



Program on States and Security

Post-Conflict State Building: The Academic Research

Friday 4 November 2005
The Graduate Center, CUNY

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MEMOS

Ana Arjona*

Ongoing Research:

Different phenomena that demand attention in post-conflict situations—such as reintegration of demobilized combatants, re-building of institutions, recovery of social mechanisms of control, preventing post-war youth violence, and creating order—require a better understanding of the local dynamics of conflict: How do armed groups behave towards civilians in the areas where they are present? How do civilians behave within a state of conflict? What are the prospects for demobilized combatants who go back to the localities in which they fought? Understanding how different dimensions of life changes during war seems to be a required step towards an assessment of the challenges and opportunities that post-conflict zones face.

Within an attempt to move in this direction, my current research revolves around three goals. First, to provide a better understanding of civilian behavior in localities where armed groups are present within a context of violent conflict. Second, to understand the decision of civilians to enlist in armed groups. And third, to study the determinants of the decision of combatants to demobilize and the prospects for reintegration. In order to collect micro-level evidence that allows to test hypotheses on these three research questions, I have been working since 2004 on a survey with demobilized Colombian ex-combatants within a collaborative work with Professor Stathis Kalyvas. In 2004 we conducted a pilot survey which allowed us to test the questionnaire and assess the feasibility of the project. In 2005 we conducted about 830 interviews with both voluntarily and collectively demobilized guerrilla and paramilitary combatants. Although so far I have only started to analyze the responses of voluntarily demobilized combatants, some preliminary results do have important implications. According to these results the following hypotheses I have worked on at the theoretical level seem to have empirical support:

Recruitment

- The motivations for enlisting in an armed group are heterogeneous (which means that dichotomies such as ‘greed or grievance’ do not allow us to explain recruitment). Ideology and material interest cannot explain why many civilians choose to join an armed group.
- The decision to enlist in an armed group is often endogenous to the war. Thus, instead of being an outcome of pre-war cleavages or structural conditions it is often the result of the dynamics of war.

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- Those who enlist in armed groups come from localities that have been highly victimized.

Local dynamics of civil war

- Armed groups relate towards civilians in a variety of ways, and these behaviors trigger mechanisms that affect civilian behavior towards both armed groups and other civilians.
- Civilian collaboration with armed groups does not stem from coercion or sympathy *alone*; it is rather the outcome of different motivations and beliefs which are often endogenous to the local dynamics of war.
- Preferences towards armed groups among civilians vary both across and within localities. The content of these preferences is an outcome of factors both endogenous and exogenous to the war, although the former seems to play a greater role.

Demobilization and Reintegration

- The decision to demobilize is, as the decision to enlist in the first place, more complex than what is usually assumed. Combatants more often than not demobilize with motivations different from material gain. Being with one's family, getting away from the conflict, and having a better life are ex-combatants' most commonly given reasons for demobilizing.
- Local dynamics of war provide both challenges and opportunities for reintegration of ex-combatants. For example, while about 80% of interviewed Colombian ex-combatants fear they would have problems if they return to their localities, figures like priests and local leaders seem to still have authority in many regions, which provide an opportunity for fostering peaceful mechanisms for conflict resolution.

Some interesting findings from the Colombian case:

- More than 40% of combatants joined armed groups between ages 8 and 17 and more than 80% joined at age below 25.
- About 80% of combatants come from rural areas. Guerrillas seem to have a more rural base than paramilitaries and consistently the former usually have a lower level of education. However, most ex-combatants of both sides did not complete secondary education and between 40% and 60% did not even start middle school.
- About 50% of voluntarily demobilized combatants had unsuccessfully tried to leave the group in which they fought before.

Creation of a network of scholars:

A network of scholars working on post-conflict reconstruction could benefit the actual quality of research by exchanging theoretical work and empirical findings as well as by facilitating access to new empirical evidence gathered by both researchers and organizations such as NGOs. Facilitating communication between such a group of scholars and policy makers could benefit both the work of those conducting research (by facilitating access to empirical evidence) and the discussion of interventions, which should improve their quality.

