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development research centre



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CRISIS STATES: SOUTH AFRICA IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

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Crisis States Programme

Crisis States: South Africa in Southern Africa

Since the collapse of apartheid in 1994, South Africa has boasted an impeccably democratic constitution that confers a series of liberties, rights and opportunities on all its citizens and promises to restore a measure of social order and quality of life denied by the previous regime. Nevertheless, as with other countries in the Southern African region, the threats to political, social and economic stability in post-apartheid South Africa remain serious. These include a region awash with small arms, continued national commitment to extensive military expenditure, deepening unemployment, poverty and inequality, and the scourge of HIV/AIDS. All these factors have profound implications for patterns of social and political organisation and the sustainability of nascent and often fragile institutions.

The political and economic structures of the Southern African region stem from its colonial legacy and the ways in which post-colonial states in Southern Africa have been incorporated into the global political economy. Any attempt to grasp the challenges confronting the contemporary states of Southern Africa must depend on our ability to understand the implications of this historical legacy, alongside the impact of the more recent wars of independence and civil wars in the region and the destabilising nature of current policy trends. The linked set of research projects that form the Southern African programme, together draw links between this history and the structure of contemporary institutional arrangements that govern the distribution of political and economic power and social cohesion. The research also explores the development and interrelationship of institutions operative at different levels – local, national, regional and international – and their impact on crisis, breakdown and recovery in ‘fragile’ political economies.

One of the questions addressed in the overall DRC proposal is: what kinds of conflict spring out of different institutional contexts? Because the Southern African work is able to engage in a retrospective analysis, the research also reverses the question by asking what kinds of institutions emerge out of different kinds of conflict? The underlying proposition that informs the Southern African research programme is as follows:

The involvement of erstwhile enemies in inclusive or co-operative institutional arrangements serves to manage conflict and promote social cohesion but undermines more fundamental social and institutional transformation.

The starting point for the research programme lies in a concern to understand constellations of power at local, national, regional and global levels and how they drive or obstruct processes of institutional change and reconstruction. With this in mind we explore institutional change in Southern Africa along a number of often intersecting axes.

The first set of projects within the programme of Southern African research will focus on understanding the political, economic and social impact of the region’s changing position in the global economy. Comparative research will examine the relationship between the structural crisis now being confronted and the nature and effects of the economic policy regimes which have been used to guide developmental strategies over the past decade. The assumption on which this part of the research is based is that levels of performance are more

directly associated with the adequacy of state, economic and social institutions in any society than with the nature of the policy regime *per se*.

Second, South Africa's recent efforts to promote national reconciliation, reconstruction and development will be examined alongside its ambiguous relationship with the Southern African region. The Southern African Development Community (SADC) was initially forged to provide protection for weaker Southern African states against the apartheid regime. It now includes its erstwhile belligerent neighbour which, while economically dominant, shares many challenges with other Southern African countries. These include the entrenchment of democracy and the management of conflict in a context where there appears to be an emerging regional arms race, a growing fragility of political institutions at national and local level, and disturbing levels of local violence and crime. In drawing comparisons between the reconstruction efforts being made in South Africa and those made elsewhere in the Southern African region, the neatly dichotomised view of economic growth and prosperity in South Africa and stagnation and poverty elsewhere in the region will be questioned. It is also intended that research at the regional level will address a third area of enquiry. This concerns the political, economic and social implications of demobilisation and demilitarisation at the national level, in the context of an emerging regional arms race. This focus will relate to other research being undertaken in the DRC, such as the projects on demobilisation in East Africa being undertaken by Suzette Heald and Tim Allen and on demilitarisation by Jenny Kuper.

A third focus begins at the local level and will explore not only the impact of national, regional and international processes on social change on the ground but also how they intersect with and are influenced by the functioning of formal and informal institutions at the local level. When official agencies and formal mechanisms fail in their duties or harm socially disadvantaged people, the latter can retreat into known and trusted informal institutions such as kinship networks or ethnically based patron-client relationships. This element of the research is informed by the premise that the ability of low-income and vulnerable people to secure their well being is shaped by the formal and informal institutional arrangements that structure their access to employment, productive assets, social services, markets, personal security, social support and political participation. The premise on which this aspect of the research is based is that in the context of crisis states, formal and informal institutional factors may induce, compound or act as a buffer against risk. They are in turn seen to be a crucial determinant in the expansion or contraction of livelihood opportunities, local level public action and ways in which the policy-making process can be made more accountable. This aspect of the research questions the neatly dichotomised view of peaceful democratic transition in South Africa and a descent into civil war, kleptocracy and clientalism in countries to its north. It also links into work on political and criminal violence being undertaken in the context of work at the local level in Colombia and India.

