

IDS

EVIDENCE REPORT

No 142

Addressing and Mitigating Violence

High-Level Roundtable on Improving Lives and Reducing Violence through the Provision of Services

Becky Mitchell

August 2015

The IDS programme on Strengthening Evidence-based Policy works across seven key themes. Each theme works with partner institutions to co-construct policy-relevant knowledge and engage in policy-influencing processes. This material has been developed under the Addressing and Mitigating Violence theme.

The material has been funded by UK aid from the UK Government, however the views expressed do not necessarily reflect the UK Government's official policies.

AG Level 2 Output ID: 46

HIGH-LEVEL ROUNDTABLE ON IMPROVING LIVES AND REDUCING VIOLENCE THROUGH THE PROVISION OF SERVICES

Becky Mitchell

August 2015

This is an Open Access publication distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are clearly credited.

First published by the Institute of Development Studies in August 2015
© Institute of Development Studies 2015

IDS is a charitable company limited by guarantee and registered in England (No. 877338).

Contents

- Summary 2
- 1 Finding solutions to the violence-poverty trap through the provision of services 3**
 - 1.1 Civil unrest and government transfers 3
 - 1.2 Non-state actors 3
 - 1.3 Provision of security services 4

Summary

This high-level roundtable explored the complex links between poverty, violence, insecurity and the provision of services, drawing on four case studies from within Nairobi, Kathmandu, Mumbai and India as a whole. Access to resources, economic opportunities, and avenues for building human capital are controlled by the government and state institutions, as well as a range of actors (including armed gangs, local vigilantes and other non-governmental groups, including non-governmental organisations and citizens' groups) who have organised themselves to fill the void left when governments fail in these provisions. Inequitable distribution of resources can result in resentment, leading to conflict and violence. Conversely, providing citizens with access to these services has been found to reduce violence and insecurity.

1 Finding solutions to the violence-poverty trap through the provision of services

1.1 Civil unrest and government transfers

How can we mitigate civil unrest before it becomes civil war? Not all forms of civil unrest escalate into violence and destruction, but why do some deteriorate and others do not?

Civil unrest has been solved through fiscal policy and the provision of public goods and services through the centuries. Prominent examples include the extension of voting rights in the nineteenth century and the beginnings of the welfare state in Germany under Chancellor von Bismarck to gain support of the proletariat. Government expenditure on social services in India has been shown, in the medium term (1–4 years), to have a significant effect on reducing riots across the country. There is a time-lag between expenditure and the reduction of rioting, which is likely to be caused by the fact that it takes some time for social service expenditure to have an effect on levels of poverty and inequality, and hence social discontent and hence rioting.

Billions of pounds are being spent on the presumption that there is a correlation between government expenditure and peace, making this research important.

It is possible that the presence of government expenditure may be a proxy for government control; the government may be more likely to spend in states where they hold power. It has been suggested that the government may allow riots to occur in areas where it may be politically expedient for votes to be split or elections to be affected by violence.

1.2 Non-state actors

Services are being provided in a variety of ways by non-state actors, both armed and non-armed. Non-state actors gain loyalty and perhaps a level of legitimacy through the provision of services.

Government and state institutions are important actors in providing access to resources, economic opportunities, and avenues for building human capital. However, a range of actors (including armed gangs, local vigilantes and other non-governmental groups, including non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and citizens' groups) play significant roles in organising themselves to fill the void left when governments fail to provide basic services. An inability to distribute access equitably can result in resentment, leading to conflict and violence. Conversely, providing citizens with access to these services has been found to reduce violence and insecurity.

