IDS

EVIDENCE REPORT
No 101

Addressing and Mitigating Violence

Toward Effective Violence Mitigation: Transforming Political Settlements

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December 2014

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First published by the Institute of Development Studies in December 2014
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Acknowledgements

Abbreviations

DDR	disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration
DFID	Department for International Development
FCAS	fragile and conflict-affected states
GIZ	Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
ICG	International Crisis Group
IDS	Institute of Development Studies
MB	Muslim Brotherhood
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PDP	Peoples Democratic Party
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
US	United States

Executive summary

Recognising the centrality of violence in the development process (though not subscribing to the notion that conflict and violence are development in reverse), in 2012–14 a group of researchers at the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) engaged in depth with the complex and thorny questions of how 'new' forms of violence in the developing world – as opposed to 'traditional' civil or intra-state war – should be understood; and through which policies they could best be prevented and/or mitigated. The result of this endeavour is a series of evidence-based reports that were produced in collaboration with Southern partners in a sample of four violence-affected countries in Africa: Nigeria (Niger Delta), Sierra Leone, Egypt and Kenya (Marsabit County).

The evidence from the four case studies suggests that – contrary to the early post-Cold War accounts of 'barbarism' and 'senseless bloodshed' – the violence we observe in many countries and locales today *is about something*. Yet, the analyses also show that the triggers, manifestations and effects of this violence – characterised as diffuse, recursive and globalised – cannot be captured by using the analytical tools developed to explain armed conflict within states. Strictly speaking, it would be misguided to label the violence in the Niger Delta, Marsabit County, Egypt and Sierra Leone as 'civil war', 'internal armed conflict' or 'new war'. Instead, it is more accurate to speak of highly heterogeneous situations of violence or 'fields of social violence'. At the same time, it is crucial not to dissociate these situations of violence from political processes by, for instance, reducing them to manifestations of criminality, such as homicide and illicit drug trafficking, or reflections of social problems like rampant youth unemployment, the use of prohibited psychoactive substances, and gang culture.

Broadly speaking, the IDS policy work on the Niger Delta and Sierra Leone adopts a *macro-level perspective*, focusing on behaviours of, and incentives for, political and state elites (including international peace-builders) to sustain or transform extant *political settlements*; the work on Egypt and Marsabit County, in turn, takes a *micro-level perspective* and is essentially concerned with citizens and the role they play in shaping or breaking political settlements, including by taking recourse to violence. Both approaches ask in which ways violence ought to be understood as: (a) a constituent element of political settlements; (b) a result of the particular configuration and functioning of a political settlement; and (c) a key element in the process of transforming political settlements. With respect to policy, the reports examine how political settlements can be transformed to become less violence-inflected and more inclusive, resilient or responsive – and who should partake in this complex process – in order to mitigate violence in developing countries.

While the authors do not work with one single definition of 'political settlement', which reflects the characteristic fuzziness of the concept, they broadly use it in the sense of *a – temporary – state of political equilibrium that results from processes of formal and informal bargaining, compromise and negotiation through which – contending – political actors create the institutions (i.e. the 'rules of the game') that govern society and the distribution of power and resources.* The centrality of the political settlement approach in this body of work responds to the growing interest in international aid circles in better understanding how political and power relationships shape institutions and development outcomes in fragile countries that are affected by conflict and violence; and how these dynamics could be influenced and transformed so as to enable and support development that favours poor and marginalised people.

A common assumption in the emerging (policy) literature on political settlements is that *inclusive* settlements enhance the chances for political stability and poverty reduction, while exclusionary settlements are deemed to engender violence and instability, and block pro-poor development. In this respect, the *World Development Report 2011* refers, for instance, to the importance of 'inclusive-enough coalitions' for enabling institutional resilience and stability and preventing or mitigating violence. The IDS reports add important, evidence-based nuance to the current debate about the relationship between political settlements, on the one hand, and violence mitigation and development on the other, suggesting that an unqualified notion of 'inclusivity' is a weak indicator for less violence-inflected and more peaceful and development-enhancing political settlements. They also provide fresh outlooks on policy to address a range of violence situations in more effective and legitimate ways, looking at the issues from both a macro- and micro-level perspective.

Putting the emphasis on the transformation of political settlements differs fundamentally from common approaches to peace-building and post-conflict reconstruction for it emphasises the pivotal role of processes of formal and informal bargaining and compromise between political actors through which the institutions that govern society and the distribution of power and resources are created. This stands in sharp contrast to extant international peace- and state-building interventions, which have tended to operate on the basis of established blueprints for the institutional recovery of, and governance reform in, fragile and conflict-affected states (FCAS). Furthermore, introducing a micro perspective to the analysis of political settlements in violent contexts responds to the important observation that existing approaches to policy aiming for peaceful political settlements do not sufficiently engage with the role of ordinary citizens in forging and transforming political and social order.

The policy guidance contained in this report is not meant to be the final word on the highly complex question of how violence in today's developing world can be effectively mitigated and which actors (internal/external, state/non-state, civilian/military, and so on) could be incentivised to contribute to achieving this goal, and by what means. It does, however, help to draw the attention to the 'power behind the violence', to recall Hannah Arendt's (1969: 49) crucial observation, providing new inroads for addressing a broad range of manifestations of violence in 'non-conflict' settings.

1 Introduction

Without a doubt, armed conflict and violence are big concerns for international development – but this has not always been so. For decades, aid donors and development experts failed to engage in any depth with the thorny and highly complex issues thrown up by political and other forms of violence in the developing world. 'Until recently' – observed Christopher Cramer in 2006 – 'textbooks on economic development had little to say about violence and war' (Cramer 2006: 2). At the same time, while 'conflict was written out of development... the emerging subdiscipline of conflict studies had little to say... about development issues' (MacGinty and Williams 2009: 1). This reluctance to work on armed conflict and violence in development contexts slowly began to recede, however, as 'governments in advanced industrialised countries, together with the UN [United Nations], the World Bank, the OECD [Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development] and other international bodies... increasingly strained to catch up with the realisation of just how pervasive violent conflict and other manifestations of violence are in the world' (Cramer 2006: 2). In the run-up to 2015, there has been no denying of the fact that fragile states affected by conflict and violence are among the group of countries least likely to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The World Bank's *World Development Report 2011* (World Bank 2011) is one among many works that make up a fast-growing and variegated body of research on conflict, violence and security, and the relationships that exist to development. The report adopts a very broad notion of violence, which it defines as 'the use or threat of physical force by groups, including state actions against other states or against civilians, civil wars, electoral violence between opposing sides, communal conflicts based on regional, ethnic, religious, or other group identities or competing economic interests, gang-based violence and organized crime, and international, nonstate, armed movements with ideological aims' (*ibid.*: 39). Echoing the 'new wars' narrative (Kaldor 2012; Münkler 2002), to which we return below, the World Bank perceives violence and armed conflict in their 'new' guise as more diffuse, recursive and globalised than during the Cold War era, and instrumental for achieving economic gains for private violence entrepreneurs, such as warlords, drug traffickers and other criminals. It also posits that violence and armed conflict are being driven less than before by states and clearly identifiable organised non-state groups with political, revolutionary and social reform agendas, though the persistence of such agendas is not ruled out.

Recognising the centrality of violence in the development process (though not subscribing to the notion that conflict and violence are development in reverse), in the past two years a group of researchers at the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) engaged in depth with the questions of how 'new' forms of violence should be understood and through which policies they could best be prevented and/or mitigated. The result of this endeavour is a series of evidence-based reports that were produced in collaboration with Southern partners in a sample of four violence-affected countries in Africa: Nigeria (Niger Delta), Sierra Leone, Egypt and Kenya (Marsabit County).

Broadly speaking, the reports on the Niger Delta and Sierra Leone adopt a *macro-level perspective*, focusing on behaviours of, and incentives for, political and state elites (including international peace-builders) to sustain or transform extant *political settlements*; the works on Egypt and Marsabit County, in turn, take a *micro-level perspective* and are essentially concerned with citizens and the role they play in shaping or breaking political settlements, including by taking recourse to violence. Both approaches ask in which ways violence ought to be understood as: (a) a constituent element of political settlements; (b) a result of the particular configuration and functioning of a political settlement; and (c) a key element in the

process of transforming political settlements. With respect to policy, the reports examine how political settlements can be transformed to become less violence–inflected and more inclusive, resilient or responsive – and who should partake in this complex process – in order to mitigate violence in developing countries.

