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**The World Bank's *World Development Report 2011 – Conflict, Security, and Development:*  
A critique through five vignettes**

Gareth A. Jones and Dennis Rodgers<sup>1</sup>

***Introduction***

The World Bank's recently published 2011 *World Development Report* (WDR) focuses on the relationship between conflict, security, and development. The basic message of the Report is that it is important to “accept the links between security and development outcomes” (page 276), and it lays out an analysis of the basic trends underlying conflict and violence in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, as well as a series of policy recommendations to face “the challenge of repeated cycles of violence” (page 2). In a nutshell, the WDR proposes that contemporary conflicts are no longer one-off events, that new forms of conflict and violence are emerging, and that different forms of violence can become linked to each other in ways that promote negative feedback loops that are very difficult to break, particularly in “fragile” contexts. In order to meet these challenges, the Report suggests that it is necessary that “inclusive-enough coalitions” be built up in conflict-affected settings, that these push forward “pragmatic, best-fit” measures that will produce “early results” in order to increase levels of confidence within society, and that they focus primarily on “security, justice, and jobs”.

This ambitious framework is presented in the Report in three parts. The first begins by describing how violent conflict and state fragility are major development challenges, causing misery, destroying communities and infrastructure, and crippling the economic prospects of over 1.5 billion people worldwide. It then offers an analytical framework that highlights how the existence of “capable, accountable, and legitimate institutions” are the common “missing factor” explaining why some societies are more resilient to violence than others. Part two offers “lessons from national and international responses”, drawing together extensive research and case study material to show how countries have managed to move away from fragility and violence, focusing on the need to “restore confidence and transform institutions”, and also to mitigate both internal and external stresses. Part three provides a range of “practical options for national and international reformers”, and identifies the need for a “fundamental re-think” of the agenda concerning security, conflict, and development, in particular emphasizing the need for the international community to adopt much longer time-frames both with regard to their engagement with fragile states, as well as to assessing the results of this engagement.

There is no doubt that the WDR contains many useful insights. Perhaps the most important – at least within a policy context, since within academic circles this is taken for given – is the notion that “institutional transformation and good governance, which are important in development generally, work differently in fragile situations” (page 104). The WDR also highlights how violence often occurs in cycles, and that one form of violence can easily mutate into another, and that it is very difficult to break cycles of violence unless certain fundamental changes are implemented at an institutional level. Another major insight is the importance of pacing and sequencing post-conflict reconstruction and violence reducing measures according to contextual specificities, something that is often forgotten in a development business that

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generally seeks quick, “blueprint” solutions. The Report furthermore contains some innovative proposals aimed at reducing conflict and violence, including for example calling for a proper examination of the question of the legalization of drugs (page 285).<sup>2</sup> Generally, the WDR 2011 can be said to clearly constitute a major advance on the World Bank’s previous exploration of the relationship between conflict and development, the highly decried WDR 2003, on “Breaking the Conflict Trap”.<sup>3</sup>

Having said this, there are also many problems with the WDR. On a conceptual level, one of the most important is its failure to distinguish between conflict and violence, as well as its propensity to lump different forms of violence – for example state versus non-state – together, despite the fact that these can have very different origins, dynamics, and consequences. Diplomatic sensitivities mean there is also very little discussion of the origins and causes of either conflict or violence, and a silence on connections with thorny issues such as inequality or class, despite their proven importance with regard to both conflict and violence. But part of the reason for this blind spot is that the WDR also displays a real lack of historical contextualization. The few occasions when the Report does invoke history, it tends to do so in a somewhat teleological manner.<sup>4</sup>

The WDR’s policy recommendations furthermore seem to be based at best on a desire to recreate the (ideal-typical) fiction of the Weberian state – a point on which the World Bank has been frequently accused in the past<sup>5</sup> - while at worst, they can be read as an attempt to justify contemporary US intervention in Afghanistan and Iraq.<sup>6</sup> Indeed, the Report’s recommendation that tackling the “interlocking landscape” of violence requires a “combined approach” (page 68) strikes a chord with measures already in train to roll together or more closely coordinate bi-lateral development organisations with foreign or defence ministries, including the re-direction of aid budgets towards security concerns.<sup>7</sup> More generally, the linking of security and development abandons the ethical commitments underpinning development, replacing (utopian) goals with (pragmatic) outcomes as the measure of progress. Nowhere is this more evident than in the fact that a major WDR policy recommendation concerns strengthening the “legitimacy” of institutions in order to enable them to reduce violence more effectively, but simultaneously grounds this legitimacy in the capacity of these institutions to limit violence rather than issues such as inclusion, participation, or representation – despite the fact that all are put forward as central development concerns by the World Bank in other contexts.

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<sup>2</sup> As such, the World Bank is arguably the first major international organization to officially put this forward as a potential policy.

<sup>3</sup> We are grateful to an anonymous referee for drawing our attention to this point.

<sup>4</sup> This lack of attention begs the question of how we are to understand the consequences of violence and its resolution if we do not understand cause. The rather neat solution is the suggestion that whatever the causes of violence, the problem of violence is the same – “weak institutions” – which prompts the solution, strengthen “weak institutions” and attend to the calibration of reform. This move shifts the focus toward working out why “exceptional” countries are more peaceful and stable.

<sup>5</sup> Both the normative representation of the state and the WDR recommendations are familiar tropes of World Bank criticism, and in particular the organization’s central concern with corruption, the rule of law, and “good governance”.