The Research Agenda for The Southern African Programme

Projects in the International to National and Local Research Programme

1. Industrial Restructuring and Crisis in Southern Africa: Issues, Objectives and Projects in the SWOP-DESTIN Research Programme

The Crisis States Agenda

The Crisis States project at LSE is an international comparative programme concerned to investigate and explain the problems of crisis and breakdown that now afflict so many LDCs. Our primary focus is on political processes and outcomes – on the processes and practices that are leading in many places to systemic breakdown and violence, and in others reversing that process and producing new structures which are better able to mediate inter-group conflict and create a stable basis for social and economic reconstruction.

However, we define ‘the political’ broadly, to take account of the processes through which conflicting interests are negotiated, compromised, or forcibly restructured in all arenas – in the state, the economy and civil society – and at all levels – global, national and local. This implies an interdisciplinary research agenda designed to produce synthetic explanations, which take account of the full range of factors that are producing or overcoming breakdown.

This work is being carried out in a wide variety of contexts, but the primary objective of the DRC/SWOP project is to consider the structural implications of policies informed by liberalisation and globalisation as a basis for industrial restructuring in the Southern African region. Our concern here is not with technical economic issues, but with the implications of these policy changes for levels of employment and unemployment (and therefore of well-being or poverty and marginalisation) on the one hand; and of industrial and/or political conflict and compromise on the other.

The new policy agenda has displaced many critical controls from states to markets, and from national authorities upwards to global agencies, and downwards to formal and informal local ones. This has removed many restrictive constraints on social and economic freedom, and created new opportunities for some, but also increased risk, uncertainty, and inequality for many others. The widespread failures associated with recent policy shifts in the region have in many contexts, manifested themselves in economic dislocation, social exclusion and marginalisation, high levels of criminal violence and, in Zimbabwe, even in political violence. These outcomes not only challenge the moral claims of the neo-liberal agenda but pose an even greater threat to the long term stability of its economic and political order.

We will therefore conduct this study by treating the basic claim of liberalisation policy as a central hypothesis, and subjecting it to a critical review through a systematic analysis of the policy agenda itself, and how its effects are operationalised in a number of key industrial sectors, and in studies of the way in which individuals excluded from formal sector employment are able to manage their livelihood and survival strategies in informal sector activities.

The liberal policy agenda claims that subjecting local industries to higher levels of national, regional and global competition will increase growth, equity and political freedom by offering producers greater international opportunities and forcing them to

become more efficient. We examine the extent to which this strategy has been effectively implemented in different countries in the region, and evaluate its effects by conducting rigorous empirical studies of a range of important industries in Southern Africa.

Here a number of countries operate at very different levels of development, are tied into many regional agreements and networks, and are all implementing the same broad policy agenda. Studying its effects here will allow us to test the theoretical claims on which the policy rests, and also to offer practical solutions to those attempting to confront the poverty, polarisation and breakdown that still dominate the region.

While our analysis will focus on the hypothesis stated positively, we also recognise a strong possibility that it could well be falsified through the operation of a number of factors – the inability of weak local states to implement the necessary policy changes effectively; the inability of domestic industry in South Africa, and especially in the weaker countries in the region, to compete effectively on global markets; the inability to manage the major restructuring in levels of employment, labour relations, downsizing, and intensification of work brought on by these changes without increased work-place and political conflict. Should these assumptions prove to be well founded our research will have important policy implications for the various governments in the region.

2. Economic Restructuring, Unemployment and Political Conflict in Southern Africa

The neo-liberal agenda has imposed a process of radical economic restructuring on all economic activities in the region. The reduction in controls and subsidies and the intensification of domestic and international competition has meant serious losses for some groups, and new opportunities for others. Liberals assume that the losses will be temporary and than compensated for by long term gains. The evidence suggests that the gains are, as yet, confined to privileged minorities, while losses are widespread, ongoing and generating political and social instabilities that now threaten the long-term viability of the programme. We will critically examine the implications of both of these tendencies.