The mechanisms that could make this network most prolific should attempt to facilitate communication without creating an excess of information that renders it impossible to follow. For example, while I believe that a list-serv would be of great help if managed properly, constant distribution of emails (e.g. daily) could work against the goals of the network. Perhaps creating a website with clear categories where members can ask for comments, leave feedback, and share information would be a great first step. Creating a database with members' current work (e.g. by

keyword) and of relevant literature would also be a great resource. Setting up an annual or by-annual meeting where research questions, theoretical contributions, and empirical findings were shared could also be very helpful.

Séverine Autesserre*

Recommendations:

These recommendations are based on an analysis of

- 1- the dynamics of violence during the war and the transition to peace in the D.R. Congo,
- 2- the approach of local violence by international peace builders during the D.R. Congo transition.

“Local” refers to the subnational level – the level of the province, the district, the community, or the village.

Recommendation 1: international peace builders should acknowledge the importance of local issues during post-conflict reconstruction

- International peace builders usually overlook local causes of violence
 - My interviews with diplomats and UN and NGO staff have shown that most of them did not think that local causes were important in sustaining violence.
 - Most diplomats and UN staff considered local violence as a humanitarian or human rights issue (i.e. considered its consequences, not its causes).
- However, local dimensions of violence in civil wars and post-conflict situations are key:
 - Local tensions sometimes escalate into national and international confrontations
 - Local agendas interact with national and international agendas during civil wars (cf also Stathis Kalyvas’ research)
 - Therefore, if not addressed, local conflicts can, at term, jeopardize national and international peace settlements.

Recommendation 2: In post-conflict society, extensive peace-building programs should be implemented at the local level as well as at the national and international levels.

- Most programs addressing the causes of local violence focus on its international and national dimensions. Only few projects address local violence at the local level.
- The problem is that local dynamics of violence are not merely a by-product of national and international dynamics. They also have very distinct causes and solutions, which lie at the local level.
- Therefore, addressing only national and international dimensions of violence generates an unsustainable peace settlement.

Recommendation 3: international actors should consider being involved in local problems

- International actors usually do not get involved in local issues for fear of interfering with the host state’s sovereignty.

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- However, in post-conflict societies, local and national actors may not have the capacity to implement local peace building programs:
 - a. Local peace-builders active in destitute societies and war-torn countries often lack the necessary logistical and financial resources to implement conflict-resolution programs.
 ⇒ *Recommendation 3.1: When necessary, international actors should channel financial assistance to local actors. It means 1- having the capability of identifying reliable local peace builders, and 2- having in place the necessary channels to fund local actors*
 - b. Civil society actors cannot address many of the local causes of violence. Indeed, parties fight over key political or military issues will usually listen only to actors having some coercive capacity (i.e. provincial, national, or international officials). However, peace agreement often put in power the provincial and national officials who fueled local conflicts during the war, and who do not have incentives to assuage these local conflicts after the war.
 ⇒ *Recommendation 3.2: International actors should implement local peace-building projects when local and national actors cannot or do not want to get involved in local peace-building or when they continue to fuel local violence.*

Recommendation 4: whenever relevant, international peace builders should be given the necessary means to work at the local level, and especially

- *4.1: addressing local causes of violence should be one of the task mentioned in the mandate of UN peacekeeping missions (and of diplomatic representations);*
- *4.2: Diplomats and UN staff should be trained in analyzing local dynamics of violence that may jeopardize national and international peace settlements;*
- *4.3: UN, NGO, and diplomatic staff addressing local problems should be given the necessary financial and logistic means to do so.*
- *4.4: Donors should increase the available funding for international and local NGOs specialized in local conflict resolution.*

Recommendation 5: plan peace processes over longer periods of time

- When planned by external actors, transitions from peace to democracy includes election are usually supposed to be completed within two years.
- Two years may be sufficient to organize elections (which is the prime goal of most peace processes), but it is not sufficient to address the root causes of violence – both at the local and at the national level.

PS: This recommendation is utterly utopian (since increasing the length of externally-managed peace processes means increasing third parties' financial and military involvement), but it's still worth being mentioned.

Mechanisms for regular communication between academic and policy communities:

We could set up an association (which, from now on, will be referred to as “The Association”) that organizes:

- Conferences and workshops gathering both academic and policy community involved in post-conflict peace-building. These meetings should be organized around thematic issues (such as “local violence and state reconstruction”). One such venue is the Great Lakes forum

that will start in NY in the coming months. The Association should organize something on a broader, non regional basis.

