadth, others felt it was far too broad to be useful in framing a research programme and encouraged us to set more specific research questions. Equally, views were divided on the appropriateness of the research themes outlined in the terms of reference (Theme 1: The drivers and sustainers of conflict and fragility”; Theme 2: “Prevention and Recovery”), again because some people favoured flexibility and depth and others specificity. Several people also commented that the division between the causes of conflict and the response to conflict was a false one as these factors are intertwined and the response or lack of response by the state and other actors can be a key factor in driving further conflict. There was broad agreement, however, that although many of the areas listed under the themes in the TOR were important, **there was a need to give much more structure and depth to these themes and specify exactly what the research gaps and priorities areas of focus are.**

2.20 A significant proportion of those interviewed felt that there was **limited need for new general research on “established” drivers of conflict and fragility** (e.g. poverty, inequality, exclusion, competition over power and resources), although some people stressed that there was a need to better understand how multiple factors intersect in specific contexts to cause conflict and fragility. There was a **far greater interest** in what might be termed the **“new” drivers of conflict and fragility** and the **relationship between local, national and international factors** e.g. the growth in crime, everyday violence and public insecurity; the impacts of migration, rapid urbanisation and demographic changes (e.g. the youth bulge); the

² This includes: (i) An email from Richard Thomas of 03/08/07 highlighting priority areas for further research based on consultation within the governance cadre; (ii) a minute from Ellen Kelly on 30/10/07 highlighting priority areas for further research based on consultation with the SD cadre; (iii) a note from Mary Thomson summarising the 2007 consultation with the SD cadre; and (iv) comments from CHASE from 01/08/08 responding to the initial PCN on ‘Conflict, state fragility and social cohesion’ circulated in August.



impacts of transnational factors such as global market forces and economic shocks, international trade in arms, drugs and conflict resources, globalised identities and foreign interventions. There was also interest in the **proximate or immediate “trigger” causes** of violence and fragility. These will be discussed in more depth below.

2.21 The consultation process also established that there is a **strong interest in the “how” in addition to the “why” and “what” issues**. In addition to a wide demand for research that is “policy relevant”, there was also significant demand for more research that actually examines the different policy choices available, the implications of policy trade-offs and the impacts of specific policy interventions e.g. What are the options for rapid service delivery in post-conflict states? What are the trade-offs between prioritising service delivery vs rule of law vs revenue generation? What have been the impacts of UK interventions to re-establish services in Afghanistan and what lessons can we learn? Although it was mainly DFID policy makers who expressed this interest, a number of academics and NGO representatives – especially those in the south - also felt it would be useful to research policy decisions and interventions. There was also a strong interest in **how communities, societies and states move out of conflict**, and how this might be supported by effective responses and interventions.

2.22 There was also significant interest among DFID staff, academics and other in complementing global research **with context-specific research relevant to particular regions, countries and localities**. Several people stressed the need to critically interrogate and go beyond accepted (donor-led) ideas of the state, state building and state fragility, and conduct research that was more embedded in and reflective of the priorities of research and policy communities in the South. It was felt that much existing research was too generic and there was a need to apply this to specific contexts in order to understand the dynamics of conflict and fragility and support the development of better local responses.

2.23 Finally, there was a strong interest among DFID staff and policy makers in Whitehall and other donor agencies in the **better synthesis, availability and use of existing research findings** on issues relevant to the proposed programme. This included the view that new research findings, and use of existing knowledge should enable better anticipation of deteriorating contexts or emerging situations of conflict and fragility. There was a widely held view that the priority was not so much new research, as bridging the gap between theory and practice, synthesizing, and making practical use of existing findings.³

2.2.2 Comments on priority themes and issues for research

2.24 The consultation process included extensive discussions of specific areas, themes and issues considered priorities for new research or synthesis of existing research. The priority areas highlighted by those consulted for further research and synthesis are listed below and will be unpacked in the rest of this section:

- “State building” in fragile states
- The role of non-state actors and structures of authority
- The transnational drivers of conflict and fragility
- Linkages between different types of violence (e.g. political, criminal, gang, domestic)
- Identity politics, ideology and mobilisation into violence
- Building social cohesion and resilience to violence.

“State building” in fragile states

2.25 Demands for new knowledge on issues related to state building and peace building in fragile states, and on the linkages, areas of complementarity and tension between them were clearly articulated. There was also a strong emphasis on the need to move from theoretical and

³ UNDP BCPR was among those stressing that the central challenge has now become that of using the established conceptual knowledge to work effectively on the ground.



general state building approaches, **to more specific, nuanced research on how external actors could engage more effectively in challenging contexts** of fragility, ongoing conflict or post-conflict recovery and how to tailor approaches to specific contexts. In this respect, many people stressed that there were different kinds of fragile and conflict-affected states and that the development of a **typology of state fragility/collapse** might be useful.

2.26 There was particular strong interest in issues of **sequencing, prioritisation and trade-offs in fragile and conflict-affected environments and the tensions between state building and peace building approaches**. Many of those interviewed questioned whether the current split between “survival” and “expected” functions of the state was helpful and stressed for example that the rapid **(re)establishment of basic service delivery** may often be the main priority alongside security and a key way to demonstrate a “peace dividend” to war-affected or violent groups and establish the social contract. In this respect, the issue of **decentralisation** was also raised by a couple of people - whether, when and how this should be prioritised. A few people said they were interested to learn more about the linking of grassroots peace building initiatives and national level peace processes. Others discussed needing to better understand trade-offs between building a “resilient” state that is resistant to collapse, a “transformative” state that is responsive to its citizens, and a “developmental” state that delivers broad-based growth and poverty reduction.

2.27 There was also some **interest in research on other service sectors such as the security and justice sectors**, when and how these should be prioritised. On the security sector, people stressed the need to go beyond narrowly defined security sector reform approaches to look at “security from below” – how poor people experience insecurity and articulate demands for security and looking at a range of different providers of security and protection, especially the police and community security providers. On the justice sector, a few people mentioned that there is little research in this area and a need for a better understanding of the political economy of judicial reform, perhaps starting with studies of how reform has actually happened in different countries. Equally, two respondents discussed traditional or indigenous justice systems, whether and how these can be integrated with the formal system. A number of people also stressed the need to understand the gender dimensions of such reforms and how men and women may be affected differently. Two people also mentioned the need to better understand **the role of the state in promoting growth and wealth creation**.

2.28 There was interest in **synthesising and extending research on political settlements**, how they are arrived at, how they evolve, how they are challenged and unravel, their institutional basis (the political system) and their relationship to the social contract. A number of people stressed that the underlying issue was the development of mechanisms for mediating between competing interests and distributing scarce resources between competing groups in society peacefully. An interesting question in this respect is whether or not there is evidence that democratic political systems are more effective. Several people **questioned the exclusive focus on elite bargains** and said there was a need for a better understanding of the power bases of elites and how political settlements were rooted in wider society.

2.29 Many people stressed the centrality of active citizenship to building legitimate, effective and responsive states and said there was a **need for more ‘bottom up’ research to look at how people relate to the state and how citizenship develops in fragile and post-conflict states** e.g. as individual citizens vs groups on the basis of collective identity or other interests. In particular, a number of those interviewed said that it was important to build on the work of the citizenship DRC and better understand the multiple allegiances and relationships many people felt to different structures of authority and even, in some cases, different states.

2.30 Equally, many people were interested in **learning more about the impacts of external intervention on state formation in fragile and conflict-affected contexts**: What has been the international architecture in different improving/deteriorating contexts and what lessons can we learn? What have been the impacts of particular military, diplomatic and development interventions? How has international engagement affected the levels of legitimacy of the



national state and impacted on the lines of accountability between states and their citizens? How has international engagement impacted on the potential for conflict and fragility?

- 2.31 At least half of all respondents (across DFID, academia, NGOs) criticised what they described as the “top-down”, “state-centric” or “template” approach that has been adopted by DFID and others. They questioned the appropriateness of the state building model in many contexts and said there was a need to **critique narrow state building approaches by testing them against empirical reality and considering alternative conceptions of the state** that stress the social networks, power relations and cultural meanings that underpin formal institutions. It was stressed that all societies have systems of governance, even if they are not forms of governance easily recognisable in the West. For example, in many contexts, formal state institutions have very limited impacts on people’s lives and other structures of power such as traditional or religious authorities are far more important and enjoy more legitimacy than the state. It was also pointed out that it is important to recognise that the population’s understandings of and expectations of the state may differ significantly from context to context. Several people interviewed therefore highlighted the need to better understand the relationship of different structures of power and authority at local, national and even international levels and for alternative, decentralized, approaches working from the community upwards, or outwards from pockets of stability and developmentalism, particularly in contexts where formal state structures were absent or had limited reach.
- 2.32 Finally, several people stressed that state building could be both negative and positive and said that more work was needed on the ways that **state building processes can entrench an undesirable state and/or increase the potential for violent conflict**. For example, when and where do particular approaches or policies adopted increase inequalities between groups or aggravate existing tensions? Where and why do processes of democratisation prevent or provoke violence? Equally, several people indicated that **more work was needed on the perpetration of violence by (parts of) the state** to achieve political ends and the development of guidance on the options for international actors in engaging with such states.

Non-state or “parallel” actors and sources of authority.

- 2.33 There was widespread interest across the board in gaining a **better understanding of the nature of (formal and informal) non-state forms of authority and power and their role in driving and sustaining conflict and fragility or promoting peace and stability**. It was stressed that conflict and fragility can be advantageous for some actors and can be in their interests to act to sustain the violence and instability. There was particular interest in looking at areas within national boundaries, **including the growing urban spaces** where the state is largely absent, and contexts where non-state actors, including organised crime networks, gangs or armed groups have acquired control over resources or populations. The role of private sector was also highlighted in this regard. Equally, the **role of traditional leaders, customary authorities, social or faith-based movements** and other forms of civil society organisations was highlighted by some as an area for further research, particularly regarding the **potential positive role** of these entities in conflict management and peace building.
- 2.34 There was also interest in the **relationships and linkages between non-state actors and the state, parts of the states or individual politicians**. It was felt that little was understood about the less visible, informal structures and relationships that linked these actors together and were often key to understanding why fragility and conflict persist. Equally, there was a desire for more research on the **linkages between local, regional and national power relations and structures of authority** - whether formal or informal – and how these affect the potential for fragility or resilience at different levels.

The transnational drivers of conflict and fragility

- 2.35 The consultation process also revealed a strong interest in various **global and transnational factors that influence governance and state capability and may drive**



conflict and fragility. Several people interviewed said that there had been a tendency to focus too much on internal structural factors and ignore the transnational drivers of conflict and fragility. They stressed that it was critical to understand the state as embedded in the international system and affected by a range of transnational economic, political and social forces. Several people stressed the need for a better understanding of the interaction between **global and local drivers of conflict and fragility** (e.g. how does global competition over access to natural resources affect particular localities (e.g. the Nigerian Delta)?) and of the **regionalisation of conflict** (e.g. Great Lakes region).

2.36 In terms of specific issues for further research, the most frequent issue highlighted by people inside and outside DFID was the current geopolitical context and the **role of western foreign policy as a potential cause of conflict and instability.** Many people highlighted the need to systematically understand the effects of western foreign, military and aid policies – particularly in situations of military intervention – on state fragility and the potential for further conflict.

2.37 The **impacts of global economic change and crisis** were also areas widely mentioned for further research. At a broad level, a number of people interviewed felt that more attention needed to be focused on global inequality and resource distribution as drivers of conflict and violence. Others mentioned that more research was needed on specific issues like **corruption, capital flight, tax evasion, money laundering and the contemporary financial crisis** in terms of their impacts on fragility. A Sri Lankan expert said that the model of economic liberalisation needed be subject to further critical analysis, including looking more systematically at its impacts in contexts of existing ethnic or social cleavages and inequalities. Many people mentioned the impacts of cross-border trade in conflict resources, arms, drugs and people, with the biggest research gap felt to be on the **impacts of the drugs trade.**

2.38 Finally, a number of people said further research was needed on **transnational social movements** and the **political and social impacts of diaspora communities** on their countries of origin. They felt that more attention should be paid to the activities of groups with multiple affinities and citizenships and their (potential) role in driving conflict and fragility, but also peace and stability.

Linkages between different types of violence

2.39 There was significant interest both inside and outside DFID in gaining a better understanding of **different types and levels of violence (e.g. political, criminal, inter-communal, gang, domestic, gender-based) and how these are linked.** Several people stressed that in many contexts, criminal, gang and “everyday” forms of violence have a far greater impact on poor people and prospects for poverty reduction. It was also stressed that these other forms of violence were also likely to play a key role in sustaining fragility and increasing the potential for more widespread violent conflict, although the linkages are poorly understood. For example, in the aftermath of conflict, levels of domestic and criminal violence often soar and more needs to be understood about the implications of this and what can be done to prevent this. Within DFID, there was wide acknowledgement of the importance of these other forms of violence, but a lack of knowledge of the policy options available to tackle them.

2.40 One particular area that was highlighted for further research was **urban violence,** especially in (non-Latin American) contexts such as Africa and Asia where urban violence is on the increase. Academics working in urban contexts mentioned the widespread failures of public security and policing, the linkages between family, communal and political violence, and the problem of intergenerational transmission of violence where young people may only ever have experienced insecurity and multiple forms of exclusion from the formal economy and society. In this respect, the issues of migration, demographics and the “youth bulge” were mentioned as areas for further research.