We will do this in four ways:

First, we will look in general terms at the macro level policy debate, by examining the claims made on its behalf, how it is operationalised in key countries (South Africa, Zimbabwe and Zambia), how it has changed over the decade, and, perhaps most important of all, the extent to which it has actually been implemented in practice. This work will relate directly to a similar exercise carried out by Robert Wade on similar issues at the global level.

Second, we will examine the effects of the new regime on formal sector employment in the region, and on the management of conflicting demands between the key stakeholders – capital, labour, government, and the social groups which depend directly and indirectly on the backward and forward linkages generated by these enterprises. The project will focus on autos, household appliances and large-scale retail trade, working in Zambia, Zimbabwe, and Mozambique.

Third, we will examine the implications of casualisation, outsourcing and informalisation that are rapidly reducing the number, security and quality of formal sector jobs. This is creating new kinds of enterprise that provide the only hope for the newly unemployed, but also for hundreds of thousands of new entrants to the labour market from the whole region and much further afield. At the moment we are suggesting one study of the activities of small informal

sector trainers. Here we will in particular look at what happens to casualised or excluded workers and suppliers (particularly by looking at the impact of South African retail investments in Zimbabwe and/or Zambia), and at the way in which migrant workers are finding ways of making a living in informal trading systems in South Africa. This will be done through a micro-study of Zimbabwean and Zambian informal cross-border traders.

Fourth, we will examine how these restructuring processes are affecting the political structures and processes through which conflicts of interest between trade unions, management, the unemployed, and government are mediated. Political transition in South Africa has had a major impact on the relationships between the ANC and the Unions, and liberalisation has had a similar impact on those between capital, labour, and the semi- and unemployed. Understanding the dynamics of these changes are clearly critical to the long term viability of the South African policy regime, and of equally fundamental importance to the region in which it occupies such a hegemonic position. This component of the research will involve analysis of the relations and processes of negotiation that have occurred between trade unions and private sector enterprises and public sector organisations in South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Each of these studies will be carried out as an autonomous exercise, but will be drawn together in an analysis that provides a holistic understanding of the political processes and practices that are leading to or mediating systemic breakdown or reconstruction.

Projects in the Local to National Research Programme

3. WISER Project on Anti-Apartheid Youth Activists in the 'new' South Africa: A Case Study in the Practice of Everyday Life in Soweto

During the mid-1980s, the Congress of South African Students (COSAS) was one of a number of social movements at the forefront of anti-apartheid struggles. With particularly assertive support in Soweto schools, COSAS played a leading role in strategies of making black townships 'ungovernable'. Many of these so-called 'Young Lions' enjoyed considerable power and status among their peers and communities, constituting an unusually powerful political cohort, with close links to ANC thinking and organisation. Yet for most of the COSAS activists, their political commitments also exacted a high price: endangering their personal safety, seriously disrupting their schooling and generating familial and social conflict, leading many social and political commentators to mourn this cohort of township youth as a 'lost generation'. There are warnings of the difficulties of re-integrating them into stable personal, communal and institutional networks, although little is known of the fate of such youth activists now that the apartheid system has been demolished, or of those who avoided political involvement and completed their schooling.

One of the striking features of the 'new' South Africa has been the demobilisation of social movements, particularly those dominated by youth coupled with a disturbing trend towards political disengagement and non-participation. At the very moment of democratisation, the political energies required to sustain active democratic politics seem to be dwindling. This study is animated by an interest in examining the life strategies, identities and modes of consciousness in the aftermath of 'the struggle' both of the COSAS 'comrades' and those who were ostensibly apolitical.

The WISER project will test whether, in the post-apartheid period, the absence of a common enemy (in this case apartheid institutions) has led directly to the demobilisation of once militant youth activists. It will further test the extent to which the disruption of formal schooling in the case of COSAS youth activists (as compared to the cohort of Soweto youth who actively disdained political involvement) has affected their degree of social integration and economic opportunity in the post-1994 period..

Specific issues include: a) demobilisation and the atrophy of political activism; b) memory and myth-making in the representation of ‘the struggle’ and their bearing on national identity; c) the social residues of cultures of violence; d) criminality and how it has been shaped by the normalisation of crime during the anti-apartheid struggle; e) how ‘comrades’ make sense of the ubiquity of HIV/AIDS in a context of official denial; f) how the danger and mistrust associated with ‘the struggle’ have impacted on contemporary notions of risk, community and culture. Related research questions include: How do these different but related groups explain and interpret the manner of South Africa’s transition, their role in it and its effects on their lives? How do they perceive, and participate in, the new social order? What economic opportunities have they enjoyed and how have they responded? What are their interests, values and aspirations for the future? What do their histories reveal about the fate of social movements in post-apartheid South Africa, and the notions of citizenship and political participation?

