DEVELOPING ALTERNATIVES

Beyond Chaos: Development
After Conflict

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CRISIS MITIGATION AND RECOVERY: PRACTICAL APPROACHES

by Bruce Spake

The post-cold war decade and the first years of the 21st century witnessed a rapid growth in democratic values and free market systems around the world. International competition—earlier manifested along cold war frontlines—was quickly and successfully organized into international cooperation. Where cooperation failed to take hold, as in the Middle East, post-cold war systems of military, diplomatic, and economic coordination proved able to contain interstate conflict, as the Gulf War amply demonstrated. After the cold war ended, interstate conflict almost ceased. Most countries in the world enjoyed a heightened sense of security.

This was not the case for countries in southeastern Europe, southern and southeastern Asia, and western and central Africa, where internal security broke down and civil conflict erupted. In the 1990s, scenes of atrocities in the Balkans dominated television news. Reports of millions of war-related deaths in central Africa beggared belief. Internal wars multiplied and death tolls mounted, making "the last decade of the 20th century one of the most deadly in the grimmest century on record."[1] Even before the events of September 11, which brought to the fore the menace of terrorism to world security, post-cold war optimism had faded before the sobering realities in Bosnia, Rwanda, the Congo, and elsewhere.

Internal conflict arose from a number of reasons. In some instances, the motivation was clearly anti-democratic, as in the early 1990s when Milosevic and his cronies used ethnic grievances, real and imaginary, to gain a stranglehold on power and resources in Yugoslavia. Elsewhere, discontent over economic problems combined with popular demand for trans-

parency and democracy, as in Indonesia after its 1997 economic meltdown.

After hard lessons in Bosnia and Rwanda, the international community learned that intervention in internal wars could not be avoided. It also learned that intervention must continue for a substantial amount of time after the conflict has subsided. Such intervention takes the form of post-conflict recovery programs, the goal of which is to prevent renewed violence and promote social and economic development.

EVEN BEFORE THE EVENTS OF SEPTEMBER 11, POST-COLD WAR OPTIMISM HAD FADED BEFORE THE SOBERING REALITIES IN BOSNIA, RWANDA, THE CONGO, AND ELSEWHERE.

Societies that have recently undergone violent internal conflict remain prone to renewed turmoil unless measures are taken to strengthen their capacity to control conflict and prevent violence. Notable hot spots where the renewal of conflict remains a threat include Afghanistan, Indonesia, East Timor, Pakistan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, West Bank and Gaza, Serbia, Zimbabwe, Angola, Sierra Leone, and Liberia. With long-term technical assistance projects in all but the last three of these countries, DAI has considerable on-the-ground experience implementing activities in which preventing a resumption of violence is an important objective.

The articles in this issue of *Developing Alternatives* come directly from experience in crisis recovery pro-

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[1] Samantha Power, "Genocide and America," *New York Review of Books*, March 14, 2002, p. 15.

grams. The articles are presented as practical discussions of how to assist societies that have been affected by internal conflict.

Broadly speaking, conflict exists to varying degrees in all societies, the result of competition for resources, power, or status (including the status of competing systems of belief). Competition is usually kept under control by mechanisms and sanctions that enforce compromise and cooperation. But once the threshold for violence is crossed, violence itself, like an opportunistic infection, can create a complex of new motives and incentives for even more conflict, replacing original motives and incentives as causes of continued violence. Moreover, perpetrators of violence are skillful and entrepreneurial in inventing causes of conflict and molding seemingly plausible pretexts to justify their actions. For example, the largely fictional—and in modern times, fully irrelevant—grievances Serbs have against Bosniac "Turks" are now imbedded in popular belief in a way that scarcely existed before the breakup of Yugoslavia.

The international community takes on a difficult challenge in attempting to help a society recover from conflict. As outsiders, the international community possesses objectivity but lacks an intimate understanding of the conflict. Michael Morfit, in "Rebuilding Social Capital," offers a methodology for achieving such an understanding.

Morfit proposes that conflict management and mitigation efforts begin by assessing how a particular society normally manages conflict. He cautions that looking only for causes of conflict may be an illusory exercise, especially when such an assessment leads to a redressing of wrongs. He argues that conflict management and mitigation efforts should instead assess a society's social capital, defined by Morfit as those "shared attitudes, beliefs, values, practices, and institutions that manage and channel conflict and achieve common objectives." By evaluating the social capital of a conflict-prone society, planners can better understand a society's institutional and organizational capacity to manage conflict. Such

an assessment would offer a practical guide for resolving problems and for designing interventions. Whereas an analysis of root causes might focus on stress points that portend renewed conflict, a social capital assessment would show how a particular society normally deals with stresses and what mechanisms it uses to do so. It also would indicate whether those mechanisms have been damaged and need repair—and whether they are, in fact, sufficient to prevent conflict. From a social capital assessment would come programs that directly target the strengthening of a society's capacity to manage conflict.

In "Finding a Role for Microcredit in Post-Conflict Reconstruction," Joan Parker discusses the role of microcredit programs in post-conflict situations in which, characteristically, the climate for business lending is unstable. She argues that microcredit projects can contribute to recovery in societies affected by internal violence in spite of physical insecurity, a lack of trust, and fluctuating currencies. Parker advises that in such environments microcredit programs must be managed by experienced practitioners. She cautions that in post-conflict environments microcredit programs are likely to yield less substantive results than programs in more stable environments. Microcredit programs are not appropriate, however, when they load borrowers with debt—which they almost certainly cannot repay.

In "Development Programs, Poverty Alleviation, and War-Torn Societies," David Pottebaum draws on his experience in Cambodia to demonstrate the importance of political considerations in a post-conflict context. Development planners implementing projects in war-torn societies must pay special attention to political considerations. Violence-fraught political contexts demand a heightened sense of awareness that inappropriate activities can do great harm. Interventions that bring populations together should be given priority; those that separate them should be avoided. All interventions should take into account that instability and insecurity change the ways in which people interact and function in their social and economic lives. Giving precedence

VIOLENCE-FRAUGHT POLITICAL CONTEXTS DEMAND A HEIGHT-ENED SENSE OF AWARENESS THAT INAPPROPRIATE ACTIVITIES CAN DO GREAT HARM.

to these considerations can sometimes mean less-than-maximum efficiency in terms of straight-line economic rates of return. But peace and stability, in the long run, are more important.

Military considerations are important, too. Internal conflict is often related to how the indigenous military handles political, ethnic, and religious conflict, especially in a country like Indonesia, where the military plays a key role in domestic affairs. In "Military Reform and Civilian Conflict in Indonesia," Marcus Mietzner explores the challenge the country faces in transforming itself into a stable and democratic society. To succeed, its civil and political leaders must find ways of engaging the military in fundamental reform. Mietzner describes the methodology used by USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives to promote civilian-led military reform in a setting where the military views such reforms as subversive. His essay is a précis for how to prepare Indonesian civil society in its initial steps toward professionalizing a deeply suspicious and highly politicized military.

Conflict transforms gender roles. In "Why Gender Matters When the Dust Settles," Annette Sheckler urges planners to include gender-based programs as a priority in conflict recovery programs. The massive entry of women into the U.S. work force during World War II is an example of conflict-induced transformation with which we are all. We are less familiar, however, with how intrastate conflict in Africa, Asia, and Latin America also has transformed gender roles.

During periods of conflict, men usually are the combatants, leaving their families to become fighters while women remain with their families. As the heads of households, women are obliged to assume greater economic responsibility, often at serious costs to their health and safety. When conflict ends, these same women, especially widows, find themselves isolated among the poorest of the poor, even though they often make up the majority of the able-bodied population. Because of their role as economic mainstays of households during periods of conflict, these women should be serving as a productive base for restarting economic activity after conflict.

Traditional, pre-conflict gender roles and customary law, however, operate somewhat perversely in a post-conflict period and can exclude women from instrumental roles in crisis recovery. For example, in some sub-Saharan cultures, widows cannot, by custom and frequently by law, obtain land rights through their deceased husbands. Landless war widows, who during the conflict supported their families, subsequently find themselves marginalized and unproductive. Donors must, for these and other reasons, specifically target programs toward women during post-conflict periods.

Sheckler's article and those before it present different ways of promoting stability in post-conflict situations. Whatever the cause of internal violence, the result invariably is collapsed institutions, political uncertainties, and a high risk of a continuation of strife and violence—unless the international community allocates resources to help manage and mitigate internal conflict. An important part of those resources are the experiences and fresh ideas of development practitioners. ◆

REBUILDING SOCIAL CAPITAL: A FRAMEWORK FOR ASSISTANCE IN POST-CONFLICT SOCIETIES

by Michael Morfit

During late 2000 and early 2001, tensions between ethnic Albanian and Slavic communities in the Republic of Macedonia began to escalate. In February 2001, armed conflict broke out in several areas, with ethnic Albanian groups seizing control of areas bordering Kosovo, violently resisting Macedonian state police and army units, and forcibly expelling ethnic Macedonian families. As the violence escalated, it appeared that the Balkans was teetering on the verge of another round of civil war and ethnic cleansing.

International donors were understandably alarmed at these events and began to look to their economic assistance programs as one instrument to help nudge Macedonia back from the precipice of an irreversible collapse of civil order. Two approaches emerged. One response emphasized the importance of responding quickly and visibly to the strong sense of injustice and grievance felt by much of the Albanian community. This strategy called for special efforts to focus economic assistance programs in areas where the Albanian population was in the majority and to support high-visibility activities, such as the establishment of an Albanian language university in the western part of the country where Albanians make up the majority of the population.

The second response was diametrically opposed to the first. It emphasized the importance of supporting programs that made no distinction between Albanian- and Macedonian-majority areas and avoiding efforts to direct economic assistance to ethnically oriented programs.

What framework of analysis underlay these contrasting strategies? What were the bases for the assessments that led to such divergent prescriptions for economic assistance? This article attempts to answer these questions by looking first at social capital as a framework for analyzing the dynamics of societies that appear to be headed toward violent conflict. This approach is then contrasted with the notion of "root causes" as a fundamental explanatory framework. The programmatic implications of the two approaches are then elaborated and contrasted.

Social Capital and Conflict

Conflict is endemic to all social relationships. Outside of some utopian visions or heavenly spheres, all human relationships are doomed to periods of stress, friction, and conflict as well as harmony, collaboration, and cooperation. The very notion of political life is rooted in the inevitability of conflict. Political issues are never resolved with certainty or finality. There is never a point at which we reach a perfect answer to a problem. Political problems and issues are constantly revisited, old solutions revised, and earlier compromises re-examined. If this were not the case—if political issues could be resolved with mathematical certainty—Plato's philosopher kings would be the ultimate (and attainable) goal.

The concept of "social capital" is anchored in the recognition that conflict is inherent and inevitable. Social capital refers to the means and mechanisms of containing and channeling conflict, focusing on ways to use it to promote collaboration and cooperation in addressing common problems. The term refers to the means by which individuals work together, interacting and pursuing individual interests in the context of a wider community. The effectiveness and adequacy of social capital are measured by its ability to not allow conflict to reach a level where it overflows and inundates all efforts to collaboration and cooperation.