The prevailing government response to violence and crime in Nairobi assumes that more robust policing and tougher laws will increase security. Approaches have included raids and operations to round up low-level criminals, and increased use of stop and search techniques. Police raids are often characterised by indiscriminate use of excessive force and the police have been implicated in extra-judicial killings, among other human rights violations. These measures have not reduced crime and violence and have actually aggravated the underlying causes of insecurity, and increased distrust in the police. Public opinion polling found that in the poor neighbourhoods of Nairobi, vigilante groups are trusted over the police to respond to

crime. Non-state violent actors often have multiple identities, protecting their communities (often through extortion rackets) but also inciting violence when mobilised by politicians. Widespread violence and the failure of the state to provide basic services have enabled militia and criminal gangs to take control, through provision of electricity, water and sanitation, and protection rackets. However, the space has also been filled by local, community NGOs who provide garbage collection, community sports groups, and economic opportunities for young people through young enterprise schemes.

Policing practices in India have often responded with military action to urban crimes, and very little is done to engage with non-state actors. Violence is a tool, instrumentalised by non-state actors as well as governments. However, both actors are likely to be involved in mitigating violence. In the urban context, core statutory institutions are not communicating with non-state actors that are involved in violence. It is crucial to get a better understanding of how non-state actors can be involved in the provision of services to mitigate violence.

In Maharashtra there is a link between vulnerability and the experience of violence. Most of the violence occurs in slums as there is a lack of security provision and police presence in slums. There is a link between the lack of service provision, the lack of employment, violence and crime. Slum dwellers make the link between vulnerability and conflict automatically. Therefore, community-led initiatives are needed and slum dwellers' participation in the process is essential. Policies that seek to alleviate urban vulnerabilities and violence must be informed by local realities and knowledge of the informal arrangements that work.

1.3 Provision of security services

Some of the world's highest homicide rates occur in countries that have not undergone wars but have violence epidemics in their urban areas. Trends in crime rates provide a different image of insecurity compared to macro-level indicators; it is therefore important to understand the role of city police forces in mitigating violence and maintaining law and order in dynamic urban areas. We conducted a review of policing practices and challenges faced by urban/city police forces in South Asia, spanning the past two decades. South Asia is not the most urbanised part of the world, but the urban populations of Nepal, Pakistan and India are growing rapidly, and together amount to roughly 13 per cent of global urban population: Pakistan (38.8 per cent urban, growing at 2.88 per cent per year); Nepal (18.6 per cent urban, growing at 3.24 per cent per year); India (32.7 per cent urban, growing at 2.47 per cent per year). Nepal has the lowest percentage but has the fastest rate of growing urbanisation.

Most government responses to urban violence have tended to be overly militaristic. (Draconian policy measures in the type of weapons; mechanised police.) An increase in acquisition of weapons, yet an ongoing investment in training for the use of weapons is not seen as a priority. Authorities predominantly view everyday urban spaces, the infrastructures of cities, as well as urban civilian populations, either as primary targets or as threats. There has therefore been an increased deployment of armed police, particularly at checkpoints and roadblocks; acquisition of new weaponry or surveillance technology; and in some instances, adoption of stringent legal apparatuses that provide expanded policing powers. Investment in auxiliary training and continued maintenance of newly acquired technology is often lacking.

However, resourcing for the day-to-day policing of the cities is very limited. Police face endemic shortages of financial and human resources (calibre, gender-balanced, lowest ranks least trained). In India, there is only one civil police officer to 1,037 residents, with 85 per cent of police personnel receiving next to no significant training in criminal investigation or crime

fighting skills. Non-state actors have moved to fill the vacuum left by the lack of police, and also to protect communities from draconian police measures. Despite this, little has been done to engage with non-state actors. There has been some progress at the community level, but this is few and far between. Security provision intrinsically involves non-state actors as much as state actors. While police need to establish monopoly over legitimate application of violence, this cannot be done without explicitly involving non-state groups.

When armed groups successfully deliver services, it may be that it is a more 'personalised' service than the government had been providing, as they tend to operate within their own communities.

More work is needed to investigate what kinds of services and goods can produce effects on trust, loyalty and legitimacy.



Brighton BN1 9RE

T +44 (0)1273 606261

F +44 (0)1273 621202

E ids@ids.ac.uk

www.ids.ac.uk



UKaid
from the British people