Identity politics, ideology and mobilisation into violence

- 2.41 There was significant interest in the proximate or “trigger” factors of violence and particularly in **processes of mobilisation into violence**, include into extreme violence (called radicalisation or violent extremism by some). In this respect, some of those interviewed mentioned the importance of a better understanding of **how local and organisational dynamics drive violence and of the role of identity politics, ideology, values and beliefs** in mobilising people to commit violent acts. A number of people stressed the need to look for linkages between micro and macro processes and between the actions and behaviour of individuals, groups and institutions.
- 2.42 Although it was acknowledged that there is a significant literature on identity politics, some people felt that in the current climate, we needed to know more about the intersection between different identities and allegiances and the **ways in which specific identities appeared to form the basis for violent mobilisation** and whether there is anything different, for example, between “ethnic” and “religious” mobilisation. In this respect, several people felt that we understood too little about **how ideology and values are transmitted and inform people’s actions** – for example through various socialisation practices. Many people also mentioned the need to look at the difference between the role and motivations of men and women in violence.
- 2.43 A few people stressed that identity politics does not necessarily lead to violence and instead that identities can be an important basis for claiming rights and empowerment. It was felt, however, that more work (perhaps synthesis?) was needed to look at **how to manage identity politics peacefully** and overcome deep-rooted cleavages and at the relationship between citizenship and individual identities. Again, there was an interest in how a development agency like DFID can engage in these issues.

Building social cohesion and resilience to violence.

- 2.44 Although there was some confusion over terminology (especially the precise meaning of social cohesion), there was significant interest in **understanding why some communities, and societies are resilient (or resistant) to conflict** (including in the face of significant inequality) and which attributes and institutions at a local or community level might manage conflict peacefully and prevent violence. There was particular demand for a better understanding of the relationship between social cohesion (various understood at social inclusion, social capital and a sense of belonging), conflict prevention and stability and for contextualised, practical examples that demonstrated these links.
- 2.45 Specific areas of interest mentioned included the **forms of (bridging and bonding) social capital** and associative/civil society organisations which might play a role in increasing resilience to conflict and fragility and how to support or foster these (e.g. is it through direct grants to local NGOs, creating independent media, pressuring governments to open up political space for civil society to grow, etc.). There was also interest in other **mechanisms for engagement, negotiation and mediation between different groups or the building of mutual trust and tolerance**. Several people mentioned the need to look at linkages between local and national institutions, mechanisms of mediation, negotiation and resource allocation and spaces for dialogue. There was also an interest in the role of **social protection**, whether and how this is and might be provided in fragile and conflict-affected contexts.
- 2.46 A number of people also stressed the need for more research on the (positive and negative) **transformative potential of conflict, violence and fragility and the implications for engagement**. How does violent conflict reshape the social and political fabric and affect particular groups, institutional structures and power relations? How do people and communities survive in conditions of fragility and violent conflict? What are the implications for approached to peace building, reconciliation and state building?



Other areas

2.47 There were also various other areas mentioned for possible research, but by a more limited number of people. These included the role of **masculinities** and young men in conflict and violence; the role of the **international human rights framework** in state accountability and effectiveness; and the impacts of **climate change** on conflict and fragility.

2.3 Overview of current and planned research activities

2.48 The terms of reference for this scoping study asked for a detailed outline of the current and planned research activities being undertaken by academic institutions, donors, UN agencies, the OECD-DAC, NGOs and other UK Government Departments in the field of conflict, state fragility and social cohesion.

2.49 In order to respond to this request, we submitted two additional GSDRC queries to supplement the GSDRC query commissioned by Mary Thompson in July. These queries used the proposed research question of “why are some states prone to fragility and conflict, and what are the foundations of durable peace and stability?” and the themes outlined in the draft PCN in order to identify relevant research. Although in many cases GSDRC researchers attempted to contact individual researchers and institutions to request information, on the whole, given the short timeframe, they primarily had to rely on information on the websites of different research institutions. This meant that it was sometimes difficult to distinguish between existing and planned research activities and information obtained on the latter was relatively limited. Equally, in the cases of a few (mainly southern) institutions, the GSDRC was unable to obtain information⁴ or information was very broad.

2.50 We therefore supplemented these queries by asking individual researchers and policymakers about research being conducted or planned by their institutions during the consultation process. In total, we managed to collate information on the current (and in some cases planned) research activities of 71 donor organisations, research institutions, consortia, and networks, including 17 based in the south. The full details of research activities being undertaken by these organisations are included in Annex E. This section gives an overview of the current state of research based on this mapping exercise across the areas proposed in the draft PCN. It is not exhaustive (especially with respect to southern research), but we believe it represents a reasonably up-to-date and comprehensive overview of ongoing research on conflict, state fragility and social cohesion.

2.3.1 Interpreting the results of the mapping exercise

2.51 In terms of interpreting the findings of this mapping exercise for the purposes of scoping of a future research programme on conflict, state fragility and social cohesion, we would highlight the following key points and considerations:

- (i) Overall, we found **no other research programme that looked at the links between conflict, state fragility and social cohesion under one umbrella**. Most of the existing work being undertaken by other institutions tends to focus either on the links between conflict and state fragility (e.g. the challenges of statebuilding, reconstruction and peacebuilding after conflict) or on the links between social cohesion and conflict (e.g. inequality and exclusion as drivers of conflict or on community level conflict prevention, peacebuilding and reconciliation).
- (ii) It is **often difficult to assess the depth and breadth of research being undertaken from the title of a research programme**. A programme may have a very broad title (e.g. the “Group Formation, Identities and Mobilisation” programme of MICROCON), but only include a handful of relatively small-scale projects being conducted by individuals on particular countries. Thus, a degree of caution is needed when judging the coverage of research programmes and the extent to which a particular topic has been comprehensively researched.

⁴ Two of the institution’s websites were unavailable at the time of writing (Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, Nigeria and publications page of Center for Democracy and Development, Nigeria).



- (iii) Similarly, even where there are a number of different research programmes looking at the same topic, it is important to recognise how knowledge based on research is generated – i.e. through several academics working on the same questions, testing each other’s ideas and evidence. Thus, when drawing conclusions from this mapping, we have tried to **make a judgement on to what extent the number and scope of existing research programmes represents a comprehensive body of research of the topic**, asking diverse questions, reflecting different theoretical perspectives and engaging in areas where existing evidence is inconclusive, contradictory or challenged. We have done this to the best of our ability, given the superficial nature of some of the information available on particular research programmes.
- (iv) **The results of this mapping exercise will perhaps be of greatest utility to DFID, when CRD judges the proposals for research programmes** that are submitted in response to the call for tender. The information in annex E will provide a basis for judging to what extent bidding consortia have taken account of existing research and are proposing research, which is innovative and adds to the body of existing research. Equally, it will help DFID judge to what extent institutions have proposed suitable partners building on existing areas of expertise.
- (v) Finally, this mapping study also gives DFID a good indication of the breadth and depth of research being undertaken in the north and south on these issues and **will hopefully help guide DFID advisory and programmes staff to particular researchers and institutions** which they can contact for further information in specific areas.

2.3.2 Overview of existing (and planned) research activities

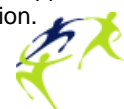
2.52 Overall, the mapping indicated some **interesting differences in focus between northern and southern organisations and research activities**. Overall, northern institutions have a much stronger focus on the state, issues of governance, fragility, democracy-building and global security. This includes looking at new security challenges such as climate change, disease, resource and energy scarcity. There are a limited number of northern programmes looking at social cohesion⁵, although there are some programmes looking at reconciliation, justice, gender and peace building - including at the community level. In contrast, the work of southern institutions appears to be much more firmly rooted in local contexts looking at local sources of conflict and tension (e.g. land, natural resource management, migration and displacement, identity politics, ethnicity) and considering how to build local capacities to prevent or manage conflict, foster peace, coexistence and reconciliation.

Monitoring conflict, fragility and instability

2.53 There are a number of projects that are **set up to monitor and analyse levels and types of conflict and fragility globally**, for example:

- The *SIPRI* research project on *Armed Conflicts and Conflict Management* continually analyzes violent conflict around the world and seeks to situate conflict analysis within international policy on security and development more broadly.
- The *CICDM (University of Maryland)* project on *International Crisis Behaviour* produces data on political instability and armed conflict and a biennial Conflict and Peace Report.
- *CICDM* also produces the *Peace and Conflict Instability Ledger*, which ranks countries according to the risks of them experiencing political instability or armed conflict within 3 years.
- The *Human Security Report project (Simon Fraser University)* looks at the causes of peace and has produced a policy makers’ guide on the determinants of war and peace.
- In Africa, the *Centre for Democracy and Development* in Nigeria runs the *Stability-Security Monitor*, which attempts early warning and risk assessment in the West African sub-region.

⁵ The Australian Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies (ACPACS) at the University of Queensland appears to be the only Northern organisations identified that is planning research explicitly focused on social cohesion.



The drivers and sustainers of conflict and fragility

2.54 Current research on the drivers of conflict indicates an **increasing interest in looking at drivers at different levels and how they interrelate:**

- An *Australian Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies (ACPACS)* (University of Queensland) project looks at the inter-related causes on conflict at local, national and international levels.
- *CODESRIA* has a project on the *Local dynamics of conflict and peacebuilding*, which aims to link the study of local, national and regional configurations and organisations.
- The recently established EU-funded programme *MICROCON* aims to engage in the micro-level analysis of conflict and make the links to macro-processes and includes a programme on a variety of themes ranging from poverty and livelihoods to exclusion, inequality and identity.
- The *Households in Conflict Network (HiCN)* looks at the causes of conflict at a household level.

2.55 In terms of broader research on the **structural causes of conflict and fragility**, there have been a number of programmes looking at the links between **inequality, exclusion and conflict**. **The key gaps here appear to be ones of synthesis and research that examines in more depth some of the drivers of horizontal inequalities and exclusion and policy interventions to overcome them.**

- The DFID-funded DRC *CRISE* (led by the University of Oxford) has looked in depth at how group-based (e.g. ethnic) inequalities in access to political and economic resources (horizontal inequalities) have affected political stability and increased the risks of violent conflict.
- A *CODESRIA* project on *Marginalisation, youth and Conflict Trade in West Africa* looks at conflict as a local struggle over the distribution of power, wealth and the representation of identities.
- *MICROCON* includes a programme on *Poverty, Inequality and Social Exclusion*, which looks at conflict over land and livelihoods.

2.56 A number of research programmes, particularly in the south, focus specifically on **conflict related to scarce resources such as land and water**. These include:

- *CODESRIA's* programme on *Land in the Struggles for citizenship, democracy and development in Africa*;
- *AREU's* work on *Building capacity to address land-related conflict and vulnerability in Afghanistan*, focused particularly on rural land relations.
- *NDI's* (Yemen) tribal conflict management programme also specifically looks at land-related causes of the conflict.
- *AREU* also have a research programme on *Natural resource management*, focused on how to ensure the sustainable and equitable distribution of benefits from Afghanistan's natural resources (i.e. **resource abundance** rather than scarcity).
- *UNDP BCPR* and the *European Commission* are also jointly funding research on the role of land and natural resources in conflict, including looking at mineral wealth, water and the impacts of climate change with a view to producing guidance notes for policymakers.
- The *Justice and Violence Research Centre* at the University of Sussex is also planning work on the links between mining, land, natural resources and conflict in a number of African regions.

2.57 There were a number of specific **research initiatives focused on the links between the environment, conflict and climate change**. The *International Crisis Group* theme focus on climate change and conflict provides an overview of a wide range of organisations working on



these issues. Those highlighted by the mapping included:

- The *New Security Challenges Programme* (University of Birmingham) project on *Security, Social Instability and Environmental Crisis in The Global South Project*, which explores linkages between violence and conflict, natural disasters, climate change, urbanisation, inequality, disease and state fragility and aims to provide an integrated assessment of security, social instability and natural disasters in the global south.
- The *2009/10 Human Security Report* will also focus on security and the environment, with governance as critical intervening variable.
- The *Woodrow Wilson International Centre for Scholars Environmental Change and Security Programme*, which looks at population growth, water scarcity, degraded ecosystems, forced migration and resource depletion
- The *Trudeau Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, (University of Toronto)* research theme on *Environmental stress and violent conflict*, which looks at the relationship between environmental scarcity, state capacity and civil violence;
- Work at the *Centre for Justice and Peace-Building* (Eastern Mennonite University) on climate change and resource scarcity
- Research at the *Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies* in India on the environmental dimensions of conflict and disaster.

We were also informed that *DFID* has recently commissioned a piece of work on *climate change, governance and conflict*. In sum, it seems that there is **a lot of existing research looking at the links between resource scarcity, environmental issues and conflict and the challenge is to explore responses** i.e. what are the mechanisms to ensure sustainable and access to natural resources?

2.58 While the queries did not specifically focus on **urbanisation or violence in urban contexts, some relevant work was highlighted** including:

- The new Manchester University *Global Urban Research Centre* (GURC) focused on researching cities and urbanisation, with violence in urban contexts as one of its themes
- The work of the *Crisis States Research Centre on Cities and Fragile States*, which is exploring how cities can prevent or promote the unravelling of the state.
- LSE's *Centre for Study of Global Governance* also indicated that they are planning to do some work on cities and urbanisation.