<sup>6</sup> Such a reading is tempting considering that the President of the World Bank, Robert Zoellick, served in President George W. Bush’s administration as Deputy Secretary of State and was a contributor to the Project for the New American Century, although more charitably it could also be seen as simply reflecting the current geopolitical priorities of major member states of the World Bank.

<sup>7</sup> See <http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2010/oct/19/aid-billions-diverted-to-war-zones> & <http://www.guardian.co.uk/global-development/poverty-matters/2010/nov/29/aid-security-bottom-billion?> [Accessed 31 July 2011].

It is beyond the scope of this brief commentary to exhaustively discuss all the WDR in its entirety, however. Instead, we have chosen to present five “vignettes” highlighting in what we hope is an informative and interesting manner selected issues concerning both the Report’s analysis and its policy recommendations. The first flush of reaction to the Report – especially from the blogosphere, but also the media (see for example, Wolf, 2011) – has not been particularly critical, and for the most part has simply repeated or paraphrased the official press release.<sup>8</sup> We hope that this commentary will help kick-start a substantive discussion about the WDR 2011, thereby contributing to re-centring the debate around conflict, security, and development, which as the WDR 2011 highlights well, is in many ways *the* key concern of the contemporary moment.

### ***Vignette 1: Unpacking the WDR Bibliography***

To paraphrase the opening paragraph of Walter Benjamin’s (1968: 59) famous essay on exploring the content of his library: “We are unpacking the WDR’s bibliography. Yes we are. We will not presume, in order to appear convincingly objective and down-to-earth, to exhaustively enumerate its content or even its prize pieces, and nor will we attempt to present their history or even their usefulness to the Report. Rather, we have in mind something less obscure, something more palpable than that; what we are really concerned with is to try to provide some insight into the relationship between the Report’s main message and its major bibliographical omissions”. Certainly, the bibliography is revealing of a very partial reading of the relevant literature regarding conflict and violence. Although the WDR claims that its “approach is multidisciplinary and draws on both quantitative and qualitative evidence” (page 73), and particularly stresses that “explanations for conflict based purely on economic motives are inadequate” (page 81), the fact of the matter is that almost all of the literature cited in the Report is economic and is based principally on quantitative correlations between economic and political factors and conflict.<sup>9</sup>

Moreover, even as the Report critiques such an approach, arguing that “not only is it facile [but] it [also] misrepresents the state of the research”, and that “identity, ideology, injustice, and political motivations ...are very important in explaining violence and conflict”, it simultaneously rather undermines the validity of most non-economic research on the latter issues when it comments that “it is much more difficult to test the[ir] importance ...using statistical methods” (page 81). This dismissal of qualitative research is also obvious in the WDR’s justification that its “framework is compatible with the theories of violence in different disciplines” (page 104) by means of a box (3.4) that draws solely on the work of a select few economists such as Paul Collier, Douglass North, or Daron Acemoglu. While recognizing the contributions of these scholars, it is striking that they are all newcomers to debates on violence and conflict, which have been ongoing since Niccolò Machiavelli’s *The Prince* written almost 500 years ago, and which also includes such classic figures as Thomas Hobbes (who is admittedly mentioned once), Karl Marx, Max Weber, Emile Durkheim, Georg Simmel, Hannah

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<sup>8</sup> A notable exception is Astri Suhrke and Ingrid Samset’s insightful note for the Chr. Michelsen Institute website – see <http://www.cmi.no/news/?818=cycles-of-violence-three-issues-and-a-question> [Accessed 31 July 2011].

<sup>9</sup> Similarly, although the WDR very laudably argues that that it is important to think of violence beyond civil war, it also suggests that the research base is far stronger for civil war than for other forms of violence. Even a cursory review of the anthropological, sociological, and political science literature suggests that this latter statement reflects a privileging of certain types of knowledge over others, however – a trend that can be associated with World Bank development research more broadly, as Bayliss *et al.* (2011) have highlighted.

Arendt, Michel Foucault, Johan Galtung, or Charles Tilly, for example.<sup>10</sup> It is perhaps most especially striking that the Report fails to engage with current debates within development studies concerning what is widely referred to as the “security-development nexus” (e.g. Buur, Jensen, and Steputat, 2007; Duffield, 2007).

The question is by no means a pedantic one. The particular focus that emerges from the bibliography reveals the reasons for certain flaws that are apparent in the WDR, including its failure to distinguish between conflict and violence, its lack of consideration of the origins, dynamics, and consequences of both, as well as its ahistoricity. In many ways, the WDR as effectively represents a combination of institutional economics with a limited consideration of the political science and international relations literature on “security” but no real analysis of conflict, violence, or history. This is perhaps best epitomized by the fact that conflict and violence are viewed solely in negative terms in the Report. Yet, there exists a long-standing tradition highlighting the central role that conflict has played in spurring development, from Karl Marx to Robert Bates (2001) – both notable absentees from the bibliography – as well as, more recently, Chris Cramer (2006) – who is cited in the bibliography but not for his most provocative work – and David Keen (2005).<sup>11</sup> There is furthermore of course a significant body of work that considers violence and conflict from ethnographic perspectives, and which illuminate how violence shapes both specific generational, “racial”, gendered, and identity politics, as well as society more generally (see for example, Evans-Pritchard, 1940; Farmer, 2003; Ferme, 2001; Richards, 1996; Uvin, 1998). Until such insights are grappled with, any analysis and policy recommendations made regarding the interrelation between conflict, security, and development can only be very partial.