While the authors do not work with one single definition of 'political settlement', which reflects the characteristic fuzziness of the concept (Laws 2012), they broadly use it in the sense of *a – temporary – state of political equilibrium that results from processes of formal and informal bargaining, compromise and negotiation through which – contending – political actors create the institutions (i.e. the 'rules of the game') that govern society and the distribution of power and resources.* The centrality of the political settlement approach in this body of work responds to the growing interest in international aid circles in better understanding how political and power relationships shape institutions and development outcomes in fragile and conflict-affected states (FCAS); and how these dynamics could be influenced and transformed so as to enable and support development that favours poor and marginalised people.

A common assumption in the emerging (policy) literature on political settlements is that *inclusive* settlements enhance the chances for political stability and poverty reduction, while exclusionary settlements are deemed to engender violence and instability, and block pro-poor development (see, for instance, Putzel and Di John 2012; DFID 2010; Lindemann 2008). In this respect, the *World Development Report 2011* refers, for instance, to the importance of 'inclusive-enough coalitions' for enabling institutional resilience and stability and preventing or mitigating violence. The IDS reports add important, evidence-based nuance to the current debate about the relationship between political settlements, on the one hand, and violence mitigation and development on the other, suggesting that an unqualified notion of 'inclusivity' is a weak indicator for less violence-inflected and more peaceful and development-enhancing political settlements. They also provide fresh outlooks on policy to address a range of violence situations in more effective and legitimate ways, looking at the issues from both a macro- and micro-level perspective.

This report starts with a brief synopsis of the main issues in relation to armed conflict and violence since the end of the Cold War (Section 2). This is followed by succinct presentations of the evidence on the relationships between violence and political settlements in Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Egypt and Kenya (Section 3); a synthesis of the policy propositions that have been developed by looking at the issues from the vantage points of both the macro- and micro-level perspectives (Section 4); and a summary presentation on how less violence-inflected and more legitimate and peaceful political settlements could be promoted (Section 5).

2   Grappling with the – changing – nature of armed conflict and violence: a synopsis of the issues

The treatment of war has a long and prominent history in Western political thought. In the past three centuries and longer, political writers have associated the nature, causes and effects of war with politics, the 'business of dominion' (Arendt 1969: 44), and the creation of political-institutional order. Suffice it to recall here Thomas Hobbes's *Leviathan*, born out of the spectre of the 'war of every man, against every man' in the state of nature (Hobbes 1960: 83); Carl von Clausewitz's influential dictum that 'war is not merely an act of policy, but a true political instrument, a continuation of political intercourse, carried on with other means' (von Clausewitz 2007: 28); and Charles Tilly's notion that 'war makes states' (Tilly 1985: 170). In contrast, the preoccupation with both individual and collective, small and large-scale acts of violence – such as homicide, massacres, armed robbery and gender-based violence – that occur outside of armed conflict contexts involving state or other parties (e.g. partisans and revolutionaries) subject to a recognisable authority is more recent. It has generally been the domain of specialists in criminal justice, law enforcement, psychology and sociology, not political theory and war and peace studies.

Yet, as the boundaries between what is seen as war-related violence and non-war violence – or 'public' and 'private' violence – appear to be breaking down, understanding the relationship between violence, on the one hand, and political order and power on the other has become of key importance. This task has acquired particular significance since the end of the Cold War, which produced an increase of the '*relative* importance of internal war as a form of armed conflict' over that of wars between states (David 1997: 553).[1] It also 'decisively affected how civil wars are interpreted and coded by both participants and observers' (Kalyvas 2001: 117). What is more, in the past two decades concerns have increased over the persistence of high levels of violence in some countries emerging from internal armed conflict, i.e. after formal peace agreements were reached between the warring parties, as well as the spread of large-scale violence – often associated with organised criminality – in what are commonly labelled 'fragile states' with no record of armed conflict. A brief recapitulation of the evolution of the state of armed conflict and violence and the debate it has sparked in the past two decades is necessary in order to situate the policies for reducing or mitigating so-called 'new' forms of violence in the developing world that are the subject of this report.

2.1   Descending toward a 'new age of violence'?

The collapse of the Soviet Union and its satellite regimes in central-eastern Europe in the late 1980s and early 1990s produced an initial period of euphoric 'end-of-history' celebrations. Yet instead of the spread of liberal democracy and free market economies to every corner of the globe – anticipated by many at the time – many states became engulfed

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[1] It bears noting that the increase of the 'relative importance of internal war' in the aftermath of the Cold War reflects a widespread perception among analysts and observers in the 1990s, which, however, has proven to be difficult to nail down empirically. In this regard, later studies suggest that 'the current level of about one in six countries [experiencing internal armed conflict] had already been reached prior to the breakup of the Soviet Union and resulted from a steady, gradual accumulation of civil conflicts that began immediately after World War II' (Fearon and Laitin 2003: 75); and 'interstate war has occurred at about the same frequency ever since 1945, with the exception of the years 1990–2' (Strachan and Scheipers 2011: 10). This notwithstanding, the perception that the occurrence of internal war spiked after 1990, even if empirically questionable, reflects the legitimate concern that somehow the form, nature and goals of armed conflict have evolved; it has also contributed to catalysing the ensuing debates about 'new and old wars', 'new civil wars' and violence in non-conflict settings, which are discussed in this section.

by political instability and violent conflict. Of great concern to many in the West, these conflicts erupted not only in far-flung places in the developing world, where they had occurred in previous decades, but also close to home. Although later research revealed that the initial belief that internal armed conflicts or civil wars saw a dramatic rise in their number after 1990 proved not to be correct,[2] the widely broadcast real-time images of the violence that ravaged places as diverse as Angola, Chechnya, Iraq, Rwanda, Tajikistan and Yugoslavia conjured up a sense of disorientation and angst. Bereft of useful new categories to classify the post-Cold War conflicts, a first generation of observers – mostly seasoned political commentators and journalists – were horrified by what appeared to be senseless and unmitigating acts of cruelty and savagery of man against man. The sentiment that the world was descending toward a 'new barbarism' (Kaplan 1994) or witnessing the rise of a 'new world disorder' (Anderson 1992) were undoubtedly widespread at the time.

The post-1990 conflicts and the violence they entailed appeared to be new and distinct – in form, intention and nature – from that which had characterised the wars that erupted in the aftermath of the Second World War. In their great majority the 'new' conflicts did not involve two or more sovereign states pitted against each other in battle; they also seemed to be different from the African and Asian wars of independence and post-independence in the 1950s and 1960s and other civil, revolutionary and 'proxy' wars, including in Latin America, in which the world's two superpowers, the United States (US) and the Soviet Union, held high stakes. Without any readily recognisable political and ideological sources and socioeconomic root causes, the use of violence in these conflicts – meted out alike by non-state groups or changing coalitions of 'official' and 'irregular' armed forces operating in cohorts with (transnational) criminal organisations – seemed to have lost its instrumental nature. It appeared to be turning into an end in itself. As one penetrating observer put it, 'what gives today's civil wars a new and terrifying slant is the fact that they are… literally wars *about nothing at all'* [author's translation from the German original] (Enzensberger 1993: 35).

The notion that violence is bereft of all sense and meaning is undoubtedly both perplexing and terrifying. It subverts the very foundations of a tradition of political thought on violence and war dating back a long time and including such prominent writers as Thomas Hobbes, Carl von Clausewitz, Max Weber, Walter Benjamin, Hannah Arendt and Charles Tilly. Although obviously not homogeneous and uniform in terms of their approach and propositions, a core theme explored by all of these thinkers is the relationship between violence, on the one hand, and power and political order on the other. Violence or, as Arendt (1969: 49) notes, the 'power behind the violence' is believed to create order: 'all violence... is either lawmaking or law-preserving' (Benjamin 1986: 287) and 'war makes states' (Tilly 1985: 170). According to Max Weber, for violence to be legitimate it has to be monopolised by the state, understood as 'a human community that (successfully) claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory' (Weber 1946: 26). The idea that violence and war are means (and not ends) through which political, economic and social goals are pursued or from which historic outcomes (such as the formation of the modern nation-state) stem has for a long time dominated the thinking on these matters, essential to the organisation of human society.

The early post-Cold War accounts of the dawning of a 'new age of violence' (Ignatieff 1993: xi) and the rise of 'molecular civil war' (Enzensberger 1993: 18) seemed to thoroughly do away with this idea.[3] While vulnerable to overstatements and varying degrees of sensationalism, the critique these bold and graphic propositions drew from academic

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[2] See footnote 1.

