

## ADDRESSING THE SECURITY-DEVELOPMENT NEXUS IN POST-CONFLICT SITUATIONS. THE ROLE OF CONSTRUCTION IN REBUILDING STRIFE-TORN COUNTRIES

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### Abstract

The scholarly debate on the motives of civil conflict has been driven by explanations based on greed and grievance. Empirically, it has been demonstrated that greed explains the onset of conflict. Therefore, in order to prevent the renewal of civil war, the opportunity cost of the rebels going back to conflict must be raised in post-conflict situations. The central argument of this paper is to address this issue by promoting the construction sector as a tool to create development and achieve security.

### Resumen

El debate académico sobre los motivos del conflicto civil se ha centrado en explicaciones basadas en la codicia y en la injusticia. Empíricamente, se ha demostrado que la codicia explica el inicio del conflicto. Por tanto, para prevenir el reinicio de la guerra

civil en situación de post-conflicto, se debe incrementar el costo de oportunidad para los rebeldes en caso de que éstos retomen las armas. El argumento central de este escrito es enfrentar el problema mediante la construcción como una herramienta para crear desarrollo y lograr seguridad.

### Keywords

Civil War; security; development; post-conflict.

### Palabras clave

Guerra Civil, seguridad, desarrollo, posconflicto.

**JEL:** F51, F59, N40, N86, O10, O43.

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## Introduction

Security and development are inseparably linked together. In order to achieve the former it is needed to accomplish the latter and vice-versa. Also, the absence of either, negatively affects the conquest of the other (Stern & Öjendal, 2010:5). This link has been shaping the formulation of post-conflict policies since the end of the cold war. However, not enough analysis has been made on the relation between the motives of the conflict and the policies proposed to prevent the renewal of conflict.

After the end of a civil conflict, a country needs to be reconstructed. Thus, promoting the construction sector is necessary to satisfy the demand for reconstruction. Furthermore, the construction sector is one of the engines of the economy and is the sector with the highest multiplier effects on the economy. Finally, the construction sector is an important source of employment for unskilled workers. If ex-combats find a legal job, the recruitment process for the rebels will be more difficult. For all these reasons, the promotion of the construction sector will probably lessen the greed motives that cause the war and will reduce the chances of renewed conflict.

Nevertheless, the international community has promoted policies of security and development based on the fact that grievance is the motive for conflict. As a consequence, the policies to achieving security and development in post-conflict situations have been focused on the creation of liberal states. Additionally, the concepts of security and development have been linked under the grievance theory through the concepts of human security and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

In order to emphasize the importance of this perspective, I begin by illustrating the concepts of security and development. Then, I continue explaining the security and development nexus in post-conflict situations. Following, I describe the main aspects of the greed and the grievance theories as the motivation for conflict. In the next section, I clarify how the promotion of the construc-

tion sector increases the opportunity cost of relapsing back into conflict. Finally, I explicate the relation between the creation of liberal states, human security and the achievement of the MDGs with grievance as a motive for conflict.

## Development and security: the solution to reduce greed

During the 20th century, the international community was concerned about security in terms of inter-state war. Therefore, security was understood as a relative freedom from war and a sense that defeat will not take place if war arises (Bellamy, 1982:102). However, after the end of the Cold War, the international community shifted its concern and begun to worry about security in terms of civil wars and the protection of individuals. Under this perspective, security was defined by the United Nations (1994) as "Freedom from want and freedom from fear". This concept was labelled as "Human Security" and refers to threats on the following areas: food security, economic security, health security, environmental security, personal security, community security and political security.

The international community's perception of the concept of development had a similar change. During the 20th century, development was understood as promoting economic growth. However, in the 21st century the concept changed and development became to be understood as improving social and economic conditions through the achievement of the Millennium Development Goal (MDGs). These goals are to end poverty, universal education, gender equality, child health, maternal health, combat HIV/AIDS, environmental sustainability, and global partnership (United Nations, 2000).