### ***Vignette 2: A “Séance” with Charles Tilly***

Charles Tilly (1929-2008) was perhaps the foremost social scientist of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to write about the relationship between violence and the state. He is however a notable absentee in the WDR’s bibliography.<sup>12</sup> Aside from a certain curiosity as to why none of his fifty or so books on themes ranging from state formation, war making, social movements, trust and violence made it into the Report, his conspicuous absence makes us wonder what “Chuck” would have made of the WDR. At one level, it is probably safe to assume that he would have generally seen the Report as an exemplification of his famous contention that if the aim of your writing is solely to influence people then do not bother with debate and counterfactual testing but simply exhort your argument and be damned. Having said this, Tilly might nevertheless have appreciated some of the general claims of the Report, including in particular its central claim that the poorest people in the world live in conditions of repeated cycles of political and criminal violence – and that their poverty is something to do with this situation – and that to break these cycles requires stronger legitimate national institutions and governance to produce security, justice and jobs. Certainly, Tilly made very similar claims in a number of his books.

As a social scientist interested in process, both academic and practical, Tilly would likely have been dismayed by the Report’s lack of understanding that the process of state formation

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<sup>10</sup> It is striking that over 90 percent of the 978 references in the bibliography were published within the last ten years.

<sup>11</sup> The latter show how violence can often be a medium for development, albeit generally a very unequal form of development.

<sup>12</sup> Curiously, the WDR 2011 Concept Note includes Tilly’s seminal *Coercion, Capital and European States, A.D.990-1990* (1993) in its bibliography but no mention of this work is made in the text of the Report (see World Bank, 2010 & 2011).

always tends to show long periods of violence, some of which fall in to cycles, but most of which are “resolved” through complex processes of social and political mediation that take decades to achieve. For example, the states of Western Europe emerged from 30 years of war to agree a peace via multiple treaties around 1648, but it took many more revolutions, civil and expansionary wars, and long periods of internal unrest for present-day “nations” to emerge and consolidate (Tilly, 1993). The point for Tilly was to understand the variations and to appreciate them for what they were, not divergence from a norm but as part of that very process.

The key question for Tilly was always “what work does violence do”, and from this, he considered the subsidiary question of “whose interests does it serve”. The difficulties inherent to answering these questions are immediately apparent if one adopts a limited definition of violence. As Tilly (2003) noted, the register of violence is highly plastic, and salience will vary according to the tolerance or prohibition of the state. In essence, a battle, a riot and a brawl are different in form but they need to be understood contextually if we are to grasp their role in political processes. In his writing, Tilly was always careful to distinguish between different forms of “violence” and to consider whether form was a sign of underlying conditions and processes. Crucially, Tilly argued that violence was best understood as concerning social ties, within structural conditions; that is, about relations between people and groups. Peoples’ relations concern boundaries, social life collectively consists of beliefs and practices that recognise boundaries – that we may loosely consider as class, ethnicity, gender, place identity and so on – and which become key ways for organising and legitimating social practice, including economic and political ties and actions (Tilly, 2005). Although violence might manifest as breakdown, violence always involves high degrees of interaction.

The next difficulty that Tilly might have identified relates to how one understands institutions and the relations of the state to violence. A core message of the WDR is that “the particular manifestation of violence at any one time is less important than the underlying institutional deficits that permit repeated cycles of violence” but “successful approaches to address political, communal, and criminal violence have much in common” (page 22). This allows the WDR to lump together different types of violence, both in a vernacular sense and as different registers of relations from a Tillyian perspective. Violence is violence, writ large or small. Such a perspective also allows the WDR to follow an increasingly common convention, which is to link (types of) violence with actors’ positions vis-à-vis the state, hence the frequent term “non-state actors”. For the most part what is meant here is violence wrought by gangs, militias, or guerrilla groups. There is a sense of competition over the monopoly of the legitimate use of violence and of states failing to deliver “security” as a public good. Although useful, the state/non-state distinction has its limits. As already noted, violence can be considered political but to Tilly it was also always about social relations.

From these key points, Tilly would likely have added another. His analysis of violence over time would broadly concur with the underlying trend identified in the WDR. The 20<sup>th</sup> century was more violent than the 19<sup>th</sup>, at least in terms of inter-state and civil war, notwithstanding difficulties of definition for the wars of colonial expansion. By the late 20<sup>th</sup> century wars were more likely to be civil, and large-scale violence generally involved guerrilla groups, separatist movements and ethnic conflict. Victims of these “new wars” were much more likely to be civilians than combatants. Having said this, Tilly would certainly have warned us that we should not confuse violence by non-state actors as non-state violence; a lot of violent behaviours take place under cover of the law and/or by agents that are far closer to the state, relationally, than other non-state social agents such as families or clans. As Abrahamsen and

Williams (2011) explore, for example, the enormous increase in private “security” companies in the modern era has been closely tied to the state, and to new forms of governance.

