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Forging Resilient Social Contracts: A Pathway to Preventing Violent Conflict and Sustaining Peace

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SUMMARY FINDINGS

A Research and Policy Dialogue Project

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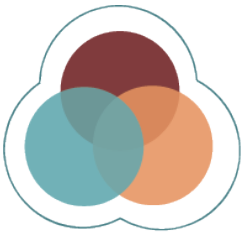

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Erin McCandless
~ with Rebecca Hollender, Marie-Joelle Zahar, Mary Hope Schwoebel, Alina Rocha Menocal, Alexandros Lordos, and case study authors

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Validation workshops also took place in Zimbabwe, Colombia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and policy dialogues around our findings, in New York, Geneva, Oslo, and Washington DC. Insights from these events contributed to the strengthening of the findings.

The research framing of this project was developed by Erin McCandless, with multiple reviews and feedback from advisers, notably the project methods team.

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The views expressed do not necessarily represent the views of the funders and partners, the United Nations or its Member States, or working group advisers.

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List of acronyms

ANC	African National Congress (South Africa)
CA	Constitutional Assembly (Nepal)
CCIs	Core Conflict Issues
CODESA	Convention for a Democratic South Africa
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement (Nepal)
DAC	Development Assistance Committee (of the OECD)
DPA	Dayton Peace Accord
EU	European Union
FES	Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
GNU	Government of National Unity (South Africa)
GNU	Government of National Unity (Zimbabwe)
GPA	Global Political Agreement (Zimbabwe)
GPC	General People's Congress (Yemen)
IDEA	Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance
IFI	International Financial Institution
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change (Zimbabwe)
NDC	National Dialogue Conference (Yemen)
NGOs	Non-governmental organisations
NP	National Party (South Africa)
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OGC	Oslo Governance Centre
ONHRI	Organ for National Healing, Reconciliation and Integration (Zimbabwe)
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Plan (South Sudan)
SAIS	Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies
SeeD	Centre for Sustainable Peace and Democratic Development
SPLA	Sudan People's Liberation Army
SPLM	Sudan People's Liberation Movement
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission (South Africa)
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNMIN	United Nations Mission in Nepal
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
US	United States of America
USIP	United States Institute for Peace
WB	World Bank
ZANU-PF	Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front

Executive Summary

'Forging Resilient Social Contracts: Preventing Violent Conflict and Sustaining Peace' is an 11-country research and policy dialogue project that aims to revitalise the social contract amidst conflict and fragility and to advance policy and practice for preventing violent conflict and for achieving and sustaining peace. The comparative findings provide evidence and insight into what drives social contracts that are inclusive and resilient, and how they manifest and adapt in different contexts, transcending what are often unsustainable, ephemeral elite bargains into more inclusive ones, with durable arrangements for achieving and sustaining peace. The project involves international scholars, policy advisers and authors from the countries examined: Afghanistan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Colombia, Cyprus, Nepal, Somalia, South Sudan, South Africa, Tunisia, Yemen and Zimbabwe. The project activities reported on here took place from 2016-mid 2018 and include case research in these countries, a series of policy and scholarly dialogues[1] and this summary. Future project work could include policy papers on critical themes emerging from the research, knowledge products featuring the case studies, and a social contract assessment tool. The project gratefully acknowledges the financial support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Oslo Governance Centre (OGC), the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) in Berlin and New York, the Julian J. Studley Fund of the Graduate Program of International Affairs at The New School in New York, in this work.

This Summary Findings Report introduces the project context, the project's research framing, and findings from nine of the 11 case studies.[2] Numerous validation workshops and policy dialogues in the case study countries and elsewhere inform the findings. Policy recommendations for national and international policymakers are shared. These findings and recommendations provide a basis for deepened future research and related policy and project activity.

Research findings illuminate how three 'drivers' facilitate resilient social contracts to attain and sustain peace: i) inclusive political settlements addressing core conflict issues, ii) institutions delivering effectively and inclusively; and, iii) social cohesion broadening and deepening. Highlights include:

- The early stages of peace negotiations, especially the peace agreement, can redefine parameters for inclusion and exclusion and for positioning different groups and issues, often with long-term effects; advances, however, can be difficult to maintain.

1 Dialogues for sharing and validating our research finding have taken place in Bogotá, Sarajevo, Harare, Washington DC, Geneva and Oslo, with upcoming sessions in Stockholm and New York.

2 Afghanistan and Somalia are not included as the cases are not completed, although their high relevance to these findings must be acknowledged.