- E-mail lists for academics and non-academics, where we can post announcements about publications and conferences of interest to the whole group, as well as questions for which we need assistance from the “other community.”
- Formal partnership mechanisms, which can take several forms
 - a. Partnerships where academics work on their own research projects using the infrastructure of the policy community (for example, participant observation research in a UN mission). In exchange, the researcher also contributes to the policy organization’s mission (by writing memos on specific topics in which s/he is expert, by presenting his/ her research findings, etc). The association could make several contributions to facilitate such partnership: identify policy institutions potentially interested, develop a database of relevant contact persons, and develop ethical guidelines and monitoring mechanisms.
 - b. Partnerships where policy makers hire young academics on a short-term, consultancy basis to work on topics of their choice. The Association could contribute by developing a database of young (and not-so-young) scholars interested in such missions, with details such as the scholars’ field of expertise, availability, etc.
- Funding resources: The Association could replicate for the field of peace operations and post-conflict reconstruction what was done in terms of Humanitarian Aid by the Inter-University Consortium on Security and Humanitarian Aid: i.e. get a several-years grant from a large funding agency (Mellon, McArthur, USIP, NSF...) and administer it to fund research projects by doctoral and post-doctoral scholars.

Benefits of such mechanisms:

- Get better accounted with each other’s research, and therefore able to
 - exchange with people who work on same issues (without waiting two years for their papers to be published),
 - get and give feedback on ongoing research;
- Confront one’s own research and findings with others’;
- Get ideas about methods, analysis, fieldwork difficulties, etc, and how to overcome them.

Keith Brown*

Research findings from work on democracy promotion in the former Yugoslavia, 2001-present:

There is an emergent consensus among practitioners and scholars of democracy promotion—including implementers of USAID programs in Serbia and Montenegro, evaluators of programs in the region, and social scientists drawing on theoretical perspectives developed elsewhere—that there are fundamental and pernicious contradictions involved in deploying so-called “quick impact” methods of reconstruction in the name of democracy promotion.

We have paid particular attention to USAID’s Community Revitalization through Democratic Action program, which operated in Serbia in the period 2001-2005. Initial efforts to gain USAID Serbia support for an ongoing monitoring role were unsuccessful: our study has combined limited fieldwork with an active program of cooperation with personnel involved in implementation, and review of public documents (including formal evaluations commissioned by USAID). Recollections by persons and organizations involved in implementation, and recommendations in the formal evaluation of the project, concur that an insistence on rapid, measurable results was detrimental to the stated overarching goal of broadening citizen participation.

The same conclusion can be derived from a statistical analysis of election results across Serbia, where those parties that US assistance originally set out to promote have lost ground in areas where US assistance was extensive as well as where it was not given.

What our research on CRDA also demonstrates is virtual unanimity on the issue of greater resources for monitoring and evaluation, for “course correction” and to establish baselines so that impact can be measured. Gordon Crawford’s recent work highlights the potential benefit that such funding—directed to building local research and evaluation capacity—would have for the overall project of democracy promotion—by building local research and audit capacity.

Projects like CRDA—which allegedly “sidestep” problematic existing power structures by reaching directly to “the people” and responding directly to “their needs”—miss the opportunity to contribute to sustainable democratic development, by ignoring universities, colleges and think-tanks which often have credibility and capacity, and which offer the promise of leadership

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in civil society. If no such institutions exist, it is worth devoting resources to building them up—and drawing on the under-utilized resource represented by faculty and students in the United States, whose interest in a region outlasts funding cycles, to do so.

The point made by several evaluations is that “burn rate”—the ability to spend allotted funds in a timely manner—is perhaps a measure of success for international organizations, but its traces are not necessarily enduring or positive. Our central point, then, would be to push for efforts by policy-makers to move beyond such approaches. Exemplary—or at least promising, in this regard—is the “Balkan Trust for Democracy”—a private-public partnership set up to operate over ten years—though reports from the field indicate that this initiative still bears the imprint of evaluation methods that prioritize the fiscal audit over societal impact.