At the same time, Tilly’s (2003) analysis of collective violence in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century suggested that the search for political autonomy was the main driver for institutional change within nation-states that denied opportunities for excluded populations to express frustration and/or seek separate statehood. He argued that those parts of the world that have become less violent over the past century had done so by as a result of increased state capacity and democratization, and more specifically the disarmament of civilian groups, the opening of the public sphere to conflict resolution, and the extension of the “law” into public and private life in a consistently reliable manner. When viewed from this perspective, Tilly would probably have been keen to see whether his analysis of government capacity and democracy is supported by the findings of the WDR. He would have been able to see some support for the former, but he would likely have been dismayed by the lack of attention to democracy. Certainly, although the WDR proposes that violence relates to institutional deficits, it barely makes any mention of democracy. The first full mention is on page 101, to note that transitions from authoritarianism to democracy can increase violence. Otherwise, there are a couple of warnings about difficulties of “winner-take-all” election approaches, as well as some discussion of the dangers of proportional representation in Iraq. Overall, there are fewer than a dozen mentions of democracy in the Report, including in boxes and footnotes. Instead, the WDR seems more comfortable with the idea that security and development stand a better chance if steps are taken to enhance the integrity of peoples’ identification with the nation-state.

The key agent in this latter endeavor, according to the Report, is the committed national leader whose existence, if suitably supported, means that “violent challenges can be overcome, lives saved, economic hope restored and collective security enhanced”, to quote the WDR Concept Note (2010: v). Repeatedly, the WDR makes reference to a “strong leader” argument, contending that a “national leader needs to lay out clear priorities” (page 20) and build national identity through vision and purpose.<sup>13</sup> Tilly, however, would certainly have highlighted the lesson from history that strong national leaders rarely produce durable national identities without bloodshed. Moreover, he would have drawn attention to the fact the construction of national identity and purpose usually occurs through processes of “boundary activation”, generally at the expense of specific – often minority – identity groups and formations.<sup>14</sup> He would have also pointed out that national leaders are simply the apex of a complex and contradictory pyramid of political “brokers” and “entrepreneurs” who possess varying degrees of power – and varying individual agendas – to affect a shift in how identity boundaries are constructed. Finally, Tilly would likely also have pointed out that as “bounded” identities, nations usually err to one identity over others, and are held together by complex webs of coercion and compromise. Changing government capacity and demands for democracy will result in instability as power geometries realign – groups get richer, regions get poorer – and a key issue concerns whether political structures can move the parameters of tolerance and prohibition in such a way as to channel demand-making.

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<sup>13</sup> Such an argument echoes some of Paul Collier’s recent work. Although his most recent contribution on the subject, *Wars, Guns and Votes* (2010), is not in the WDR’s bibliography, it has clearly been influential, most likely by virtue of the fact that Collier was a member of the WDR Advisory Committee.

<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, building national identity through the endeavours of leaders may produce flags, anthems and statues, but will not necessarily consolidate nations. Tilly’s own historical writing about France, Ireland, and Eastern Europe extensively underscore this point, but one can also think about more contemporary examples such as Pakistan, Nigeria or Lebanon.

More generally, Tilly would also have suggested that the contemporary global upsurge in post-democratic violence is no great surprise. Democracy as an institution is not monolithic, its quality can vary enormously, and there is no linear relation between violence and democracy. Any understanding of democracy needs to be related to the social ties that make it work and to government capacity. Violence can for example increase with democratisation as political brokers are threatened or governments seek to extend the areas of legitimate claim-making open to all and new actors are able to emerge and seek to assert themselves. Alternatively, Tilly (2003) observed that collective violence involving government – that is to say, stamping authority on what today would be termed “non-state actors” – often increased with the development of government capacity – and this whether a government was democratic or autocratic. Indeed, a case can be made to suggest that democracy often follows war precisely because violence is deeply involved in its institutionalisation. There is no doubt that deepening democracy decreases violence as egalitarian forms of expressions are expanded, however, and that ultimately high capacity democratic states are the least violent around. But this is a long term process, and by no means a guaranteed one.

### ***Vignette 3: Gangs of the World, Unite!***

Gangs emerge as major bugbears in the WDR, to the extent that they are repeatedly invoked in an almost talismanic manner as a short-hand means of describing the violent and threatening “other”.<sup>15</sup> Certainly, images of gangs as the embodiment of a brutal and senseless barbarism widely infuse the global public imagination. From books such as Graham Greene’s 1938 classic *Brighton Rock* to acclaimed films such as *City of God* (2003) to popular TV series such as David Simon’s *The Wire* (2002-08), gangs have been ubiquitously portrayed as forms of social pathology, inherently associated with an anomic violence that is seen to threaten the very fabric of societies all over the world. At the same time, however, there is a curious lack of discussion of the origins and dynamics of gangs in the WDR, which conspicuously fails to engage with much of the extensive social scientific literature that exists on the subject. When it does, it proposes only a very partial analysis, as is the case in box 2.4 on page 78, where the transnational origins of the *maras* of Central America is described, but without situating this either contextually – *maras* are only one type of gang in Central America, which is also afflicted by *pandillas* – or temporally – the transnational element is much less of a factor affecting *maras* dynamics today.<sup>16</sup>

But perhaps most strikingly, the WDR lumps gangs together with other very different violent actors such as drug cartels, terrorists, or even rebel groups. In figure 1.1 on page 53, for example, a graphic comparison is made between the media coverage concerning gangs, terrorism,

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<sup>15</sup> This concern must also be placed within the broader context of the increasing body of World Bank-sponsored work on “youth bulges” as drivers of conflict (see for example, Urdal, 2006).