[3] It is noteworthy, however, that these accounts were still based on the assumption that the midwife of the 'new' violence is the disintegration of established political orders and nation-states, thereby giving – in an inverted sense – some credence to the 'old' school of thought on violence and war, broadly grounded in the notion of violence as a means of and to power: the disintegration of political order spawns violence, but no new order arises out of this violence.

quarters bears testimony to their stimulating influence on the scholarly inquiry into violence and (civil) war in the past two decades (see, for instance, Berdal 2011; Kalyvas 2001; Keane 1996). In particular, the notion that violence – both on a smaller and larger scale – had become dissociated from political and/or ideological and social objectives and was being substituted for by sources of conflict such as ethnic and religious identities, greed and sheer 'irrational' pleasure in destruction, looting and killing, hit a nerve among many experts working on armed conflict and war, mostly in the developing world. While newly formed specialised non-governmental conflict prevention and resolution organisations, such as the International Crisis Group (ICG), began to engage with these complex and thorny issues from the ground up, several strands of academic research emerged under a plethora of labels meant to capture the essence of violent conflict in the post-Cold War era: new and old wars, uncivil wars, intra-state wars, resource conflict, variants of ethnic war, internal wars, new civil wars, low-intensity conflicts, shadow wars, and complex political emergencies (Angstrom 2005).

Broadly speaking, the field split up into four different schools of thought on the nature and causes of internal armed conflict, 'emphasising (a) the terms of accumulation, uneven development, structural violence and inequality; (b) "greed", economic incentives, resources and war economies; (c) the mobilization of ethnic, religious [and other] identities and "horizontal" inequalities; and (d) the political sources of conflicts, including crises of governance, state fragility and criminal-political nexuses' (Luckham 2013). In what turned into a veritable academic growth industry, different strands of research focused on the macro and micro foundations of violent conflict, conducting cross-national comparisons, econometric analyses, ethnographic studies, and political and governance assessments. Perhaps the only common denominator between these different approaches has been that they all stuck to the basic notion of 'war' and conceptualised violence as a function of war, i.e. 'a state of armed conflict between different nations or states or different groups within a nation or state' (Pearsall 1998: 2080). As we will discuss below, this perspective was subsequently broadened to include a focus on violence in non-conflict settings. Analysts started to point out that such violence was emerging as a far greater source of destruction and violent death in the developing world than that associated with armed conflicts, including civil wars, the incidence of which was observed to be on the decline since the late 1990s.

2.2 Debating the nature of violent conflict in the post-Cold War era

Despite its problematic features, which we briefly discuss below, the literature on the 'new wars' has catalysed the debate about armed conflict and violence in the post-Cold War world. Echoing quite sharply the sentiments expressed by the first generation of observers discussed above (and reverberating still today in the debate about violence in non-conflict contexts), this strand of analysis is likely best known for Mary Kaldor's (1999) book *New and Old Wars: Organized Violence in a Global Era*, which built on earlier works, such as those by Martin van Creveld (1991) and Donald Snow (1996), and was subsequently developed further (in critical fashion) by Mark Duffield (2001), Herfried Münkler (2002) and others. Concerned with what she sees as 'genuinely new elements of contemporary conflicts' (Kaldor 2012: 204), which in her view make them distinct from 'old wars – that is to say, war involving states in which battle is the decisive encounter' (*ibid.*: vi) – Kaldor broadly focuses her attention on the role of globalisation, transnational relationships and technology in shaping the nature of war in the late twentieth century.

Breaking with a tradition of analysing war through a Clausewitzean lens, she summarises her main argument as follows:

> During the last decades of the twentieth century, a new type of organized violence developed, especially in Africa and Eastern Europe, which is one aspect of the current globalized era. I describe this type of violence as 'new war'. I use the term 'new' to distinguish such wars from prevailing perceptions of war drawn from an earlier era... I use the term 'war' to emphasize the political nature of this new type of violence, even though... the new wars involve a blurring of the distinctions between war (usually defined as violence between states or organized political groups for political motives), organized crime (violence undertaken by privately organized groups for private purposes, usually financial gain) and large-scale violation of human rights (violence undertaken by states or politically organized groups against individuals).
> (Kaldor 2012: 1–2)

Seeking to delineate 'new war' from 'civil war', she contends that:

> In most of the literature, the new wars are described as internal or civil wars or else as 'low-intensity conflicts'. Yet, although most of these wars are localized, they involve a myriad of transnational connections so that the distinction between internal and external, between aggression (attacks from abroad) and repression (attacks from inside the country), or even between local and global are difficult to sustain.
> (Kaldor 2012: 2)

The 'new wars thesis' sparked many critical reactions, particularly from among exponents of what one author has aptly termed 'new civil war studies' (Mundy 2011). Holding fast to the notion of civil war as 'armed combat within the boundaries of a recognized sovereign entity between parties subject to a common authority at the outset of the hostilities' (Kalyvas 2011: 203), Stathis Kalyvas, for instance, stresses that 'old civil wars are not as different from new civil wars as they appear to be' (Kalyvas 2001: 113). With respect to the use of violence in these wars, he charges that 'both the perception that violence in old civil wars is limited, disciplined, or understandable and the view that violence in new civil wars is senseless, gratuitous, and uncontrolled fails to find support in the available evidence' (*ibid.*: 116). These arguments have been further underpinned in recent years by a turn to what has been labelled the study of the micro foundations of armed conflict (Justino 2009; Kalyvas 2008).

However, the failure to conceptualise 'what exactly constitutes a civil war' (Mundy 2011: 280) while at the same time claiming that there 'existed a degree of "consensus"... among the various models used to determine the trigger causes, sustaining conditions and intensifying factors of civil wars' has rendered the new civil war studies of limited use to analyse 'recent episodes of mass armed violence' (*ibid.*: 280). It should be added that the same too can generally be said for the other schools of conflict research mentioned above. Taken individually, they are unable to capture convincingly the full picture of the nature, causes and effects of armed conflict and violence in the post-Cold War world.[4]

In effect, to this day there is no 'grand theory' of contemporary forms of armed conflict and (organised) violence, and it does not seem likely that there will be one. This is so because armed conflict and violence have proven to be distinctly changeable and dynamic as well as complex social phenomena. Importantly, their nature, form and effects are dependent on the context – political, economic, historical, geographical, and so forth – and they clearly are not monocausal. The more recent preoccupation with diffuse, networked, globalised and non-

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[4] It is noteworthy that the World Bank-sponsored research on the economic causes of violent conflict of the late 1990s and early 2000s especially sparked a great deal of controversy and critique. Among the many critical assessments of this literature, see Cramer (2002).

conflict forms of violence reflects this. These violence situations can, at times, take on a war-like intensity and proportion in terms of the number of people that are organised to perpetrate acts of violence or are killed by it. However, they are analytically and conceptually not easily captured by using the terminology of internal armed conflicts, new wars, new civil wars or whichever of the other denominations that have been *en vogue* in the past 25 years.

2.3 From conflict resolution to violence mitigation

Roughly since the mid-2000s, armed violence reduction or mitigation – as different from armed conflict prevention and resolution – has evolved to become another growing field for research and policy. It is likely that this development is related to the decreasing incidence of inter-state war as well as intra-state conflict in the post-Cold War era. Conversely, other forms of non-conflict and/or crime-related violence, such as homicide, drug trafficking-related violence, kidnapping and gender-based violence, have seen a marked increase in several regions of the world, particularly in South Africa and South and Central America and Mexico (see, for instance, ICG 2005, 2008a, 2008b, 2010; Krause 2009).

This has prompted analysts to make the significant observation that 'war and organised armed conflict is far from the most important risk of lethal violence that most people face' (Krause 2009: 345). At the same time, it is recognised though that 'in many regions of the world the distinction between armed conflict and non-conflict violence is blurred' (*ibid.*: 345). This point is crucial for it links back to our earlier discussion on the centrality of the relationship between violence, on the one hand, and political order and power on the other. As the IDS case studies presented in Section 3 suggest, these forms and types of 'new', non-conflict violence are not necessarily always any less instrumental in the pursuit of political, economic and other social goals as the violence that is found in 'classical' (internal) armed conflicts, even if they are categorised as 'new wars' with the attendant implication that the distinctions between war, organised crime and large-scale violation of human rights has become blurred.

The Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development – launched at a ministerial meeting in 2006 under the auspices of the government of Switzerland and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and endorsed since by more than one hundred states – has been instrumental for drawing attention to 'the global scourge of armed violence' perceived to be 'both a cause and consequence of underdevelopment and [to constitute] a major obstacle to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals' (Geneva Declaration Secretariat 2014). The core concerns that gave rise to the Geneva Declaration are that armed violence is spreading in many parts of the world, that it is not limited to countries that are witnessing or are emerging from internal armed conflict, and that it seriously undercuts the chances of human development: 'armed violence destroys lives and livelihoods, breeds insecurity, fear and terror, and has a profoundly negative impact on human development. Whether in situations of conflict or crime, it imposes enormous costs on states, communities and individuals' (Geneva Declaration Secretariat 2006: 1).