Nonetheless, given the ongoing challenges of urbanisation especially in African and Asia contexts, and the related increased in urban violence and crime, **there will be a need for more systematic work in this area, both on understanding causality and on prevention and response.**

2.59 There were also a number of fairly new research programmes **looking at other forms of armed or everyday violence:**

- At the Utrecht University *Centre for Conflict Studies*, there is a programme on *Changing understandings and interpretations of conflict and violence*, focussed on examining other forms of violence, including urban violence and domestic violence.
- A joint multilateral agency project at *UNDP BCPR*, on *the prevention of armed violence* has just begun to look at the phenomenon of armed violence in urban areas and will start by conducting baseline assessments of the prevalence and distribution of armed violence and then consider how such violence might be prevented.
- The *Chr. Michelsen Institute* (Norway) has a research programme on *post-conflict violence*, looking particularly at how reconstruction efforts may aggravate social tensions and lead to



further violence of different kinds.

- The *International Peace Institute's* (IPI) work on state building includes elements on organised crime and private security.

Overall, though, research in this area is still very limited and **there is scope for further research to look at different forms of violence (criminal, political, inter-communal, domestic), the linkages between them and the options for prevention and response.**

2.60 Equally, the mapping of ongoing and planned work yielded a **relatively limited number of initiatives concentrating explicitly on the role of non-state actors and structures of authority** and their impact on conflict and fragility. The only key programme in this area is at ACPACS (University of Queensland) looking at non-state sources of power and legitimacy in South East Asia and the Pacific, how they impact on state capacity and the interaction between non-state and formal state mechanisms in long term processes of state formation. Other related work includes:

- The web-based database on armed groups recently launched by the *Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies*;
- At the *Kings College Department of War studies*, a research project on *The Political Reintegration of Armed Combatants Following Conflict*, which examines the challenge of transforming rebel or insurgent or other non-state armed groups into viable political entities.
- Similarly, a *Berghof Research Centre* project examines *resistance and liberation movements and transition to politics*, involving participation of a number of armed groups and aiming to contribute to increased understanding of transitions from violence to peace.
- At *The Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Contemporary Political Violence*, at the University of Wales, activities include work on political movements and their influence on states.

Overall, **we didn't find any research programmes that looked comprehensively at the range of non-state actors** (including traditional authorities, armed groups, gangs, criminal organisations, civil society organisations, faith-based organisations), operating in a society, how they relate to each other, the state and citizens, and their role in driving conflict and instability or in peace building.

2.61 Although the mapping did not look specifically at research on terrorism or violent extremism (which is likely to be fairly extensive), it suggested that there are a **limited, but increasing number of research programmes looking specifically at processes of violent mobilisation or "radicalisation"** – particularly on the basis of religious or other identities. This includes:

- Research at *Centre for Conflict Studies* (Utrecht University) on the *emergence of violent movements*
- Research at the recently established *Centre for the Study of Political Violence and Radicalisation* (CSPV) at the University of Wales, which includes work on terrorism and non-state movements such as Hezbollah.
- The *Chr. Michelsen Institute* has a programme on the *politics of faith*, which looks at both moderate and militant religious movements, their role in provoking conflict and potential role in peace and reconciliation.
- *MICROCON* also has a project on *Contemporary conflicts and ethnic-religious tensions*, exploring the role of ethnicity and religion in mobilisation, and a project on *Group formation, identities and mobilisation*, where a number of individual research projects look at the actors in violence and why they choose to perpetrate violence.

The **main gaps here appears to be research on the exact processes by which people are mobilised into violence on the basis of identity and the role of ideology, values and**



beliefs in mobilisation. The only project identified that looks at these issues is *PRIO's* (Norway) research programme on *Ethics, Norms and Identities*, which conducts research on perceptions of identity and belonging, and beliefs about social, moral, legal and religious norms and how these contribute to conflict and peace building.

2.62 In terms of research on **global and transnational factors affecting conflict and fragility**, there are **a number of programmes looking at global security and global governance issues including through a human security approach**:

- The *Oxford Research Group's Moving Towards Sustainable Security Project* explores threats to global security beyond international terrorism; including climate change; competition over resources; global militarisation the marginalisation of majority world; and sustainable responses to security threats.
- The *Centre for the Study of Global Governance, at LSE*, studies global processes and global governance, including two key projects: Oil and Conflict, and Human Security. Planned research of relevance includes work on transnational networks and weak states, and a book on human rights law as the key paradigm for contemporary conflict situations.
- The University of Bristol's *Centre for Governance and International Affairs* is conducting research on the actors, issues and processes that play a critical role in global security governance, including a focus on non-traditional and Human Security.
- The southern-led *Global Consortium on Security Transformation* has just begun to conduct research on the themes of *Regional Security from above and below* and on the *Securitization of Governance and the Governance of Insecurity*.

2.63 There appeared to be **limited amount of specific research on the (potentially negative) impacts of foreign intervention on conflict and instability**:

- Utrecht University's *Centre for Conflict Studies (CCS)* is looking at the implications of *new interventionism* and securitisation of issues such as climate change and natural disasters.
- *AREU* (Afghanistan) and the Feinstein Centre at Tufts University have a joint project on aid and security, looking at whether and how aid actually promotes security.
- At the *New Security Challenges Programme at the Birmingham University* a research programme on *Global Health, Security and Foreign Policy* will make a detailed analysis of how health crises can create insecurity, instability and failed or failing states.

2.63 **A number of other regional and cross-border dimensions of conflict and fragility also seemed to be relatively under-researched.** For example, there seemed to very little work looking specifically at the **regional dynamics of conflict** with one programme at Rwanda's Centre for Conflict management on *regional conflict and international dimensions*, focused on the Great Lakes region. Equally, the mapping came up with very little on the impacts of **cross-border flows of refugees and migrants** (except for some research at *IPCS* in India on migrants and IDPs in South Asia and the link to conflict and instability), but it did not look specifically at this issue. Although it is important to note that centres focused on migration are likely to conduct much of the research in this area.

2.64 Although this mapping did not look at the arms trade, we are aware that there are several international programmes looking at the impacts of cross-border flows of arms. However, **we did not come across any work for example, on the international drugs trade or organised crimes** and its impacts on the local dynamics of conflict and instability. The mapping also indicated **relatively few research programmes looking at cross-border economic drivers of conflict and instability**, such as the impacts of the global financial crisis, capital flight, tax evasion, corruption etc or at the impacts of changes in international trade and economic policies.



Prevention and response

2.65 A wide range of programmes focused on state building, state functioning, governance and political institutions in contexts of conflict and fragility are ongoing, particularly in northern institutions:

- The recently completed *World Bank Post Conflict Transitions: Political Institutions, Development and Domestic Civil Peace Project* aimed to advance understanding of the conditions under which post conflict societies succeed.
- The *Crisis States Research Centre's Development as statemaking* programme looks at processes of state formation and collapse across a number of specific countries and attempts to understand why some fragile states respond effectively to contestation and why others collapse and examines the factors that contribute to or impede post-war state reconstruction.

2.66 Many of the research projects in this area explicitly look at international strategies for building state capacity, conflict prevention and peace building:

- The work of the OECD-DAC's *Fragile States Group* is focused on areas such as *Principles for good international engagement in fragile states* plus early warning and preventative action.
- The *World Bank* has also launched a new *Research, Knowledge and Learning (RKL) programme on Fragility and Conflict*, which includes components on state building and engaging more effectively in situations of deteriorating governance.
- *ODI's new States in transition* programme will focus on states moving into, involved in and emerging out of conflict, and how aid should be delivered differently along that continuum; using a political economy analysis.
- *The Project on Leadership and Building State Capacity at Woodrow Wilson International Scholars Centre* seeks to achieve more holistic strategies for peace building and strengthening state capacity.
- *The Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies – Centre on Conflict Development and Peace-building (CCDP)* focuses on conflict sensitive development, state fragility and armed conflict.
- *The International Peace Institute's Coping with Crisis and State building* programme aims at providing analytical policy support on the rebuilding on states after conflict and peacebuilding.
- *The Clingendael Security and Conflict Programme* focuses on integrated approaches to conflict prevention, stabilisation and reconstruction in fragile and post conflict states, addressing security and stability, governance and democratisation and socio-economic development.
- *The Post War Reconstruction and Development Unit (York University)* conducts interdisciplinary research to develop theory and practice in relation to humanitarian aid, peacebuilding and post-war reconstruction.
- *The Centre for Conflict Resolution (South Africa)* has a *peacebuilding research project*, which looks at how to enhance the UN's role in promoting peace, security and development in Africa.
- *The CSIS (Washington) Post conflict reconstruction project* addresses the key pillars of reconstruction: security and public safety, justice, governance and participation and economic and social progress.

3 A limited number of projects look at building regional capacities for conflict prevention and peacebuilding. For example, *ICES (Sri Lanka)* has a project entitled *Building multilateral conflict prevention capacity in South Asia*, which aims to establish a regional conflict prevention mechanism.



2.67 **A number of projects take a more critical approach to international engagement in peace building, statebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction:**

- The initiative at CCS, *Utrecht University, Conflict Policies and Politics: Re-ordering State and Society through peace-making and peace building*, examines securitization of energy food climate change and natural disasters; and new interventionism; and critically examines peace making and state building as dynamic processes including the role of governments; NGOs and civil society.
- The *Chr. Michelsen Institute's, Peace Conflict and the State programme* examines how the liberal peace model can aggravate social tension and also examines the trade off between peace building and state building.
- *NYU CIC* also work on the relationship between state building and peace building.
- *ACPACS* (Queensland) takes a critical perspective on issues of the state and violence, which challenges the state failure discourse and the focus on state building and looks for alternative assessments of state hood in south, and non state centric approaches to the control of violence, with regional focus on Asia.
- The *Berghof Centre* works on the *peace-development nexus* i.e. the integration of peace building tools into development cooperation.

2.67 In short, there **appears already to be a fairly comprehensive body of research on state building, reconstruction and peace building** in fragile and conflict-affected contexts. The challenges are to **synthesise the conclusions** and to **look much more closely at the trade-offs, sequencing and prioritisation of interventions to build state capacity in practice**. For example, the timing of re-establishing basic service delivery vis-à-vis work on security, rule of law and revenue generation. The *Centre for the Future State* has a research theme on *Collective Action around service delivery*, but this is not currently focused on fragile or conflict-affected countries.

2.68 There also appear to be very limited current research on several key sectors including **the justice sector**. The only project we found on this was on *Local ownership in the rule of law* at *SIPRI* (Sweden), which examines national and international efforts to promote justice and establish rule of law in post conflict situations; addressing linkages between immediate public security needs and long term institution building and capacity building. However, we didn't come across any projects on judicial reform, how to support reform processes, or the relationship between the formal and informal provision of justice.

2.69 There is also a **growing body of research on political reforms and democratisation in fragile and conflict-affected contexts:**

- The completed project on *Strengthening democratic governance in conflict torn societies* at the *Institute for Development Studies (IDS)* aimed to understand the conditions under which democratic institutions are effective in resolving social conflict, broadening political participation and delivering development.
- The *Carnegie Endowment Democracy and the Rule of Law* project examines democratic transitions and approaches to promoting democracy and the rule of law.
- The *UNRISD Democracy, Governance and Well-being* programme focuses on the conditions under which democratic regimes can improve the well-being of citizens, including looking at decentralisation and service delivery.
- *IDRC* (Canada) has also funded a number of individual research projects under its programme on *Democratic processes of Governance and Peacebuilding*.
- *International IDEA* has a research programme on *Democracy, Conflict and Human Security*, which focuses on impact of democratic practices on human security, and has produced a resource on electoral violence.



However, the mapping suggests that there is **much more limited research on political settlements and power-sharing arrangements**, with the programme on *power-sharing after civil war* under the *Department of Peace and Conflict Research's* (Uppsala University) *Conflict and Democracy Programme* the only project found.

2.70 There appears to be a **growing and fairly comprehensive body of research on transitional justice and reconciliation**:

- The established *International Centre for Transitional Justice* (Netherlands) conducts a wide range of research on transitional justice processes including a recent project on the impact of ethnicity and religion on transitional justice processes.
- *The Kings College War Studies Department of War Studies Peace and Justice Research Project* seeks to examine the impact of institutions established to foster transitional justice, accountability and reconciliation on the recipient population.
- At *Oxford University*, the *Oxford Transitional Justice Research* programme includes a focus on local and traditional practices.
- The *Berkeley-Tulane Initiative on Vulnerable Populations, Human Rights Center (University of California)*, carries out empirical work on the views of conflicted affected populations in DRC and Uganda on issues of justice, accountability and reconciliation.
- Along with international human rights organisations, *national human rights institutions, including the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission* have undertaken relevant research.
- At *ICES*, within work on examining why countries lapse back into violence, the *Justice and Struggle for Peace* project challenges standard views of transitional justice.
- *CPRS (University of Coventry)* is undertaking some research on the links and compatibility between justice and reconciliation, mainly via small-scale projects.
- The *Justice and Violence Centre* at the University of Sussex is planning work on post-conflict justice in Rwanda.
- The *Berghof Centre* is undertaking some much needed work to challenge understandings and approaches to reconciliation through work in the West Balkans.