<sup>16</sup> Even if there is a tendency to talk about Central American gangs generically, a distinction should be made between “*maras*” and “*pandillas*”. *Maras* constitute a phenomenon with transnational origins, while *pandillas* are more localised, home-grown groups that are the direct inheritors of the youth gangs that have long been a historic feature of Central American societies. *Pandillas* were initially present throughout the region during the post-conflict period, but are now only significantly visible in Nicaragua — and to a much lesser extent in Costa Rica — having been almost completely supplanted by *maras* in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. Although there is little doubt that the initial impulse for this particular process was the deportation of immigrant gang members from the USA in the mid-1990s, the number of deportees in *maras* today is relatively small, and they are a locally self-sustaining social phenomena (see Jütersonke *et al.*, 2009).



civil war, and trafficking, highlighting that this has followed very similar trends for all of them, particularly since 9/11. Similarly, at a national level, figure 3 on page 113 discusses insecurity in Colombia in a manner that merges the violence of urban crime, gangs, FARC and ELN rebel groups, implicitly suggesting they are all equivalent and unambiguously condemnable forms of violence.<sup>17</sup> Arguably the clearest example of this particular approach can be found in box 2.6 on page 80 (also repeated in figure 2.2 on page 9), where a comparison is made between the motivations underlying young people's decisions to join rebel movements and gangs, in order to show that they are very similar.<sup>18</sup> While these may well be some coincidence between motivations for joining, presenting things in this manner also clearly reinforces the notion that two very different types of violence are analogous (and concomitantly should be dealt with in similar ways).

Although as John Hagedorn (2008: xxv) has pointed out, “today's youth gang might become a drug posse tomorrow, even transform into an ethnic militia or a vigilante group the next day”, this is by no means inevitable, and moreover these groups have fundamentally different logics and dynamics (see also Jones and Rodgers, 2009). To this extent, lumping them all under the same category is clearly potentially dangerous. Even if the WDR only associates gangs and rebel groups on the basis of their origins, it is only a small step to connect them in terms of their motives and objectives, and while rebel groups may or may not be political organisations, they generally have at least at a rhetorical level the objective of overthrowing a government and seizing state power, something which can rarely – if ever – be associated with gangs. Having said that, where gangs can sometimes be compared to rebel groups is in terms of their potential position within a broader structural context. As has been described in relation to Central America and South Africa, gangs in both contexts, while not explicitly revolutionary in nature, can be analysed as emergent vanguard social forms, perhaps not revolutionary for themselves, but certainly in themselves, even if their rage is generally little more than a spontaneous and anarchic cry against situations of inequality, exclusion, and injustice (Jensen and Rodgers, 2008; Rodgers, 2009). When seen from this perspective, it is interesting to note that the WDR comes close to condoning revolutionary uprising when it offers the “Arab Spring” popular protests as an illustration of the fact that grievances increase when political, social, or economic change lags behind expectations (page 55), especially in view of the Report's suggestion that gangs can sometimes be part of the solution to post-conflict problems (page 133).

#### ***Vignette 4: Violence and Cities (or, the view from Rio de Janeiro)***

The WDR makes a number of comments that violence is linked with rapid urbanisation, although the exact nature of this relationship is not mapped out. This general lack of consideration of the issue suggests uncertainty as to how violent processes can be conceived in space, despite the previous WDR on the “new economic geography” being billed as the most “spatial” yet. The notion that urbanisation as a process might be related to violence or that cities are increasingly violent relative to the countryside, and what might be done about this, definitely

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<sup>17</sup> It is rather conspicuous in this respect that paramilitary violence is not discussed.

<sup>18</sup> It should be noted that analyses of gang member motives are provided by non gang members responding to surveys, an unpalatable foresight of the WDR's suggestion that more reliance is put on opinion polls as guides to policy. Surveys point to the primary motivation for joining gangs and rebel movements being unemployment. While it may be that most gang members are unemployed – although being a gang member can of course be a lucrative occupation – it should not be forgotten that most unemployed youth are not gang members nor do they want to be. Ultimately such opinion polls say more about normative judgements concerning young people than about gangs.

merits greater consideration, however. For example, Eric Wolf (1969) famously examined how “war” in the 20<sup>th</sup> century – meaning revolt initially – was generally not led by an industrial worker vanguard as Marx had predicted, but rather by the “middle peasant” inspired by an urban intelligentsia, often leaving the poor peasant proper as the victims of insurrection. Wolf was ultimately ambivalent as to what role cities played in war; he acknowledged they were sites of conflict but thought the urban proletariat would become active agents only if they maintained ties with the countryside. In a recent article, however, Jo Beall (2006) has suggested that this dynamic has changed, and that cities are increasingly new loci for conflict and violence globally. As such, she echoes Samuel Huntington’s (1969) earlier contention that cities were often the loci of revolution and war. He however also argued that with the right conditions cities could therefore serve as the basis for processes of social “pacification”. In particular, he advocated “forced-draft urbanization and modernization”, so that cities could accommodate the rural dispossessed that might otherwise join guerilla groups, and called for the establishment of major public works and job programmes to occupy them, and thus prevent the spread of communism.