Interestingly, the preoccupation with armed violence (as opposed to armed conflict) has reverberated strongly in the international development community. During the Cold War, development experts and practitioners by and large believed that armed conflict was none of their business and that it was wiser to 'work around it'. When, in the 1990s, they could not extricate themselves anymore from being tasked with playing a role in large international humanitarian interventions and peace-building operations in war-torn countries in sub-Saharan Africa and other regions, they did so reluctantly and often not very successfully. The proposition that there existed a two-way relationship between human development and security and that development agencies should 'gear their work towards conflict resolution and helping rebuild war-torn societies in a way that will avert future violence'

(Duffield 2001: 1) was of particular concern. This was perceived to equal the 'reinvention of development within global liberal governance as conflict resolution and societal reconstruction' (*ibid.*: 135) by way of which development assistance was 'granted a new lease of life... [and] repackaged as a valuable, indeed, as an essential weapon in the armoury of liberal peace' (*ibid.*: 121).

A number of international development agencies, including the World Bank, OECD, UNDP, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID) and Germany's Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), have started to include an armed violence reduction focus in their policy development and programming (World Bank 2011; OECD 2009, 2011; Marc 2009; Geneva Declaration Secretariat 2008, 2010). The inclusion of this approach has been particularly salient in respect to interventions in FCAS and volatile post-conflict situations. 'As the international development agenda expands to include greater concern with state- and institution-building and to addressing some of the underlying causes of state fragility', explains Keith Krause, 'increasing attention is being paid to sources of violence and insecurity – gang violence, corruption, judicial impunity, and large-scale criminal violence, gender-based and sexual violence' (Krause 2009: 354). In no small part, this agenda has been driven by the realisation that FCAS are particularly unlikely to achieve the MDGs, and that armed violence, if left unaddressed, is recursive and that it presents security threats both in the affected countries as well as donor nations via transnational crime and terrorism, deemed to flourish in large so-called 'ungoverned spaces' in FCAS.

However, as with the different theories that seek to explain the nature, sources and effects of armed conflict mentioned previously, there is no consensus on what the 'risk factors' for large-scale non-conflict violence are, and on how this violence could best be conceptualised. Recent research suggests that there is a two-way relationship between homicidal violence and underdevelopment: 'high homicide levels are related with low levels of development... [and] a large number of studies investigating the linkages between income inequality and violent crime tend to identify a robust causal correlation' (Geneva Declaration Secretariat 2010: 9, 22). But many other trigger mechanisms are also listed, making it difficult to determine which factors are of primary importance and which of secondary, and how they potentially link up and reinforce one another. In this vein, one study (Geneva Declaration Secretariat 2008) points to factors as diverse as 'sharp macroeconomic shocks... the expansion of unemployed youth populations, growing demographic youth "bulges", horizontal inequalities among groups, and persistent political and socioeconomic grievances (associated with land distribution, access to political and economic opportunities, and ethnic or religious discrimination)'. With respect to violence against women, the authors note that it is 'specifically associated with asymmetric power relations between men and women, reflected in lower social and economic status of women in many cultures and societies' (*ibid.*: 11–12).

2.4   Mitigating violence: the policy challenge
This state of affairs has effects on the development of policy to prevent and resolve violent conflict or, in newer parlance, mitigate violence. The straightforward reason for this is that where it is not clear which factors – or combination of factors – drive violence, interventions to control and overcome it are bound to be vulnerable to trial and error, with unclear prospects for success and the risk of doing more harm than good. Earlier work on violence mitigation in post-conflict settings, such as in Guatemala, recommended focusing on strengthening social, human and physical capital in violence-affected urban communities, for instance (Moser and McIlwaine 2001). While we would have to conduct more research into the effects of such interventions (if they were actually ever adopted by the Guatemalan government and its international partners with any degree of commitment), the persistence of high levels of urban-criminal violence since would question their efficacy.

More recent work by the World Bank, OECD, DFID and other development organisations (as well as some conflict prevention/resolution experts) highlights the importance of building broad or 'inclusive-enough' political and social coalitions or political settlements in countries affected by violence to enable institutional resilience and political stability (see, for instance, World Bank 2011; DFID 2010; Schultze-Kraft 2010; OECD 2009), and protect them against 'external stresses' such as transnational drug trafficking (for a critical assessment see Schultze-Kraft 2013b, 2014) and cross-border violence (Allouche and Adama 2014). Yet, besides the important observation that the 'new' violence of the twenty-first century cannot be dissociated from political interests and power relationships, there is little clarity as to: (a) what an inclusive political settlement actually is; (b) how it could be established and who should be involved in this process; and (c) why such settlements could help to mitigate violence.

Cutting through the fog, Michael Watts observes that underlying this emerging debate appears to be the recognition that 'the field of violence has been refigured in such a way that the standard roles for diplomats, military, or humanitarian officials developed in and around civil war are largely redundant, which means that new configurations of civil society, state, and international organizations must be developed' (Watts 2012: 116). 'Central to this strategy', Watts continues in his critical assessment of the *World Development Report 2011*, 'is the construction of "sufficiently inclusive" political coalitions capable of including social groups, instilling security and confidence... At its core this is a program – a context-specific national program with external support... – that reconfigures state–society relations' (*ibid.*: 124).

However, the all too general notions of reconfiguring relationships between states and societies (which in fragile states or hybrid political orders are especially difficult to pin down) and making political settlements more 'inclusive' are vulnerable to being of limited use to policymakers seeking to come up with effective ways to mitigate violence. Considering our key point that 'new' forms of violence in non-conflict settings in the developing world emerge and play out in political contexts which can be captured by employing the political settlement lens, what is needed are empirical analyses that unpack the relationship between violence and such settlements in order to prepare the ground for the development of useful policy propositions. In this vein, the aim of the following section is to trace the relationship between violence and political settlements in Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Egypt and Kenya, both from a macro- and micro-level perspective.

3 Tracing the relationship between violence and political settlements in Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Egypt and Kenya

The policy work on violence mitigation conducted by a group of IDS researchers that forms the basis of this report explores the relevance of the political settlements approach for violence mitigation. Their focus is on four African countries: Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Egypt and Kenya. While the authors do not work with one single definition of 'political settlement', which reflects the characteristic fuzziness of the concept (Laws 2012), they broadly use it in the sense of *a – temporary – state of political equilibrium[5] that results from processes of formal and informal bargaining, compromise and negotiation through which – contending – political actors create the institutions (i.e. the 'rules of the game') that govern society and the distribution of power and resources.* These bargains and negotiations can materialise in peace agreements, constitutions and laws. But in countries with weak formal institutions they often also take the form of informal, rolling accommodations and compromises between politically and economically powerful groups. Depending on the specific circumstances of each case, the elites that participate in the forging of a political settlement can be national, sub-national/local and international, civilian and military, and state and non-state.

Adopting what we call the 'macro', state-centred perspective, the case studies on Nigeria and Sierra Leone broadly use this elite-focused conception of political settlements. The analyses of the cases of Egypt and Kenya, in turn, bring to the fore that political settlements between elite groups should not be understood as being independent of, and dissociated from, bargains at the local level, involving subaltern groups and common citizens. Looking at political settlements from this 'micro', citizen-centred perspective sharpens our understanding about the political role played by citizens who confer legitimacy to higher level political settlements; and, indeed, have the ability to shape and break them, including by taking recourse to violence.

Using these two different perspectives, the case studies on Nigeria/Sierra Leone and Egypt/Kenya are concerned with the question of how violence – or the risk of it – is linked to the functioning of political settlements in the selected countries and locales. In this vein, they explore in which ways violence ought to be understood as: (a) a constituent element of political settlements; (b) a result of the particular configuration and functioning of a political settlement; and (c) a key element in the process of transforming a political settlement to make it more inclusive and resilient and less non-inclusive and contested. The remainder of this section provides brief overviews of the empirical evidence gathered for each of the four country cases. This will be followed, in Section 4, by a discussion of what both the macro- and micro-level perspectives on the relationship between political settlements and violence can contribute to developing effective policies to mitigate violence.

3.1 Nigeria (Niger Delta)
For over two decades, the oil-rich Niger Delta region has been affected by recurring cycles of violence in which several thousand people have lost their lives.[6] Despite the democratic opening in 1999, the country's oil-centred political economy geared at furthering the interests

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[5] Mushtaq Khan captures the notion of 'political equilibrium' by referring to the 'compatibility (or lack thereof) between institutions and the distribution of power and economic benefits amongst powerful groups in society' (Laws 2012: 15). 'To say that the combination of power and institutions is politically viable means that conflict and violence do not reach levels that threaten core institutional political arrangements' (*ibid.*: 16).
[6] This section is based on Schultze-Kraft (2013a, 2013c).

of dominant domestic and international elites has not changed much since. Analysing Nigeria's post-1999 political settlement reveals the centrality of the interests of political elites in maintaining or expanding their access to large rents, drawn from the country's oil sector, in spurring violence in the Niger Delta.