The **main gap in this area appears to be research, which looks at the linkages between local and national-level reconciliation and peace building initiatives.**

2.71 **Citizenship and identity appears to be a recurring research theme for southern organisations.** This includes:

- *CODESRIA's* multinational working group on citizenship and identity in contemporary Africa (looking at disjuncture between formal rules of citizenship and daily practice, the “non-justiceability” of rights, urbanisation and the tension between civic law and the realm of tradition or custom)
- The *International Centre for Ethnic Studies' programme on Ethnicity, Identity and Violence* (which focuses on coexistence and the perpetration of violence) and on multiculturalism and modes of ethnic co-existence in South and South-East Asia (including state responses to cultural diversity).
- *UNRISD* has a programme on *Identities, conflict and cohesion*, which looks at the impacts of affirmative action policies on levels of horizontal inequality and violence.

Northern work of relevance includes:

- The *Bradford University Centre for Participation Studies' work on violence, participation and peace*, looking at how violence affects participation, whether and how civic participation minimises the likelihood of violence.



- The *PRIO-World Bank* post-conflict programme focuses on social factors that favour consensus building including levels of ethnic polarisation / integration.

2.72 In terms of **building social cohesion and resilience to violence**, there is a **growing body of research, particularly in the south, on the contribution of civil society and other community-based institutions to peace building**:

- The *Berghof Centre* has a programme on civil society contributions to conflict transformation, which looks at the influence of social structures and cultural factors in inter-group conflict.
- The *Centre for Justice and Peace Building (Eastern Mennonite University)* also addresses the role of civil society in strengthening good governance, security and peace in fragile states, for example through the building of both vertical and horizontal social capital.
- *ACPACS* (Queensland) is one of the only northern universities conducting work directly on social cohesion, looking at reconciliation social dialogue and social bridging institutions and mechanisms in divided societies – focused on Southeast Asia and the Pacific.
- The *Pakistan Sustainable Development Policy Institute* programme aims to deconstruct and embed concepts of peace in civil society.
- *CECORE* (Uganda) is working on African methods of conflict resolution.
- *ACCORD's* (South Africa) *Preventive action programme* focuses on civil society contributions to democratisation and conflict transformation in post-conflict situations and its *Coexistence Initiative* looks at how communities transit from violent conflict to a situation of cooperation, tolerance and coexistence.
- *NDI* (Yemen) is doing work on capacity building for conflict management at the community level
- *CDRI* (Cambodia) is researching conflict transformation and peace building at a community level in Cambodia.

The gaps in this area are the synthesis and application of research findings so they have a greater influence on policy and practice.

2.73 Finally, **the mapping highlighted relatively limited work on gender dimensions of conflict and fragility**:

- The websites of both *CCS* (Utrecht) and *Clingendael* (Netherlands) state that they are undertaking some work on gender and conflict, although no further details are available.
- At Bradford University Centre on Participation, thematic foci include *Re-imagining women's security and participation in post conflict societies*.
- *MICROCON* work includes a project on the violent mobilisation of young men in Nigeria and Niger.
- At the University of Sussex *Justice and Violence Research centre*, research includes a focus on women's political participation in post conflict societies.
- Perhaps the most substantive programme of research is the work on *gender, peace and conflict at PRIO* (Norway), which looks at the different effects of armed conflict on men and women, men and women's different security needs and their different capacities for peace building.



3.0 Scope of the programme

3.1 Conceptual framework

3.1 Both the consultation process and literature review suggested the **need for greater conceptual clarity in terms of defining key terms and setting out the relationships between the different concepts, actors and processes that this research programme will explore**. To a large extent, this will be the task of the researchers who undertake this research programme. In this respect, we **recommend** that the tender process ask each bidding consortium for information on the conceptual framework and theoretical approaches they propose to use in determining specific research questions and undertaking the research.

3.2 Nonetheless, in scoping out this research programme, we have examined the key concepts, explored as far as possible the relationships between them and have been guided by a number of different conceptual approaches or lenses. This section therefore briefly clarifies the conceptual thinking that has underpinned the proposed research themes that are presented in section 3.3.

3.3 Most of **the key concepts and terms relevant to this area of research are contested to varying degrees** and there are often multiple definitions of each. These include the terms **“conflict”, “fragility” and “social cohesion”**, as well as the terms **“the state”, “statebuilding”, “political settlement” and “social contract”**. For the purposes of elaborating this research programme, we have found the definitions and understandings included in annex B to be the most helpful.

3.4 There is clearly a **need to better understand the relationships between conflict, fragility and social cohesion**. The existing literature indicates the following, but these relationships will need to be further unpacked and examined as part of the research undertaken:

(i) **The relationship between conflict and fragility:** A recent body of literature and practice, including extensive work by the OECD-DAC and research by Addison (2008)⁶, Cousens et al (2001)⁷, and Ghani and Lockhart (2005, 2008b)⁸, has highlighted the linkages between conflict and fragility. The OECD-DAC research finds that fragile states are more prone to violent conflict and violent conflict further erodes the state. Although state fragility itself does not necessarily lead to conflict and vice versa, the *conditions* that lead to state fragility are also likely to lead to conflict. The existence of conflict, in turn, makes it even more difficult for a weak state to perform its core functions. The OECD-DAC definition of fragility (annex B) implies that a situation of fragility arises when the state fails to deliver on survival or expected functions, and the negotiation of the social contract between the state and its citizens fails. This is when the emergence of grievances, and the mobilisation of groups into violent action, is most likely. This causality flows the other way also too: large-scale violence makes it harder for any new political settlement to take root and produce results, and this further increases the likelihood of a recurrence of violence. Collier et al. (2008)⁹ have shown that post-conflict countries are twice as likely as other developing countries to fall back into conflict and about half do so within 10 years, partly because of increased institutional fragility. Furthermore,

⁶ Addison, T and Brauholtz-Speight, T, 2008, Chronic Poverty and Violent Conflict: 'Fragile States' and the Social Compact, Chronic Poverty Research Centre, Overseas Development Institute, London

⁷ Cousens, E.M., Kumar, C. and Wemester, K. (2001) Peacebuilding as Politics: Cultivating Peace in Fragile Societies, Lynne Rienner Publishers

⁸ Ghani, A, Lockhart, C, 2008b, Fixing Failed States: A Framework for Rebuilding a Fractured World, Oxford, Oxford University Press

Ghani, A, Lockhart, C, and Carnahan, M, 2005, Closing the Sovereignty Gap: An Approach to State-Building, Overseas Development Institute Working Paper 253

⁹ Collier, P, and Hoeffler, A, 2008, Post Conflict Risks, Journal of Peace Research



according to the report *Peace and Conflict 2008*,¹⁰ 77% of all international crises in the post-Cold War era (1990–2005) included one or more actors that were considered unstable, fragile, or failed at the time of the crisis.

- (ii) **The relationship between social cohesion and conflict:** Analysts are divided on whether social cohesion should be considered as an independent variable (i.e. which generates its own outcomes such as wellbeing, economic performance, health participation rates, political legitimacy) or a dependent variable (i.e. the result of actions / factors in other realms, such as societal diversity, globalisation, etc.) and in practice, most analytical studies have only been able to demonstrate a correlation between social cohesion and other variables, and not causality in either of the directions above.¹¹ Nonetheless, weak social cohesion (defined both as social exclusion and lack of social capital) is believed to increase the risk of social fragmentation and exclusion, which may in turn result in violent conflict. For example, recent research has shown that a divided society – i.e. one with pronounced horizontal cleavages or high levels of exclusion from social, political, economic life, or a combination of both - is more likely to experience violent conflict, even when its institutions are strong and the state appears functional, as in Rwanda or Colombia (OECD-DAC 2008b,¹² Stewart et al. 2006,¹³ DFID 2005¹⁴). For example, ethnic divisions can impede institution building, and create space for opportunistic politics, which can in turn further undermine institutions and social cohesiveness and lead to conflict (Easterly et al 2006)¹⁵. Conflict can also contribute to the polarisation of identities and further divide societies (Srinivasan, 2006)¹⁶. Violence (including gang or criminal violence) itself increases the social exclusion of groups (especially young males) or whole neighbourhoods, eroding the social fabric of family life and local communities (DFID 2005).
- (iii) **The relationship between social cohesion and fragility:** Recent work emphasises the strong correlation between effective states and social cohesion and the need for more research to examine the links between them (Easterly et al 2006). Stewart and Brown (2008)¹⁷ look at the relationship between horizontal inequalities (HIs) and social exclusion and state fragility. Whilst they conclude that a state can be fragile without HIs or social exclusion being present and that neither HIs nor social exclusion necessarily follow from fragility, they stress that a state with a significant degree of HIs would be counted as fragile as it fails in comprehensive delivery of service entitlements and does not enjoy full legitimacy on the grounds that it excludes major group(s) (although the degree of HIs necessarily to call a state fragile might be debated). At a more general level, it might also be inferred that in cases of existing fragility, weak and non-representative institutions are likely to hinder efforts to achieve a political settlement, and negotiate a social contract that would strengthen state-society relations as well as the cohesiveness of society. Nonetheless, there is a need for further work and evidence to unpick these linkages.

3.5 In scoping out this research programme, we have also been guided by the **application of a number of conceptual lenses** to help us think through the issues and develop coherent themes:

- (i) **Linking levels of analysis and understanding relationships between the micro-meso-macro and local-national-regional-global:** Both the literature review (annex C) and consultation process have suggested the importance of gaining a better understanding of the linkages between factors, processes and dynamics at a micro- or local level and at higher levels including the national and global level. For example, understanding how the motivations

¹⁰ CIDCM *Peace and Conflict 2008* (<http://www.cidcm.umd.edu/pc/>)

¹¹ See Beauvais, C, and Jenson, J, 2002, *Social Cohesion: Updating the State of Research*, CPRN Discussion Paper

¹² OECD-DAC, 2008, *Concepts and Dilemmas of State Building in Fragile Situations: From Fragility to Resistance*, Discussion Paper

¹³ Stewart, F, et al, 2006, *Social Exclusion and Conflict: Analysis and Political Implications*, CRISE Policy Paper

¹⁴ DFID (2005) *Reducing poverty by tackling social exclusion*, A DFID policy paper

¹⁵ Easterly, W et al (2006) *Social Cohesion, Institutions and Growth*, Centre for Governance and Development

¹⁶ Srinivasan, S, 2006, *Minority Rights, Early Warning, and Conflict Prevention: Lessons from Darfur*, Minority Rights Group International

¹⁷ Stewart, F. and Brown, G. (2008) *Fragile States*, CRISE working paper 51



of individuals and groups to engage in violence are related to the wider actions and policies of state institutions or globally shared perceptions of the exclusion or inequality of particular groups. Or, looking at how global competition over natural resources impacts on local patterns of insecurity, inequality and violence. Or, the linkages between urban gangs in particular cities and international organised crime networks engaged in the drugs trade, money laundering, identity theft etc.

- (ii) **Understanding the actions, perspectives and relationships between different actors: state actors, non-state actors and citizens:** Again, both the literature review and consultation process have raised concerns about perspectives that are too “state-centric” or “top down” and the need to understand the multiple actors involved, as well as their interests and incentives (consistent with political economy analyses). In particular, recent literature on how citizenship develops stresses the need to examine processes of state building, state transformation and democratisation from a citizen’s perspective (see Eyben and Ladbury 2006¹⁸, Luckham, Goetz, and Kaldor 2003¹⁹ and DFID 2008²⁰). Such “bottom up” perspectives give greater insight into how citizens view the state in relation to other sources of authority, what their experiences and expectations of the state are. They also help inform interventions by the state and other actors to develop citizen-state relations, greater accountability and responsiveness. Equally, recent literature stresses the importance of “non-state” actors and structures of authority – whether parallel actors operating within national boundaries with varying degrees of control and authority over territory, resources and the population (e.g. traditional leaders, religious authorities, armed groups, gangs, private security companies) or transnational actors that have a significant impact on social, political and economic life within national boundaries (e.g. organised crime networks, multinational corporations, global social or faith-based movements)(see for example Walby’s 2003 work on “multiple polities”²¹ and Kaldor 2007²²). It is also important to better understand the incentives and actions of such non-state entities, how they relate to the state and citizens, their role in driving conflict and fragility and their potential role in building peace and stability.
- (iii) **Understanding both structural and proximate or “trigger” factors:** In drawing up the research themes and possible research questions for this programme, we often distinguish between the longer-term underlying or “structural” drivers of conflict and fragility and the proximate or “trigger” factors. Both are important (see DFID 2002)²³, but in practice it is often felt that less is known about the proximate causes and exactly how a number of causal factors “line up” and reinforce one another to produce the deteriorating governance and violence.
- (iv) **Understanding conflict and fragility as dynamic processes:** Finally, and in line with the most recent thinking of DFID and others (e.g. DFID Fragile States Paper 2005 and Conflict policy 2006, DAC Guidelines)²⁴, we treat both conflict and fragility as dynamic processes. The original drivers and underlying causes of conflict and fragility may be reshaped and transformed as a result of state incapacity and protracted violence and profound transformations of institutions, social networks and power relations can also result.

¹⁸ Luckham, R., A. M. Goetz, and M. Kaldor (2003), ‘Democratic Institutions and Democratic Politics’. In Sunil Bastian and Robin Luckham (eds.), *Can Democracy be Designed?* London: Zed Press.