For de Tocqueville, social capital is seen as the "habits of the mind." For James Coleman, who first

popularized the idea of social capital, it is the ability of people to work together for common purposes in groups and organizations. Fukuyama collapses this into the single concept of social capital as "trust." For the purposes of this analysis, *social capital is the shared attitudes, beliefs, values, practices, and institutions that manage and channel conflict and achieve common objectives*. It is not merely de Tocqueville's habits of mind because, unlike physical capital, social capital is inherently communal. It cannot be monopolized or hoarded, and there are no claims of individual ownership that exclude others. It exists only to the extent that it is shared. Social capital facilitates Coleman's ability to work together precisely because it manages and channels conflict. Trust does not create social capital, but it is the effectiveness of social capital, in channeling conflict, that generates Fukuyama's trust.

Assessing Social Capital

Many analysts treat social capital as analogous to physical capital: either a society has a lot or a little. Those with a lot are better off than those with a little. But this one-dimensional view of social capital is simplistic and misleading. All societies have some kind of social capital, but they do not necessarily have the same kind or level of social capital. The Taliban used the social capital of Afghanistan to exercise its rule. It used networks of kinship, clans, and ethnic loyalties, as well as military force, religious scholars, mosques, *fatwa,* and *syariah*, to establish and maintain its rule. It used all these to help manage conflict and achieve common purposes. Clearly, this social capital was very different from the social capital of a West European democratic society. It was nonetheless complex and robust.

The key questions then are not, "Who has more and who has less social capital?" but, "What makes the social capital of some societies effective in channeling conflict while the social capital of other societies is not? And how do we describe the differences?" Assessing the quality, dimensions, and depth of social capital is key to understanding how effective it is at channeling conflict and encouraging collaboration. How is this to be done?

First, the focus on social institutions and organizations as manifestations of social capital enables us to move beyond beliefs, attitudes, and opinions, which, in any case, are difficult to measure and assess and problematic to change. Specific institutions, organization, and mechanisms, in contrast, can be more easily measured and assessed. We are able to examine specific institutional arrangements, organizational structures, and mechanisms for managing conflict and promoting collaboration and to ask how does this work? What is its function? Who is authorized to make authoritative decisions?

Second, the inherently communal nature of social capital points to other important questions about social capital: How is it shared? Who has access and is included? Who does not have access and is

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excluded? How has this changed over time? Underlying both sets of questions is the issue of membership. Fundamentally, social capital has to do with who is included in the category of "people like us" with whom we share values, bonds, and characteristics. Violent and destabilizing conflict is always between "us" and "them." That is, violent conflict is likely to occur between groups that have little social capital in common; it occurs between those who are like us and those who are different from us in some fundamental way. With few ways of bridging that gap, violence is readily seen as the only viable option.

The concept of membership, in turn, points to three key dimensions or range of variables that can be used to assess and distinguish the kind of social capital enjoyed by members of a society:

- "Simplicity-complexity" refers to the different possible dimensions or "layers" to one's identity;

- "Rigidity-adaptability" refers to the ability of institutions, organizations, and mechanisms to evolve and respond to new circumstances; and

- "Exclusion-access" refers to the extent to which different groups have access to mechanisms, institutions, and organizations.

The simplicity-complexity dimension refers to the different groups to which one claims affinity and membership. To the extent that one is a member of a relatively small number of groups, the social capital available to one is simple. This might include some of the primordial affiliations of family or clan and religious, linguistic, or ethnic group. For many parts of the world, these concepts of membership are the basic building blocks of one's identity and define the institutions and organizations available for channeling conflict or encouraging collaboration. There are few choices here because membership is largely determined through birth and inheritance rather than voluntary affiliation. For example, in the Dayak societies of the forests of Kalimantan, there is no shared membership outside the extended family and clan. Within the family and clan, roles and responsibilities, rights, and privileges are largely determined through birth and marriage rather than active decisions to join one group or another. Consequently, within the group, the mechanisms for managing conflict and promoting collaboration are largely defined by inherited networks. In addition, there are few options for dealing with strangers who are not a part of this network. Strangers are by definition threatening, with no claims to the rights or privileges of the kinship group. Negotiations over ownership and control of land between these indigenous groups and migrants from Java, thus, are inevitably ad hoc and fragile. It is not simply that there are different concepts of the rights of property, religious traditions, or languages which separate the two groups but also that there are no commonly accepted mechanisms for bridging these gaps. The social capital of the Dayak communities gives them few options for managing conflict, and violence is therefore a likely recourse.

In other societies, the range of choices is more varied. There are more ways in which membership is defined, and more of these are a matter of voluntary association and positive acts of affiliation. In these societies, through a conscious act of voluntary affiliation, one can decide to become a member of a political party, environmental protection group, university alumni association, book club, church, homeowner association, or parent-teacher association. These affiliations and memberships present new ways to define identity consciously. They also offer new ways to work with others to manage conflict, resolve problems, and achieve agreed solutions.

The rigidity-adaptability dimension refers to the capacity of organizations and institutions to deal with new circumstances, develop new responses, and forge new mechanisms for dealing with conflict. Many aspects of one's identity are inherent and relatively incapable of being altered, no matter what the circumstances. These include blood relationships, gender, and first languages acquired. In some societies, however, these fundamental and immutable characteristics are not seen as incidental but as primary and determinant. They fundamentally shape the social capital of that society. Because they are paramount in defining one's membership, and at the same time inflexible and immutable, the social capital of these societies can be said to be "rigid." For example, under Taliban rule in Afghanistan, a fundamental principle was that women had to be excluded from active participation in public life. This was asserted to be an essential and defining characteristic of Islamic society that the Taliban sought to create. This insistence on the defining importance of the single, inherent, and immutable fact of gender meant that the social capital was inherently rigid. It could not adapt or change without abandoning a fundamental principle and thus profoundly altering the identity of the society.

In addition to biological facts (such as gender and kinship), membership in organizations or institutions can similarly be defined in ways that are necessarily resistant to change and thus create rigid social capital. Institutions that claim to be shaped and defined by the immutable commands of God, for

example, must insist on adherence to divine commandments and cannot easily accommodate change. The Roman Catholic church is one example. Other institutions may base their claims for legitimacy on continuity and strict adherence to precedence and, thus, have no mechanisms to deal with the pressures for change. The tradition of descent exclusively through male lineage in the Japanese imperial family is an example.

In contrast, other societies enjoy social capital with more adaptable institutions and organizations that offer greater flexibility in responding to changing circumstances. They are less likely to define identify and membership in terms of a limited number of immutable characteristics (such as family, gender, or divine law). Instead, they are likely to define membership in terms of a wide variety of contingent circumstances. In addition, the qualifications for membership are more likely to be driven by utilitarian considerations—Is it effective? Does it work?—than by appeals to inherent characteristics or divine law. For example, the qualifications for being a professional (such as a lawyer or an accountant) can and do change over time as changes occur in the legal structure or business practices evolve. Finally, societies with flexible social capital are more likely to have explicit rules and procedures for adapting to new circumstances and expanding notions of membership to accommodate new groups and adjust to new pressures.

The United States enjoys more flexible social capital. Historically, it has redefined membership in political life—for example, by abolishing slavery and very gradually eliminating legal measures restricting the political rights of African-Americans, and by enfranchising women. In both cases, these changes were facilitated by explicit provisions in the U.S. Constitution that envisioned the necessity for changes in the political order and that provided a clear and orderly process to achieve it. As a result, the significance of two immutable characteristics— race and gender—has been profoundly altered.

The exclusion-access dimension refers to the extent to which new or aspiring members of a group

are excluded from or permitted access to membership and to the full range of social capital entailed in membership. Societies with exclusionary institutions, restricting membership to family or clan members or to adherents of the same religious or linguistic group, find it difficult to deal with diversity or change. They have few mechanisms for dealing with those who do not meet the critical factors that determine who is "one of us." For example, Americans of European descent commonly felt that native Americans were necessarily excluded from being "one of us." Native Americans were defined as fundamentally different and incapable of being a part of the European American society. In the conflict over access to and control of land, Native Americans were consequently largely excluded from the systems of legal protection or other dimensions of social capital available to European Americans. As a result, conflict was often resolved through warfare.

Institutions and organizations that provide for greater access, however, are able to accommodate new groups, reach out and include outsiders, and bring them into the framework of a common identity. This enables them also to invoke shared processes and procedures for managing conflict. Although far from smooth or free of violence, the United States accommodated a massive wave of migration in the late 19th century. Often resented initially, migrants from Ireland, Italy, Poland, and Russia were grudgingly accepted, gradually incorporated into the power structure, and relatively quickly integrated into the mainstream of American life. No longer were there just a few key factors that defined who could claim to be an American. Ethnic and national backgrounds, religious traditions, and languages became less and less relevant in distinguishing "us" from "them."

These various dimensions of social capital— simplicity/complexity, rigidity/adaptability, and exclusion/access—tend to be clustered or bundled. Societies with relative simple social capital (for example, limited largely to family and clan ties) also tend to be those that are more likely to be rigid (familial definitions being relatively impervious to choice or change). In these societies, the criteria for

TABLE 1: SHALLOW AND DEEP SOCIAL CAPITAL

SHALLOW	DEEP
Simple • Membership and identify defined in terms of inherited affiliations (family, clan, ethnicity, religion) • Relatively few opportunities for voluntary association	**Complex** • Membership and identify defined in terms of variety of associations • Relatively great opportunities for voluntary association
Rigid • Membership and identify defined in terms of inherent or immutable characteristics • Critical defining characteristics based on sacred law • Few mechanisms or procedures for modifying definitions of membership or identity	**Flexible** • Membership and identity based on a variety of contingent characteristics • Critical defining characteristics based on utilitarian factors • Explicit mechanisms or procedures for modifying definitions of membership and identity
Exclusive • Homogenous societies based on limited number of critical characteristics defining membership	**Inclusive** • Heterogeneous societies with a relatively large number of characteristics defining membership

exclusion are also likely to be clear and specific. It is more difficult to provide access to new or aspiring members because they are unlikely to meet the few and inflexible criteria for membership.

At the other end of the spectrum, societies with complex social capital, offering a wider variety of affiliations, are probably more open to change. This is precisely because of the complexity of the social capital, which offers a greater range of choices and thus an increased capacity to adapt and change. Similarly, complex and flexible social capital is more likely to be inclusive, accommodating new groups and bringing them into membership.

Societies with simple, rigid, and exclusionary definitions of membership and identity may be said to have "shallow" social capital. In these societies, social capital offers relatively few institutions, organizations, and mechanisms for channeling conflict and encouraging collaboration. Societies at the other end of the spectrum, with complex, adaptable, and accessible definitions of membership and identity, may be said to have "deep" social capital. They enjoy a relatively large range of institutions, organizations, and mechanisms for managing conflict.

Like physical capital, social capital is not an inevitable; it is deliberately fashioned. Nor is it eternal;

it must be maintained over time. Social capital can be both strengthened and undermined, consciously developed or destroyed.