Andrew Gilbert*

Research findings:

The social, political, and cultural ideologies that frame international state-building practices in post-war Bosnia-Herzegovina militate against the creation of the social order we think of as “the state.” Theorists of the nation-state have argued that the existence of “the state” and the durability of state authority results in part from (1) a collectively held assumption that states are real entities with an affixed, eternal identity, rather than historically contingent ideological formations with no existence independent of social practices, and (2) from the resulting ability of a range of actors to coerce or seduce citizens into adopting the rhetoric of state ideology and its values for the moral organization of their own everyday social relations. In other words, the continual reification of the nation-state by ordinary people in daily interactions is fundamental to the efficacy of state authority. The volatile and contradictory path of post-war reconstruction has rendered the constructed, contingent, and arbitrary nature of state authority so visible that it has failed to create the necessary impression of permanence or stability required for state reification. Complaints by Bosnians about the absence of the state (of a dependable, durable social order), and complaints by internationals in Bosnia about a lack of “local ownership” of the state, are rooted in this fact. Such instability and its effects are the product of the state-building practices of international authorities *and* their Bosnian interlocutors, flow to a significant degree out of the contradiction that come from applying the European nation-state model to Bosnia, legitimizing and institutionalizing ethnicity as a dominant mode of public sociality and political agency.

The inability or unwillingness of international policy practitioners in Bosnia to take seriously the local political economy of information or the culturally distinct, differentially situated nature of their interactions with their local “partners” threatens to make democratic reforms little more than a synonym for international hegemony. Cultural difference matters: a banal point, perhaps, to offer as a research result, but one that is critically under-estimated or misunderstood by policymakers and practitioners. International state-building projects tend to assume sufficient cross-cultural understanding - that is, if local cultural practices or institutions are taken into account at all. Indeed, most internationals arrive in Bosnia with little knowledge of its history, politics, or society but their very presence in the country is

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predicated on the assumption that they are there to transform it. This only underscores the prevailing notion within the “international community” that it is not considered crucial for foreign state-builders to have concrete knowledge of a place like Bosnia in order to carry out their work. And yet the ability of international actors like those working for the OSCE or UN to fulfill their mandates to protect vulnerable populations like returning refugees and ethnic minorities as well as to promote stable, democratic reform often breaks down in the misinterpretations and misunderstandings that characterize much international/local interaction.

Take, for instance, the example of the Human Rights Officers and Democratization Officers of the OSCE field offices. Part of their mandate includes monitoring human rights abuses and the rule of law and promoting democratic reforms in municipal institutions. As members of the international community formally committed to reversing the effects of ethnic cleansing, the OSCE was thus often sought out by individuals like returning refugees who had experienced official abuse or ethnic discrimination, as well as those who sought to remedy what they perceived were blanket biases or corruption that kept them out of positions of public employment. And yet Bosnians and the foreign staff of the OSCE often had very different ideas about how these problems should be remedied, a difference reflected in very distinct pragmatic frameworks—norms and expectations about what is effective and thus appropriate speech and action in a given context—guiding their interactions. This is particularly evident in how each understands the role and uses of information in everyday life, and is rooted in the differently situated experience of the relationship between knowledge and power.

The ideal of transparency that many internationals work with assumes that the abuse of power and lack of accountability on the part of government officials is a function of their ability to keep information and decision-making hidden; the antidote is therefore to discipline government by making its actions public and visible. Thus when confronted with claims of official abuse or discrimination, I found that OSCE officers feel they must have “concrete cases” of such abuse and access to information that they can use to make the situation transparent *to them*. For internationals, useful information is information that is written down and usually contains personal details like names, dates, sociological attributes and specific information about the complaint. Unlike their Bosnian interlocutors, internationals invest more trust in a text-form than a person’s word, because the materiality and replicability of such information is taken to index its truth value. Using such information, internationals promise to investigate the claims of abuse and alert officials they are “monitoring” what they are doing. And yet the OSCE finds few, if any, takers for these solutions.

For Bosnians, interactions with powerful foreigners are attended by significant uncertainty regarding trust and information. Most Bosnians make strong distinctions between the public and private, between “us” (family and friends) and “them” (the state and officialdom in general); this has strong roots in a well-developed wariness regarding the arbitrary and capricious exercise of bureaucratic power under state socialism (and since), and the dependence on informal networks and the constant use of friends and connections that made life survivable in socialist Yugoslavia (and since). The public/private distinctions carry with them different moral principles: the cultural imperative to be honest and ethically responsible to those who counted as the private “we” contrasted with distrust and tolerance of duplicity and interpersonal manipulation in dealings with the public “them.” Under these circumstances, the face-to-face nature of informal personal relations has a much higher degree of legitimacy than any official or bureaucratic channels. Thus the social relationship between potential interlocutors is extremely important when it comes to gauging whom to trust with information (and whose information to

trust), as does the context in which information is circulated: personal, direct, verbal, fact-to-face interactions carry much more weight than any merely textual, translated or otherwise mediated interactions.