Besides the shift in its definition, these concepts have been linked to the so-called security-development nexus. In post-conflict situations, this nexus suggests that development is a precondition to security because on the one hand, the lack of development threatens and affects the security achieved, and on the other, development reduces the risk of renewing the conflict (McDougall, 2010:172).

The nexus also implies that security is a precondition to development because without stability, development cannot take place (Krause & Oliver, 2005:455). In the international arena, the security-development nexus has also been understood as the relation between the lack of development of some countries and the perception of insecurity by the developed world. For instance, in 2004 Kofi Annan<sup>1</sup> (2004) stated that underdevelopment helps to spread terrorism, the traffic of illicit drugs and weapons, and increases the flows of refugees; thus, threatening the security of the world. The view of the latter security-development nexus has been an emphasis since the terrorist attacks of September 2001 (Duffield, 2005). However, for purposes of this paper, the security-development nexus to be considered is the one that refers to post-conflict situations.

The security-development nexus has been applied in post-conflict situations to reduce the risk of returning to conflict. The importance of this lies in the fact that during the last decade, 90% of the conflicts around the world corresponded to the onset of civil conflict in countries that have had previous civil wars (World Bank, 2011:3). Additionally, Collier et al. (2003:83) argue that during the first five years after a civil war ends, the risk for the country to return to conflict increases by 44%. Nevertheless, in order to formulate policies that link security and development in post-conflict situations it is necessary to understand the motivations that lead to conflict in the first place.

The academic debate about the motivations for civil war has been driven by explanations based on "greed" and "grievance". The greed theory states that the cause of conflict is due to rebels' decision to initiate a civil conflict whenever the opportunity cost of initiating the civil war is low enough that makes it a rational decision (Cramer, 2002:1847). In other words, because rebels need funds to create organize and maintain the rebel organization, as well as enough manpower and equipment to fight the government military forces and survive; then, rebels only go to war when they have the

opportunity and ability to finance the conflict and get profit out of it. This hypothesis has been proven and verified by the analysis of empirical data from different recent civil wars. Collier (2000 a) found that dependence upon primary commodities exports, low average income of the country and slow growth are strongly related with the risk of the onset of war. Later, Collier and Hoeffler (2002) identified loot-seeking as the main cause of civil wars. Hegre (2002) confirmed this finding and showed that countries that depend on primary exports have more probabilities to initiate a civil war. De Soysa (2002) illustrated that the dependence on oil exports increases the likelihood of a civil war. With the analysis of different data, Fearon and Laitin (2003) and Ross (2004) verified the relationship between the dependence on oil export and the onset of conflict. Likewise, Humphreys (2005) demonstrated that countries which produce oil have a higher likelihood of having conflict. Additionally, Fearon (2005) proved that the dependence on the exports of agricultural commodities also increases the risk of a civil war and (Fearon, 2004) that conflicts last longer when rebels are able to earn an income from the contraband of opium, diamonds or coca. The importance of the previous investigations is that they all show how the existence of lootable natural resources lower the opportunity cost to initiate a civil conflict because it constitutes an important source of funding and profit for the rebels.

As mentioned before, rebels' organizations also need manpower in order to fight. Therefore, the ability for the rebels to recruit and retain people influence the opportunity cost to initiate the conflict (Murshed & Tadjoeddin, 2007:5). Collier (2000:110 b) found that the unemployment rate of young men contributes to lowering the opportunity cost of the onset of a conflict because it makes the recruitment process easier for the rebels. When young people face an absence of legal jobs, the opportunity cost for joining the rebels is lower than the one they face when they are able to find a legal job instead. For instance, according with Figgis, in the Russian civil war of 1919-21, the desertion rate of the rebels' organization was higher during the

<sup>1</sup> Former Secretary-General of the United Nations. Served from 1997 to 2006.

harvest time than during the winter (as cited in Collier & Hoeffler, 2002:6).