Social Capital and Donor Assistance Strategies

Using this framework, the task of international donor agencies is to help societies deepen their social capital—that is, to move them from simple, rigid, and exclusionary social capital toward complex, adaptable, and accessible social capital. This provides a basis for analyzing the current situation and for developing a more effective strategy to achieve donor objectives. It points to specific aspects of social relations that can be assessed and measured. It helps explain why some societies are able to contain, channel, and manage conflict while others are not. It also offers the prospect of explaining the dynamics of an unfolding social conflict and why some societies seem to fall back (in some cases perennially) into destabilizing and violent conflict that further degrades social capital, trapping them in a downward spiral. Finally, it offers an analytic framework that points to a range of possible donor interventions to change the dynamics of the conflict and help reverse the downward spiral.

A brief examination of donor programs to support civil society in Central and Eastern Europe illus-

THE TASK OF INTERNATIONAL DONOR AGENCIES IS TO HELP SOCIETIES DEEPEN THEIR SOCIAL CAPITAL—THAT IS, TO MOVE THEM FROM SIMPLE, RIGID, AND EXCLUSIONARY SOCIAL CAPITAL TOWARD COMPLEX, ADAPTABLE, AND ACCESSIBLE SOCIAL CAPITAL.

trates some of the programmatic implications of this framework. International donors have frequently been strong supporters of civil society organizations on the grounds they can serve as effective instruments for citizen participation, increased oversight and accountability of government operations, and improved service delivery. Accordingly, a strong civil society has been a primary objective. The strategy has been to support as many civil society organizations as possible, at both the national and the local levels. In effect, the donors asked themselves, "Where can I find some civil society organizations and how can I strengthen their capabilities?" Strengthening their capabilities has most often meant core grants for institutional support and project grants to lobbying and advocacy activities. The assumption has been that the more active civil society organizations there are the more likely it is that the society will force changes in state operations and navigate the challenging passage from a Communist to a liberal democratic regime successfully.

However, the objective of deepening social capital would ask different questions and probably arrive at a different strategy and different programs. Instead of asking, "Where can I find civil society organizations to support?," the social capital framework asks, "What is necessary to broaden the range of mechanisms and organizations for managing conflict, making them more adaptable and inclusive?" The focus is on the full texture of civic life rather than on individual organizations. Support for civil society is not defined simply in terms of core institutional capacities or lobbying and advocacy by individual organizations. Instead, the strategy is to support the emergence of more complex, flexible, and inclusive networks of organizations that cut across, rather than reinforce, primordial cleavages.

In addition, this framework demonstrates that not all civil society organizations are assets in democratic

transitions. Some civil society organizations can move a society toward more shallow social capital, rather than deepening it, and thus undermine the success of a democratic transition. (The Ku Klux Klan is a voluntary association, aggregating and articulating interests outside the control of the state. However, its focus on the rigid and exclusionary characteristic of race as the fundamental defining factor in membership in the U.S. political order is typical of shallow social capital.) Institutionally stronger and more capable civil society organizations will not necessarily advance democratic transition if they are based on rigid and exclusionary principles. For example, Croat veteran organizations were effective in lobbying for the views and interests of their members, but they were also among the most vigorous advocates of ethnic cleansing.

Alternative Analytic Frameworks: Root Causes

The idea of identifying, understanding, and addressing the "root causes" of destructive and destabilizing social conflict is a common and appealing starting point for developing donor programs. The search for root causes invites us to look beneath the surface and understand the underlying social dynamics that appear to be driving destructive social conflicts. The suggestion is that only when we understand and address these primordial and fundamental causes can we contain destructive conflicts. (For example, the UNOPS *Operational Guide for Rehabilitation and Social Sustainability* devotes an early chapter to understanding and analyzing root causes as the starting point for developing effective assistance programs.)

Unfortunately, despite its initially appealing emphasis on looking beyond today's visible crises to an in-depth social analysis, an analysis of root causes proves less helpful in practice. Although it is plausible, because we do indeed need to look beneath immediate surface events, it takes us less far than we

need to go. First, there are theoretical limitations. The search for root causes suggests that primordial divisions are inherently destabilizing and destructive. They must be identified, addressed, and (one hopes) fully eliminated if a society is to prosper and flourish. If these root causes are not suppressed or eliminated, conflict will continue to threaten the social order. In contrast, the social capital framework in essence learns to live with conflict and accepts that complete harmony will always be elusive. Because conflict is inherent and inevitable, the issue is not how to suppress or eliminate it but how to live with it and manage it.

Second, the initially appealing search for root causes turns out to give us little in terms of analytic tools to understand and respond to conflict. The term "root causes" suggests there are a limited number of key factors that are the driving force behind social dynamics and change. But what are these forces? How do we identify them?

To answer these questions, we need something more. Each society seems to have its own story and its own root causes. How do we know what factors are truly root causes and which are merely superficial manifestations? Because the analytic framework of root causes itself can offer us no clear criteria for isolating and identifying these critical factors, we have no clear means for assessing the adequacy of one plausible explanation of root causes from another.

Third, the search for root causes fails to explain why some societies descend into violent conflict while others do not. Root causes are held generally to be "latent"—a source of potential explosion that some societies successfully avert while others singularly fail to avoid. But what turns a latent root cause into an overt or virulent one? Why do some societies seem able to evade the trauma of a virulent outburst of root causes while others succumb? The search for root causes does not go far enough to offer an explanation for this.

Finally, it is difficult to draw programmatic implications from the analysis of root causes. Even if we have identified the fundamental root causes with

confidence, where do we go with this analysis? What kinds of actions are likely to be effective in restraining or channeling conflict? What strategies are going to work and why? Here again, we find ourselves reaching for something more than the assessment of root causes can offer us.

Implications for Donor Assistance Programs

The contrasting approaches of root causes and social capital start with very different problem assessments, and, as a result, they point to very different types of donor programs to help deal with violent conflict. The root causes approach is centered on a discrete number of fundamentally conflicting forces, and it starts with the problem of how these can be eliminated or suppressed to the point that they no longer threaten to bring violent conflict upon a society.

In contrast, the social capital approach is centered on the institutional and organizational mechanisms for managing conflict. It starts with the problem of how social capital can be deepened—that is, how these mechanisms can be strengthened and made more effective in channeling conflict and promoting collaboration.

From these very different starting points, very different operational programs flow. One seeks to address the grievances of disaffected groups, whereas the other seeks to strengthen institutions that are inclusive and cut across primordial groups. A good example is the outbreak of ethnic conflict between Macedonians and Albanians in the Republic of Macedonia in 2001. The two approaches point to different prescriptions for the international donor community.

Many donors apparently based their responses on the root causes approach. The donors identified Albanians as the disaffected group whose sense of grievance and injustice led them to challenge the fundamental rules of the game and threaten the collapse of public order and security. Their response was to try to redress these grievances through donor programs. These included instructions to find ways to do more for Albanian communities where

there were outbreaks of violent conflict against the national government. The clear intention was to address root causes of the conflict by assuaging the sense of injustice. Several donors also decided to support a major initiative to develop an Albanian language university in Tetovo. This was a direct response to complaints from Albanians that they had suffered systematic discrimination and exclusion from the national Macedonian university in Skopje.

Those who adopted a social capital approach came to different program recommendations. They saw special efforts to focus on delivering benefits to the Albanian community as reinforcing identities, institutions, and organizations that are defined exclusively in ethnic terms and thus ran counter to the goal of a liberal, democratic society. That is, they saw the proposed donor response as supporting shallower, rather than deeper, social capital. It was, in fact, going in precisely the wrong direction and likely to exacerbate the conflict rather than channel it and promote collaboration in solving common problems. An example of a more appropriate response was the conscious effort of USAID's local government program to create mechanisms for identifying and resolving problems that cut

across ethnic lines. In the city of Kumanovo, which teetered precariously on the brink of violent conflict and was constantly subjected to exploratory incursions by armed rebel groups, USAID's Local Government Reform Project organized Macedonia's first-ever public hearings on the municipal budget. The project purposely brought together local print and broadcast media, NGO representatives, and neighborhood leaders from both ethnic Albanian and Slavic communities. Multi-ethnic committees were established to review tenders from local businesses for city construction projects. In part a result of these efforts, and in contrast to many other multi-ethnic communities, Kumanovo did not erupt into armed conflict, even when Albanian paramilitary groups cut off water to the city and threatened to bombard it from the surrounding mountains.

Similarly, the same USAID project built coalitions of local government officials that cut across both ethnic and political party lines. The Macedonian association of municipalities, for example, made a major contribution to building trust and confidence across ethnic lines when its leadership denounced manipulation of the government revenue-sharing formula to favor cities where most of the population

TABLE 2: ROOT CAUSES VS. SOCIAL CAPITAL—CONTRASTING APPROACHES, PROBLEMS, AND RESPONSES

	ROOT CAUSES	SOCIAL CAPITAL
Approach	• What are basic, primordial divisions in a society?	• What are the institutional and organizational mechanisms by which conflict is managed and collaboration is encouraged?
Problem Statement	• How do we eliminate or supress these basic divisions or root causes?	• How can we deepen social capital?
Programmatic Response	• What programs can respond to the grievances or sense of injustice of specific groups, driven by root causes?	• What programs will strengthen the complexity, adaptability, and accessibility of social capital, cutting across the whole society?
Example: *Macedonia* —Sample strategy —Sample program	• Develop programs directly responsive to disaffected group. • Support a separate Albanian language university specifically for that ethnic group.	• Increase participation in common institutions. • Foster professional associations creating new constituencies for decentralized government. • Support multiethnic parent-teacher associations, creating new opportunities for collaboration.

are Slavic Macedonians. Speaking on behalf of all local government, the association helped build a new constituency for a multi-ethnic political order and thus deepened social capital.

Similar contrasting strategies and programs can be found in Bosnia-Herzegovina (BiH). Based on a pragmatic assessment that the realities of ethnic identity had to be accepted, the architecture of the Dayton Accords carefully protects the representation of each ethnic group in government institutions. Three "separate" languages (Bosnian, Croatian, and Serbian) are recognized, notwithstanding the minimal substantive differences between them, and the website of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe for BiH still has three separate local language texts that read nearly identically. These measures serve to reinforce the shallow social capital of BiH, where there are relatively few incentives or programs to encourage the movement to deeper social capital, with mechanisms and opportunities to expand the range of options for managing social conflict. The result is the stability and fragile peace enjoyed in BiH are more external impositions than organic developments.

Analytic Challenge

Recognizing the increasing importance of violent conflict in developing and transition societies, as well as the need for new approaches and instruments, the international donor community has developed innovative response mechanisms over the past 10 to 15 years. In some cases, these mechanisms have been given significant prominence and funding. (An example is the decision of the UNDP to create a new Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery, funded at $30 million per year.) In other cases, donors have aggressively used these new mechanisms to respond rapidly to the quickly changing demands of post-conflict societies. (USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives, funded at $70 million per year, has emerged as an increasingly common instrument for U.S. assistance in these situations.)

Despite these innovations, however, there is not yet a clear framework for assessing post-conflict situations and developing responses that will help build

capacities to manage social conflict more effectively. Programming decisions are driven by pressures to act quickly and seek targets of opportunity. Evaluations of specific programs are not always undertaken and are generally limited to the boundaries of specific projects. Despite the great interest in post-conflict situations, there is little evidence thus far of much strategic learning that will advance the effectiveness of donor programming.