This, in part, explains why local/international interactions are so fraught. The foreign staff of the OSCE clearly falls into the public “them” slot, and thus are initially seen as powerful persons to be exploited or potential connections to be cultivated, but not necessarily someone to be trusted. Moreover, the need for translation and presence of an interpreter increases social distance and means that communication can never be truly direct, interpersonal, or face-to-face. In other words, the local, culturally-specific conditions necessary to establish trust are rarely established (or establishable) because many of these conditions are antithetical to the international’s standards of conduct. Bosnians find that their international interlocutors do not respond as expected to their overtures to establish the bounds of trust or relations of mutual obligation because internationals are likely to interpret them as evidence of the practices of “personal connections,” nepotism, and corruption that they are there to reform. Indeed, secrecy, the reliance on face-to-face interactions and “private” connections, and the deliberate verbal (and not textual) communication of information *are* ways through which power is exercised by those in positions of official authority; but they are also ways through which ordinary people protect themselves from the capriciousness of those in power in an environment of continuing uncertainty. In a socio-political and historical field like Bosnia, where the population has long been exposed to the surveillance of intrusive state agencies spying on its citizens (like the UDBA or KOS of Yugoslavia), most people’s sense of agency lies in the ability to prevent that surveillance from accessing the “private,” by exerting what control they can over information about themselves and how it can be interpreted. Therefore, few Bosnians feel comfortable with the kind of vulnerability and personal exposure that the OSCE demands to “monitor” their cases, particularly if there is the possibility that their claims of abuse and recourse to the OSCE will become known to powerful municipal authorities who are likely to be around long after the OSCE has left.

The tragedy is that this tends to be self-reinforcing: over time, with few people consenting to become a “concrete case” and without enthusiasm for other reforms designed to “increase transparency,” OSCE officers are likely to become evermore convinced that the complaints of returnees or their representatives are the product of rumors and paranoid social thought (thus not worth taking seriously), or are cynical attempts to exploit the power of the OSCE for personal ends (and thus not worth taking seriously). And this will only increase their belief that such concrete cases and the increased transparency they bring to the OSCE are the only solution – not only for what may be real cases of official abuse and discrimination, but also for the conditions of murkiness that sustain both paranoid thinking and the practice of using public authority for private ends. Under these circumstances, internationals are likely to find in a Bosnian “culture of corruption” the reason for their failure to respond to the needs of vulnerable populations or find much enthusiasm for their institutional reforms designed to “increase transparency.” They are also more likely to impose institutional reforms as they see fit and dispense with the confusions and frustrations of working within a social context they do not understand.

Over time, the Bosnians that the OSCE interacts with are likely to be evermore wary of OSCE demands for personal information (and less likely to give it), and to interpret the “concrete cases” model as a way for the powerful OSCE to assert its authority by threatening local officials with the surveillance of “transparency,” but without any concrete promise for them except

increased vulnerability. This is taken as evidence that internationals are only interested in maintaining their own control and reinforces local understandings of governmental power as arbitrary, secretive, and self-interested – thus making it less likely that reforms promoted by the “international community” will be seen as worth committing to.

Mechanisms of communication:

As a prelude to considering this question, it is probably important to consider the differences between academics/scholars and policymakers. Each of these two groups exists in very different social and professional environments, with distinct ideas about information and knowledge, different ethical obligations, and divergent professional imperatives – and varying capacities for good and harm. The stakes are fairly high: we are talking about policies being carried out in volatile, post-conflict contexts, and it is worth remembering that any intervention in a context of a violent conflict becomes a part of that context and thus also of the conflict.

One clear example of this difference between academics and policy practitioners lies in what the invitation letter referred to as the “tasks of translation,” that is, translating criticism into “language that [policy practitioners] could use and addressed operational implications.” For very understandable professional reasons, policy practitioners are unlikely to spend much time thinking about information or criticism that is not directly useful to them. In engaging policymakers, do we have to be committed to the same projects that they are? More importantly, what are the tradeoffs of adapting our research results to the same conceptual, normative frameworks as policymakers in order to be taken seriously, given that often our research suggests that these conceptual frameworks are flawed? One example from my own research on international state-building practices in Bosnia makes clear this divergence: I came across many members of the “international community” asking “how can ethnic conflict be managed”? I found myself asking the question “how does conflict become ethnicized in the first place?” These are very different questions with different implications for how one might conceptualize and design foreign intervention.