- Core issues of conflict are often not effectively addressed over time or through previous peace processes and political agreements, directly undermining the inclusiveness of the political settlement.
- Social contract-making mechanisms are often not well-linked in ways that promote the coherent and effective implementation of peace agreements and a more inclusive political settlement. This is true for state institutions, the 'hardware' for carrying forward peace agreement implementation and, similarly, for non-state and customary institutions, which are often not sufficiently or systematically engaged, especially at subnational levels.
- Vertical and horizontal social cohesion are linked in important ways and interact with the other drivers, offering apertures for catalytic action across initiatives and efforts.
- In addition to progress within the three drivers, resilient national social contracts help attain and sustain peace when: i) the drivers interact in mutually reinforcing ways; ii) resilience capacities are mobilised and supported towards peace efforts; and ii) parallel systems and structures and competing social contracts are brought into dialogue, supporting the forging of a national social contract.

Together, these findings offer a valuable way to assess and understand how peace agreements and the political settlements underlying them can deal with the core issues of conflict and can lead to a more lasting formula – namely, an inclusive, resilient social contract.

Policy recommendations, appearing at the end of this document, show how this is relevant for policymakers. Highlights include the need to:

- Identify and strengthen social contracting mechanisms (i.e. dialogue, constitutions, national development plans, subnational arrangements) that inclusively and coherently address conflict issues and new forms of responsive governance that support transforming institutions at all levels.
- Target conflict issues broadly important to state and society with the explicit goal of building consensus around the issues, and agreed mechanisms to address them, thereby building momentum and trust in the ability of these processes to address other conflicts.
- Strengthen social cohesion across drivers in catalytic and context-specific ways, such as by promoting a sense of national belonging (e.g. through a national dialogue on implementing the constitution), trust (e.g. fair provision of services) and participation (e.g. in a budgeting process).

Promoting resilient social contracts in these ways supports current policy agendas (i.e. the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Security Council/General Assembly resolutions focusing on sustaining peace and conflict prevention) by offering:

- An inclusive concept that frames a national vision with broad appeal;
- A theory of change for how countries can develop resilient social contracts by:

- Making political settlements more inclusive, and embedding agreements in enduring institutional arrangements (i.e. social contracting mechanisms) and efforts to deepen relationships (i.e. social cohesion programming) that support peace;
- Charting a pathway to address intractable issues of conflict (i.e. through social contract-making spheres and mechanisms); and
- Offering integrated, context-centred treatment of politics, security, peace and development.

Introduction

In countries affected by conflict and fragility, the social contract is in deep crisis and requires better understanding about what this means for fostering more resilient states and societies in different settings. Leaders and citizens globally face extreme challenges and profound complexities in durably preventing violent conflict and achieving and sustaining peace. The international community has also found it difficult to support national actors more effectively and to agree on broader, collective approaches to peace and security. A rising consensus in scholarship and policy discussions suggests that i) elite-driven political settlements, while important in establishing the foundations of peaceful political orders, do not guarantee nationally owned, lasting peace; ii) externally driven, templated approaches to peacebuilding and statebuilding do not secure a path for peace; and iii) sustainability requires more than negative peace.[3]

Within this context, the notion of the social contract is rising as a priority policy area to revitalise thinking and practice around how to transform and prevent violent conflict and to forge lasting peace in countries affected by conflict and fragility. Leading policy actors engaging with the concept include the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) the World Bank,[4] the United States Institute for Peace (USIP) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).[5] The social contract also informs much work of the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding and its 'New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States'. A driving member of this Dialogue, the g7+ intergovernmental organisation of countries affected by conflict, is also using the term to guide thinking on the transformation of official development assistance (ODA) and national policy approaches in their countries.

The United Nations' Security Council (UNSC) and General Assembly (UNGA) resolutions[6] emphasised the prevention of violent conflict and the sustaining of peace. In these resolutions and related policy discussions, the notion of the social contract lies at the core (though not always explicitly) of efforts to sustain peace. The twin resolutions suggest that sustaining peace is a goal and a process to build a common vision of society, ensuring that the needs and aspirations of the entire population are considered. A shared task and responsibility of the government and all stakeholders, it encompasses activities to prevent the outbreak, escalation, continuation and recurrence of conflict across development, peace and security, and human rights. This includes tackling the root causes of conflict. A prominent 2018 United Nations

3 For discussion on these scholarship and policy trends, see: McCandless, Erin. 2018. "Forging Resilient Social Contracts for Peace: Towards a Needed Re-conceptualisation of the Social Contract." Working Paper, Witwatersrand University.