Going beyond the search for root causes to examine social capital and how donor programs can deepen social capital offers the possibility of a more coherent and useful framework. More work needs to be done, however, to sharpen this instrument. Issues that require further examination include:

- Cost-effective and easily administered instruments for assessing the status of social capital, including its complexity, flexibility, and inclusiveness;

- Evaluative instruments to assess the impact of past donor programs (not based on the social capital analysis) and new ones (using the social capital analysis) to further illuminate differences in approaches and effectiveness;

- Examination of strategies to reverse the vicious circle of deteriorating social capital in situations where violent conflict has already erupted; and

- Exploration of whether there is a "point of no return" where violent conflict has so damaged social capital that it cannot be reconstructed or repaired.

These are not insignificant analytic challenges. However, a continued focus on targets of opportunity, with no underlying analytic framework of conflict management, or a focus on root causes, with the danger of exacerbating conflict and impoverishing social capital, seems to be less attractive. For all of its difficulties, the social capital perspective does appear to offer the donor community what it badly needs: a way to get a handle on dealing with violent conflict and post-conflict societies. ◆

FINDING A ROLE FOR MICROCREDIT IN POST-CONFLICT RECONSTRUCTION

by Joan C. Parker

As a conflict ends, relief and development teams arrive and survey the scene, taking stock of physical assets and human capital that will serve as the base for reconstruction. They also take note of the steep challenges: continued insecurity, distrust and societal fracturing, and the formidable task of demobilizing and reintegrating combatants.

In this scene, jump-starting economic activity and normal business interactions becomes a central goal, not only to rebuild communities but also to strengthen the fragile social fabric by building common goals. One tool increasingly popular in post-conflict economic reconstruction is microcredit—small loans to poor households to spark or expand economic activity.

This article presents three brief scenarios to explore this issue. The first scenario examines demobilized combatants who have not naturally reintegrated into nonmilitary society. The second scenario explores microcredit for refugee populations who remain outside their country of origin. The third examines a community made up of returnees and those who remained during the period of conflict. Can microcredit work for all of these populations? And where is it most—and least—appropriate?

Scenario 1

Imagine the negotiated end of a 10-year internal conflict where political leaders are looking for ways to reintegrate combatants into the nonmilitary community and economy. In this scenario, ex-combatants are offered business loans in return for turning in their weapons. The program is managed through a special loan window of a local microcredit institution. Those who come to the program are likely to have little experience in business, and the business plans they present have little viability. The most skilled ex-combatants have most likely been given jobs in the civil service or military, or they may have already transitioned back into preconflict livelihoods. In short, the majority of those who participate are poor credit risks. Even setting aside the unfortunate result for the microcredit institution, is it good development practice to burden ex-combatants with debt they cannot manage?

Microcredit "sound practices" provide insights to assess this situation. Worldwide, the majority of loan programs require borrowers to have at least six months of business experience before they qualify for a loan. This requirement reduces the program's risk to business failures. What's more, this requirement identifies entrepreneurs who are capable of managing basic business functions and are likely to be able to manage additional capital for business success and loan repayment. Most loan programs targeted at ex-combatants lift this requirement, not only placing the microcredit program in jeopardy but also failing to provide the bulk of ex-combatants with the services they need. Indeed, after many extended conflicts, ex-combatants are likely to require some mix of psychosocial counseling, business skill training, and jobs in which to learn nonmilitary work skills and habits. In some cases, transfer payments—in the form of pensions or a start-up grant—may be a more honest and appropriate tool than a business loan for those leaving long military service. In the case of the Organization of International Migration (OIM) and UNDP in Congo/Brazzaville, for example, an arms-for-microcredit intervention for ex-combatants was quickly replaced with a skills training and job placement approach. Some of these ex-combatants later transitioned to self-employment and microcredit.[1]

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[1] E-mail correspondence with Maximo Halty, OIM, Congo/Brazzaville, March 2001.

Of course, there are exceptions. In short-lived con-flicts, ex-combatants may be able to return to civil-ian lives that included businesses and that can benefit from an infusion of capital. In agricultural communities, ex-combatants may be able to return to agricultural production; in that case, an agri-cultural loan (with other technical support) may provide a critical leg up.

Finally, there is some evidence that ex-combatants may transition into business and borrowing more successfully if they are fully integrated into micro-credit programs with noncombatants rather than treated as a special target group. First, integration may break the mentality of special privileges; second, it may provide an opportunity for them to observe sound business behavior and to learn how to manage money.

Scenario 2

The second scenario reflects an ongoing conflict, or a group of people in a refugee camp who have been unable to return to their country since the conflict ended. Imagine a large refugee settlement, positioned in an isolated area of a neighboring country. The camp is served by humanitarian assistance programs, and informal markets have sprung up within the camp to trade handouts for money to buy what they really need. Outside the camp, local laws may prohibit the refugees from owning land or holding jobs.

As with the first scenario, microfinance basics pro-vide guidance. Microloans provide a cash infusion into a cash-based economy to borrowers with suffi-cient economic stability to use the loan as an invest-ment or as a short-term bridge until other resources appear. Refugee camps often break these rules: many have barter-based economies, they are often pop-ulated by highly vulnerable people, and—at least initially—there is often a dearth of economic invest-ment opportunities. As a result, some argue that the most critical financial services in a refugee camp are

not loans but safe savings mechanisms to protect the cash that refugees carry with them and must guard within a camp setting.[2]

Stability and social cohesion—two critical assets in standard microcredit programs—are often cited as limiting factors for credit interventions in a refu-gee camp. The fear is that traditional microcredit repayment incentives based on physical stability and social cohesion may fail, such as "step lending" (the promise of a larger loan in the future if one pays this loan on time and in full) or "group lending" (in which the program makes groups of borrowers responsible should any one borrower default).

Despite the obvious higher risks inherent in this setting, some camp-based programs report that ref-ugees can and do still manage to use and repay credit, as long as the program clearly communicates its expectations for repayment. Their incentives for repayment are twofold. First, microcredit links poorer refugees into the camp's internal market activities, which may be a critical survival mech-anism for a significant (but unknown) period of time. Second, refugees may have an interest in the program following them with services when they eventually return home, providing an incentive for clients to remain in good standing within the camps.

Well-run refugee-based microcredit programs respond to these realities by limiting their expecta-tions of permanence and scale relative to non-camp environments, but not lowering their expectations of client performance (specifically, for full, on-time repayment). For example, Christian Outreach implemented a microcredit activity within a refugee camp in northwest Tanzania. Although it did not aim to become a permanent institution, the program showed high loan repayment rates, in part because of the interest of refugees to have the program follow them with services back to Rwanda.[3]

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[2] E-mail exchange with Daniel Sellers, consultant on post-conflict and post-disaster microfinance, April 2002.
[3] E-mail discussion with Richard Reynolds of World Vision International, June 2002.

Scenario 3

Picture a community that is gradually reforming. Many displaced families are returning to their communities and land and beginning to rebuild their homes and livelihoods. Some of these families have assets—land, homes, or physical assets—and are replanting their fields. Trade activity is seen at local markets, where people are trading small foodstuffs and consumer products. Is this a context in which microcredit can work?

A reconstituted community provides one of the best contexts for post-conflict microcredit. Community members are rebuilding their lives and livelihoods and are engaged in an increasingly cash economy. In such a context, a cash infusion—if properly structured—can provide a useful input into the reconstruction and development process. Starting small, a microcredit program can strive for two goals: (1) making appropriate credit products available to those who can use them without becoming over-indebted, while (2) establishing a stable, well-structured program that can grow alongside an emerging economy.

To succeed, program staff need significant microcredit skill, combined with the patience to develop a program slowly according to a changing environment. Program risks and costs will inevitably be higher than those incurred in a nonconflict area because of the higher costs of security, damaged or limited infrastructure, a scarce skilled work force, and the threat of inflation. In this context, the first task is to design credit products that fit the emerging needs of the population and price them to cover cost and inflation to avoid decapitalization of the program. Along with strict requirements for repayment, these features will ensure that the microcredit program is useful to clients, credible, and financially sustainable and that it can expand as the economy picks up speed. Perhaps surprisingly, setting interest rates on a market basis may actually increase the program's credibility with the local population. In ACLEDA in Cambodia, for example, Peter Kooi

reported, "Our repayment rate improved dramatically in the 1990s when we significantly increased our interest rates. Our clients told us, 'Now we know that you are serious and will be around for a long time.'"[4] A final tenet of sound post-conflict microcredit is to remain apolitical and ensure that credit is accessible to all segments of the community, not limited to returnees only or members of particular ethnic groups.

Three Lessons

The three scenarios described above, gleaned from real cases around the world, illustrate three key lessons on microcredit in post-conflict environments:

- Post-conflict microcredit requires a detailed knowledge of sound practices and principles of microcredit in general. This knowledge will help practitioners avoid situations in which microcredit is unlikely to succeed. Where microcredit can work, this knowledge ensures that a useful, sustainable service is provided to borrowers.

- Post-conflict microcredit is likely to yield smaller results than nonconflict microcredit. The costs and risks of programs will be higher, whereas program growth may be slower. From an efficiency standpoint, this means that it will cost more to serve each borrower in a post-conflict environment, at least in the medium term.

- Would-be clients' needs and realities must come first. Every post-conflict situation should start with the question: "Is this community in a position to use credit effectively, or is such a program more likely to lead to few benefits and increased indebtedness?" In short, the appeal of the microcredit approach—that it is a sustainable institutional model—must not overshadow the population's needs, and microcredit should be discarded when it is inappropriate. ◆

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[4] Microfinance Following Conflict Technical Brief #5, "Searching for Differences: Microfinance Following Conflict v. Other Environments," Microenterprise Best Practices Project, Bethesda, Maryland: Development Alternatives, Inc., September 2001 (http://www.mip.org/pubs/mbp-def.htm).

DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS, POVERTY ALLEVIATION, AND WAR-TORN SOCIETIES

by David A. Pottebaum

Like a sudden downpour, vast amounts of money are flooding into reconstruction programs in countries emerging from conflict. Cambodia received nearly $2 billion in overseas development assistance between 1992 and 1996. Bosnia received more than $4 billion between 1994 and 1998. Afghanistan and Sierra Leone are next. Such large sums streaming into these impoverished and war-affected countries are often like much awaited rain that turns into a flood and, ultimately, brings little relief, perhaps even harm. At best, such a torrent is less useful than steady, light showers that seep into the soil.

POLICY MAKERS AND PLANNERS MUST UNDERSTAND THE LINKS BETWEEN POVERTY AND VIOLENT CONFLICT.

Despite this largess, governments, donor countries, and international organizations must still work to ensure the efficient use of development assistance and to direct aid to people who need it at the grassroots level. Water must be directed into the soil rather than allowed to run off and carry away the very nutrients intended to enrich the earth.

Policy makers and planners in war-affected countries draw upon a range of principles and best practices when designing and implementing development and poverty alleviation programs. Such vision comes mostly from program experience in stable societies, where macroeconomic policies are relatively stable, civil servants can address and act on poverty issues, and government has legitimate control. In such environments, individuals can work and invest with some reasonable hope for reward.

This is not the case, unfortunately, for many developing countries today. These countries are involved in or emerging from internal conflicts that have divided their populations and destabilized the national social, economic, and political climates.