There are also important benefits to remaining rigorously independent of the policymaking community, particularly for Americans doing research in volatile contexts in which their scholarly activities—particularly field research—is likely to be affected by local interpretations of the speech and actions of the US government. As many who have carried out such fieldwork can attest, the difference between “spy” and “researcher” is often a thin one in the eyes of our informants.

Finally, it is important to recognize that there are different commitments regarding the circulation of knowledge and information, and different standards for assessing the value of information. Scholarly communities develop standards for research, and are (at least ideally) committed to considering the ethical implications of our analyses for the populations we study. I have found that there is often a reluctance on the part of members of the policy community to share “internal” information or analyses, which makes any communication potentially lopsided.

Benefits of systematic collaboration:

More systematic collaboration among scholars on these issues might generate ethical ground rules for communication between policy and academic communities. This strikes me as necessary because the risks of circulating our research directly to policy makers are also considerable. Scholars have different ethical obligations because they know that social science research, particularly carried out by Western social scientists, can be a powerful legitimating

device to authorize practices and projects that we have little knowledge about or cannot foresee. The use of Raphael Patai's *The Arab Mind* (1973) by the US military as a textbook on Arab behavior and its influence on in how Iraqi prisoners were treated at Abu Ghraib is only one recent, if extreme, example. <http://www.aaanet.org/press/an/infocus/viewsonhumans/starrett.htm>

Christof Kurz*

A selection of research findings:

I am at a very early stage of my research, so do not have any concrete research findings yet. What I expect to find out by studying the state-building process and post-conflict reconstruction efforts in Sierra Leone and possibly in other countries (Liberia, Mozambique, others) may include the following:

- A better understanding of the historical state building processes and how war and the post-war period needs to be seen as part of a larger long-term state formation trajectory;
- A deeper appreciation for the often competing and contradictory requirements of exerting authority while adopting often new democratic decision making procedures;
- A greater reliance on existing local decision making processes;
- Focus on fewer large-scale reform projects in areas of high impact;
- Better indicators for gauging success or failure of assistance projects;
- Longer timeframes for reconstruction efforts generally and specific institution-building or capacity building projects;

Suggestions for such mechanisms for regular communication between academic and policy communities on these issues:

- Ensuring that young scholars are part of planning and evaluation meetings in donor institutions;
- Young scholars be part of external/internal assessment teams of post-conflict reconstruction efforts;
- Regular exchange of ideas between donor M&E staff and young scholars;
- Extending the network to ensure participation of (young) scholars from developing/crisis countries;
- Regular newsletter with focus on post-conflict research;
- Mechanisms for sharing and discussing research with practitioners and government officials from post-conflict societies;
- Regular briefings with top UN/Wbank/USG, other countries' gov't officials;
- Regular briefings and events for Congressional staffers;
- Regular briefings, brainstorming sessions, conferences, workshops or other exchange of ideas with NGOs and development firms;
- Keeping a database of country/topical experts and sharing it regularly with the UN, WBank, USG, NGOs, development firms.

Benefits of establishing such mechanisms and such a network of scholars:

For post-conflict countries:

- Increased understanding of post-conflict reconstruction efforts and how they fit into larger social and political processes;
- Greater transparency of donors' interests and underlying logics of assistance programs;
- Improved post-conflict state-building programs (hopefully).

For the (sub-)discipline of post-conflict reconstruction:

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- More focused research projects and better theory building through more frequent exchange of ideas should lead to;
- A greater recognition for the study of post-conflict reconstruction as a sub-field in the social sciences.

For the post-conflict assistance community:

- Increased understanding of political and social dynamics in post-conflict countries;
- Improved and more focused assistance projects;
- Better planning for assistance projects;
- Access to a larger pool of experts and specialist in various areas of post-conflict work;
- More relevant research addressing the practical needs of the assistance community.