4 The United States Institute of Peace (USIP) is foregrounding the notion of the social contract in its work, and the World Bank has a new major study underway on social contracts in Africa.

5 See OECD. 2008. "Concepts and Dilemmas of Statebuilding in Fragile Situations: From Fragility to Resilience." Offprint of the journal *OECD Journal on Development* 9 (3).

6 U.N. Security Council, 7680th Meeting. Resolution 2282. (S/RES/2282). 27 April 2016; and U.N. General Assembly, 70th Session. Review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture. (A/RES/70/262). 12 May 2016.

and World Bank publication, 'Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict',[7] similarly calls for a revitalised global commitment to prevent violent conflict by addressing societal grievances and building societal resilience and inclusive, risk-informed development.[8] Towards this end, inclusive, innovative and synergistic mechanisms that bring actors together, the report suggests, are needed. The '2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development' also provides a new policy context, converging the international community around a plan that includes a commitment to peace, governance and security to facilitate coherent national action. These developments are promising, as they reinforce, on the one hand, support for national efforts to address the root causes of conflict and grievances and, on the other hand, the creation of lasting incentives for peace (i.e. through greater inclusion in statebuilding and peacebuilding processes, and the creations of national visions to drive peaceful, positive social interactions[9]). Nevertheless, another element can enrich policy and practice: the social contract.

The concept of the social contract is well established in political philosophy, particularly by classical Western thinkers. Enduring themes and questions, however, that lie at the heart of social contract thinking, have confronted rulers, the ruled, states and societies over time and geographical space.[10] These enduring themes transcend the classic ties of the social contract and speak to its lasting relevance and power to support a common national vision and to manage and transform conflict. The social contract's contemporary application to countries affected by conflict and fragility and its use as a pathway towards more resilient and peaceful states and societies are not well understood. Over the last decade, scholarship and policy research on statebuilding and peacebuilding have investigated the role of elite-based political settlements in achieving stability; this is a critical foundation for this study.[11] The notion of the social contract, however, requires more than elite bargains: it requires more inclusive political settlements and systems to sustain peace – especially in and through institutions and relationships. Within this context, the study of social cohesion, and specifically building and repairing relationships in countries affected by conflict and fragility is garnering greater attention.[12] Social cohesion research is digging into the social and economic dimensions of how states and societies, and groups within states, create and sustain bonds across divides. It falls short however, of suggesting clear pathways to transform politics and to address the root causes of conflict, which often require structural solutions.

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7 United Nations and World Bank. 2018. Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict. Washington, DC: World Bank Group.

8 Ibid.

9 Researchers at Columbia University are seeking to compile and build evidence around how positive social acts, i.e. forging of a national vision and corresponding discourse, can support behaviours that facilitate and sustain peace. See http://www.tc.columbia.edu/articles/2018/march/understanding-peace-to-build-peace-and-understanding/. See also resilience for peace (cross-cutting issue) below.

10 See McCandless 2018, for discussion on the enduring themes and questions that concern: i) its nature and purpose; ii) participants; iii) the mechanisms through which it is forged and fostered; iv) moral obligations and conflicting interests; and v) wealth distribution.

11 See e.g. Rocha Menocal, Alina. 2015. Inclusive Political Settlements. University of Birmingham, June 2015.

12 See e.g. Sisk, Timothy. 2017. *Preventing Deadly Conflict in Ethnically Fractured Societies: International Development Assistance for "Bridging" Social Cohesion. Background Paper for the United Nations and World Bank report Pathways for Peace.*

Despite these promising research and policy trends, there is still a dearth of targeted, contemporary scholarship on the social contract that speaks concretely to people in different contexts, especially where they are struggling to redefine their relations with the state and regional and international actors to achieve and sustain peace. These are key concerns of this 11-country research and scholar-policy dialogue project, which has benefited from the support of an international Working Group of scholars and policy advisers/makers. This research provides comparative evidence and insight into what drives and undermines national social contracts, and how they adapt in different contexts, transcending elite bargains into more inclusive ones, with durable arrangements for achieving and sustaining peace. This should inspire and support policy directions so that domestic actors can lead and own the development of common visions and autonomous, trusted pathways for preventing violent conflict and achieving and sustaining peace.