Such a vision of things is particularly interesting to consider when one realises that the only urban crime prevention initiative discussed in any detail in the WDR – and which the Report moreover holds up as a “best practice” – is the deployment of Police Pacification Units (*Unidade de Polícia Pacificadora*, UPP) in the poor neighbourhoods – or *favelas* – of Rio de Janeiro in Brazil. This initiative, begun in 2008, aims “to replace coercive, short-term interventions in *favelas* with a long-term police presence and social services”, with the aim of ensuring “the consolidation of territorial control and peace in the areas of intervention through the promotion of citizenship and development” (page 152). The WDR singles out the initiative for praise partly because the UPP are financed by the private sector – which it argues is “thus contributing to social and economic development in the pacified *favelas*” – but also because it considers the UPP to illustrate the fundamental interconnections that it believes exist between security and development, and the necessity to link the two together.<sup>19</sup>

In a recent policy note written for the Zurich-based Center for Security Studies’ International Relations and Security Network (ISN),<sup>20</sup> Albert Souza Mulli confirms that the UPP programme “represent[s] a doctrinal and operational revolution away from police business as usual” in Rio de Janeiro. He however also remarks that “the widely praised program ...is not without its critics, who worry that it will turn each newly pacified neighborhood into a quasi-police state”. UPP units establish permanent bases in the *favelas* that they “pacify”, and become the first point of contact with the state for local residents, through which they request public goods and services. Indeed, citing Professor Luiz Antonio Machado of the Rio de Janeiro State University, Souza Mulli points out that this means that the police has “become the only channel through which residents can express their demands”. Indeed, he argues that it goes even further than this, pointing out that

“instead of just cooperating with the community in order to make police work more efficient and effective, the [UPP] officers are themselves acting as agents of social development, doing work that police do not usually do. This is very similar

<sup>19</sup> The UPP has also been championed by UN-Habitat which has featured the programme prominently on its webpage, although financial support seems to amount to no more than a few million dollars.

<sup>20</sup> See: <http://www.isn.ethz.ch/isn/Current-Affairs/ISN-Insights/Detail?lng=en&id=128530&contextid734=128530&contextid735=127717&tabid=127717128530> [Accessed 31 July 2011].

to the role of soldiers in the US counterinsurgency (COIN) strategy in Afghanistan, with [UPP] officers seeking to gain the ‘hearts and minds’ of Rio’s population through social development and engagement programs”.<sup>21</sup>

The scale of the UPP – aiming to “pacify” around 30 *favelas* each year up to 2016 – is audacious and rightly demands attention. At the same time, however, the UPP has in many ways taken earlier experiences to a new level, in terms of scale, motive, forms of coordination and relations between state and citizens. To those with experience of policing and *favelas* in Rio, the UPP’s reliance on the deployment of overwhelming force with a new police unit and military support is all too familiar. So too the follow-up post pacification of more proximal forms of community policing that not only include regular patrolling but also the organization of development initiatives for local residents. In 2000, for example, the newly formed *Grupamento de Policiamento em Areas Especiais* (Special Areas Policing Group) occupied a number of *favelas* in the south of Rio de Janeiro, using the special forces *Batalhão de Operações Policiais Especiais* (Special Operations Police Battalion, better known through its acronym, BOPE) to push out armed actors, after which they then “urbanised” the *favela* with community policing and social programmes run by NGOs.<sup>22</sup>

More dramatic still, 200 soldiers of the 9th Motorized Infantry Brigade occupied the Morro da Providência *favela* in 2008, allegedly as a means to force the Residents Association to accept an upgrading programme. The Providência experience is useful in the context of international support for the UPP for three reasons. First, the unit occupying Providência had been part of Brazil’s contribution to the UN peacekeeping mission in Haiti, making for a direct link between urban management and conflict resolution – techniques used in Brazil were honed in Port au Prince and brought back to the *favela*. Second, the occupation’s goal, to reinsert the state followed Providência *favela* having been a site of repeated previous upgrading efforts, including the controversial *Favela-Bairro* programme, but which had failed to ensure a state presence. Third, Providência *favela* was controlled by the *Comando Vermelho* gang, which remained very much present after the occupation and was in fact aided in doing so by the infrastructure introduced with *Favela-Bairro*.<sup>23</sup> Providência subsequently became a UPP *favela*, and was one of the sites where the UPP expanded with a “social dimension” called Social UPPs.<sup>24</sup> Rather than being operated from the state level, these are now run from the municipal level, in part to avoid the competition with the city’s infrastructure development programmes for

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<sup>21</sup> The similarities between UPP and US counter-insurgency strategy have also been noted by US diplomats in Brazil, as exposed in the Wikileaks cable 09RIODEJANEIRO329, which notes that “the Favela Pacification Program shares some characteristics with U.S. counter-insurgency doctrine and strategy in Afghanistan and Iraq. Like counter-insurgency, the population is the true center of gravity, and the program’s success will ultimately depend not only on effective and sustained coordination between the police and state/municipal governments, but on favela residents’ perception of the legitimacy of the state. One of the principal challenges in this project is to convince favela populations that the benefits of submitting to state authority (security, legitimate land ownership, access to education) outweigh the costs (taxes, utility fees, civil obedience). As with American counter-insurgency doctrine, we should not expect results overnight.”

<sup>22</sup> Homicide in the affected *favela* fell to zero, but the programme was subsequently the victim to political change, corruption and opposition from the Police. We are grateful to Luke Dowdney at Viva Rio for discussing this experience with us.

<sup>23</sup> Field visit by Gareth Jones, June 2009.

<sup>24</sup> The Social UPPs approach includes conventional infrastructure upgrading and extension of education, health and cultural facilities, as well as environmental protection, renovated public spaces, and micro-enterprise promotion.

*favelas*. Yet despite this change, the *Comando Vermelho* continues to be a significant presence, and tightly controls the *favela*.