¹⁹ Eyben, R, and Ladbury, S, 2006, Building Effective States: Taking a Citizens’ Perspective’, Citizenship, Participation and Accountability Development Research Centre, IDS

²⁰ DFID (2008) Citizens Building the State: Challenges for DFID, Concept Note (Draft 28/08/08)

²¹ Walby, S. 2003 ‘The Myth of the Nation-State: Theorizing Society and Politics in a Global Era’ *Sociology* 37, 3: 529-546

²² Kaldor, M. (2007) *New and Old Wars: Organized Violence in a Global Era*, Stanford University Press

²³ DFID (2002) *Conducting Conflict Assessments: Guidance Notes*

²⁴ DFID Policy Paper 2005, *Why we need to work more effectively in Fragile States*, DFID Policy Paper, 2006, Preventing Violent Conflict, OECD DAC guidelines on Helping prevent Violent Conflict 1997 and 2001 supplement



3.2 Guiding principles

3.6 In developing the proposed research programme, we have also been guided by a number of general principles building on DFID's Research Strategy 2008-2013 and based on feedback from the consultation process:

- (i) **Ensuring research is relevant to policy and practice:** In developing the research themes below, we have consulted a range of stakeholders including policymakers, practitioners and academics and have focused on areas considered relevant to current and emerging policy challenges. However, given the proposed research programme is to be a long-term six-year programme we have interpreted 'policy-relevant' in a broad sense that stretches from research that responds to shorter-term policy demands to 'horizon-scanning' research, which looks at issues which policy-makers may not yet realise are important to achievement of their objectives. Equally, we have considered 'policy-relevance' to DFID, but also to other Whitehall departments, donor agencies, and, to the extent possible, developing country partners.
- (ii) **Not over-determining the research questions:** Although the research themes presented below are fairly detailed and suggest a number of specific areas where research could be focused, it will be essential to leave scope for the research institutions who tender for this programme to: (a) define and justify other research areas under the broad themes that they feel are relevant to policy and practice; and (b) respond to new 'cutting-edge' issues and emerging policy challenges during the life of the research programme. To some extent, the tender process itself should be seen as a means to determine key research gaps and emerging issues.
- (iii) **Recognising how research-based knowledge is generated:** In developing the research themes, we have aimed to avoid wholesale duplication of existing research, but in many of the areas proposed, there is already some research underway. However, based on the mapping, literature review and consultations, we do not consider that this research is sufficiently conclusive to inform policy and practice. There may be gaps, areas that are contested or where existing evidence is inconclusive, contradictory or challenged. Thus, we propose that further research is required to improve knowledge and the evidence base in these areas. This is consistent with how knowledge based on research is generated – through several academics working on the same questions, testing each other's ideas and evidence.²⁵
- (iv) **Striking a balance between creating new knowledge and getting knowledge into use:** In developing the research themes, we have focused on two kinds of 'gaps': (a) areas where there is insufficient knowledge or existing knowledge is contested and therefore new primary research is required (we have termed this "new" research); (b) areas where there is already a body of existing research, but this research is scattered and has not yet been synthesised into a form in which it can be readily used by policy makers and practitioners (we have termed this "synthesis: of existing research").
- (v) **Delivering both global research and context-specific locally relevant research:** DFID's research strategy commits DFID to improving the knowledge and choices for developing country partners and to building research capacity within developing countries. To achieve both of these objectives, it will be important to achieve a balance between research that is focused on global issues and generic questions (e.g. What are the areas of complementarity and tension between state building and peace building?) and research that is context-specific and relevant to problems and challenges in specific countries or regions (e.g. How should state building and peace building objectives be prioritised and sequenced in DR Congo?). In developing the research themes below, we have therefore aimed to allow scope for research questions to be generated at a generic level, but also at a country or regional level in

²⁵ As one person consulted put it, "Paul Collier and Frances Stewart both work on the same questions, but from very different perspectives and I don't think anyone would dispute the value both have added to knowledge in this field".



response to local challenges. In both cases, the role of southern research institutions in determining relevant research questions will be key (see annex F).

- (vi) **Building on existing research:** DFID has already funded research related to conflict, state fragility and social cohesion via a number of research centres (CRISE, Crisis States Research Centre and the DRC Citizenship, Participation and Accountability). We have consulted each of these centres to ensure that the proposed research programme builds on the knowledge they have already created, moves this forward into new areas and follows up on specific gaps in knowledge that they have identified.
- (vii) **Complementing other areas of possible future DFID-funded research:** DFID's research strategy lists four other research themes under the section "Governance in challenging environments" including "social exclusion, inequality and poverty reduction", "building strong and effective states" and "migration". Although it is not yet clear what research will be commissioned in these areas, we have tried our best to anticipate and avoid possible areas of duplication and delimit this research programme accordingly. Equally, we are aware that there is currently a preliminary study underway on "climate change, governance and conflict" and that there are plans to commission research on "radicalisation and violent extremism".

3.3. Proposed research themes

3.7 On the basis of the conclusions we have drawn from conducting the literature review, consultation process and mapping of existing and planned research activities, plus consideration of the parameters and principles discussed in sections 3.1 and 3.2 above, we have reviewed the proposed research question and themes in the terms of reference (TOR) and draft Project Concept Note (PCN). In terms of the proposed research question, we would suggest amending this slightly and splitting it into the following two overarching questions:

- **How do local, national and international factors combine to drive conflict and fragility in specific states?**
- **How can states and societies be supported to manage competing interests peacefully and lay the foundations for resilience, stability and durable peace?**

3.8 In terms of the research themes and sub-themes outlined in the TOR and draft PCN, overall our findings and analysis support the key areas of focus outlined. However, we propose to organise the various areas of research under the following themes:

- **Theme 1: Building resilient, effective and peaceful States**
- **Theme 2: Non-state actors and exogenous drivers of conflict, fragility and peace**
- **Theme 3: Building social cohesion and resilience to violence**

3.9 We set out the rationale for each of these themes below as well as possible research questions and sub-themes/areas of focus. We have chosen to divide the themes in this way for the following reasons:

- To ensure each theme constitutes a coherent and manageable intellectual agenda in its own right, which is likely to fit with the areas of expertise of different research institutions in the north and south.
- To encourage a diversity of theoretical perspectives and different angles on some of the same issues and problems e.g. bottom up vs top down perspective, a focus on the perspectives of the state vs non-state actors and dynamics vs citizens, groups and individuals.
- To encourage as far as possible the combining of different disciplinary perspectives (e.g. governance and social development; political science, international relations and anthropology) under each theme.



- Because we felt that the divide between “the drivers and sustainers of conflict and fragility” and “prevention and response” was somewhat artificial. We wanted to emphasise the fact that the actions of different stakeholders can decrease or increase the potential for fragility and conflict e.g. international interventions to respond to conflict may actually further aggravate tensions and thus drive future instability and conflict.

3.10 Nonetheless, it is important to stress the need for linkages to be made between the themes. As far as possible, we have attempted to do this in the following ways:

- Ensuring that each theme looks at the relationships between different actors (e.g. state, non-state, individual and groups of citizens), dynamics and processes (local, national, regional and international).
- Focusing on both increasing understanding of the causes and dynamics of conflict and fragility as well as the local, national and international interventions to address them.

Theme 1: Building resilient, effective and peaceful States

Rationale

3.11 Existing research highlights the complexity of the state building process and the importance of the political bargain or settlement between elites, which underpins stability by ensuring enough of the key interests support the state against external threats.²⁶ It demonstrates the potential for a positive trajectory towards greater state resilience and away from conflict and violence. Conversely, the settlement can be less inclusive and the state can reinforce divisions in society or become a perpetrator of violence thereby creating a negative trajectory in the opposite direction.

3.12 Although much research has already been conducted in this area, theories and perspectives are incomplete, remain contested in some areas and need to be challenged to incorporate additional dimensions. At the same time, there is a need to effectively utilise the considerable body of existing research and to make it operationally relevant to stakeholders. The biggest challenge is to develop a more multi-dimensional theory and approach to state building in fragile and conflict-affected states, which incorporates the multiple objectives of elites, those of other groups in society, and of the international community, and is based on a firm understanding of processes of both state building and peace building over the short and longer term.

3.13 For example, there is a need to look more closely at the sequencing and prioritising of policy options – such as security provision, service delivery and justice reforms - what is necessary in terms of preventing a return to violence in the shorter and longer term and what the expectations and needs of different groups of citizens (men, women, elderly, youth etc) actually are. In this respect, it is important to recognise that the path of transition from fragility to resilience and stability may affect and shape the path to a development state and the linkages and trade-offs need to be better understood.²⁷ There is particular demand for more in-depth research on the impacts of international interventions (military, diplomatic, development) in various fragile and conflict-affected states, and to draw out key lessons.

3.14 There is also a demand to deepen understanding of how the state interacts with the rest of society and how this reinforces or undermines the state building and peace building processes.²⁸ For example, there is an interest in exploring the conditions under which citizens engage with formal political institutions such as elections or choose informal institutions like political movements. Equally, there is an interest in looking more closely at the state’s role in

²⁶ See for example James Putzel Development as State Making, LSE, Draft 2008

²⁷ Roger Wilson provided comments to help develop this section

²⁸ See for example Building Effective States-Taking a Citizens Perspective S. Ladbury and R. Eyben June 2006



the perpetration of violence and insecurity, including in countries that have political settlements, have re-established state authority and rebuilt core functions (e.g. Uganda, Rwanda).

3.15 This theme could therefore both support research that builds on existing work and new areas of investigation to generate a body of knowledge about how state building can reinforce resilience and progress toward a developmental state that is based on wider legitimacy and prevent a reversal or decline towards an “unresponsive “ state susceptible to fragility and collapse. The research under the sub theme would preferably collect time series and other primary data for example through historical “ life histories” of institutional change and political contestation²⁹ that can produce generic insights across a group of countries. The approach could involve comparative or longitudinal studies that would present the evidence of positive (or negative) trajectories in state building and the successful (or unsuccessful) policies or approaches adopted. It would reveal how states had been built up or rebuilt in the past and what in practice have been the priority functions and services. Quantitative analysis of trends is also important.³⁰

Theme 1: Possible research questions

- *How can state building processes advance a political settlement whilst also prioritising the strengthening of core functions including infrastructure and services? What are the areas of complementarity and tension between state building and peace building and what does this imply for prioritisation and sequencing in specific contexts?*
- *How can development programmes reinforce rather than undermine state resilience and how do efforts to build state resilience affect prospects for longer-term development and conflict prevention?*
- *What is the role of popular legitimacy in the transition out of fragility to stability and to the developmental state? Are democratic or authoritarian processes more likely to promote stability and peace or instability and violence? Under what circumstances, can democratic processes be supportive of a transition to stability and development?*
- *In what ways does the state contribute to fragility and conflict or perpetrate violence and insecurity and what steps can be taken to prevent or mitigate this?*
- *How effective has the international community been in supporting the transitions to stability and the initiation of democratic development? What are the incentives and constraints for the different actors – international and regional organisations; neighbouring states; superpowers; Western donors; the BRICS?*

Areas where research could focus

(i) State building and peace building in practice in fragile and post-conflict states

3.16 A new research agenda could be developed around evidence-based policy options for effective state building and peace building in fragile and conflict-affected countries. The aim would be to develop a clearer idea of appropriate policy options and trade offs for national and international stakeholders and possible impacts on the political settlement and on the social contract between the State and the rest of society. The rebuilding of the social contract is particularly important for social cohesion and exploring the ways that this can be achieved

²⁹ This description was used to emphasise the need for systematic research methods in the Cramer et al Mid Term Review of the Crisis States Centre May 2008

³⁰ Discussions with Mark Robinson DFID



through efforts to improve the security of poor people and the provision of services would be a key aspect of this theme. In particular research would look at the sequencing and prioritisation of efforts to restore or improve core state functions and service that build the resilience of the state, maintain peace, build social cohesion and promote development. Research could compare more resilient states with those in crisis. The specific areas where there are identifiable gaps and demands for new research are:

- Improving security provision for citizens: Existing research stresses the need to prioritise the restoration or strengthening of security functions in fragile and post- conflict states, but it is not specific about what kind of security and for whom. There is a need for a better understanding of the security needs of citizens and how the state can work with others to rapidly provide security for all citizens, especially the most vulnerable and the most dangerous groups. There is also a need to explore how security sector reform policies be better integrated with broader strategies of conflict prevention, peace building, political reform and development and made more gender-aware.
- Service delivery, the social contract and “peace dividends”: Existing research stresses the need for a sequenced and selective process of institution building to restore core functions and services,³¹ but is not definitive about the most appropriate sequencing and prioritisation of these efforts and has not examined the full range of services.³² The peace building literature highlights the importance of providing rapid “peace dividends” to war-affected populations and the re-establishment of basic services is a highly visible means to achieve this. Equally, we know that service delivery is central to the social contract between the State and its citizens. Yet, existing research shows that failures to deliver services in an equitable manner can aggravate horizontal and gender inequalities and increase risks of fragility and violent conflict.³³ Thus, research could examine experiences of service delivery in fragile and post-conflict contexts and the priority that should be accorded to re-establishing/improving services compared to the other core functions (e.g. taxation). It could look at the policies, institutional arrangements and interventions that most effectively provide essential services consistent with the security situation and capability of state institutions and that promote social cohesion. It could examine the prioritisation of activities, resourcing decisions and the management of service delivery across areas like power supply, agricultural inputs, rural roads and communications, water and sanitation, primary education and health. It could look in particular at services which provide concrete dividends from peace and which can rebuild the social contract most quickly, yet at the same time how to ensure these are delivered in a way that reduces rather than aggravates tensions. It could also look at other areas of social policy such as social security, social protection and other welfare measures, which are key to promoting social cohesion and wellbeing.
- Promoting inclusion and cohesion through service delivery: In the context of a political agreement the restoration of services and addressing “service entitlement failures” can be an important contribution to enhancing the legitimacy of the state. Understanding which services are the most important to citizens and which factors most influence their perception of the state, levels of trust and willingness to engage, could be a useful addition to knowledge. Furthermore, in the context of a political agreement (e.g. Nepal) there is scope to rebuild service provision in a way, which addresses problems of access and discrimination and promotes social cohesion. Thus, new research could usefully examine experience of targeting interventions on specific state functions and institutions to remove discriminatory aspects of service delivery and throw light on how different forms of exclusion (based on ethnicity, religion, gender etc) can be overcome by improving access and availability of services.
- Justice sector reforms: Existing research highlights the critical importance of an effective justice sector to protect the rights and security of poor people, and encourage economic

³¹ Various papers produced by the Crisis States Research Centre make this point.