For the young scholars:

- Easier access to policy circles and decision makers;
- Greater ability to team up on specific research projects with people with similar or complementary interests;
- Exchange of ideas between different disciplines;
- Increased opportunities for publishing research;
- Greater satisfaction from greater relevance of young scholars' research to practical concerns of policy makers.

For the "old" scholars:

- More frequent exchange of ideas between established and new scholars;
- Greater collaboration and larger pool of specialists for larger research projects.

Deniz S. Sert*

Post-War Studies Database: Preliminary Findings

In January 2005, funded by the Carnegie Corporation of New York, at the City University of New York Graduate Center, we began a process of building a database of younger scholars working on issues and/or areas of post-war reconstruction. The database is a part of a larger project whose objective is to improve the success rate of post-conflict reconstruction and state-building interventions by creating a more solid and reliable foundation in the knowledge that does and should underlie policy and planning and by linking the findings of academic research more directly and accessibly to those who design and implement programs. This memo is an initial attempt to analyze the findings of this database. Please note that the database is still under construction; therefore, this memo can only provide a low level of analysis.

The database of younger scholars includes PhD candidates, recent PhDs, and assistant professors and contains the following information on each scholar:

- Name
- University/Degree (PhD, JD)/Year/Field
- Dissertation Title
- Current Position
- Geographical Area/s of Interest
- Topic/s of Interest
- Publications

We applied a variety of methods of data collection to compile this information. By and large, the Internet proved, as ever, to be the universal source of information during the data collection process. The search engines of “Google” and “Scholar Google” were extensively utilized to fill in the information for each scholar.

We started our search within the Dissertation Abstracts Database, which contains dissertation abstracts from North American institutions. We limited our search to dissertations awarded within the period from 1999 to the present, and searched with the keywords: post-conflict, post-war, peace, conflict, war, peace building, and reconstruction. The search was then extended to the keywords of countries in conflict: Afghanistan, Angola, Bosnia, Burundi, Cambodia, Cyprus, DR Congo, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Iraq, Liberia, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Namibia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Tajikistan, and West Bank and Gaza to avoid the loss of data of empirical research in these areas.

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We also consulted departmental chairs (based on the APSA directory) to increase our reach among those still working on their degrees. Besides Political Science, many Anthropology, Sociology, and Economics departments were asked for assistance. A search within ISA and APSA websites of papers presented at annual conferences for the past 3 years provided additional names for the database.

All these efforts provided names primarily from North American institutions. Unfortunately, the process has been much slower for institutions outside of the US because there is no equivalent to the Dissertation Abstracts. Our information channels very much rely on personal networks, which have proved to be the most productive means of gathering information so far.

Thus far, we have collected data on approximately 230 scholars. Our preliminary findings show that:

- It is somewhat difficult to be able to differentiate scholars who are specifically working on post-conflict issues and/or areas from those who are studying conflict. Thus, it is important to note that the database as it stands right now also involves scholars who can only be marginally considered as post-conflict scholars.
- Beginning with the year 2000, we observe a trend of an increase in the number of dissertations written on post-conflict issues and areas.
- While 75 of these scholars are still PhD candidates pursuing their degrees, 155 of them have received their degrees. Approximately 97% of the latter group holds an academic position, one-third of which are assistant professors. Only 3% have pursued policy careers, which is one indicator of the minimal interface between policy and academic circles.
- The London School of Economics and Political Science is the institution with the single greatest number of scholars in the database indicating an extensive focus on post-war studies at this institution within different departments.
- Scholars are likely to do post-doctoral research on topics that are closely related with their dissertation projects. Thus, the decision to focus on dissertations appears to have been an efficient method of data collection.
- In terms of areas of interest, the Balkans, especially Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo, has the greatest number of representation. Rwanda seems to be the second most studied case. One implication may be that the concentration of policy-makers in these areas influences the likelihood of their selection by academic researchers.

These “eyeball” results provide us some guidance for the next steps to improve the database: First of all, we need to focus more on academic programs outside of North America. What can the methods be to pursue this goal? What kind of mechanisms can we establish to make sure that we are maximizing our inclusion of younger scholars working on the subject? Secondly, we need to find a way to differentiate between conflict and post-conflict topics as the initial goal of this project is to create a database of younger scholars working on issues and/or areas of post-conflict reconstruction. Finally, we need to decide how useful this database can be for policy makers and for networking among scholars, and how to improve its usefulness.