The post-1999 settlement emerged from a military controlled transition to civilian-electoral rule that was geared toward protecting the economic, political and judicial interests of the outgoing federal military rulers, their civilian allies and major transnational oil companies. While competition for elected office at the federal, regional and local levels of government increased, this happened mostly within the ruling, patronage-based Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and not between several genuinely representative and issue-based political parties. In the aftermath of the 1999 elections and the promulgation of a new constitution, there was an assumption that the transition from military to civilian-electoral rule would create the necessary political space, and political incentives, for significant pro-poor reform. Instead, the elections deepened divisions and increased the level of violence, as politicians armed unemployed youth, criminal gangs and other groups in a bid to gain political control, and thereby access to oil revenues.

Many communities in the Delta saw how public office holders, both at the federal and regional levels, appropriated oil revenues for their own private enrichment. This led to a greater scramble for power in 2003, and more election-related violence. Politicians in the Delta and other states paid youths to attack their political opponents and intimidate voters to have them support a particular party. Before and during the 2003 elections, hundreds of people were killed throughout Nigeria, many of them in the Delta. After the polls, politicians tended to abandon the youth who they had supplied with weapons and cash. With no jobs but with access to arms, many set up their own guns-for-hire groups, and started to carry out attacks on oil installations and kidnap oil workers for profit. Militancy thrived in the region; the groups who caused havoc in the 2003 elections were more powerful in 2007, when the second post-transition polls took place. In the interim, many had also resorted to other forms of criminality. As violence was entrenched in the Delta it became a 'hard currency' that was used by many actors to press their demands and achieve their own political and economic goals. Powerful groups at the federal and regional government levels allied with local youth and militant organisations to take advantage of the chaotic situation to illegally appropriate oil revenues. Organised crime increasingly penetrated Nigeria's political system; political ends and criminal means became entwined, giving rise to a dangerous mix of criminality and militancy that still exists today.

The new layer of militancy and organised crime that penetrated political bargaining from the federal to the regional and local levels in the Niger Delta expanded the group of predatory political actors, some of which are well armed and organised. Concomitantly, corruption and instability increased. Following previous federal government efforts to gain control of the situation in the Delta, since 2009 the pacification of the region has been pursued through the co-option of a small group of militant leaders into Nigeria's political settlement by offering them judicial impunity for past crimes and financial opportunities in the oil industry. While the 2009 amnesty and the associated disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) programme have produced a drop in violence in the Delta, and oil production has returned to pre-2006 levels, the socioeconomic grievances and political demands of local populations that sparked protests in the 1990s have not been addressed in any meaningful and sustainable way.

3.2   Sierra Leone

The shape of Sierra Leone's political settlement as it emerged in the aftermath of the decade-long armed conflict that ended in 2002 has been strongly influenced by international peace-building agencies and development donors.[7] Foremost interested in creating a stable and secure environment in the war-ravaged country, including through decentralisation, they ended up contributing to an order where coercion, inequality and violence have remained central problems (though it is recognised that the country is in better shape today than at the height of its internal armed conflict). The forming of new, post-conflict elite coalitions that was facilitated by international actors has made the country more stable, but root grievances of the conflict have not been addressed and the revenues of the country's extractive industry benefit only a few.

The new political settlement is not geared toward tackling the country's predatory and highly unequal political economy, consolidate peace and advance pro-poor development. Donor-driven decentralisation and other governance reforms have failed to alter the political and economic structures of power in Sierra Leone. Decentralisation implemented the restoration of both local councils and the institution of chieftaincy, but it did not meet the donors' goal to diffuse power among the elites and it has actually accentuated the struggle between local councils and chiefs. The central government exploits the conflict between chieftaincies and local councils by rewriting policy to diminish council authority, employing corruption within the chieftaincy system and practicing a 'divide and rule' strategy to maintain its power. The reintroduction of the chieftaincy and the decentralisation programme in most instances simply recreated the old networks of political patrimony that existed pre-war. This particular way of going about re-building governance in the wake of the war has allowed the same elites to maintain power, while also creating a new layer of corrupt chiefs and local council authorities seeking to appropriate rents from natural resources and donor funds.

The post-conflict political settlement is based on pre-war patrimonial relationships and the political economy of natural resource extraction (foremost diamonds, but more recently also iron ore, gold and other mining) to buy popular support and legitimacy. In the mining areas, the unchecked control exercised by rural chiefs, as well as entrenched poverty, underpin the same grievances that facilitated the onset of the violent conflict in the early 1990s. The settlement – engineered, supported and upheld by international actors – has created little room for addressing the underlying power structures that allow Sierra Leonean elites and (transnational) mining companies to exploit natural resources with little thought for the development of local communities. The prospects for long-term political stability and violence prevention/mitigation are therefore slim.

Popular anger and frustration about the inequalities brought on by Sierra Leone's post-conflict settlement and winner-take-all politics are again manifesting as violence – in the mining areas; on the streets of the capital, Freetown, and other urban centres; and in universities and schools. The two most destabilising factors affecting Sierra Leone are youth unemployment and the conflict over land and labour rights in marginal rural areas, particularly mining such as iron ore, diamonds and other minerals. These factors can largely be correlated with the new forms of youth and rural violence. The relationship between youth violence and politics is historically observed with the spikes in violence around the elections in 2002–03 and 2007–08 where youth gangs clashed and instigated community upheaval. However, youth marginalisation and unemployment have recently contributed to the formation of street gangs and the rise of organised crime, resulting in emerging forms of violence that are worryingly omnipresent in daily life. The past years have seen violent incidences involving fans of rival music labels and fraternities in schools, which are divided along national political lines and fanned by a political elite looking to mobilise a youth wing. The weakness of Sierra Leone's justice system and the associated criminal impunity has led

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[7] This section is based on Allouche (2013, 2014).

to an influx of economic migrants from other African countries engaged in illegal activities, exacerbating the get-rich-quick mentality and exploiting the desperation of locals, especially among the urban youth.

In the mining regions, a set of grievances, including lack of involvement in mining-related decisions, the absence of development and investment, and dire work conditions, exacerbated general discontent with the government and facilitated violence. In the Tonkolili District, an area that is thought to have the largest iron ore deposit in Africa, violent protests in 2012 rocked the region. Tensions began when miners protested at poor pay and working conditions in the mines. Local residents joined the miners in demonstrations, which led to one person being killed and several others being severely injured. Similar incidents have taken place in Tongo Fields, Lunsar and Makeni, where iron ore and other minerals are being mined. The current political settlement has not addressed the underlying causes of violence in the youth and rural mining communities spurring historical and new forms of violence that threaten future stability.

3.3 Egypt

Since the revolution of January 2011, Egypt has witnessed a period of protracted political instability that has been accompanied by significant levels of violence.[8] The ouster of President Hosni Mubarak has not resulted in the emergence of a stable new political settlement but has triggered the forging of a succession of (informal) political agreements and pacts between changing groups of elites. While the first two of these pacts were short-lived, the third is still holding up today. In the aftermath of President Mubarak's fall, the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces and the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) entered into an informal agreement on the exercise of power. The youth revolutionary forces and the non-Islamist political parties were excluded from this pact. This was followed by the Fairmont Agreement of 2012, which constituted an attempt to establish a broader power-sharing arrangement between the MB and a number of political parties and youth groups. In June 2012, the Muslim Brothers and Salafis formally came to power, winning a majority in parliament and seeing their leader, Mohamed Morsi, elected president. Those who did not support the Brotherhood felt that they were excluded from this settlement. Violent actions and protests against the Morsi regime, often instigated by youth, culminated in a nationwide uprising leading to the ousting of the president in July 2013. The post-Morsi political dispensation, still in place today, rests on agreements and bargains between the former general and incumbent President Abdel Fattah El-Sissi, elected in May 2014, and a diverse range of actors that had not been part of the Morsi regime.[9] The MB declined an invitation to participate in these negotiations.

The case of post-2011 Egypt reveals that there can be an important relationship between the elite power-brokering inherent in the forging of political agreements and pacts and common citizens' influence on these processes and their outcomes, as well as on their very survival. Importantly, the public can play a key role in legitimising or rejecting the use of violence to influence the shaping of agreements and pacts that underpin a political settlement. The level of inclusiveness in such pact-making does not, on its own, explain the incidence of violence. Citizens played a role in tolerating violence against the Morsi regime, in reaction to its lack of responsiveness for the promises made of improved security and economic wellbeing. By contrast, following Morsi's ouster the public has consistently condoned oppressive measures against the MB, expressing next to no public empathy or acceptance for the Brothers' retaliatory violence. Citizen mobilisation can have significant effects on the process of the

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[8] This section is based on Tadros (2014).
[9] These include Sheikh Ahmed el Tayeb, a leader of Sunni Islam; Pope Tawadrous, leader of the Coptic Orthodox Church; Mohamed Abd el Azziz, a representative of Tamarod, the youth movement that called for the uprising against Morsi; Mohamed el Baradei, representing the non-Islamist political parties that had formed into the National Salvation Front; Galal el Morah, the secretary general of the Nour party, the political wing of the ultra-radical Islamists; a progressive woman leader, Sekina Fouad; and several members of the judiciary.

formation of elite pacts and on their outcomes. This explains why presently there is no political will on the part of any key political actor in Egypt to change the terms of the political settlement to make it more inclusive.