Links between Poverty and Conflict

Economic decline, low income, and competition over scarce resources are among the chief socioeconomic causes of war. As minor conflicts erupt, the delivery of what already might be meager assistance to impoverished regions often slows dramatically. As the conflict intensifies, assistance to these areas typically stops entirely, resulting in increased inequality. As a result, living conditions deteriorate and people become poorer, provoking even more conflict.

Policy makers and planners must understand the links between poverty and violent conflict, and recognize that development assistance can cause harm as well as good. Properly designed development programs can facilitate the transition from war to peace and accelerate the rebuilding of society. Poorly designed programs can destabilize fragile societies and exacerbate conditions among the poor.

What do experiences from stable societies teach us about how to design and implement development programs? Are new principles required for war-torn societies? A UNDP program in Cambodia is one example of a post-conflict development program that may answer these questions and illustrate some best practices for externally financed and managed development programs in war-affected countries.

The UNDP CARERE Program

Cambodia's decades-long civil war formally ended with the signing of the Paris Peace Agreement in October 1991. During the previous 21 years, Cambodia experienced extensive bombing, brutal repression, and international isolation that devastated the country. The peace agreement called for

the U.N. to administer the country until the people elected a representative government. During the run-up to the election, soldiers were to be demobilized, and a U.N. peace-keeping force of 15,000 troops was to help bring peace and stability to the countryside.

The UNDP Cambodia Resettlement and Reintegration (CARERE) Program was initiated in 1992 as part of the U.N.'s overall involvement in the rehabilitation of Cambodia. This area development program was designed to bridge short-term relief activities to long-term development initiatives planned for the country. The poorest communities and families were to receive program assistance. The UNDP and UNHCR agreed to share responsibilities for the overall task. UNHCR was the lead agency for the repatriation from Thailand and initial resettlement in Cambodia of 360,000 refugees, while UNDP reintegrated the returning population into local communities and provided for their immediate development needs. The initial phase of the CARERE program lasted four years, with total budget expenditures of more than $27 million.

Politics, Poverty Indicators, And Target Zone Selection

The CARERE program initially focused on northwest Cambodia for four principal reasons. First, a decade of civil war had destroyed the local infrastructure and undermined production. Second, heavy, continuous fighting had made it impossible for central government development and welfare programs to operate in the region during the preceding two decades, leaving the regional population in great need of development assistance. Third, most of the refugees in Thai border camps had registered to settle in the region and nearly all of the internally displaced citizens in Cambodia were living and likely to settle there. Fourth, each of the three guerrilla factions that fought the Phnom Penh government during the civil war controlled land in the region.

The planned influx of refugees and internally displaced persons into already poor communities threatened to heighten the competition and conflict over scarce resources. In the northwest, provincial populations had grown by as much as 25 percent because of the resettlement program. Moreover, the influx of people threatened the planned decommissioning of rebel soldiers in the region. Such uncertainty concerned U.N. officials as well as the returnees and communities in which they were to settle. A Cambodian Red Cross survey of returnees and local people revealed that returnees feared they would be worse off in Cambodia and unable to make a living in their new communities. They also feared not receiving full recognition as citizens of the country. Local residents also felt insecure. They did not trust the returnees. They thought returnees would be wealthier and that competition for jobs and government services would increase. Clearly, such beliefs seriously threatened the success of reintegration as well as the overall peace agreement.

Targeting the northwestern provinces, planners developed a basic program framework. Based on U.N. experience in Central America, UNDP designed a multisectoral program that initially emphasized rehabilitating infrastructure immediately and improving agricultural production. Community development, water and sanitation, and skills development programs were to build on the success of infrastructure and agriculture sector activities. Planners engaged local villages and communities in implementing the program, with minimal provincial government or factional control over program management and resources. The program was to be politically neutral, serving only the needs of poor rural communities and households.

Program staff began fieldwork by conducting surveys and working with local leaders of each political faction in selecting target zones and target groups. They followed a two-step process.

The first step involved listing all potential target areas, using the simple criteria that each region controlled by the four factions should benefit from program resources. This minimized the potential alienation of any political faction, which could jeopardize the entire program. Faction leaders put together lists of villages or communes (subdistricts)

they felt should receive program resources. UNDP provided guidance by suggesting that initial selection should be based on the size of population, relative isolation, and perceived poverty in the area. Flexible selection criteria enabled the full participation of all four factions in the early stages of program development, helping ensure their commitment to—and political investment in—overall program goals and objectives.

The selection of final target zones—the second step of this process—also involved the participation of local faction leadership. Other criteria used to narrow the original list to areas most in need of assistance included standard indicators of poverty, such as average landholdings and land quality, access to markets, percentage of women-headed households, and number of disabled in the population. Another criterion was the number of returnees and internally displaced persons to be settled in the proposed target zone (a high percentage of returnees or internally displaced persons in the post-resettlement population increased the likelihood that an area would become a target zone). This criterion was particularly important because of the reintegration and reconciliation objectives of the program. Demobilized soldiers were not included in the selection criteria because they were to receive support through the U.N. Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC). Nonetheless, demobilized soldiers who settled in program target zones were eligible as residents to participate in program activities and receive program assistance.

An informal committee of representatives from each faction and from local and international organizations working in the region assisted in the final selection of target areas. This participatory, cross-faction decision-making process led to formal agreement by all parties that households in these areas should benefit directly from CARERE program resources. With this agreement in hand, program activities began.

Without hard socioeconomic data, and given the politically charged atmosphere of the time, the selection of final target zones was not an easy task to complete and errors were likely committed. Staff used rapid appraisal techniques, held meetings with local leaders, and participated in intense discussions with national and international relief and development authorities. Decision makers explicitly recognized the fragility of the peace-building process throughout the selection process. They gave immediate political considerations precedence over program efficiency or long-term development concerns.

Program Assistance and Delivery Mechanisms

One immediate objective of the CARERE program was to assist in the resettlement and reintegration of refugees, internally displaced persons, and demobilized soldiers through the initiation of infrastructure reconstruction and other activities that would lay the foundation for poverty alleviation and long-term development activities. To facilitate this, CARERE formulated a basic assistance package for delivery to each target zone. The core of the assistance package included labor-based rural works activities (for example, road and irrigation system construction or rehabilitation), agriculture supplies and related training, and small business training. CARERE staff adjusted this package to meet the specific needs of each target area. Various mechanisms helped get program resources to people and communities that needed them. For example, poverty-based indicators guided the selection of participants for each activity; this minimized the transfer of resources to nonpoor or nonreturnee households. These indicators helped planners decide where to build roads, who should build them, and which families should receive agriculture supplies.

Self-screening mechanisms encouraged the participation of poor households. For example, manual laborers received cash wages of $1 per day—slightly below the average wage paid to unskilled workers in the region. Thus, skilled individuals with higher incomes were unlikely to participate.

Local leaders worked with program staff to compile lists of workers eligible to participate in road construction activities; these lists, which included equal numbers of local and returnee persons, sought to maximize the participation of women.

THE MOST IMPORTANT PRINCIPLE IS THAT ALL PROGRAM ACTIVITIES MUST ENCOURAGE POLITICAL STABILITY.

What does the CARERE program teach us about principles and best practices for post-conflict development programs? Are these principles specific to Cambodia, or are they applicable to other war-torn country situations?

Macrolevel Principles

The most important principle is that all program activities must encourage political stability. During program design and implementation, UNDP gave political stability priority over other objectives. In an environment where rumors of the breakdown of the peace agreement were common, there was little time for concern regarding program efficiency in reaching the poorest of the poor. The importance of political considerations in post-conflict situations is clear, and practitioners now commonly assess the extent to which standard development recipes apply to post-conflict settings by evaluating how they interact with peace-building and reconstruction agendas. Furthermore, the most important element in rebuilding war-torn societies is political rehabilitation. Economic and social rehabilitation cannot occur without political stability and legitimate political authority.

Another principle is that program management must be politically neutral and operationally independent. Neutrality and independence ensures that program management responds quickly to unforeseen changes in the political environment and supports the peace-building efforts of communities on all sides of the conflict. The political independence of the CARERE program was a structural feature of the program because it was a U.N. operation. Consequently, the program was perceived by the target population as neutral. In contrast, there was no operational independence at the beginning of the program. Rather, management gained operational independence by working closely with each faction in the selection of target zones, the formulation of the basic assistance package, and the design of assistance delivery methods. Once there was understanding and agreement by all sides on these issues,

CARERE was free to act independently of faction authorities. CARERE staff thus had great access to target areas and groups, helping ensure that beneficiaries received and used program resources. The program also secured internal operational independence after activities started. UNDP senior management gave CARERE staff great freedom to make critical decisions regarding program policies and strategies. Major operational decisions did not have to filter through layers of bureaucracy. Instead, Phnom Penh or provincial office staff made these decisions. Much of CARERE's success stemmed from this lack of bureaucratic layering.

Frequent monitoring and evaluation is yet another macrolevel principle. Practitioners in conflict-laden environments often neglect monitoring and evaluation, particularly of the end use of program resources. Programs commonly dedicate too few resource to quality monitoring in war and conflict situations and base their assessments on hope and assumption rather than reality. Monitoring and evaluation should answer questions regarding not only who is receiving and how they are using program resources, but, more important, whether program activities are increasing or decreasing the risk of renewed conflict. Inadequate monitoring can lead to serious diversions of resources to military groups and, thus, can exacerbate local and regional political tension. The CARERE program emphasized frequent monitoring and evaluation from the very beginning. Field-based staff spent a lot of time in villages, interacting with beneficiaries, local leaders, and regional authorities. Senior program managers felt that each field trip was important to overall program management. Intensive and near continuous monitoring of resource delivery and use left little opportunity for the diversion of resources from their intended beneficiaries. Senior staff met daily, and all staff met weekly, to analyze information from the field. Given the potential danger to CARERE staff monitoring activities in the field, local organizations played a crucial role in providing information on the outcome of program activities. These local organiza-

MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF CARERE ACTIVITIES WERE TRANSPARENT IN THAT ALL FACTION LEADERS KNEW OF, AND AGREED TO, THE DAILY PRESENCE OF CARERE STAFF AT PROJECT SITES.

tions were an invaluable source of information from otherwise inaccessible areas that enabled independent assessments of progress in dangerous locales.

Monitoring and evaluation also must be transparent. Transparency diminishes the potential for political conflict and nourishes an environment of mutual trust and support. Monitoring and evaluation of CARERE activities were transparent in that all faction leaders knew of, and agreed to, the daily presence of CARERE staff at project sites. They understood that diminished access would lead to fewer resources being directed to their regions and populations. Monitoring was transparent because program staff and faction leaders shared information—each faction knew what the others were doing and what their problems and successes were.

Finally, nontarget groups should receive some program resources. Negotiations with faction authorities in Cambodia led to the inclusion of local "poor" in program activities at rates equal to returnees, women-headed households, and the disabled. Many of these local poor households would not qualify for assistance using strict definitions commonly used in more stable environments. Inclusion of these groups provides several benefits. First, providing resources to politically powerful constituents of local authorities helps ensure a degree of political stability. Second, by receiving program resources, this constituency gains a stake in the continuation and success of the overall program. They will not, then, allow faction leaders to divert large amounts of resources for personal use. Finally, inclusion of a broad base of households facilitates extensive field monitoring of program activities, including delivery and use of program resources. This maximizes the amount of aid channeled to those most in need and helps minimize extortion of aid from the poor by local authorities or military elite.