In contrast of the greed theory, other scholars argue that grievance is the motivation factor behind civil wars. Grievance is defined by Gurr (1970:24) as "the discrepancy between what people think they deserve, and what they actually believe they can get". In other words, social exclusion and justice-seeking are the determinant factors for civil wars. Olson (1965) states that greed is not the cause of civil conflicts. This is due to the fact that greed is not enough to overcome the collective action problem<sup>2</sup>. Instead, he argues that rebels can overcome this problem by offering selective incentives to its members and thus, grievance explains the onset of civil conflict. Similarly, Tilly (1978) demonstrates that the formation of identities is necessary to mobilize people. More recently, "horizontal inequality" has been identified by Stewart (2000) as the cause of civil conflict. He states that inequality between identifiable groups increases the risk of a civil war. All of these scholars agree on grievance as the motive of civil conflict.

As with the greed theory, the grievance theory was tested against empirical data from different civil wars by Collier and Hoeffler (2002). In their research they did not find a correlation between inequality or injustice and the onset of civil conflict. As Collier et al. (2006:7) explain, even though the leader of a rebel organization will usually refer to grievance as the motivation of its acts, he acts based on his own benefits. Social problems as injustice are too difficult to be solved by conflict, because conflict itself creates a general suffering in the population (including the group that supports the rebellion) and generates more devastation than justice. Additionally, because rebel victories are rare, then to initiate a conflict is not a rational decision, unless rebels expect to obtain gains during the conflict. Furthermore, Fearon and Laitin (2003) demonstrated that empirically, the single best predictor of the onset of civil wars is per capita income and other factors related with grievance such as the level of democracy, the income inequality,

the ethnic or religious diversity, failed to predict it. Indeed, poor countries have a greater risk of having a civil war than rich countries. Fearon (2008:293) demonstrated that poor countries have a risk of 14.3% of having a civil war while the risk in rich countries is only 1.5%. He got these results using the data from the outbreak of civil wars of 161 countries during the period of time from 1945 to 1999. Moreover, Miguel et. al. (2004) examined the relation between economic growth and the likelihood of civil conflict by analysing data from 41 African countries and concluded that economic growth reduces the incidence of civil conflict. All these studies confirmed that the low economic performance of a country lowers the opportunity cost of starting a conflict.

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Based on greed theory being the motivation for civil conflict, it is necessary to pursue policies of development to accomplish security in post-conflict situation. If the onset of war is caused by greed then, in order to prevent the renewal of conflict, the opportunity cost of going to conflict should be raised. Thus, the way to achieve this aim is by promoting economic growth. It means that development and security should be understood as defined in the 20th century by the international community. This is justified because the new definition of these concepts includes social transformation, which is linked to grievance as a cause of civil war.

The formulation of an effective policy that increases economic growth and reduces the chances to have another conflict is the challenge for post-conflict policies. The promotion of the construction sector by the state, supported by the international community has all the requirements needed to achieve this aim. First of all, public physical infrastructure and private properties are destroyed during a civil war. Thus, it is necessary for the state and its citizens to reconstruct the country after the conflict. In a civil war, the destruction of key physical infrastructure is part of the strategy of the rebels. Usually the main targets are airports, ports, roads, bridges and telecommunication facilities. Evidence of this situation can be found in Mozambique's civil war where around forty percent of the public administration sector, agriculture infrastructure and communication facilities were destroyed (Kulipossa, 2006:43), more evidence can be found in the Liberian civil war, where most of the infrastructure was damaged and looted (Hoeffler & Reynal-Querol, 2003:5). Hence, the construction sector plays an important role in the early years of the post-conflict situation, which is the period of time with the greatest risk of renewal of war.