Egypt's political process since 2011 has engendered new forms of social and economic violence, which in turn could mobilise citizens against the current regime and contribute to potentially new rounds of political violence in the future. In post-Mubarak Egypt, the absence of security and economic decline has sparked economically motivated violent crime, such as armed robbery and drugs and arms trafficking. An informal economy of street vendors have emerged, who could also become entangled with political violence. New forms of social violence and mob justice have emerged, such as *haraba* (irreversible physical punishment), and gender-based violence has also increased. The Christian minority experiences sectarian violence as never before. Therefore, common citizens have experienced an increase in criminal activity in everyday life. Each form of violence contributes to the notion that the regime cannot guarantee the safety of the citizenry, deepening a sense of insecurity and delaying the emergence of a stable new political settlement.

3.4   Kenya (Marsabit County)

Dating back to the Moi one-party period (1978–2002) and continuing into the early years of multi-party politics (2002–07) and the post-2008 democracy, Kenya has a tradition of political settlements that are underpinned and sustained by violence.[10] Throughout this history, the political manipulation of ethnicity has characterised the struggles for influence over the distribution of power and resources. The country's constitution of 2010 forms the basis of a new political dispensation in which power is devolved to county governments. Although the creation of county governments was intended to mitigate violence, its immediate effect has not been to reduce it but to shift the locus and style of the violence. The case study of Marsabit County, located south of the Kenya–Ethiopia border, suggests that violence is one of the dynamics through which a political settlement is created, shaped and sustained. Importantly, there are connections between macro- and micro-level political processes which move in tandem. National arrangements are underscored by local behaviours that extend a web of power over resources and positions.

Four dynamics and sources of violence are identified: (a) the struggle over the fruits of devolution; (b) the use of violence to shift local voter constituencies en masse; (c) the use of violence by one group to prevent other groups from gaining a share of the local economy; and (d) the political culture of rewarding ethnic blocs through a system of economic preference and clientelism. These four dynamics point to the existence of an interlocking system of economic, political and social competition, which is enhanced by the devolution process. It is exploited by political entrepreneurs who operate at the county level but are also connected to the 'rhizomes of hidden and informal power' that grow 'outwards from elite incumbents in national institutions' and penetrate 'layers of local leaders (administrators, police chiefs, criminal bosses, business interests)' (Scott-Villiers *et al.* 2014: 3). Importantly, there is some evidence to suggest that there is a connection between citizens' perceptions of the political settlement, both at the local and national levels, and the ways in which they interpret incidences of local violence. Citizens view local problems as reflections of the imbalance of power at the national level.

In a setting such as Marsabit, violence is embedded in day-to-day life. Political actors incite ethnic tensions through random, so-called 'innocent killings', where it is altogether impossible to know why a child, woman or man walking along a road has been killed and by whom. These incidences of violence are interpreted by local people as a means of 'political communication', as attempts to set one community against another in a cycle of revenge that

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[10] This section is based on Scott-Villiers *et al.* (2014).

cements political voting blocs. Additional patterns of unresolved and persistent violence in Marsabit are 'small wars'. Innocent killings, revenge attacks, economic boycotts and hate speech culminate in sustained episodes of attack and counter-attack, in which in the past years thousands of people have been involved, hundreds killed and many more displaced. These forms and expressions of violence contribute to forming reliable political blocs and reinforce a political settlement that not only spurs violence but is also sustained by it.

4 Preventing and mitigating violence: macro- and micro-level perspectives

In this section we outline some past interventions by governments, communities and/or international agencies aimed at mitigating violence in the Niger Delta, Sierra Leone, Egypt and Kenya's Marsabit County. Although there are many differences between them, on the whole these interventions have not been effective. Based on these accounts we present alternative policy propositions for each of the case studies, focusing on the question of how violence could be mitigated more effectively through political settlement transformations. Here we recognise the importance of distinguishing between what we call macro- and micro-level perspectives on understanding political settlements and developing policy geared at transforming them in such a way that they become less violence-inflected and more peaceful and development-enhancing.

In a nutshell, the macro-level perspective focuses on behaviours of, and incentives for, political and state elites to sustain or transform a political settlement; and the micro-level perspective is essentially concerned with citizens and the role they play in shaping or breaking political settlements, including by taking recourse to violence. The case studies of the Niger Delta and Sierra Leone use the macro perspective; the studies on Egypt and Marsabit County look at the issues from the micro perspective.

4.1 The macro-level perspective

4.1.1 Nigeria (Niger Delta)
The Nigerian federal government's responses to the crisis in the Niger Delta have oscillated between a tough security strategy geared at uprooting armed militants and protecting the oil infrastructure, and measures aimed at furthering the region's development.[11] Security interventions have been combined with presidential amnesty offers to militants and some initiatives to reform Nigeria's oil sector. In 2007, the Niger Delta Technical Committee was instituted composed largely of youth and community leaders drawn from the Ijaw, the largest ethnic group in the region. The committee conceived the amnesty and the DDR programme for the Delta militants as part of a broader four-year strategy with the overarching objective of developing the region. After more military crackdowns in 2009, a presidential amnesty was issued and rank-and-file members of the militant groups, estimated to number 20,000, were taken to camps where they were paid a monthly subsidy and received vocational training.

Overall, the Nigerian state responses have suffered from weak design, feeble implementation and incoherent strategies, resulting in adverse consequences, particularly in relation to human rights. The underlying problems in the Niger Delta – incessant oil spills leading to pollution of farmlands and rivers, large-scale unemployment, lack of social and physical infrastructure, corrupt and unaccountable politicians, and a refusal by the federal government to increase the oil revenue allocation accruable to the Delta states beyond the 13 per cent stipulated by the 1999 Constitution – have remained largely unresolved. While the amnesty and the DDR programme have restored relative peace to the region, enabling the oil companies to increase production to pre-2006 crisis levels, Nigeria has not created the necessary institutional structures with the capacity to develop and implement coherent policies for the reintegration of ex-combatants and addressing a long list of political and socioeconomic grievances of communities in the Delta.

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[11] This section is based on Schultze-Kraft (2013a, 2013c).

The Niger Delta Development Commission, established under President Olusegun Obasanjo in 2000, has suffered from a lack of ownership as local stakeholders have not been involved in any meaningful way in its activities, the public funds for which have consistently been siphoned off by corrupt federal and regional political leaders. Inter-community conflicts over community development funds and direct cash payments to local leaders from transnational oil companies still persist. There is a strong sentiment among Delta communities that top-down and militarised approaches to development, conflict resolution and violence mitigation in the region have been counter-productive or outright failures.

A different, more effective and legitimate approach to addressing violence and instability in the Niger Delta should centre on strengthening governance at all levels of public authority – from the federal down to the local levels. The evidence suggests that putting governance reforms at the centre of violence mitigation efforts is clearly a more effective and legitimate way than militarisation to address the problem of elite appropriation of oil rents for private gain, including through the use of violence, and the associated political and socioeconomic grievances of Delta communities. Furthermore, any positive effects that development initiatives might achieve in the region essentially hinge on the transformation of the prevailing predatory oil-centred political settlement through strengthening accountability and protecting the electoral process. The emphasis on governance reform also questions the conventional assumption that it is foremost the exclusionary nature of a political settlement that contributes to violence as contending elites, including leaders of social movements and popular sectors, take to violent action to press their inclusion in the settlement. According to this view, a more inclusive or 'inclusive-enough' political settlement reduces the risk of broader groups of elites seeking recourse to violence as they are enabled to participate in political and economic decision-making processes and benefit from the institutional order.

The case of the Niger Delta shows that inclusivity on its own, and without any clear qualification of the term, is a weak indicator for determining whether a political settlement is prone to generate pro-poor development or, conversely, predatory elite behaviour and violence. The 2009 presidential amnesty and the 2011 election of Goodluck Jonathan, an Ijaw from the Delta, resulted in expanding the post-1999 settlement through increasing the representation and power of Niger Delta elites at the federal level and co-opting 'new', contending militant elites who had pressed their inclusion by militarily targeting the country's vital oil industry. However, beyond contributing to the fragile and temporary pacification of the Delta, this process has not prompted any tangible changes in the way the federal and regional governments administer and distribute the country's natural resource wealth and address socioeconomic grievances, poverty, criminality and violence in the Delta and other parts of the country.