As such, although clearly important, security is not necessarily peace, at least not in Rio. A headline of the UPP has been the decline in the number and rate of homicides in “pacified” *favelas*. The state government has also drawn attention to a number of opinion polls that show people “feel” safer after UPP. The picture on the ground seems inevitably to be more complicated, however. First, *pace* Tilly, violence in *favelas* was often an end game to a process of dispute resolution, either between members of the same armed faction (for example, dealers who had become users), or between rival *Comando* factions for control of territory, as well as with the Police or military. Such violence is clearly often terrifying and has many innocent victims. But – and here we write from the cold ground of social science – violence rarely occurs without rules or on a zero-sum basis. Violence in this case was clearly a tool of governance – a form of “law” – that incorporated behavioural norms, welfare distribution, and conflict resolution – if perhaps not exactly “justice” (see Arias and Rodrigues, 2006).

Second, security in UPP *favelas* has come in part due to the more predictable actions of the Police. But, at the same time, the UPP has – deliberately or otherwise is by no means easy to tell – altered the power geometry between non-state actors, moving against armed groups such as the *Comando Vermelho* and leaving the militias, groups associated with ‘black’ (corrupt) police units involved in protection rackets, in their place. Unconfirmed reports suggest that the pacified *favelas* are increasingly being taken over by the militias; by some accounts the militia now control more than one-third of Rio *favelas*. Armed groups such as the *Comando Vermelho* on the other hand have restructured operations: homicide has therefore fallen city-wide on average but increased in *favelas* not affected by the UPP, leading to the interpretation that UPP has displaced armed groups that have simply shot their way into new areas.

The interrelation between security and development that are illustrated through the UPP example raises important issues concerning the sequencing of development measures linked to security provision. Effectively, the WDR projects security as a precondition for development, but initiatives such as the UPP go much further and actually merge the two in a way that is clearly biased towards security much more than development. When seen from this perspective, it is interesting to note that most UPPs have been deployed in *favelas* close to or directly adjacent to middle- and upper-class neighbourhoods, to the extent that Souza Mulli suggests that “the programme is merely a temporary effort to quell violence in the city’s most strategic neighbourhoods ahead of the 2014 World Cup, and 2016 Olympic Games”.<sup>25</sup> By the time the UPP is slated for completion in 2016, only some 120 of Rio’s 1,000 plus *favelas* will have been “pacified”, despite the fact that the number of Police personnel in the city is due to double from 32,000 to 64,000 (Teixeira, 2011). As such, while it can be contended that the UPPs are perhaps a more sophisticated form of social control, they also respond to the long-standing desire to segregate the poor from the rich.<sup>26</sup> To this extent, Rio can be seen as part of a larger process whereby neoliberal forms of governance conceive of “inclusion” as a set of managed “exclusions” (see Samara, 2011).

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<sup>25</sup> The UPP’s website <http://www.upprj.com>, includes a high-spec English language version attainable by clicking a Rio2016 icon and includes a banner for the Olympic Games. Albeit hailed as a city-level initiative the UPP depends on the federal government’s \$250 billion “Programme for Accelerated Growth” (PAC) for its budget. The PAC is the principal fund for infrastructure associated with the World Cup and Olympics.

<sup>26</sup> A countervailing trend is that property prices and rents are reported to have risen sharply in UPP *favelas*. The revanchist reading is that police-induced gentrification might form a dimension of pacification in the longer term.

### *Vignette 5: Jobs as Commodities?*

Rather unusually for a World Bank publication, the WDR makes job creation one of its three major policy planks, along with the promotion of security and justice. As such, it could be seen as something of a new departure in Bank policy. Even a cursory glance at the Report however makes clear that jobs are considered the least important of the oft-repeated trinity of “security, justice, and jobs”. Not only is substantially less space devoted to job creation, but fewer of the empirical examples in the Report concern this issue, certainly compared to security and justice. Furthermore, despite suggesting that “there is still a debate over what works in generating jobs and widening economic stakes in prosperity – not only in fragile areas but worldwide in the wake of the global financial crisis” (page 257), the Report lays out only a small number of basic measures. First and foremost, the Report claims that “the international community has not paid as much attention to labor-intensive private sector development as is warranted” (page 200), and suggests – unsurprisingly, perhaps – that job creation in conflict-affected areas must be market-led. To encourage this, the WDR suggests that action must be taken to ease infrastructure constraints to private sector activity (particularly with regards to electricity and roads), simplify the regulatory environment, as well as work to reconnect potentially broken linkages between producers, traders, and consumers (or what they term “value chain investments”).

The WDR does acknowledge that some “simple”, “community-based” public works programmes that do not “distort” private sector activities might also be implemented, but only if they can be “well-administered” and are sustainable in the long run (page 161). It mentions very briefly Ethiopia’s Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) or India’s National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGA), both of which have been widely praised as innovative initiatives, including by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) – which the WDR conspicuously fails to mention, except in two footnotes. Indeed, one of these footnotes refers to “a thorough review of job creation programs in post-conflict environments [that] can ...be found in ILO 2010” (page 176), a document that the WDR arguably ought to have paid more attention to if it had really wanted to go beyond simplistic market-based solutions. The problem, however, is both ideological and normative. On the one hand, the ILO is committed to the fundamental value that “labour is not a commodity”,<sup>27</sup> and much of its work revolves around the promotion of a “decent work” agenda.<sup>28</sup> The World Bank’s international economic policy advisory services have generally focused on growth rather than jobs, seeing the latter firstly as epiphenomena of the former, and secondly labour as simply one of several economic variables that ought to be determined by competitive market forces.