The geographical location of the research is Soweto, the most differentiated and sophisticated black ‘township’ in Greater Johannesburg and one with a long history of social and political organisation. The research will pivot around the life stories which people tell and their perspectives on the experience of the 1980s and 1990s, the effect of political commitment or avoidance on other aspects of their lives, as well as their subsequent survival and progress. By generating a sophisticated understanding of the livelihood strategies of young people disadvantaged by a poor education (also disrupted by social conflict and political violence) and in many instances fractured families and sparse economic opportunities, this project bears directly on questions about poverty, human development and the rights of children and youth. The principal researcher on this project will be a scholar who was an activist in Soweto during the 1980s and will be both reflexive and ethnographic. It will form an important part of a broader WISER focus on everyday life in post-apartheid South Africa; a world marked both by opportunity and insecurity, moral renewal and menace, as well as new cultural norms and identities.

4. DESTIN Project on Conflict, Reconciliation and Reconstruction in KwaZulu-Natal: Local Level Experiences and Responses

This research project seeks to understand the social experience of local level institution building in the context of reconstruction and development in post-apartheid South Africa. Local level responses to post-apartheid conflict management will be explored both in terms of the maintenance and reconstruction of individual and household livelihoods and social networks and their intersection with public action and the reconfiguration of the local state following the post-apartheid transition. We will examine these processes in both urban and rural areas, building on ethnographic and qualitative research work already conducted in rural North West Province and urban Johannesburg and conducting new fieldwork in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) where rural-urban linkages remain particularly strong. One of the poorest and most differentiated areas in post-apartheid South Africa, KZN is also a region that appears to have transformed itself from the epicentre of violent conflict and civic breakdown during the twilight years of apartheid to one where accord and coexistence seem to have been forged.

Nevertheless, in a province where black, white and Indian South Africans live cheek-by-jowl across urban and rural areas and where political supremacy cannot be guaranteed for either the African National Congress (ANC) or the predominantly Zulu-speaking Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) local government is contested particularly fiercely. Local level public action in KZN also occurs in a context where there has been a tradition of militant trade unions and where business has always taken a close interest in local political processes and outcomes. Moreover, until quite recently it was widely assumed that the transition in South Africa would see the power of the chiefs replaced by that of democratically elected local government institutions. It is now clear that political settlement at the national and provincial levels was built on the assured continuation of strong 'traditional' authorities in rural areas and their involvement even in some urban areas. Against this background, a central focus of the research will be on how changing institutions at the local level intersect with the politics of resource access, property rights and household livelihood strategies.

In the context of political transition in South Africa, the tensions will be explored between institutional processes that are furthering the redistribution of resources and the development of accountable and inclusive political structures and those that are seeking to halt or mediate these institutional processes. In doing so the research will consider the extent to which the dichotomy between urban 'citizen' and rural 'subject' pertains in South Africa, particularly at the level of local government. It will test the validity of a claimed bifurcation between urban political systems where people are treated as citizens of a modern polity and rural areas where they are constructed as subjects of 'traditional authorities' in terms of the following hypothesis:

Recent changes in labour, land and commodity markets and in government structures in South Africa have strengthened rather than weakened the institutions linking livelihood strategies, public action and local politics across the rural-urban divide.

In addressing this proposition, the research will identify how informal institutions intersect 'upwards' with formal organisations, such as national and local political structures, commodity and labour markets and development agencies, and 'downwards' with social relations within households and communities. With regard to the latter, a second crucial focus of the research focus will be the ways in which ordinary people in KZN, Johannesburg and North West Province have put the past behind them, built peace and reconstructed their lives and livelihoods. In other words, the research will illuminate the informal social and political institutions that are being built, nurtured or undermined alongside or within formal institutions, at a time of economic stress, political transition and on-going conflict management.