³² Most work so far has concentrated on revenue raising, justice and security, although Ghani et al (2005) (ODI Working paper 253) also include infrastructure and primary education as core functions that need early attention.

³³ Frances Stewart and Graham Brown (2008) *Fragile States* CRISE Working Paper



activity. Although there has been an increasing amount of research on transitional justice, there appears to be very little research on (re)building institutions in the justice sector (see literature review at annex C). There is significant demand from practitioners for more research on reform of the justice sector,³⁴ but the evidence base is weak and the available studies emphasise the patchy results of existing institutional reforms and the need for more detailed research on political interests.³⁵ New research could examine the sectoral experience in more detail across a suitable sample of conflict-affected and more resilient countries. Key aspects could include: the political economy of reforms including the impact on incentives and interests in the sector; the overall effect on individual security and access to services for poorer groups; prioritising reforms to legislative frameworks and legal systems; how traditional and informal systems link with state systems and have evolved together over time; and whether and how the justice sector is serving the needs of different groups (men, women, young, old, different ethnic groups et). The work could look at the sector as a whole but also at individual institutions, which have yet to be looked at systematically (e.g. police, judiciary).

- Longer-term trade-offs: resilient vs developmental states? Recent research by the Crisis States Research Centre stresses that building a resilient and stable state does not necessarily result in a developmental state that promotes broad-based economic development and poverty reduction. It would be useful to build on this work and to conduct further cross-country, sector or institution specific studies that look in practice at the critical trade-offs between promoting resilience and stability and building a developmental state. Research could identify critical decision points that affect the future potential of the state in promoting development, highlight possible win-win options and mitigating actions.

(ii) The political foundations of resilient and peaceful states

3.17 A second sub theme for new research could involve gathering empirical evidence about where and how different political systems and institutions have effectively mediated between competing interests to prevent violence escalating into more generalised conflict and state collapse. This would involve examination of how political processes, leaders, parties and institutions (formal and informal) have actually operated to resolve disputes between elites and powerful groups and to prevent the undermining of the social contract between citizens and the state.

3.18 Existing research has focussed on political settlements and elite bargains and has examined democratic processes and constitutions from that perspective. Less attention has been given to informal and formal political institutions such as elections and constitution making bodies.³⁶ Equally, in politically unstable and post-conflict states it is important to better understand party politics³⁷ and links between citizens and the State through organised groups and informal political institutions in order to explore possibilities for the incremental development of democratic institutions.³⁸ There is also a need to look at the impact of the overwhelming power of the executive vis-à-vis other state institutions and civil society.³⁹

3.19 New research could examine experience across groups of countries with different political systems and institutions and across a range of conflicting interests both fundamental and less controversial. This could identify the conditions and institutions for delivering multiple objectives

³⁴ Feedback from DFID Governance Advisers.

³⁵ See Security and Justice : Measuring the development returns : A review of knowledge Marcus Cox August 2008

³⁶ There has been some recent work to examine the role of constitutional bodies in ensuring representative Government, reserved seats in Parliament and allocating special powers to marginal groups (Frances Stewart op cit), but key aspects remain unaddressed,

³⁷ Reilly B (2006) In Post Conflict Elections: Uncertain Turning Points of Transition-See literature review

³⁸ Tom Carothers (2007) The "sequencing" fallacy, Journal of Democracy

³⁹ Evaluations by the International Peace Academy in New York stress this as a key factor in explaining the limited success of state building.



- a stable arrangement for elite compromise and democratic development in resilient and developmental states.⁴⁰ Specific proposals for future research include:

- Deepening our understanding of political settlements: Research could broaden and deepen our understanding of the formation and evolution of political settlements in different contexts. There has been a tendency in existing research to see political settlements in narrow terms as bargains between elites, but this risks overlooking the relationships between elites and their power bases in wider society. New research could develop a more multi-dimensional model of political settlements, exploring the role of popular legitimacy and democratic processes in political settlements, the bargains that are struck at different levels (local, regional, national) between elites and specific groups in society, and how these evolve over time.
- Democratic transitions and the role of elections: Recent trends need to be better understood. There is a high level of public support for multi party elections both globally and in Africa as shown, for example, by Afrobarometer . Recent elections in Kenya and Zimbabwe might be seen as undermining state building and resilience but an alternative view is they exposed the pre-existing conflicts in these states and the cynical manipulation of power. In other cases like Mozambique, election processes and institutions such as electoral commissions have been effective in building legitimacy and resilience. Research could identify the factors that make processes of democratic or political transition more or less likely to provoke stability or instability, peace or violence. It could look at how the introduction of elections has affected: the role of popular legitimacy in political settlements; the imperatives for local leaders and communities to make demands on governments; the resilience of political settlements; and the prospects for transition to a developmental state. It could draw out lessons about the timing of elections as well as the conduct of the electoral process with respect to wider processes of democratic transition.
- The development and rebuilding of political society and citizenship. Research by the citizenship DRC has started to look at the development of citizenship in a number of different (relatively stable) countries and suggests that notions of citizenship and belonging are often multilayered and vary considerably from society to society. It also suggests that active citizenship is a critical element in building effective and responsive states. New research could build on this work by looking specifically at the development/rebuilding of political society and citizenship in fragile and post-conflict contexts. It could aim to illuminate the paths to developing an inclusive political system, social cohesion and an active citizenry, which forges and utilises democratic pathways to claim rights and meet its responsibilities to the State and one another.
- Deepening our knowledge of the politics of conflict. This could focus specifically on the political interests and incentives that drive violent conflict and how different groups decide when their interests are best served by violence. What are the specific conditions under which groups decide to address grievance through violence?⁴¹ What are the key causal factors and how do they interact to generate a vicious circle leading to political instability and conflict? Research could examine more closely the “tipping points”, the processes that result in the breakdown of political institutions, which would otherwise mediate the different interests and what actions might prevent this.

(iii) How the state contributes to fragility and conflict and steps to mitigate this.

3.20 Research under this theme could involve both new work and the synthesis of general lessons and practice from existing research outputs. Our discussions and literature review suggest that existing research and policy papers have examined many individual cases (the Balkans, Rwanda, Somalia, DRC, Afghanistan) and have produced historical and context-

⁴⁰ It could also include less tangible aspects such as the role of benevolent leaders and the institutional aspects of their intervention. For example, the CSRC is planning papers on political organisations and the elite bargain in a range of developing countries, which could be an important starting point. It will look at how the executive authorities reach a settlement with elite groups.

⁴¹ Frances Stewart op cit



specific evidence of how and why the state has actively engaged in or been a catalyst for conflict. However, there is a need to draw this material together, summarise and communicate the key insights that emerge for stakeholders. In terms of specific areas for new research, these could include:

- Situations of deteriorating governance: Research could deepen our understanding of situations of deteriorating governance, how political settlements unravel, and why states fail to perform core and expected functions. How do specific state actions, failures or policy changes exacerbate tensions between groups? Which state functions are the most critical to prevent conflict and violence (for example justice and security or welfare services) and how have they been undermined in different contexts and why? It could also look at why certain failures in governance lead to violence in some contexts and not others. What are the characteristics of the state and the specific institutions, which are critical in preventing violence and conflict erupting even in the presence of widespread failures in the provision of core or expected functions or high levels of inequality? In an African context, to what extent does the dominance of the executive contribute to stability or instability and what alternatives are there?
- The state as a perpetrator of everyday violence and insecurity: Although there has been significant work on the causes of conflict, why and how states engage in inter-state and intra-state conflict, there has been much more limited research that examines the role of the state (or parts of the state) in the perpetration of “everyday” violence and insecurity. In some parts of the world, poor people suffer high levels of insecurity as a result of state repression and the actions of state security actors meant to protect them. It would be useful to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the state’s role in these forms of everyday insecurity, how different population groups are affected (e.g. men, women, migrants) and how international partners can engage more effectively with states and other local actors to combat this.
- The role of sub-national and local levels of Government: It would be useful to gather more evidence on the power structures at sub-national and local levels of Government, their role in provoking conflict or instability and whether and how they can play a greater role in conflict prevention and management for example through delivering core functions and services and providing a channel for the expression of grievances and claiming of rights. How do local state institutions and structures relate to the national level and how can neglect of these aspects exacerbate tensions?⁴²

(iv) The international community and state building: roles, opportunities and challenges

3.21 The role of the international community has constantly evolved but there is a strong interest in supporting interventions that can promote peace and stability in specific regions and countries, This is often a complex undertaking, especially in dealing with states where internal conflicts persist and violence is orchestrated by the state itself (e.g. Sudan) or where there is little interest in addressing the problems (Somalia).⁴³ Further research could produce evidence on the incentives, capability and roles of the various actors in the international community in relation to fragile states, for example, whether and how they can reinforce national state building and create positive incentives or sanctions that limit or challenge adverse trends in state building. Equally, it could examine where their actions (advertently or inadvertently) aggravate tensions, weaken national capacity and increase the potential for future violent conflict. Research could cover international and regional organisations, donors and the BRICS. Themes could also include cross-border or regional conflict (e.g. Rwanda and DRC) and regional economic integration and dispute resolution (e.g. around shared natural resources). Specific areas for future research could include:

- Lessons from international interventions in specific contexts: Through a combination of synthesis of existing research and new research, key lessons could be drawn from recent international interventions in a range of fragile and conflict-affected contexts, from those with

⁴² The CSRC has work planned at city level which could be fed into this

⁴³ See Robin Luckham International Community and State Reconstruction



“pockets of fragility” (e.g. Uganda) to severely conflict-affected (e.g. Sudan) or collapsed states (e.g. Somalia). It could look the following issues:

- What was the international institutional set-up in the country and what were the strengths and weakness of this? How well were political, military and development interventions integrated? What lessons can be learnt?
 - How effective were “stabilisation”, early recovery and rehabilitation activities both in terms of meeting short-term goals, but also in terms of longer term peace and sustainable development? What lessons can be learnt about the prioritisation, sequencing and integration of humanitarian, security and development activities?
 - Were state building and peace building goals integrated and interventions considered from the perspective of both objectives? How can specific aspects be better linked e.g. peace negotiations, the political process, the restoration of “survival” or core functions, state guarantees of rights, removal of discrimination in access to services etc.
 - Were policies and interventions tailored sufficiently to the context – both in terms of the degree of state fragility / failure and the specific historical, political, economic and socio-cultural context?
 - Were interventions at the central / national level adequately integrated with interventions at the regional or local level? For example, what were the linkages between the national peace process / political settlement and local level peace building? What was the balance between restoring core state functions and delivering concrete peace dividends at a local level?
- Dealing with cross-border and regional conflict: Building on existing work on regional conflict and security,⁴⁴ new research could look in more depth at the options that have been used and are available for dealing with trans-border conflicts including diplomacy and mediation; supporting the development of new formal and informal dispute resolution institutions at regional level; using development programmes to support regional economic integration through institution building and provision of infrastructure.
 - Engaging with violent or repressive states: Research could look more specifically at how international partners can engage more effectively to influence states that are engaged in the perpetration of violence and insecurity and work together toward common goals. Ideally, this would include looking at situations where state perpetration of violence is obvious (e.g. Sudan), but also cases where the use of violence or repression may be less visible and the state may otherwise be highly regarded for its policies and progress (e.g. Rwanda).

Theme 2: Non-state actors and exogenous drivers of conflict, fragility and peace

Rationale

3.22 The state operates as part of a wider society and there are a range of other non-state actors, structures of authority and sources of power – both formal and informal - that can exert influence on the State and its citizens and, in some cases, operate beyond the authority of the State. In conflict-affected and fragile states, there are often significant areas of territory as well as economic sectors, which are outside the control or regulation of the state. However, this does not mean that these areas or sectors are ‘ungoverned’; rather that they are under the partial or complete control of alternative structures of power and authority (e.g. gangs, armed militia, criminal organisations, private security companies) which in many cases are expanding their reach and gaining momentum. There may also be other alternative or “parallel” structures, which play a significant role in the political, social and economic lives of the population (e.g.