The approaches represent two poles on a political spectrum that have been in opposition for over 200 years, and this commentary is not the place to determine which is right and which is wrong. The WDR’s position can however be said to blindside it, insofar as contrarily to most of the other policy recommendations made in the Report, the ones concerning job creation are not very context-sensitive, but actually smack very much of the “blueprint” development prescriptions that the Report seeks to avoid. Certainly, while the reconstruction of infrastructure is clearly something that is often necessary in many post-conflict contexts, its nature and the way in which to best achieve it will inevitably vary, as will the primary motivations. In the case of electricity, for example, which the WDR discusses at some length, one might imagine that this

<sup>27</sup> See <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/leg/download/constitution.pdf> [Accessed 31 July 2011].

<sup>28</sup> See <http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/decent-work-agenda/lang--en/index.htm> [Accessed 31 July 2011].

ought to be reconnected first and foremost less to ease constraints on private sector activity, but rather to enable the survival of urban populations highly constrained in their ability to access other energy sources. Similarly, concerning the issue of regulatory simplification that the Report is adamant must be promoted, in many post-conflict contexts the demand will actually likely rather be for the promulgation of some form of regulation, in order to rein in a war-fuelled Darwinian socio-economic order.

The WDR's blindside is furthermore also obvious in the rather disingenuous comment that job creation has fallen somewhat by the wayside with "shift by donors to focus support on the MDGs [that] have led many to dedicate significant parts of their development assistance to health, education, and basic services like water and sanitation" (page 200). Beyond the fact that this ignores the work of numerous NGOs, trade unions, and international organizations, it also displays a rather strange understanding of the substantive content of the MDGs, and the fact that "the goals of full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people, [are] a central objective of ...relevant national and international policies and ...national development strategies" for achieving MDG no. 1.<sup>29</sup> In the final analysis, however, the important point is that dealing with violence and post-conflict reconstruction is clearly an extremely difficult process – as the WDR itself highlights very well – and maximizing the chances of achieving success obviously requires a plurality of initiatives rather than a single focus.

## Conclusion

Given the concern by the World Bank and other development organizations that "fragile" states are less likely to meet the MDGs, it is important to interrogate the idea that poverty is higher and that state capacity is lower in countries with recent histories of violence. Of necessity, this commentary has only picked out a couple of the many issues raised by the Report. We have read the WDR as academics might, without having to brief a sceptical minister of state in the morning about what she should do next, but also as researchers with some experience of violence. Most of the countries in which we conduct our research are not in the "bottom billion and a half" – they are, Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, Nicaragua and South Africa – while some do qualify – Ghana and India. Without the finesse of statistical analyses it is immediately notable that many of the patterns of violence discussed in the WDR – such as urban crime, for example – are much more salient in the former than in the latter (noting that Ghana and India nevertheless suffer multiple forms of violence). But it is also notable that patterns of economic development are mixed across these countries, as is inequality, corruption and governance.

The WDR is an original and welcome addition to a debate on how violence shapes development processes and outcomes, and its relation with politics. In offering a narrow disciplinary focus, indicated by both the partial bibliography and the omission of key authors such as Charles Tilly, the ability of the WDR message to travel with credibility across disciplines may be undermined, however. Similarly, the conflation of violent actors one page, the distinctions between forms of violence the next, then outcomes of violence, overlaps with "conflict", and the idea of "security" as violence's opposite are clearly problematic. The Report's reliance on "tangibles" to tell its story furthermore overburdens a topic for which robust comparable data are mostly lacking, even for homicide let alone riots, fights or mugging. One

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<sup>29</sup> See: <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/pardev/download/mdg/kilm-5-2007-chap1aen.pdf> [Accessed 31 July 2011].

thing that ordinary people in the *favelas* of Rio and the Brazilian State seem to agree on is that the present violence is akin to a civil war, though it is not classified as one in international statistics. Peoples' everyday expression of violence is not only a tangible variable but also a form of fear that differs depending whether they are speaking of their child in a gang, the dangers associated with going out to buy food, or an unsettling sense of the future. The Oxford English Dictionary cites fourteen definitions for fear, only a couple of which equate in any way with violence or crime. What of conflict, security, safety?

Assuming that "world peace" is unlikely to break out anytime soon, alerting practitioners and others to even the broadest link between violence and development is undoubtedly a good idea. But beyond peacekeeping, community policing (still, rarely more than experimental), and justice reform, what is it that national and sub-national governments can do to provide security? And will these measures stand up when economic conditions fail to provide sufficient employment to hold-up grievances (especially among "youth") and bind communities together? The WDR recommends some adapted "best fit" reforms and longer-term approaches to institutional transformation: from basic large-scale infrastructure projects, skills and finance programmes, closer involvement of women in justice and security, and greater oversight afforded to individuals and communities to gauge state corruption. Nevertheless, such a pragmatic reform agenda, doing what is possible when possible, and privileging security first and foremost before development ultimately does not change the direction of travel, and as such it does not provide a coherent template for breaking the repeated cycles of violence that afflict the "bottom billion" of world. This would require a much more substantive engagement with notions of history, democracy, and capital accumulation, while avoiding stereotyping and ideological bias.

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