For the purpose of developing more effective and legitimate policies to address the problems in the Niger Delta it is therefore important to ask *how* a political settlement is expanded to include additional social groups; *who* is included and *why*; and what the expansion of the settlement means in terms of reducing the risk of violence, such as the violence associated with electoral competition, organised criminal activities and the predatory (illicit) appropriation of oil revenues. In short, a political settlement that is not based on the use of violence by both established Nigerian elites and emerging counter-elites requires profound changes in the way these groups interact with one another as well as with their local constituencies. In this respect, it is paramount that Nigeria's political parties, especially the PDP, are incentivised to move away from patronage-based and 'godfather' politics; and that the electoral process is strengthened and protected from violent interference.

Such a strategy would enable the inclusion of democratic, pro-development and non-violent counter-elites, particularly from the Niger Delta, in the country's political settlement through peaceful, more transparent institutional channels. Getting these sectors involved is

paramount not only for the sake of inclusivity, but to actually transform Nigeria's extant political settlement in such a way that it becomes less violence-inflected and more development-enhancing. Importantly, these reform initiatives need to be taken by Nigerians themselves. Outside actors can and should support certain political processes but need to make sure that they do not complicate matters further.

Strengthening accountability mechanisms and enhancing democratisation are key policy areas for building an inclusive and resilient political settlement that is geared toward addressing the sources of violence in the Niger Delta and enabling pro-poor development. Reforms are needed to bolster accountability from the local through to the federal levels of government in view of reducing judicial impunity, corruption, human rights violations by state security forces and (state-sponsored) criminality, such as massive oil theft and illegal oil lifting. Capacity building programmes should be initiated for Niger Delta civil society and community and social organisations in order to enable them to participate in meaningful ways in decision-making processes related to local and regional development and oil production. Linking the reintegration of demobilised militants into economic and social life to local development efforts, with a particular focus on job creation and vocational training for youth, would further enhance violence mitigation efforts.

4.1.2 Sierra Leone

The international community-led peace-building effort in Sierra Leone focused on two broad areas: (a) security and justice, including the DDR programme, the Security Sector Reform programme, the Special Court for Sierra Leone, and the Truth and Reconciliation programme; and (b) political and governance reforms, including decentralisation and the restoration of both local councils and the re-institution of chieftaincy.[12] The evidence suggests that these efforts have been successful insofar as they have prevented a relapse into violent conflict in the post-2002 period. Yet many challenges persist that need to be addressed in order to tackle serious problems associated with faltering post-conflict development and the spread of violence affecting the daily lives of many communities and citizens in the country.

At the heart of the peace-building policy has been a DDR programme aiming to provide former fighters with cash and skills training in exchange for weapons. However, the programme was not thorough enough and excluded vulnerable youth. The DDR process was externally led and focused on the removal of guns, but not on the rehabilitation of the ex-combatants. The Special Court for Sierra Leone and the Sierra Leone Truth and Reconciliation Commission did not have the desired effects as tensions still exist between local communities and ex-combatants, with many of the youth becoming involved in organised criminal activities. Lacking political backing, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's recommendations, contained in a report released in 2004, were not taken up. Overall, these policies have made the country more stable, but the grievances that triggered the onset of the civil war have not been addressed. Youth marginalisation and unemployment persist, as do disputes over land and the distribution of natural resource revenues, labour disputes, especially between local communities and transnational mining companies, drug trafficking and the proliferation of small arms.

More effective policies need to take a long-term approach and focus on transforming the post-conflict political settlement. Such a strategy should prioritise reforms of the political economy of natural resource extraction, which benefits only a few, and of the chieftaincy system that was reintroduced as part of the international community-supported decentralisation programme, resulting in the recreation of old pre-war networks of patrimony. Enforcing codes of practice for resource extraction (such as the Extractives Industries Transparency Initiative) would make transnational corporations operating in Sierra Leone

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[12] This section is based on Allouche (2013, 2014).

accountable; supporting the creation of domestic natural resource-governance initiatives would promote accountability and the more equitable distribution of natural resource revenues.

Concomitantly, poverty reduction strategies should focus on the economic and social reintegration of demobilised fighters and youth such as job creation and vocational training in urban areas and clearer targets for inclusion of youth in economic strategy. Education should be the linchpin of recovery and should make the reconstruction of formal and non-formal education systems a priority. Furthermore, there ought to be more of a focus on activities that build peace, such as intergroup sports activities and peace clubs. More attention should also be placed on youth employment programmes for urban areas, such as investments in electrical power generation and industry, particularly through the Agenda for Prosperity, which is the newly articulated Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper for 2013–18; and finally, there should be more investment in programmes to develop the capacity to control and limit the possession, trade and use of small arms, including by developing alternative livelihood initiatives to incentivise artisan blacksmiths to stop producing small arms.

4.2 The micro-level perspective

4.2.1 Egypt

Since the fall of President Mubarak in 2011, violence has not been contained in Egypt.[13] In what throughout the past years has been a highly volatile and unstable situation, the use of violence has become a widely accepted means to press political demands. Sectarian and other forms of violence, including gender-based violence, have also seen increases. Involving a wide spectrum of both state and non-state groups, official violence and security crackdowns have generated waves of counter-violence. This has been particularly evident since the ouster of President Morsi in 2013, a situation that has been influenced by the Egyptian public's condoning of state violence against Morsi supporters and the Muslim Brotherhood (MB). There are no indications that these cycles of violence can be broken in the foreseeable future, for a new, less violence-inflected political settlement that includes the MB would be met with significant popular resistance forfeiting the settlement's legitimacy. At the same time, the MB has not indicated that it would be interested in forging such a settlement.

Mitigating violence in such a volatile and violent political context is extremely taxing. A reasonable approach would be to take systematic account of citizen perspectives in the design of policies to address the violence, thereby bolstering the legitimacy of the emerging post-revolutionary political settlement. Such policies should focus on youth job creation and vocational training, and transitional justice, which are areas of key concern for a majority of Egyptians. The international community should tread very carefully in supporting this strategy. Its influence in Egypt is severely limited because Western governments are perceived by many in the country as having aligned themselves too closely with the MB. A stance of condemning all parties that are fuelling violence in equal terms appears to be the most advisable option.

4.2.2 Kenya (Marsabit County)

Formal state but also customary security and justice institutions have on the whole not effectively tackled political killings, small wars, arson and divisive speech in Marsabit County.[14] Kenya's new devolved system of governance has dislodged the old balance of power between the state, local political interests and the customary order, vastly increasing the monetary value of local politics and promoting the use of violence and economic rewards

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[13] This section is based on Tadros (2014).
[14] This section is based on Scott-Villiers *et al.* (2014).

as means for reproducing power. While government interventions to curb the violence have been slow and uncommitted, citizens have relied on a tradition of elder-managed conflict resolution mechanisms and systems of customary civilian governance. Although contradictory in parts to modern state law, these mechanisms have had a role in creating local peace and a sense of justice, and they tend to be appreciated among the population. However, confidence in the peace declarations brokered by customary leaders is eroding since they have not resolved persistent forms of (political) violence. This failure is associated with weak backing from the state, the politicisation of ethnicity and the involvement of local authorities themselves in the violence, particularly the police.

Addressing the violence in Marsabit and other Kenyan counties requires that citizen perspectives and their actions are systematically taken into account. This proposition rests on the observation that the role of ordinary citizens in forging and transforming political and social orders and in shaping political settlements – both at the local and national levels – has not been sufficiently incorporated into violence mitigation policies. Once generalising about ethnic rivalry, primordial raiding and root-and-branch corruption is stopped it will be possible to understand the logic behind the participation in violence, and how it is linked to the political struggle that is playing out in the context of devolution.

Recognising that no one state and customary institution or group is strong enough to tackle the problem alone and that violent entrepreneurs are using violence to create their own law, one way forward is to promote an alliance between state and customary law. This would mean incorporating a specific recognition of the role of such law as a control of political incitement and politically motivated crime into devolution policy. Customary jurists in Marsabit suggest a programme of restorative justice, which gives precedence to resolution over punishment.

Such a programme should aim to create formal and funded cooperation between state and customary legal institutions and include genuine citizen's groups empowered to deal with innocent killings, arson, eviction, hate speech and small wars as they arise. The process should involve detailed discussions as to points of moral and legal alignment, support collaborative investigation of any violence, and should include making and implementing formal rules and sanctions for dealing with specific cases. Only by taking control of the law will the pro-peace elements of society also take control of the violence. It may be that a radical reduction in the toleration of ground level violence would help control and mitigate the violence inherent in the national settlement.