⁴⁴ For example the CSRC work on “Regional and global axes of conflict”, the work of the Global Consortium on Security Transformation on “Regional security and peace above and below” and the work of ICES (Sri Lanka) to build a regional inter-governmental conflict prevention mechanism in South Asia.



traditional authorities, civil society organisations, trade unions, social, political and faith-based movements). These alternative power structures may play positive roles (e.g. service delivery, security provision, welfare provision) – often fulfilling functions that the state fails to deliver - as well as negative roles (e.g. use of violence, exhortation, gender-based discrimination) and have varying levels of legitimacy with different groups in the population. In some cases, these actors or structures are linked to the state or particular state actors, but these relationships are often not visible and hence poorly understood. Although there has been some research in this area, much more research is needed to understand the nature and interests of these non-state structures and actors, their (potential) role in driving different forms of violence, conflict and fragility or peace and stability, their relationship with the State and with different population groups and how the State and international actors can best engage with these actors to prevent violent conflict, build peace and resilience.

3.23 There is also demand for more work to look at certain international or transnational drivers of conflict, fragility and “bad governance”, which have become increasingly important as a result of globalisation. Although violent conflict mostly takes place within state boundaries, it is also driven by complex transnational military, financial and political networks involving diasporas, dissident political and armed groups, criminal networks, the private sector and illicit markets in plundered natural resources, arms and narcotics.⁴⁵ These networks operate within the state, cross-border and globally. Understanding these structures and how they sustain long-term conflicts and undermine peace processes is critical for stakeholders wishing to find avenues for possible peace building and political agreement within specific countries and sub-regions. Equally, there is a need to better understand the impacts of global economic and geopolitical changes on the potential for fragility and conflict in specific countries, regions and localities. This includes changes in the economic, trade and migration policies of particular countries, regions or internationally; the impacts of the foreign policies and interventions of other states - including emerging economies such as the BRICS; and the impacts of global financial and economic crises.

3.24 Finally, there are a number of structural and exogenous factors such as demographic pressures, migration trends, urbanization, resource scarcity/abundance, under/unemployment and climate change that are posing challenges for policy makers, particularly in fragile states and countries emerging from conflict. Current research in these latter areas is rather scattered and does not provide clear policy and programme guidance for national and international actors on what to do about these issues and the threats they pose to peace and security.

3.25 Under this theme, it would be useful for research to include a historical perspective on how the importance of these non-state and exogenous drivers has changed over time, how they have related to and impacted on the state and citizens and what lessons can be learned with respect to influencing these non-state, external or exogenous drivers of conflict and fragility.

Theme 2: Possible research questions

- *What are the significant non-state organisational structures and alternative structures of power within national boundaries that interact with the State and with citizens? In what ways have and do they contribute(d) to conflict and fragility or support conflict prevention/ management measures to promote peace and stability? How can the State and external actors engage more effectively with a wider range of formal and informal non-state actors to reduce the risk of conflict and to build peace?*
- *What are the drivers and impacts of different kinds of violence perpetrated by non-state and state actors (e.g. interpersonal, political, gang, criminal), how these are connected and how can they be addressed?*
- *How are transnational factors and influences increasing the risk of conflict and fragility, and*

⁴⁵ Mary Kaldor (1999) *New and Old Wars: Organised Violence in a Global Era*



undermining state building and peace building processes? What are the linkages between global and local dynamics and drivers of conflict and fragility? And what can be done to anticipate and manage their impact, including by tailoring interventions to the local context?

- *What incentives and structures underpin the transnational military, financial and political networks that sustain conflicts within states and across their boundaries for example through refugees, exiled political dissidents, the illicit trafficking of natural resources, arms and drugs and money laundering?*
- *How are fragile states affected by global economic and geopolitical conditions and shocks and how can state, non-state and international actors work together to manage them in order to prevent political and economic instability?*
- *Under what conditions can structural and exogenous variables (urbanization, demographic trends, migration, climate change) create conditions that increase the potential for conflict and undermine the resilience of the state? What are the most important factors and causal relationships? Under what conditions might these factors interact and how can this be better anticipated and managed by the state and the international community?*

Areas where research could focus

(i) Non-state actors and informal sources of power

3.26 The literature review and consultation processes suggest that there is a small, but growing body of work on the operation of certain non-state actors like armed groups, private security companies, urban-based NGOs and traditional authorities. However, this work needs to be expanded, in particular to examine the specific ways in which these actors undermine or reinforce state resilience, conflict prevention capacities and social cohesion and to better understand their relationship with state actors and citizens. There also appears to be a lack of research on more informal structures and organisations like religious or kin-based groups⁴⁶ and grassroots social or political movements. Overall, there is limited understanding of the various options for engagement with these actors and how the State or external actors might work with them to reduce violence and build peace. Research in this area could therefore both support national actors in their engagement with these non-state actors and structures as well as inform frameworks for donor engagement in conflict-affected and fragile contexts - particularly in areas such as addressing security threats, armed violence reduction, supporting peace negotiations, (re)-establishing service delivery, promoting social cohesion and community level peace building. Specific areas where research could focus include:

- “Ungoverned” (or non-state governed) spaces: In conflict-affected or unstable states with “ungoverned spaces” or areas that are partly or completely outside the control and authority of the state (e.g. urban neighbourhoods, zones where natural resources are being extracted, sub-regions (e.g. in DRC)), research could increase our understanding of the operation and interests of various non-state armed groups such as rebel groups, local militias, vigilantes, crime syndicates and private security companies. It could look specifically at how these actors complicate, undermine or prevent the establishment of state authority, whether and how they relate to or form alliances with state actors, specific population groups and organisations beyond state boundaries (e.g. diasporas, multi-national corporations, other states etc), and how they impact on social cohesion.⁴⁷
- Understanding non-state political, socio-cultural and religious movements and sources of authority: There is demand for new research to examine in greater depth the role and interests of traditional leaders and authorities, grassroots social, political or faith-based movements

⁴⁶ Citizens Building the State : Challenges for DFID Draft Concept Note

⁴⁷ See Holmquist 2005 Engaging Non State Structures in Post Conflict Settings and National Intelligence Council – Mapping the Global Future, United States Government 2004



(which may also have strong transnational links) and (where not covered by existing research), the private sector and civil society organisations. What roles do they fulfil and what levels of authority and legitimacy do they enjoy in the eyes of the population or specific population groups (e.g. men, women, young, old, different ethnic or religious groups)? How does their presence affect the relationship between citizens and the state, undermine or contribute to state building processes and conflict prevention capacities? For example, do these movements provide a channel for the expression of grievances and claiming rights? In what ways do they reinforce or combat exclusion and inequality?

- The proximate causes of violence: Research on the structural causes of violence and conflict is reasonably comprehensive, but less is known about the proximate causes. Research could usefully look at the “trigger” factors that lead non-state groups and organisations to choose violence as a means to achieve political, economic or other ends. It could look particularly at the role of organisational dynamics (e.g. roles of leaders and followers), state actions (e.g. changes in state policies), local political events, other local pressures or changes and how these interact with material factors (e.g. exclusion, un/underemployment, needs for security and protection etc) and lead to the emergence of violent groups. Research could also draw out the implications for the likelihood, nature and duration of violence as well as explore means to anticipate and address these proximate causes.
- Options for engagement with non-state actors: Research could look at how the State and international actors can respond to or engage with these non-state structures of authority and informal sources of power. What are the costs and benefits of the range of possible policy responses whether adversarial, accommodating or co-opting of non-state actors? What kinds of institutional and organisational spaces (formal and informal) exist that support better engagement between state and non-state actors? Where and how can these alternative structures of authority contribute to state building, conflict prevention, social cohesion and the achievement of peace and stability.

(ii) The linkages between different forms of violence

3.27 It is increasingly recognized that there is a need for a better understanding of the linkages between different kinds of violence perpetrated by state or non-state actors that may or may not be related to conflict⁴⁸ and which can have an extremely negative impact on poor people and prospects for economic development and poverty reduction (e.g. inter-communal violence, organised political violence, criminal and gang violence, interpersonal violence, sexual and gender-based violence). Research could focus in the following areas:

- The importance of different forms of violence in specific contexts: Research could examine the nature and relative quantitative importance of different types of violence perpetrated by state and non-state actors (interpersonal, household, inter-communal, political, criminal, gang etc) in different contexts (e.g. post-conflict, weak governance, political transition, recession).
- The drivers and impacts of these wider forms of violence: Research could deepen our understanding of the causes of these different forms of violence, how they are linked and their impacts and implications for poverty reduction, economic development and state building.
- Options for addressing different forms of violence: Research could look at past experiences and explore possible policy and practical interventions at a local, national and international level that can prevent and reduce these forms of armed and everyday violence.

⁴⁸ Recent figures published by the Small Arms Survey show that of the at least 750,000 fatal injuries annually, 46,000 are recorded as direct conflict deaths, at least 200,000 indirect conflict deaths and 490,000 as non-conflict deaths. See Geneva Declaration “Global Burden of Armed Violence” report (2008)



(iii) Transnational drivers of conflict, fragility and resilience

3.28 The literature review and consultation processes suggest that existing research on the transnational drivers of conflict and fragility is patchy and could be extended to explore the causal links between these drivers and the political, administrative and security weaknesses within nation states. There appear to be particular gaps in areas such as the impacts of international trade in drugs and other activities of international organised crime networks and the impacts of global economic and financial crises on the potential for conflict and fragility.⁴⁹ At the same time, a limited amount is known about how different actors and processes beyond state boundaries can increase incentives for more responsive and accountable governance. There is also a need for more in-depth research on the regionalisation of conflict via cross-border flows of arms, militia, refugees, conflict commodities, ideas etc and the appropriate means of response. Specific areas where research could focus include:

- The transnational drivers of “bad governance” and fragility: There is demand to better understand how various international actors and processes can lead to poor or deteriorating governance or increased fragility in particular contexts. Research could focus, for example, on the activities of international criminal networks and terrorist organisations – including money laundering and the drugs trade about which little is known. Research could also look at the international dimensions of resources scarcity/abundance and the conditions under which international competition over scarce or high-value resources creates incentives for rent seeking, corruption and violence at a national and local level.
- The transnational drivers of resilience and responsiveness: It would be equally valuable to look in more depth at how other international or transnational actors and processes can contribute to improved resilience and governance. For example, more research could be conducted on the (positive and negative) impacts of the following actors on internal events and processes in fragile and conflict-affected states: diaspora populations, global political, social and faith-based movements, transnational corporations
- The impacts of global economic change and crisis: Given the contemporary global economic crisis, it would be useful to build on existing research and deepen our understanding of how the economic, trade and related policies (e.g. migration, labour) of other countries and regions – as well as changes in international rules – impact on conflict and fragility in specific contexts. In particular research could look at the impacts of global recession, capital flight, sudden changes in commodity prices etc
- Responding to the regionalisation of conflict: There is evidence that violence in one country is more likely if there is violence or conflict in a neighbouring country. Research could deepen our understanding of the processes by which violence is regionalized for example, through examining the dynamics and impacts of the cross-border movement of arms, refugees, militias, natural resources, ideas etc. It could also further our understanding of what can be done to prevent the regionalisation of conflict, for example, through regional organizations like the Africa Union or through informal mediation initiatives.
- Exploring the linkages between global and local drivers of conflict: Research could look specifically look at the linkages between global and local dynamics and drivers of conflict and fragility. For example, recent work has demonstrated that horizontal inequalities exist internationally as well as within nation-states and may provoke a sense of grievance at a local level⁵⁰ and further work could explore the specific processes by which this might lead to violence. Equally, there are often complex and shadowy inter-linkages between, for example, local warlords, private security companies and transnational corporations. Similarly, decisions taken in one country about the location and operation of a new manufacturing or mining

⁴⁹ Recent speeches by the President of the World Bank have emphasised this point focussing on the recent spike in food and oil prices and future volatility in these commodities.

⁵⁰ See Frances Stewart Global Aspects of Horizontal Inequalities: Inequalities experienced by Muslims worldwide draft working paper 2008



operation in another country can have dramatic impacts on the dynamics of power, inequality and exclusion in the surrounding zone and thus the potential for instability. These linkages need to be better understood as well as the options for intervention by local, national and international actors in this difficult area.

(iv) Responding to structural and exogenous factors

3.29 Developing countries are vulnerable to a combination of factors that can simultaneously undermine social cohesion and state resilience whilst creating a sense of grievance, which can lead to violence and conflict. Some research and analysis⁵¹ has suggested that, in the future, developing countries will be exposed to a combination of problems with rapidly rising populations and reduced agricultural production caused by climate change leading to mass migration and increased competition for resources. If these situations are not well handled they may lead to rising tensions and conflict both locally - for example violence in urban areas - and more widespread conflict at a regional level. There is identified demand for research in these areas, but there are already a number of research programmes that look at these issues. Specific areas where further research could add value might include:

- The demographic challenge: Research might deepen our understanding of the specific ways in which various structural dynamics interact and impact on the potential for conflict and fragility at the local, national and regional level – for example demographic trends, migration rapid urbanization, un- and underemployment – and how states, local communities, regional organisations and international partners can better respond to and manage the impacts of these changes. A particular area of current interest is in the so-called “youth bulge” and how this might be a cause of fragility and conflict, but research is still fairly scattered and inconclusive and more systematic research is needed in this area.
- Local impacts of increased competition for resources: Competition for resources is likely to increase at all levels in future. There is a need to understand more about potential causes and consequences at local level especially the rising threat from urban violence caused by rapid urbanization, inward migration, lack of employment and services, and personal insecurity within cities. Equally, in rural areas, a combination of environmental degradation and natural resource depletion (often aggravated by climate change) is impacting on livelihoods and increasing competition for resources. There is a need to understand how different factors interact to increase the potential for fragility and conflict at a local level and what steps might be taken to build resilience locally and nationally.
- Regional management of scarce resources: There is also a need to consider the consequences of increased competition for shared water and natural resources at a regional level and to draw lessons from existing (formal and informal) initiatives (e.g. the Nile Basin Initiative) to attempt to resolve disputes, take joint action and manage these resources equitably and peacefully. How can external actors support such initiatives?
- Building resilience to structural and exogenous pressures: It is important to understand how the risks of fragility and conflict associated with structural and exogenous factors can be managed more effectively? What specific aspects of the resilience of states and societies are critical in determining the outcome? How can they be strengthened?