Village-Level Considerations

As with the case at the macro level, political considerations must take precedence in the field over all other considerations. The focus in the village is on political stability among households and communities that might be divided on many fronts. Although the potential for conflict at the village level may not be readily apparent when viewed from a national or regional perspective, its potential to disrupt program operations is real, and mechanisms to reduce village-level instability must be part of program design. Divisions in tension-laden communities based on ethnic, religious, or political differences can easily fracture into divisions based on who became refugees and who stayed behind or on who receives assistance and who does not. Such divisions can undercut community cooperation and support and diminish social and economic welfare. It is crucial that planners design targeting and delivery mechanisms that do not create such subdivisions. The CARERE program targeted both poor local and returnee households to minimize potential conflict between local and returnee groups. Whenever possible, activities benefited entire communities. Two examples of such interventions include road construction and cooperative agriculture enterprises (for example, rice banks and duck-raising groups). Whenever possible, participating communities designed and implemented development interventions. This encouraged local ownership of project outputs and, more important, promoted the development of an environment of mutual support and assistance in these war-affected areas.

Another important principle is that women should participate in all aspects of the program cycle, and activities should target them from the beginning of the program. Women commonly receive assistance because they are guardians of their families and, as case studies often show, they tend to do more for

the good of the family than men with aid transfers to the household. In war-torn societies, directing program resources to women also serves to erode the power of local authorities and military officials—typically a male-dominated realm. These elites are commonly the source of the conflict, and perpetuation of their power may perpetuate local conflict. By providing resources to women, programs can offer them the chance to break this power structure. Unfortunately, the transfer of resources directly to women-headed households and women in poor households is not easy to accomplish. In Cambodia, local leaders felt that women did not need to participate in training or labor-based work activities. Because they shared the same cultural background, local staff found it difficult to argue with these sentiments. The CARERE program facilitated the participation of women through constant discussion with and persuasion of local leaders, along with training of local staff.

Program activities also should support and strengthen alternative social structures (such as non-military or nonfaction leadership). Support provided to family, religious, and other local networks can reduce local tensions and address the social or healing needs of war-affected communities. Moreover, close relations with these groups can provide program managers with a source of information and advice independent of regional military and faction power structures. The CARERE program facilitated and encouraged religious ceremonies to open reconstructed roads and sought the contributions of village elders and religious leaders throughout program implementation. CARERE also supported indigenous local structures such as farmer groups involved in rice banks and animal-raising schemes and women's silk production cooperatives. Households involved in these groups helped design project activities, participated in program evaluations, and provided valuable feedback on the specific projects in which they directly participated, as well as on other areas of CARERE support.

Finally, project staff must maintain daily contact with faction leaders. This maximizes the flow of information among and between factions and project staff and improves coordination among these groups. CARERE emphasized daily engagement—regular meetings and briefings and frequent field trips—to change the feelings of mistrust and suspicion that existed between factions. Daily field trips to project sites nearly always involved meetings between faction representatives and travel by these representatives into rival territory—something that had not occurred during the 21-year conflict in Cambodia. Through exchange visits, faction leaders witnessed firsthand the work of other factions. The visits fostered interfaction information exchange and cooperation. In some cases, the factions even established trade-link cross-faction meetings.

The Priority of Political Considerations

Policy makers and planners working in war-torn countries face diverse and complex issues when designing multisectoral development interventions. Their work requires extensive communication with and understanding of many local, regional, and national actors. Unfortunately, there is no blueprint to follow in this difficult task. Returning to one of the central questions of this paper, Are the development programming experiences of stable societies relevant to war-torn societies?

Experience in stable societies suggests that policy makers and planners must consider several important issues when designing development programs, including the root causes of poverty, the costs of beneficiary participation, incentives, and political costs. Case studies do not stress the importance of one issue over another. Relative importance will most likely vary among settings. What seems clear is that failure to address one of these issues during project design or implementation is unlikely to have impact beyond the efficiency or effectiveness of the development program itself and the beneficiaries it intends to serve.

ANOTHER IMPORTANT PRINCIPLE IS THAT WOMEN SHOULD PARTICIPATE IN ALL ASPECTS OF THE PROGRAM CYCLE.

Conclusions from field experience in war-torn countries point to a somewhat different set of key issues. Costs of participation, incentives, and understanding of the root causes of poverty are still important, but clearly less so than political considerations. The outcome of ignoring political costs in stable societies might include a cancelled program, a politician voted out of office, or reduced program efficiency. The outcome in a war-torn country, in contrast, might be an increase in violence or a return to war. Such events will clearly affect more than just the poverty alleviation program and its intended beneficiaries—they will spread to and harm all of society. Thus, political considerations must take precedence over all other issues in war-torn societies. Planners must organize program management, design monitoring and evaluation systems, and select target groups keeping in mind their potential for increasing political tension and conflict in the program area. Although analysts might argue that similar conditions hold for stable societies, the risks involved are much starker in war-torn societies.

What about village-level issues and principles? Here, as at the macro level, the key issues in stable societies are important in war-torn societies, as well. However, once again, political considerations must receive priority over other issues. It is equally important that policy makers and planners consider the impact of war and conflict on people and communities. Insecurity and instability brought about by war change the way people and communities interact and function. In countries like Cambodia, conflict is so chronic that people have incorporated these changes into their economic and social lives. Policy makers and planners in war-affected countries must recognize such changes in behavior and design poverty alleviation programs that not only deal with the economic requirements of the poor but also help mend relations and build dignity, trust, and cooperation between individuals and communities.

Clearly, development programs and poverty alleviation interventions in war-affected societies must adhere to the principles and best practices discerned from experiences in stable countries. However, it is vital that policy makers and planners design and implement programs with close regard for their potential negative effects—increased risk of violence and insecurity, exacerbation of community divisions, and legitimization of corrupt and violent power structures. Policy makers and planners must design programs with an understanding of the complex and fragile environment of post-conflict societies and of the urgent need to build trust and cooperation between divided individuals and communities. Only then will post-conflict development programs act as a light shower after a long drought and prepare the way for lasting peace and sustainable development. ◆

MILITARY REFORM AND CIVILIAN CONFLICT IN INDONESIA

by Marcus Mietzner

Much of Indonesia's recent religious, ethnic, and political violence is directly or indirectly related to the way its armed forces handle the conflict. A professional military and police force can, in theory, help prevent conflict. An undisciplined or politicized security force, such as Indonesia's, however, often not only fails to control the violence but actively takes part in it. Consequently, comprehensive security-sector reform, and military reform in particular, should be an inseparable element of any conflict-resolution strategy. Such reform should establish clear guidelines for the armed forces in terms of decision-making hierarchy, field procedures, and political interaction.

In Indonesia, the downfall of the New Order regime in 1998 raised high expectations for a drastic reduction of the military's political influence. Four years later, however, the armed forces remain a major political power, mostly because of civilian failures to curb the military's might. What were the political realities behind the painfully slow and often stalled process of reforming the Indonesian military? How have civil-military relations evolved in the post-authoritarian era? And what can be done to overcome the major obstacles to depoliticizing the armed forces and establishing effective civilian control?

The Military and the New Order

Indonesia's armed forces, Tentara Nasional Indonesia (TNI), have traditionally played a central role in the country's politics. In the 1950s and early 1960s, during Indonesia's failed attempt at parliamentary democracy and President Sukarno's authoritarian, pro-Communist rule, military leaders managed to consolidate the armed forces politically and economically. The military took over Dutch enterprises nationalized by Sukarno, giving TNI a solid foundation for self-subsistence and making it largely independent from civilian control.

After Sukarno's reign ended in chaos in late 1965, the army seized control in what many believe was a military coup disguised behind the veil of a Communist insurrection. Suharto, commander of the army's strategic reserve at the time of the coup, became Indonesia's second president, in 1967. With Suharto's accession to power, the armed forces took over a large share of civilian posts, securing key governorships, ministries, and ambassadorships.

The military consolidated its political gains through a command structure based on a tight network of territorial units. From the central government down to the village government level, the army established an effective shadow administration. Each civilian government institution had a military counterpart, which obliged the civilian administration to seek military approval before signing off on business projects and making political decisions.

Contending that political opposition endangered economic development, the armed forces oppressed virtually all independent political activity. By the mid-1980s, the New Order had forced Indonesia's civil society into a corset of state-sanctioned, standardized political rules and restrictions. The economy boomed, while the military's grip on power remained largely unchallenged.

The economic crisis of 1997 changed everything. Suharto's regime lost the foundation that had held it up for more than 30 years. Malfeasance and mismanagement within the president's circle of family and friends, long tolerated during decades of growth, now became the focus of public protest. In the end, even TNI turned against its mentor and protector, fearing that the doomed ruler would drag the institution with him into a political abyss. After a generation at the helm, TNI was confronted with an uncertain future.

Post-Suharto Politics: Pressure for Reform

The post-Suharto era began with the public demanding the reform of the armed forces. The newly independent press played a major role in this campaign. Newspapers and magazines featured articles about past human rights violations in Aceh, Papua, and other troubled regions.

This unprecedented criticism appeared to irritate the leaders of the armed forces. They announced hastily drafted changes to their ideology. But behind the scenes, the TNI elite fought desperately to preserve its political and economic privileges.

Unwittingly, civilian politicians helped the military maintain its power. These politicians, used to forging alliances with the armed forces in an effort to outflank one another, showed little inclination to do away with TNI's political role. In early 1999, TNI was granted 38 uncontested seats in the new Parliament. Because one seat represented a constituency of 400,000 and TNI itself was only 300,000 strong, this concession was hugely disproportional.

Although many believed that nonelected TNI delegates reflected the price the country had to pay for a peaceful transition, they also pointed to a shifting paradigm: civil-military relations were no longer marked by a conflict between a dominant state and an oppressed civil society. In post-Suharto Indonesia, major differences within civil society itself began to shape the political discourse.

Obstacles to Military Reform

From the civilian side, the long-standing rivalry between Indonesia's religious and political constituencies turned out to be the most serious obstacle to military reform.

The military used the same divide-and-conquer strategy that Suharto had employed so well during his heyday. In their fight to gain economic and political hegemony, Indonesia's religious and political groups courted the support of the armed forces. What's more, because of this interconstituency conflict, the armed forces were able to claim the role

of mediator between apparently irreconcilable civilian forces. The concessions for this role came in the form of reduced demands for internal military reform and the almost complete absence of calls for the investigation of past human rights abuses. The sharp criticism of TNI of the early post-Suharto period dissipated as soon as the struggle for national leadership entered its decisive phase.

Civilian infighting wasn't the only factor that slowed military reform. Most civilian politicians found themselves unable to discuss military matters with sufficient expertise. As a result, the civilian elite not only failed to establish effective control mechanisms over the armed forces, but it also had little knowledge about or interest in these mechanisms in the first place.