Second, the construction sector is the key locus of the economy. Turin (1973) demonstrates how there is a positive correlation between construction activity and economic growth. His study was based on the analysis of the data of eighty-seven low and middle-income countries within the period of 1955–65. Anaman and Osei-Amponsah (2007) analyzed the relationship between the growth of the construction sector in Ghana and the growth of its economy and concluded that the construction sector is the major driver of Ghana's economy. Kulipossa (2006:45) reached the same conclusion by analyzing the construction sector of Mozambique and its economic growth after the civil war. The positive correlation between the construction sector growth and the economic growth is due to the strong linkages of the construction sector with other sectors of the economy. Park (1989) proved this statement and demonstrated that the construction sector generates one of the highest multiplier effects on the economy. Hillebrandt (1985) identified manufacturing and the use of raw material, equipment, finance, energy, and labour as the activities that have strongest linkages with the construction sector. Moreover, before the change on the concept of development, the World Bank (1984) identified the construction sector as a major player in the development and the growth of the economy. The positive relation between the growth of the construction sector and the economy is also evident in developed countries. Pietroforte & Gregori, (2003:321) found that in Australia, Canada and Japan the construction sector is still an important engine for economic growth. Ofori (1988) concluded that the construction sector was the major contributor to the economic growth of Singapore during the period of time from 1960 to 1986. Therefore, the promotion of the construction sector will create economic growth and with it, the opportunity cost of renewing the conflict will increase because people will find better alternatives to get profits. As a result, the greed motivation behind civil war will be diminished.

Another challenge that can be solved by promoting the construction sector is the possibility for rebels to recruit people

easily. As mentioned above in the greed theory, the main reason why people decide to join a rebel group is because this is probably the only alternative to get a "job" and make earnings. After the civil war ends, rebels will be unemployed again and if they do not have the possibility to get a legal job, then re-joining the rebel organization or engaging in criminal activities will be a rational decision for them. Additionally, ex-combats represent an unskilled labour force, either because the duration of the civil war was too long that it has been the only jobs they have had or because they have been fighting too long that they need to be retrained. In this context, the construction sector is the best mechanism to provide work to ex-combats. This sector offers the opportunity for unskilled, semi-skilled and skilled forces to find a job. According to Ali Khan (2008:279) the construction sector is regarded as an effective instrument in generating jobs for unskilled workers. Evidence of this statement can be found in Istanbul, where the construction sector provided "easily accessible employment for the unskilled labour force" (Keyder, 2005:129). Moreover, the productivity of the construction sector relies on the managerial level and not on the skills of its workers (Sanvido, 1988). For instance, in 2000 more than 7% of the construction workforce of the United States were Hispanics who speak English "less than well" and 5% did not speak English at all (Dong & Platner, 2003:46). This means that around 5% of the workers are illiterate and 7% are just able to communicate. However, the construction sector of the United States is one of the most productive in the world (Haas, 2009:63). By promoting the construction sector, the creation of legal jobs will make the recruitment process more difficult for the rebels and as consequence the opportunity cost for the rebels to renew the conflict will be raised.

In order to diminish the greed motives of civil war, other kinds of solutions have been implemented by the international community. These efforts have been focused on increasing the opportunity cost by control-

ling the international trade of lootable natural resources. In 2003, the UN Security Council launched the "Kimberley Process Certification Scheme" with the aim of preventing the trade of diamonds from being a source of funds for the rebels. One of the problems with this initiative is the constant falsification of the certificates by the rebels (Orogun, 2004:159). Another is that the initiative only regulates the legal trade of diamonds and overlooks the black market of diamonds. According to the US Department, about 15% of the world trade of diamonds corresponds to smuggled and illicit stones generating more than \$7 billion dollars a year (Burke & et.al, 2000). Moreover, this initiative cannot be replicated in situations where the rebels are funding the rebellion with the traffic of illicit drugs as cocaine. The problem behind this initiative is that the certification by itself does not increase the opportunity cost of conflict because it does not provide an alternative for rebels to make profits legally. Furthermore, the certification itself does not promote economic growth or create employment.