Projects in the National to Regional Research Programme

5. Witwatersrand Sociology Department and DESTIN Project on Demilitarisation, Demobilisation, Reconciliation and Reconstruction in South Africa

During the late 1970s and 1980s South Africa became a highly militarised society, marked by the mobilisation of resources for domestic and regional war. The power of the apartheid military was such that the South African Defence force (SADF) was positioned at the centre of state decision-making, penetrating deeply into many aspects of social life and supported by

soaring defence expenditure. The post-apartheid armed forces, the South African National Defence Forces (SANDF) continue to wield considerable political, economic and ideological power. South African foreign policy has shifted from the destabilisation of neighbouring countries under apartheid to an emphasis on regional cooperation, accompanied by closure of military bases, a reduction in defence expenditure, the abolition of conscription and a downsizing of the military. However, this has been an uneven and incomplete process with contradictory consequences. Moreover, despite budget cuts amounting to more than 50% between 1989 and 1998, South Africa is still Africa's largest military spender in absolute terms and accounts for nearly 70 per cent of Southern Africa's military spending.

The research will build on work already undertaken on demilitarisation in Southern Africa as a social and political process and on the social imperatives of reconciliation, reconstruction and development. With no evident initiatives to take this work forward, the proposed research aims to chart the considerable changes going on in the region and to extend analysis into policy implications. The research will consider the South African rearmament programme and the emerging arms race throughout the Southern African region. It will review the forthcoming Basson Trial, the last great apartheid trial in South Africa, which will conclude the investigations into 'dirty tricks' and chemical and biological warfare begun during the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa. Lastly, it will focus on the social challenges posed by the reintegration of ex-combatants into social and economic life. It will not draw extensively on ESCOR funding for the Crisis States DRC but will seek additional funding to pursue the themes of a) the formation of new and democratically accountable national defence forces where the transition to independence has involved attempts to merge government and guerrilla armies; b) demobilisation and the challenges posed in terms of social and economic opportunities as and safety and security; c) disarmament, both formal in relation to the restructuring of the arms industry and informal, in relation to the fact that the region is awash with small arms; d) institutions for peace building and the management of conflict in the region; and e) the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, both as a national exercise in catharsis and as a powerful instrument of historical construction and memory, as well as one which might hold lessons for other contexts.

The Capacity Building Agenda for The Southern African Programme

The MA in Development Studies at Witwatersrand University

Witwatersrand University is offering a Masters degree in Development Studies for the first time this year. The Crisis States Programme at the LSE has agreed to provide it with financial assistance to support course and staff development as part of its contribution to capacity building in the region. We made this commitment for two reasons – first because the general orientation and objectives of the MA are almost identical to our own; and second because we feel that producing a well educated cadre of professionals to work in development agencies in the Southern African region is of crucial importance in dealing with the problems of crisis and breakdown that concern us. Our own programme at the LSE is enormously costly, and, has been unable to attract more than a handful of students from Africa, the continent in which these problems exist in the most extreme form. The Wits MA is a far more affordable, targeted at students from the Southern African region, and backed by the intellectual and financial resources of one of the leading academic institutions in Africa.

In our view supporting it will make an important contribution to strengthening the capacity of development agencies – public, private and NGOs, to respond effectively to the problems of

economic, health, and social breakdown that now threaten the long term viability of not only the weaker countries in the region, but also of the majority of the population of South Africa itself. All of the countries in the region are having to respond to crises of governance, economic restructuring, HIV/AIDs, social dislocation and crime. Most of the Universities in the region have been seriously undermined by a major crisis of state funding and management, and cannot deliver the high quality post-graduate training that is increasing seen as a pre-requisite for the professionals who are making the critical decisions which determine the success or failure of all attempts to overcome these problems. Although historically relatively well endowed this is changing and moreover, South African universities were severely disadvantaged by the cultural and academic boycott during the 1980s and 1990s. As a result, until recently there were no significant up-to-date development studies courses at all.

The objective of the MA is to provide a high level course in development studies targeted at outstanding students, often with some professional experience. The current intake of students are all from disadvantaged backgrounds, some with professional experience, others not. The course is designed to expose them to the current debates on development policy and management theory in order to equip them to take the high level decisions expected of those making macro-policy decisions in important organisations. The Development Studies course at the LSE has been doing this for the past ten years, and it is clear from the great success of our Alumni in the field, and from our high application rates, that this approach does provide students with a professionally relevant set of skills. The skills created in this way are generic – they improve the capacity to make informed judgements, research problems, develop programmes and manage projects.