A third obstacle to military reform was indifference at the grassroots level. Most rural Indonesians continued to view the armed forces as the best organization to deal with a variety of issues, ranging from helping during natural disasters to upholding law and order. Confronted with corrupt and inefficient police, local communities had no time for sophisticated debates about the military's structural problems.

The military, for its part, used civilian polarization, incompetence, and indifference to block reform and defend its large array of vested interests. Reform jeopardized the military-run enterprises that had made TNI largely independent of state funding. TNI fiercely resisted giving up these businesses, and it frequently included this caveat in the list of concessions requested from civilian forces in return for its political support. Moreover, senior officers had profited immensely from the armed forces' political role, collecting additional salaries and other material perquisites from businessmen and politicians. Although most had salaries of less than $1,000 a month, high-ranking officers were able to purchase houses in luxurious residential areas and send their children abroad to study. The specter of reform threatened not only TNI's political role but also the lifestyle of its officer corps.

TNI's desire to preserve its privileges was coupled with a genuine ideological conservatism. Indoctrinated for five decades as the guardians of Indonesian nationalism, officers found it hard to accept a state of affairs that saw TNI as a mere security force at the disposal of civilian decision makers. Many military leaders firmly believed that without their guidance the country would fall apart.

OTI's Civil-Military Relations Project

Based on this analysis of the obstacles to military reform, USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) initiated a project on civil-military relations. Since 1999, the Indonesia Transition Initiative, implemented by DAI under the Support Which Implements Fast Transitions (SWIFT) Indefinite Quantity Contract, has tried to create an institutional framework for a modernized military built on the principles of professionalism, transparency, and civilian supremacy.

The project works at the grassroots, university and NGO, and elite levels. To date, the SWIFT project has achieved varying degrees of success at the three levels.

Indifference at the Grassroots Level

Perhaps not surprisingly, the project has made the least progress at the grassroots level. SWIFT-funded research revealed that people living outside the country's major cities displayed a shocking level of indifference toward the military's presence in their villages. Arguing that the military has become an inseparable part of local government and that the withdrawal of troops would leave an intolerable gap, most Indonesians see no problem in TNI's maintaining its territorial command structure. It is this command structure, however, that forms the basis of TNI's grip on politics, business, and security.

SWIFT pilot projects found it difficult to overcome this indifference. Even if the pilots ended successfully, as many did, their impact was limited to the local communities in which pilot activities took place. Some SWIFT grantees were able to turn initially reluctant village communities into enthusi-

astic debaters of military issues, but these results were achieved only through direct contact between trainers and the target constituencies. A nationally applied program to engage villages in the discussion on military reform would require a massive amount of coordination, time, and funding—in short, at a level beyond SWIFT's scope.

In the four years since Suharto's departure, public concern about the dangers of militarism not only has not risen, but it actually appears to be declining. Faced with intercommunity clashes, rampant crime, incompetent police, and corrupt local governments, many Indonesians view the military as the lesser of two evils. Although they recognize that TNI is as corrupt as any other state institution, they nevertheless appreciate the military's reliability.

Another reason people at the grassroots level remain indifferent is that the country's intellectual elite has not become an effective advocate for political change. Living and working in the country's major urban areas, this elite tends to congregate in universities and NGOs that have no real access to or influence upon the rural masses. The intellectual elite has generally been unable to serve as a communication link between people in the villages and the government. Instead, universities and NGOs have played a much stronger role in formulating policy and facilitating dialogue between military and civilian elites.

Recognizing these strengths and weaknesses, the project decided to use NGOs and universities as vehicles of civilian participation in institutional military reform rather than as tools for grassroots education. The approach has focused on three areas: defense-related legislation, reform of the territorial command system, and revision of TNI doctrine.

Defense-Related Legislation. In 2001, the project assisted in drafting defense- and security-related legislation. The old legislation imposed by the New Order had cemented TNI's status as a political force and therefore had to be rewritten. The project assembled a team of prominent civilian military experts who drafted a new state defense

bill, challenging the official draft produced by TNI headquarters. After intensive discussions with the Minister of Defense, the team's version was accepted as the official government draft sent to Parliament for deliberation. Subsequently, the drafting team brought together politicians from various parties in an effort to form a united civilian vision of how the law should regulate defense matters. Even the military, initially uneasy about its own draft being dropped in favor of a civilian version, agreed after several meetings with the team. As a result, deliberations in Parliament proceeded smoothly and the bill was accepted as an all-party compromise. This success ended decades of TNI domination of defense- and security-related legislation.

The participation of civilians in drafting defense legislation has created a model for future projects. What had been a coincidental sequence of circumstances appears to have become a more institutionalized mechanism. For the new Armed Forces Bill, scheduled for deliberation throughout 2002, TNI headquarters indicated that it will consult the SWIFT-funded team at a much earlier stage in the drafting process.

Reform of the Territorial Command System. The project's second major focus is the reform of TNI's territorial command system. Although the military will be out of the central and local parliaments by 2004, its sheer presence in the center of cities, towns, and villages gives it substantial political weight. Without the reform of TNI's territorial structure, the creation of new legislative frameworks for the armed forces is unlikely to have a significant impact on politics at the local level.

OTI has supported programs aimed at reforming the territorial system, ranging from research to policy advocacy at the highest political levels. TNI has been engaged in these programs, debating civilian concepts for reform and presenting its own case. By the end of 2001, TNI had agreed to abolish the three lowest levels of its territorial administration. Senior officers have even begun to think aloud about changing the nature of the command system from a territorial to a divisional structure, which would

move TNI out of local neighborhoods and into concentrated barracks at locations crucial for the country's defense.

Although full reform of the territorial system is still far off, largely because of the absence of grassroots pressure to change, TNI's offer to dismantle large parts of its network is a huge step in the right direction. Further discussions will be needed to finalize a sustainable concept for revising the system, and OTI is determined to remain engaged in the process.

Revision of TNI Doctrine. The third major component of the civil-military relations project is the revision of TNI's doctrinal orientation. The project supported civilian participation in rewriting TNI's doctrine, leading to the incorporation of universal concepts of human rights and democracy into a framework previously dominated by references to nationalist heroism. For the first time in Indonesia's history, civilians actively participated in drafting TNI's internal guidelines.

The engagement of senior TNI officers in OTI's programs was a major precondition for its success. Although adhering strictly to congressional restrictions regarding U.S. government funding for TNI and its officers, the project invited military leaders to participate in civilian-dominated events and listen to civilian presentations. The engagement opened access to the decision-making process within TNI and the Indonesian Department of Defense.

A Work in Progress

The process of modernizing and professionalizing the Indonesian armed forces has moved slowly. Politicking, military conservatism, and civilian backbiting have obstructed the process. Despite these obstacles, USAID's Indonesia Transition Initiative has been able to help the country take some initial steps in the right direction. Military reform in Indonesia likely will remain a work in progress for years to come, but civilians are now better prepared to take on a more prominent role in the reform process. ◆

WHY GENDER MATTERS
WHEN THE DUST SETTLES

by Annette C. Sheckler

For the past 10 months, much of the world's attention has been focused on Afghanistan. A country of mostly rural people divided into some 20 ethnic groups, Afghanistan is one of the least developed countries in the world. Its long history of foreign occupation, ending with the withdrawal of Soviet troops in 1989, left behind a legacy of intolerance, conflict, and violence. The constant struggle for power in Afghanistan, along with a political culture based on the principle of "winner take all," created the conditions necessary to allow the ascendance of a group such as the Taliban.

The rise of the Taliban, a small fundamentalist Islamic group that ruled by terror, is a worst-case scenario of a failed state. For more than 20 years, Afghanistan has been at war. An estimated 1.5 million people have died as a direct result of the conflict, while another 5 million have fled as refugees to Iran and Pakistan. Much of the population is internally displaced. Afghanistan has the world's lowest life expectancy and literacy rates and the highest rates of infant, child, and maternal mortality. Chronic hunger has been a fact of life for the majority of the population for decades.

The September 11 attack on the United States by the Al Qaeda, a group sheltered and protected by the Taliban, has forced our attention toward not only defeating the terrorist network but also rebuilding the postwar Afghan state. And although there has been a great deal of discussion about who will govern during the post-conflict transition, equally important is how they will govern.

The focus of this article is not on rebuilding the Afghan state. Afghanistan is but one of several states that have failed in the past decade, including Somalia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the former Republic of Yugoslavia, to name a few. The defining characteristic of a failed state is the collapse of its institutions. Democratic institutions, in which there is relatively equal access to political, economic, and social resources, are a first-line defense against the intra- and interstate violence that gives rise to the inevitable conflict over scarce resources.

The purpose here is to emphasize the role of political, economic, and social institutions in democratic nation building as the main vehicles for ensuring more equitable access to resources and opportunities. And although ethnic, religious, and regional groups represent the more visible competing interests, gender is a core concern in democratic nation building.

Why Gender Matters

Many development practitioners remain confused about the meaning of the term "gender." It is important to distinguish between gender and sex. Sex refers to the biological difference between men and women. Gender is the socially constructed roles, rights, and responsibilities of men and women, boys and girls. The biological differences between men and women do not change. The social roles ascribed to men and women, however, do change and vary from place to place. Gender refers to the different attributes and opportunities associated with being a man or a woman.

In most societies, women have unequal access to political, economic, and social resources. From a development perspective, gender inequalities harm the health and well-being of the individual, the household, and the larger community. A wealth of data shows the negative impact gender inequalities have on economic productivity and efficiency. According to the World Bank, "By hindering the accumulation of human capital in the home and in

the labor market, and by systematically excluding women or men from access to resources, public services, or productive activities, gender discrimination diminishes an economy's capacity to grow and raise living standards."[1]

This "efficiency argument" for addressing gender disparities is especially important during the post-conflict transition period. In most post-conflict societies, women constitute the majority of the population, are heads of households, and are the productive base for restarting the economy. If the primary objective of post-conflict reconstruction and rehabilitation is to create an enabling environment for development, correcting gender disparities should be a major priority of donor assistance.

**The Impact of Conflict
On Women and Gender Roles**

Today's conflicts are more likely to take place within a country than across borders. Civil wars can be more destructive than interstate conflicts because the fighting takes place entirely within the territory of that country. In an intrastate conflict, physical infrastructure is destroyed, economic activity is disrupted, and untold numbers of people are killed or wounded. Left in the wake of violence are widespread population displacement, collapsed institutions, and far-reaching social polarization.

The impact of conflict on gender is both negative and transformatory. Women are more adversely affected by conflict than men. At the same time, the traditional roles and responsibilities of women and men are transformed to meet the immediate needs of their families and communities.

In recent conflicts, more than 90 percent of the casualties have been civilians—mainly women and children.[2] Women also are victims of sexual violence used as a weapon of war to inflict physical and psychological injury on the individual, family, and community. In El Salvador and Guatemala, women and girls were abducted and raped by soldiers, and in Bosnia and Rwanda, rape was used as an instrument of ethnic cleansing. In Sierra Leone, soldiers raped women and girls as a "punishment" for supporting a rival army. Sexual violence inflicts intense physical trauma, such as sexually transmitted diseases, that has far-reaching consequences for the victims. The psychological scars are deep and abiding. In many societies, rape stigmatizes the victim. Women and girls suffer from not only the physical wounds of sexual violence but also the psychological scars of shame that are reinforced by cultural and religious beliefs.