5 Toward effective violence mitigation: promoting less violence-inflected and more legitimate and peaceful political settlements

Against the backdrop of the discussion of the cases of Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Egypt and Kenya it is worth restating the truism that every situation of armed conflict and violence has particular features and that context matters a great deal. Evidently, the violence associated with the appropriation and distribution of oil revenues in the Niger Delta is of a very different kind than that experienced by citizens in Marsabit County; and Egypt's unstable post-revolutionary setting shot through by sectarian and revolutionary violence cannot easily be compared to Sierra Leone's post-conflict context characterised by a heavy international peace-building presence. This has important implications for the development of policies to prevent and mitigate violence. What works in one setting might not be an advisable or realistic course of action in another.

This notwithstanding, the evidence from all four case studies discussed in this report suggests that – contrary to the early post-Cold War accounts of barbarism and senseless bloodshed discussed previously – the violence we observe in many countries and locales today *is about something*. Yet, it also becomes clear that the triggers, manifestations and effects of this violence cannot be captured by using the analytical tools developed to explain 'traditional' armed conflict within states. Strictly speaking, it would be misguided to subsume the violence in the Niger Delta, Marsabit County, Egypt and Sierra Leone under the labels 'civil war', 'internal armed conflict' or 'new war'. Instead, it seems more accurate to speak of highly heterogeneous situations of violence or 'fields of social violence' (Watts 2012: 117). At the same time, the evidence presented in this report suggests that it is crucial not to dissociate these situations of violence from political processes by, for instance, reducing them to manifestations of criminality, such as homicide, or reflections of social problems like rampant youth unemployment, the use of narcotic drugs, and gang culture.

While it remains to be developed further, the political settlement approach used in the four case studies helps to shed light on the relationship between different forms of non-conflict violence, on the one hand, and political order and power on the other. It directs the attention to addressing the political factors that underpin these forms of diffuse, persistent and non-conflict violence in developing countries with weak formal institutions, rather than responding in simplistic and, as the evidence from the case studies suggests, ultimately ineffective and even harmful 'carrot-and-stick' fashion to its symptoms (i.e. through militarisation and securitisation and/or conventional, politically insufficiently attuned development interventions that are either feeble in design and implementation or ultimately do more harm than good). Using what we have called macro- and micro-level approaches to analysing the relationship between violence and political settlements, the case studies contribute to broadening the scope for the development of effective violence mitigation policies.

One key issue in the evolving debate about political settlements and violence mitigation is the degree of 'inclusivity' of the settlements. This issue is at the centre of the *World Development Report 2011* and also figures quite prominently in the four case studies that form the basis of this report and other policy analyses (see, for instance, Putzel and Di John 2012; DFID 2010; Lindemann 2008; Whaites 2008). As Michael Watts highlights in his critical assessment of the World Bank's report, 'one cannot run away from the need for an in-depth understanding of local politics and the need to engage with the long, arduous, and time-consuming process of forming broad-based coalitions capable of restoring confidence and

credibility in something – the state – that has for far too long been seen as either subsidiary to the market or as a repository of corruption and bad governance' (Watts 2012: 127). While we tend to agree with this proposition, the fundamental questions we raised earlier remain to be addressed. What is the role of violence in both the constitution and transformation of political settlements? How could such broad-based and inclusive political coalitions be built, who should be included in this process, and through which specific initiatives and mechanisms could political settlements be transformed to become less violence-inflected and more peaceful and development-enhancing?

We believe that putting the emphasis on the transformation of political settlements differs fundamentally from common approaches to peace-building and post-conflict reconstruction, for it emphasises the pivotal role of processes of formal and informal bargaining and compromise between political actors through which the institutions that govern society and the distribution of power and resources are created. This stands in sharp contrast to extant international peace- and state-building interventions (see, for instance, Paris 2004), which have tended to operate on the basis of established blueprints for the institutional recovery of, and governance reform in, FCAS. Furthermore, introducing a micro perspective to the analysis of political settlements in violent contexts responds to the important observation that 'existing approaches to policy aiming for peaceful political settlements do not sufficiently engage with the role of ordinary citizens in forging and transforming... political and social order' (Scott-Villiers *et al.* 2014: 4).

The IDS case studies that form the basis of this report offer several – if yet tentative – propositions for the development of more effective and legitimate violence mitigation strategies, drawn from the vantage points of both macro and micro perspectives. As posited earlier, it is likely that every violence situation requires particular courses of remedying action, making it difficult and hazardous to extrapolate from one case to another. We do believe, however, that the case studies of Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Egypt and Kenya reveal that both states and citizens have a role to play in creating political settlements that are more peaceful and less violence-inflected; and that it is in the interactions between structures of political authority and social entities where the key to mitigating violence can be found.

The policy guidance we present below is, of course, not exhaustive and not meant to be the final word on the highly complex question of how violence in today's developing world can be effectively mitigated and which actors (internal/external, state/non-state, civilian/military, and so on) could be incentivised to contribute to achieving this goal, and by what means. It does, however, help to draw attention to the 'power behind the violence', to restate Arendt's (1969: 49) crucial observation, providing new inroads for addressing a broad range of manifestations of violence.

- Violence mitigation should be understood as a long-term process involving both formal (state) and informal institutions, and affected communities and citizens. Interventions should be designed to operate across and between several fields of public policy, e.g. improving education, reducing youth unemployment, increasing citizen and human security, and protecting human rights.

- Given the complex and intricate relationship between violence and political order and power in violence-affected countries and locales, the room for outside actors to contribute to violence mitigation is limited. In effect, the evidence suggests that external interventions can help create – temporary – stability, but they are also vulnerable to not supporting comprehensive and lasting solutions, such as in post-conflict Sierra Leone, or standing little chance of being welcome and adopted by both governments and citizens in the target countries. The latter is reflected in the presented material on Nigeria and Egypt.

- Essentially, outside support for violence mitigation (understood as a deeply political process) should aim at mitigating the risk factors associated with external involvement and interests, such as those of the transnational oil and mining companies in Nigeria and Sierra Leone. Rather than direct intervention this requires initiatives that help enable both local elites and citizen groups to build political settlements that are more peaceful and support development as they become less predatory and violence-inflected.

- Long-term and essentially indigenous processes of transforming political settlements in violence-affected countries and societies have to grapple with the key problem that the (strategic) use of violence – or its condoning – by both state and non-state actors is often a constituent element of the settlement. It is therefore paramount that violence mitigation efforts are effective with respect to taking violence out of the exercise of public authority and the struggle over the distribution of resources and wealth.

- The presented macro evidence from Nigeria and Sierra Leone suggests that counter-violence measures should aim for strengthening governance in relation to natural resource extraction, protecting the electoral/political process from violent interference, and to generally bolster accountability from the local through to the central/federal levels of government. This would help to rein in corruption, judicial impunity, human rights violations and (state-sponsored) criminality, counter-balance patrimonial networks and 'godfather' politics, and remedy core problems of decentralisation or devolution reforms, such as those found in Sierra Leone, Kenya and Nigeria.

- As is highlighted in the work on Egypt and Marsabit County, such an approach could be operationalised at the micro level by taking systematic account of citizen perspectives and the role that ordinary citizens play in forging and transforming political and social orders and in shaping political settlements. Reaching a state of political equilibrium that allows for a reduction in violence is not likely if the emphasis of policy is only or foremost on influencing elite behaviour.

- Citizens shape and break political settlements by conferring or withdrawing legitimacy to/from rulers, including by taking recourse to violence. Hence, political settlement transformations operate at both the macro and micro level and policies need to support political processes at both levels simultaneously to advance toward the goal of effective violence mitigation.

- In terms of specific propositions geared at tackling violence or the risk of its re-emergence in more immediate ways, the evidence from Nigeria and Sierra Leone points toward the salience of state-centred interventions such as completing the reintegration of demobilised fighters, militants and youth into economic life by prioritising job creation and vocational training; building capacity among Niger Delta civil society and community and social organisations to enable them to participate in meaningful ways in decision-making processes related to local and regional development and oil production; enforcing codes of practice for resource extraction, such as the Extractives Industries Transparency Initiative; and controlling and limiting the possession, trade and use of small arms. In general, state security interventions should complement and support – not guide, replace or undermine – these policies.

- The citizen-centred policy perspective developed in the case studies on Egypt and Marsabit highlights the importance of focusing on transitional justice (Egypt), and incorporating into devolution policy a programme of restorative justice enhancing cooperation between formal and customary legal institutions and including citizen

groups who are empowered to tackle innocent killings, small wars, arson and other forms of violence at the local level (Marsabit). The evidence suggests that for citizens in violence-affected communities in fragile states with weak formal institutions, engaging with issues of justice and taking control of the law is of particular importance.

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