However students at Wits, as at the LSE, also have access to more than fifty optional Masters courses in the School of Social Science and of Public Development and Management which enable them to specialise in specific policy areas – health, education, migration, international trade, industrial relations etc. I doubt whether any other University in the region can offer a range of comparable extent and quality. These options also include courses dealing directly with key issues being confronted in the Crisis States programme – population displacement, sociology and history of HIV/AIDS, the operation of the global trade organisations, problems of industrial restructuring, labour relations and unemployment, and problems of informal settlement, poverty, basic needs and gender.

The programme also has a strong research orientation, with the dissertation counting 50% of the final mark. At the LSE students are obliged to do library-based dissertations, but here they will be able to do research based on directly relevant fieldwork. The programme plans to assist students in doing research that is directly relevant to the needs and problems of organisations that are attempting to deal with problems of poverty and social breakdown. We are also discussing the possibility of incorporating a group consultancy component into the programme, equivalent to that offered in the MSc in Development Management at the LSE. The outcome of student research could form a basis for local policy-oriented workshops incorporating practitioners. Wits also offers a funded Internship Programme for its post-graduate students which will enable them to gain relevant practical experience.

This all suggests that the new MA could, with effective direction, publicity and financial support, make a powerful contribution to improving the management of poverty and crisis reduction programmes in the region. However, Wits, like all of the other South Africa Universities, is having to deal with its own budgetary crisis. It has had to make painful cuts

over the past five years in response to declining state support. The new MA is being introduced without any increase in staffing, and therefore depends on the willingness of faculty to take on additional workloads without any increase in payment or reduction in existing commitments. It also involves the development of new courses that in some cases will impose major new intellectual demands on the teachers who will be offering them. Once the MA is able to attract an adequate intake it will be possible to persuade the University to make adequate provision to cover these costs. However, at present its long-term viability is threatened by a short term funding gap which our support is designed to overcome.

Our support, therefore, is designed to deal with this problem by providing resources to fund additional teaching costs, travel to the LSE by faculty who will take on a central role in the development of the core courses, field work costs for students working on their dissertations, and workshops and the publication of working papers coming out of their research. Dr. Brett will also provide direct teaching support and academic mentoring while in South Africa, with further inputs from other DESTIN staff, in the expectation that local staff will be fully equipped to take over from them by the end of the DRC programme. They will also be able to provide students with additional research supervision, and expect that many of them will be undertaking work directly relevant to the Crisis State's own research programme in Southern Africa.

Support to PhD Candidates in Sociology at University of the Witwatersrand

Support for two PhD candidates is included as part of the capacity dimension of the collaborative programme with University of the Witwatersrand. In both cases candidates will be part of DRC research teams and will be jointly supervised by academic staff from Wits and LSE. The rationale for this element of the capacity building programme is based on a recognition that although the number of black students from South Africa and the region has increased substantially since 1994, the complexion of the staff has changed much more slowly. The legacy of apartheid inequities means that the over 3,000 full-time staff members at Wits remain overwhelmingly white. With this in mind this component of the LSE-Wits link seeks to support the development of young black academics and researchers. The link will directly support two full-time doctoral fellowships at Wits, one in the Sociology of Work Unit (SWOP) located in located in the Department of Sociology and the other in the Wits Institute for Social and Economic Research (WISER). Both candidates will benefit from supervisory support from senior staff at DESTIN/LSE as well as at Wits, and as part of the capacity building component of the collaboration, new and more junior staff will receive training and mentoring in the supervision of doctoral research.

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The aim of the Crisis States Programme (CSP) at DESTIN's Development Research Centre is to provide new understanding of the causes of crisis and breakdown in the developing world and the processes of avoiding or overcoming them. We want to know why some political systems and communities, in what can be called the "fragile states" found in many of the poor and middle income countries, have broken down even to the point of violent conflict while others have not. Our work asks whether processes of globalisation have precipitated or helped to avoid crisis and social breakdown.

Crisis States Programme collaborators

In India:

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In South Africa:

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In Colombia:

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Research Objectives

- We will assess how constellations of power at local, national and global levels drive processes of institutional change, collapse and reconstruction and in doing so will challenge simplistic paradigms about the beneficial effects of economic and political liberalisation.
- We will examine the effects of international interventions promoting democratic reform, human rights and market competition on the 'conflict management capacity' and production and distributional systems of existing polities.
- We will analyse how communities have responded to crisis, and the incentives and moral frameworks that have led either toward violent or non-violent outcomes.
- We will examine what kinds of formal and informal institutional arrangements poor communities have constructed to deal with economic survival and local order.



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