Conflict transforms gender roles within the household and the larger community. Because most combatants are men, women assume far greater responsibilities in their absence. A study conducted by USAID's Center for Development Information and Evaluation showed that "intrastate conflicts contributed to an increase in women-headed households in practically all six case study countries [Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cambodia, El Salvador, Georgia, Guatemala, and Rwanda]." This increase of women-headed households transforms not only the traditional roles but also the responsibilities of women and men. The burden that women must assume increases significantly, with many now responsible for ensuring the economic survival of their households.[3]

In many societies, women have no formal rights to land and property. As heads of households during and after periods of conflict, in the absence of male relatives, women are left with few means of sustainable livelihood. This leads to greater poverty at the household level. Children and the elderly become particularly vulnerable and may not recover from long periods of deprivation.

[1] *Engendering Development*, World Bank and Oxford University Press, 2001, pp. 10-11.
[2] *Post-Conflict Reconstruction: The Role of the World Bank*, 1998.
[3] U.S. Agency for International Development, "Women and Women's Organizations in Post-Conflict Societies," December 2000.

The case of women in post-genocide Rwanda illustrates this point. Immediately following the genocide, about one-third of all Rwandan households were headed by women. This was a 50 percent increase over women-headed households in 1992.[4] Customary law did not allow women to inherit their fathers' or husbands' property. Land rights were passed from father to son. Widows had access to their deceased husbands' property at the discretion of their in-laws. The already tenuous hold women-headed households had on economic survival was severely undermined by gender disparity in land and property rights.

Disparities between the physical health of men and women because of prolonged conflict are well documented. Women-headed households are the poorest of the poor. When food is scarce, women typically feed their families first. The exceptions are women refugees who have greater access to food, shelter, and health services. However, this situation is reversed after repatriation.

Although women are more affected by conflict than men, women should not be viewed merely as victims. Gender and roles are transformed during periods of conflict. The increase in women-headed households raises a woman's status within the family and larger community. In the absence of men, women assume leadership roles and take on new responsibilities. Through indigenous religious and social institutions, women provide the leadership and support for community-run food distribution, healthcare, childcare, education, and other public goods and services. It may surprise many that in Afghanistan, by the early 1990s, women made up nearly half the physicians and more than half of the teachers. Indeed, in traditional societies that narrowly circumscribe the role of women, conflict inevitably broadens women's

roles in the absence of men and the collapse of social norms and traditions.

During post-conflict transition, societies are given a window of opportunity to build on the accomplishments of women and institutionalize their gains in the new political, economic, and social order. Donors can play a critical role in a number of areas. They can ensure women's representation at the peace table, engendering constitutional rights and promoting women's political participation. They also can assist in reforming economic institutions to address gender disparities and provide material and technical assistance to support greater access for women and girls to healthcare and education.

> *Kabare sent someone to my home. He asked my relatives: "Why should she be chased from her father's land? What about all the work she has done? Are you going to pay her for all the work she has done since her youth?" "No," my nephew said, "she just has to go." They said no woman has ever inherited land.*
>
> Testimony by a Rwandan woman

Reconstruction and Rehabilitation: Challenges and Opportunities

Post-conflict reconstruction and rehabilitation are driven by variables atypical of the traditional development environment. Traditional development builds on a country's current capacity with a more predictable set of conditions. Post-conflict societies are fragile and unpredictable. To avert the ever-present danger of further conflict, it is essential to rebuild the institutional base of the country. Collapsed states with ruined economies require national institutions to deliver public goods and services. Improved political, economic, and social institutions are critical to short-term post-conflict reconstruction and longer-term develop-

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[4] U.S. Committee for Refugees, *Life after Death: Suspicion and Reintegration in Post-Genocide Rwanda*, February 1998, p. 39.

ment. Fundamental to rebuilding these institutions is ensuring gender equity as a basic right.

Political, economic, and social institutions largely determine men's and women's access to resources and opportunities. An important objective of post-conflict reconstruction should be to assist in creating institutions that are transparent, accountable, and equitable in allocating public assets and opportunities. Gender is a core issue in rebuilding institutions and establishing a foundation for equal rights and opportunities for men and women.

The Peace Process: Bringing Women to the Table

The first major challenge is facilitating the transition from war to a sustainable peace. The peace accord is only the first step in the long and arduous process of building and sustaining peace. Third-party states or international organizations typically broker peace accords. Sitting at the table are the combatants, despite the fact that women and children account for the vast majority of those affected by the conflict. When the formal agreements and institutional mechanisms for the peace accord are drawn up, it is essential that women take an active role in the process and that a gender perspective be mainstreamed into any peace-keeping operations. The U.N. Security Council has called on all international actors "involved in negotiating and implementing peace agreements to adopt a gender perspective that [includes] the special needs of women and girls during repatriation and resettlement, rehabilitation and reintegration and post-conflict reconstruction."[5] To engender the peace accord, the new government needs to protect women and girls from gender-based violence, provide for their special needs during repatriation and reintegration, and ensure the full participation of women in post-conflict reconstruction. Women's participation in the peace process and the mainstreaming of gender into the peace accord

lay the groundwork for engendering post-conflict reconstruction and rehabilitation.

Institutionalizing Good Governance: Good for Men, Good for Women

During post-conflict transition, rule of law and a framework for governance based on principles of democratic pluralism must be established quickly. Constitutional issues are at the core of the ongoing

THERE WERE NO BOSNIAN WOMEN AT THE DAYTON PEACE NEGOTIATIONS OF 1995.

reconciliation process. The constitution represents the blueprint for the new government and its institutions. By fostering transparency, accountability, separation of powers, equity in representation, and protection of basic human rights, a constitution can establish the new political order and set the rules of engagement between the state and civil society. Constitutions determine people's economic and social rights and play a central role in empowerment. Constitutional protection of women's rights, particularly in countries where customary law, social norms, and social practices restrict women, will have a long-term impact on promoting gender equality and equity. Incorporating gender equity in access to and control over resources—such as land—is key to post-conflict reconstruction and longer-term development.

The post-conflict institutional framework for government requires special attention to ensuring the participation of women and to building the capacity of the state's regulatory and enforcement agencies. During post-conflict reconstruction, women can be marginalized in the political process. It is essential to correct gender disparities in decision making at all levels of the government. Some countries "reserve" positions for women in political parties, local assemblies, and national legislatures. Gender budgets that evaluate the impact of government allocations on women's access to resources and public services are

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[5] U.N. Security Council Resolution 1325, 2000.

important tools for strengthening women's voices in the decision-making process.

The state's ability to regulate and enforce the law—to mediate tensions and to ensure equal access to rights and resources—is the foundation for a lasting peace and future prosperity. Strong democratic political institutions that enforce the rule of law and provide avenues for redressing grievances are critical to achieving greater gender equality.

> *Established in Kabul in 1977, the Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan (RAWA) is an organization that fights for human rights and social justice. . . . Facing a literacy rate of about 4 percent among women—a rate exacerbated by the exodus of educated women over the past 20 years—the group has been supporting home-based schooling. It also encourages small-scale projects for women, such as chicken farming and rug making, since one of the enduring hardships of civil strife is the suffering of war widows who cannot support their families. The group arranges secret bi-monthly meetings to discuss issues such as democracy and human rights.*
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> *The Washington Post*, November 11, 2001

Laying the Foundation For Economic Development

Economic institutions determine men's and women's access to resources. Following a conflict, there is a marked increase in the number of women-headed households. The short-term needs of these vulnerable households require particular attention. Equally important, however, is the need to lay the foundation for long-term economic development that guarantees equal access to resources and opportunities. During post-conflict transition, rebuilding economic institutions requires addressing gender inequalities in the structure of the institutions and the state's regulatory and enforcement capacity.

The two major economic constraints women face are access to land and credit. In many societies, women lack equal rights to land. For example, in most of sub-Saharan Africa, women obtain land rights through their husbands and lose these rights when they are divorced or widowed. It is essential during the transition period to identify and correct gender disparities under both formal and customary law. This should be followed by an effective information campaign and rigorous enforcement by the appropriate state agencies. In addition, women should be encouraged to join and play an active role in cooperatives and farmer organizations. These organizations serve to institutionalize small farmers into the national economy and provide members

with access to services such as extension, new technology, and credit.

The difficulties that women encounter in accessing credit generally are a function of their access to land and property. Without collateral such as land to secure loans, women are unable to access credit or other financial services. Women's access to credit also is constrained by social norms that discourage women from activities that generate cash, lack of information about and access to markets, physical distance from financial institutions such as banks, and formalities of financial services that require literacy. Addressing gender disparities in land and property rights will have a significant impact on securing women's livelihoods during the transition and on creating an enabling environment for long-term development. Additional support might include providing interest-rate subsidies to women borrowers, establishing credit and portfolio quotas for financial institutions, and educating and training women in the skills needed to fulfill the requirements set by banks and other lending institutions.

Equal Access to Healthcare and Education

The wealth of a country is its people. Healthcare is not only a basic right but also a determinant of an individual's economic productivity. Gender disparities in health policy, service delivery, and financing have a major impact on women's health and

access to public services. In many countries, public health policies focus almost exclusively on women's reproductive health. A broader approach is needed to address women's nonreproductive-health problems and needs, including gender-patterned diseases; work-related health problems; unhealthy traditional practices such as female genital mutilation; and, especially following conflict, violence-related ill health. Healthcare delivery systems need to take into account women's constraints regarding time, access to transportation, and information.[6]

There is a great deal of empirical data to support the high return on investing in girls' and women's education. Investment in girls' and women's education increases women's labor-force participation rates and earnings; reduces women's fertility rates; lowers maternal, infant, and child mortality rates; lengthens the period of time between having children; and yields significant environmental benefits. Gender-specific policies at the macro level—such as flexible school hours, quota systems, subsidized fees, scholarships, and open admissions—increase girls' and women's enrollment, attendance, and completion. Building more and smaller schools increases girls' and women's attendance by allaying fears for their safety and allowing them more time to fulfill their household obligations. Subsidizing education programs, improving curricula, and providing health and nutrition programs also significantly increase girls' and women's enrollment.

Looking Ahead

The startling images seen on television and in newspapers of Afghan women in burqas being beaten and killed by the Taliban and prohibited from working or attending school are seared in our collective consciousness. Juxtaposed in the mass media are images of men—and boys—waging war and engaging in high-level negotiations to form a new government. These images do not tell the whole truth. Absent are the women of Afghanistan providing for and protecting their families and communities amid the violence and the bloodshed. Absent are the women—such as the women of RAWA—discussing democracy and human rights underground in Afghanistan and in the refugee camps along the border in Pakistan.

Who will govern post-Taliban Afghanistan and how they will govern are difficult questions facing the country. However, how these questions are resolved ultimately will affect not only the people of Afghanistan but also the security and peace of people worldwide.

The impact of a failed state is now global. Donor governments and organizations, as well as development practitioners, must ensure that Afghanistan's new state is rooted in strong and enduring institutions that offer equal access—for all men and women—to resources, opportunities, and political voice. ◆

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[6] See Zoe Oxaal with Sarah Cook, *Health and Poverty Gender Analysis*, BRIDGE, Institute of Development Studies, October 1998.

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