Besides the initiative mentioned above, the international community has focused its efforts on policies that understand grievance as the motive for conflict. In the World Development Report of 2011, the World Bank (2011:2) states "The central message of the Report is that strengthening legitimate institutions and governance to provide citizen security, justice, and jobs is crucial to break cycles of violence". In other words, the World Bank sees the transformation or "strength" of the institutions and the need to provide justice as the solution to reduce grievance and therefore, the solution to the cause of conflict. This reasoning has two problems. First, it implies that countries which have had conflicts have weak institutions, which ultimately means that they are weak or failed states that need to be fixed. Second, it implies grievance as the motive for conflict. The label of weak or failed state is subjective and is related to the Weberian<sup>4</sup> understanding of state. In consequence, the state is weak or labelled as failed whenever

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<sup>3</sup> Decision adopted by the UN Security Council Resolution S/RES/1459.

<sup>4</sup> Max Weber defines the state as the right to successfully exert the monopoly of violence in a given territory (Weber, 1964:154).

the state loses its monopoly on the use of violence. Under this approach, "human security" is the mean by which "strong" states intervene to help the population in weak or failed states (Duffield, 2006:23) and the solution provided to strengthen or transform them is created by liberal states (Schwarz, 2005:433). Paris (2004:151) analyzed eleven case studies where political and economic liberalization took place after a civil conflict. He concluded that in most of the cases, the policies "produced destabilizing side effects that worked against the consolidation of peace". The explanation of this outcome lies first in ignoring that state formation should occur more organically than by imposition (Krause & Jütersonke, 2005). Secondly, and most importantly, due to the fact that strengthening of states and its institutions is based on grievance as the cause of civil conflict, overlooking greed as a cause of conflict. As it has been illustrated before, it has been demonstrated empirically that perhaps greed and not grievance is the motive for civil conflict. Therefore, the solution of creating liberal states cannot prevent the renewal of civil wars because it fails to eliminate the cause of civil conflict.

Furthermore, since the shift of the concepts of security and development, the international community has been relating these concepts under the grievance theory. For instance, the concept of human security is not only associated with the absence of conflict, but is also linked to aspects related to grievance as good governance, access to education, health care and human rights (United Nations, 2003:4). Additionally, development understood as the achievement of the MDGs is more concerned with providing social benefits instead of only economic benefits. Seven out of the eight MDGs are related to the solution of social problems. Most recently, the link between these concepts is that besides the necessity to pursue human security and MDGs in conjunction to addressing common problems related to health, environment, community and political institutions; human security has been identified as the first step towards the achievement of the MDGs (Commission of the European Union, 2005). As long as the international communi-

ty keeps formulating policies to ensure peace in post-conflict situation based on grievance as the motive for conflict, none of the policies will be effective because they will not address the real cause of the conflict.

## Conclusion

In post-conflict situations, policies of development and security should be pursued in conjunction. However, in order to formulate effective policies it is necessary to understand the causes of conflict. As illustrated in this paper, the empirical evidence shows that the onset of conflict is due to greed motives. Therefore, an effective policy should be focused on addressing greed as the motive of conflict.

Based on this argument, the promotion of the construction sector may prove to be an effective policy to reach higher levels of development, understood as economic growth and security and conceived as freedom from civil war. First, it is buttressed by the need of reconstructing the country after the end of the conflict. Second, because the promotion of the construction sector effectively creates economic growth. Finally, because the construction sector offers the opportunity for ex-combats to find a legal job.

However, the international community considers grievance as the motive for conflict. Thus, the concepts of security and development have been expanded respectively to human security and the achievement of the MDGs. Additionally, the policy formulated to avoid the renewal of conflict has been focused on the creation of liberal states.

Creating a liberal state in post-conflict situations is not an effective policy because it does not solve the real cause of conflict, which is greed. Thus, as long as the opportunity cost for the rebels to restart the conflict is not increased, then the risk of conflict will remain latent.

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