⁵¹ See for example UK Ministry of Defense DCDC Global Strategic Trends 2007-36 and recent DFID Horizon Scanning papers 2008



Theme 3: Building social cohesion and resilience to violence.

Rationale

3.30 Over the last few years, there has been increasing interest in the academic and donor communities in the relationships between social cohesion, fragility and conflict.⁵² Existing evidence demonstrates a correlation between high levels of social cohesion (measured variously in terms of levels of social inclusion and social capital), more effective governance and greater stability.⁵³ However, there is still a lack of clarity about the concept of social cohesion – which is variously defined as social capital, social inclusion or in terms of common identity or values⁵⁴ - and the precise relationships between (a lack of) social cohesion, conflict and fragility. A better understanding of these linkages is critical to efforts to support the development of states and societies that are resilient to instability and violence.

3.31 For example, in terms of the relationship between social exclusion, inequality and violence, the work of the DFID-funded research centre CRISE has established that high levels of horizontal inequality tend to lead to violence, especially if the various dimensions of inequality and exclusion (political, economic, social, cultural) reinforce one another.⁵⁵ However, less is known about how the policies or states and external actors impact positively and negatively on levels of inequality and exclusion. Similarly, although there is a relatively large literature on identity politics and on ethnic and religious conflict,⁵⁶ which looks at how the mobilisation of identities can provide a channel for the expression of a wide range of other social, political and economic grievances, there are still a number of gaps where further research and synthesis could produce new insights – especially into precisely where and how identities are used to mobilise individuals and groups to perpetrate violence and the different roles played by men and women. It is also increasingly recognised that the role of ideas, values and beliefs is extremely important, but there is little research in this area and little known about how to intervene to shape ideas, values and perceptions.

3.32 There is also a need to examine in more depth how conflict impacts on societies and communities and what specifically makes particular communities and societies more resilient to instability and violence. A historical perspective would be particularly valuable here looking across a variety of contexts. For example, a number of studies stress the negative impacts conflict can have on levels of trust and cooperation between groups,⁵⁷ but there is a need to look more comprehensively at these impacts and the implications for processes of reconciliation. Equally, much of the peace building literature stresses the importance of 'bridging social capital' to building tolerance and preventing conflict between groups and communities, but much of this knowledge has not yet impacted significantly on mainstream policies of either national governments or their international partners.

⁵² See for example Colletta, N. J. and Cullen, M. L., 2000, *The Nexus between Violent Conflict, Social Capital and Social Cohesion: Case Studies from Cambodia and Rwanda*, World Bank, Washington DC as well as the references to social cohesion in the following DFID publications: DFID (2005) *Reducing poverty by tackling social exclusion* and Smith, A. and Vauz, T. (2003) *Education, conflict and international development: Report for DFID*

⁵³ Easterly W. et al (2006) *Social Cohesion, Institutions and Growth, Centre for Governance and Development*

⁵⁴ Beauvais, C., and Jenson, J., 2002, *Social Cohesion: Updating the State of Research*, Canadian Policy Research Network, Ottawa

⁵⁵ Stewart, F. (2008) *Horizontal Inequalities and Conflict: Understanding Group Violence in Multiethnic Societies*, Palgrave Macmillan

⁵⁶ See for example, Sen, A. (2006) *Identity and Violence: The illusion of destiny*; Turton, D. (1997) *War and Ethnicity*; Van Hoyweghen, S. and Vlassenroot, K., (2000) 'Ethnic Ideology and Conflict in SSA. The Culture Clash Revisited', in *Politics of Identity and Economics of Conflict in the Great Lakes Region*, eds R. Doom and J. Gorus, VUB Press, Brussels; Eller, J.D. (1999) *From Culture to Ethnicity to Conflict: An Anthropological Perspective on International Ethnic Conflict*; Austin, A., M. Fischer and N. Ropers (eds)(2004)*Transforming Ethnopolitical Conflict: The Berghof Handbook*.

⁵⁷ See, for example, Colletta, N.J. and Cullen, M.L. (2000) *Violent Conflict and the Transformation of Social Capital: Lessons from Cambodia, Rwanda, Guatemala and Somalia*, World Bank, Washington D.C. p.3.



Theme 3: Possible research questions

- *What are the precise relationships between (a lack of) social cohesion, fragility and conflict? Is there strong evidence that cohesive societies and communities are more resilient to conflict and instability? What are the specific characteristics that make them so?*
- *How are levels of inequality and exclusion at a local level affected by wider national and global factors and policies? Which policies are most effective at tackling inequalities and exclusion?*
- *What are the roles of identity (e.g. ethnic, religious, gender) and ideology in producing or preventing violence and how can violent mobilisation on the basis of these factors be prevented?*
- *What are the proximate (as opposed to structural) factors that lead to the involvement of individuals and groups in violence and how can these be addressed?*
- *How can societies and communities be supported to become more resilient to violence, instability and attempts at violent mobilisation? What is the role of different types of social capital in preventing conflict and fostering peace and reconciliation?*

Areas where research could focus

(i) The links between social cohesion, conflict and fragility

3.33 Existing evidence demonstrates a correlation between high levels of social cohesion (measured variously in terms of levels of social inclusion and social capital), more effective governance and greater stability. However, there is a need for further work to unpack the concept of social cohesion and to examine whether there are casual links in either direction between a lack of social cohesion and fragility and a lack of social cohesion and conflict. Specific areas for research include:

- Unpacking the concept of social cohesion: There is no one agreed definition of social cohesion and it would be helpful for research to unpack and clarify this concept in terms of aspects such as social inclusion, identity, values and belonging and social capital.
- Examining the causal relationships between (a lack of) social cohesion, fragility and conflict: Once the concept of social cohesion it would be useful to re-examine existing research findings and synthesise what is known about the causal relationships between (a lack of) social cohesion, conflict and fragility. Where required, new primary research could also be conducted to examine these interlinkages.

(ii) Breaking the links between inequality, exclusion and violence.

3.34 Further research could build on the work of CRISE in a number of specific areas:

- The global and national drivers of inequalities at a local level: Research could deepen our understanding of how levels of inequality and exclusion at a local level are affected by national, regional and global economic, trade and related policies (e.g. migration, labour market policies) as well as international competition over access to scarce and high-value resources.
- The relationships between political systems, inequality, exclusion and violence: Research could look across a range of different countries with different political systems and institutions and examine whether particular types of political systems increase or reduce horizontal inequalities and exclusion. It could also look at the characteristics of states that prevent violence erupting even in the presence of large horizontal inequalities and the consequences



of this for longer terms peace and stability.

- How does violent conflict affect inequalities and exclusion? Although we know that violence is transformative and can further embed existing divisions or create new divisions, further research could look specifically at how violence affects levels of exclusion of particular groups and levels of inequality between groups. This could include looking at different ethnic and religious groups, but also at men and women, different regions and occupational groups. It could also look at the implications of the findings for interventions to resolve the conflict and build peace.
- Interventions to reduce horizontal inequalities: Building on preliminary work by CRISE, further research could look at what specific national and international policies would reduce horizontal inequalities and their potential to exacerbate conflict and fragility.

(iii) Violent mobilisation: Identity, ideology and violence

3.35 There are still a number of gaps in this area where further research and synthesis could produce new insights:

- The mobilisation of groups on the basis of ethnic or religious differences: A mixture of synthesis of existing research and new research could deepen our understanding of the specific ways in which identities are constructed and utilised as a basis for mobilisation into violence. Is there something about the way these identities develop that makes them vulnerable to co-option by violent groups? Are there differences between the mobilisation of groups on the basis of religious or ethnic differences? What are the similarities in the drivers of violent mobilisation across different contexts (e.g. Islamic/non-Islamic, North/South)? What lessons that can be learnt for policy and practice.
- The role of ideas, ideology and values in processes of violent mobilisation: DFID and others have only recently begun to acknowledge the power of ideas, values, beliefs and perceptions in informing people's politics, actions and modes of expression and impacting on the pace and direction of processes of economic, social and political change, but recognise that their existing knowledge base is very low.⁵⁸ Research in this area could usefully examine in more depth the role of ideas, ideology, cultural and religious values and beliefs in processes of violent mobilisation; the links with perceived or real grievances of groups within society; and the links to means to perpetrate violence (i.e. supply networks, material support and weapons). It could also draw out the implications for policy and practice at local, national and international levels?
- The inter-generational transmission of conflict: Recent research examines the intergenerational transmission of conflict and situations where young people grow up experiencing nothing other than multiple exclusion from society, the economy and political life, often combined with everyday violence and insecurity.⁵⁹ Research could useful look more closely at these issues, examining the role of education and socialisation in increasing or decreasing the likelihood of people becoming engaged in violence and the ways in which (non)violence is transmitted from one generation to another. What does this imply for policy interventions?
- Gender differences in the motives for and experiences of violence: Existing research suggests that men and women engage in and are impacted by violent conflict in very different ways,⁶⁰ but more work is needed in a number of areas e.g. How do gender inequalities shape the potential form nature of and consequences of violent conflict? What makes young men particularly susceptible to recruitment into violence in different contexts? Where, when and why do women become perpetrators or facilitators of violence vs peacemakers? What does

⁵⁸ DFID Strategy Unit (FCPD) *The Long Term Context for Development: Detailed analyses*, Internal Document: December 2007

⁵⁹ Joy Moncrieffe (Forthcoming 2008), (ed) 'Intergenerational Transmissions', IDS Bulletin 40.1.

⁶⁰ El Jack, A. (2003) *Gender and Armed Conflict* BRIDGE



this imply for policy interventions to tackle violent mobilisation and deal with the consequences of violent conflict?

- Managing identity politics to promote responsive governance and stability. Existing research demonstrates that identity politics need not necessarily be violent and that identities can provide an important basis for claims, forms of empowerment and supporting the development of citizenship.⁶¹ Research could usefully draw together lessons from different contexts on the conditions under which politics become driven by identity and political extremism emerges vs where and how identity politics can be a force for improving the accountability and responsiveness of governments and promoting peace and stability. What specific institutions and actions can support the peaceful management of differences in this way?

(iv) Social capital and resilience to violence

3.36 Much of the literature on conflict transformation and peace building emphasises the transformative nature of violence, its impacts on social and political institutions, and the importance of building social capital across communities as a means to prevent violence.⁶² However, much of this work has yet to influence mainstream policy processes and inform the actions of state and external partners in fragile and conflict-affected states. There are a number of specific areas where synthesis and further research could be valuable:

- The transformative dynamics of violence and conflict. Research could provide evidence on how social, economic and political ties are forged, maintained and broken between individuals, groups and the state during times of violence. How are local and national social and political structures and institutions transformed by violence itself? What opportunities does violence create with respect to control over power, resources and territory? How do people survive and find new sources of livelihood and security during violent conflict? What are the implications for post-conflict policymaking?
- What makes societies and communities more or less resilient in the face of instability, conflict and insurgency? Building on existing research, work in this area could look at whether there are particular forms of local political and social organization that make societies and communities more resilient to violence. It could also synthesise what is known about the role of different forms of social capital in increasing or decreasing the likelihood of violence and fostering peace and reconciliation. In particular, research could generate empirical evidence on the most effective forms of 'bridging social capital', which can build and reinforce positive social bonds and relationships, levels of trust, tolerance and cooperation between groups and communities. It could also look at different mechanisms for engagement, negotiation and mediation between different groups or the building of mutual trust and tolerance.
- Building resilience to violence: Research could examine in more depth how different societies and communities can be supported to be more resilient to violent conflict and attempts at violent mobilisation. It could also look specifically at post-conflict policies of reconstruction and reconciliation and explore to what extent they are really addressing underlying problems at a local level. It could examine the different roles that might be played by the state, civil society actors, the private sector and international partners in building resilience.

Modalities of the programme

3.37 As highlighted by DFID's recent research strategy and many people consulted during this scoping study, the delivery of high quality, relevant research that has an impact on policy and

⁶¹ Luckham, R, et al (2006) "Understanding the Routes In and Out of Political Violence: An Assessment of the Linkages between Identity Politics, Exclusion, Inequality and Political Violence in EMAD Countries", Report prepared for the Department of International Development, London

⁶² See for example, Nelson, B.J, L. Kaboolian, and K.A. Carver (2003). *The Concord Handbook: How to Build Social Capital Across Communities*. Los Angeles: UCLA; and Lederach, John Paul (1997). *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*. Washington, DC: USIP.



practice also depends on how research is managed, conducted and communicated. In this respect, annex F makes a number of observations and recommendations.