CASE STUDIES

Afghanistan
Bosnia-Herzegovina
Colombia
Cyprus
Nepal
Somalia
South Africa
South Sudan
Tunisia
Yemen
Zimbabwe

Project Framing Overview

This research and policy dialogue project is focused on countries in transition and/or affected by conflict and fragility, inspired by the question: *What drives a resilient social contract in such countries?* A social contract can mean a national agreement between state and society, including different groups in society, on how to live together and settle conflict peacefully. This study more fully defines a resilient national social contract (see Box 1). This study's fuller conceptualisation seeks to ensures attention not only to core values and mechanisms associated with the social contract, but also to the dynamism and adaptability that countries in transition from conflict and fragility demand. [13]

BOX 1: KEY DEFINITIONS

Resilient national social contract: A resilient national social contract is a dynamic agreement between state and society, including different groups in society, on how to live together, how power is exercised and how resources are distributed. It allows for the peaceful mediation of conflicting interests and different expectations and understandings of rights and responsibilities (including with nested and/or overlapping social contracts that may transcend the state) over time, and in response to contextual factors (including shocks, stressors and threats), through varied mechanisms, institutions and processes.
Resilience capacities for peace: Endogenous capacities to address shocks and stressors (e.g. drivers of conflict and fragility) in ways that minimally (adaptively) mitigate the effects of conflict and more maximally (transformatively) uproot drivers and foster new or revitalised structures and systems that support peace.[13]
Core conflict issues (CCIs): Overt drivers of conflict that are disputed in the policy arena nationally, over time, that are agreed by the main political parties and that resonate with most, if not all, of the population. They are ideally reflected in formal agreements or mechanisms.[14] Examining CCIs enables analysis of how the state and society at different levels engage the conflict issues and how they adapt.
Hybridity: Hybridity reflects the heterogeneity and diversity involving mixed institutional systems and political orders or even social contracts with competing rules and claims authority, power and legitimacy that co-exist, overlap and interact, reflecting mixes of Western, indigenous, formal and informal traditions. These can be international (i.e. United Nations and other external peacebuilding or military), national or local community mixed systems and structures. Part and parcel of state-formation and statebuilding processes and development processes globally, hybridity is not only in everyday life, but also in the structures and institutions that shape how society is organised. Leaders may have positions of power and authority in one, two or more systems simultaneously or sequentially, while citizens may relate to two or more systems, moving between them strategically and negotiating their sometimes contradictory obligations.

13 Conceptualisation draws upon McCandless, Erin and Graeme Simpson. 2015 (June). "Assessing Resilience for Peacebuilding – Executive Summary." Geneva: Interpeace & Sida. http://www.interpeace.org/resource/assessing-resilience-for-peacebuilding-executive-summary-of-discussion/

BOX 1: KEY DEFINITIONS, CONT.

Political settlements: A consensus between political elites on the underlying rules of the game. Often achieved through contestation, negotiation and compromise, political settlements are ongoing political processes of interaction (that can include, i.e. bargains and peace agreements) between key elite figures and groups and between elites and the wider array of interests in society, to define and challenge the nature of their relationships. They involve the interplay of formal institutions and informal understandings and arrangements that shape governance and development outcomes.[15]

'Everyday' social contract-making: Forms of 'everyday' (or quotidian) social contract-making are daily-life forms of interaction at any level, across social, political and economic realms, that can include norms (i.e. Ubuntu), mores (i.e. zakat), and actions or practices (the use of social media, land occupations or other forms of social movements).[16]

Social cohesion: The formal and informal ties and interactions, characterised by attitudes, norms and behaviours, that bring and hold members of society (actors, groups and institutions) together horizontally (across citizens, between groups) and vertically (in the relations between citizens/groups and the state) and across domains of i) trust and respect, ii) belonging and identity and iii) participation.[17]

Sustaining peace: The project is working with the recent (2016) twin UN Security Council and General Assembly resolutions (A/RES/70/262 and S/RES/2282) conceptualisation that sustaining peace: "should be broadly understood as a goal and a process to build a common vision of society, ensuring that the needs of all segments of the population are taken into account, which encompasses activities aimed at preventing the outbreak, escalation, continuation and recurrence of conflict, addressing root causes, assisting parties to conflict to end hostilities, ensuring national reconciliation, and moving towards recovery, reconstruction and development, and emphasising that sustaining peace is a shared task and responsibility that needs to be fulfilled by the government and all other national stakeholders..."

Conflict prevention in this study, in line with the United Nations and World Bank *Pathways for Peace* study, is understood as a part of a comprehensive strategy for sustaining peace. Specifically, it is about proactively addressing deeper, underlying risks that prevent sustainable development and peace. It is also about fostering societies where it is easier for people to choose peace, where people feel safe, and where there are opportunities and inclusion.[18]

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14 Policy attention on addressing root causes is growing and the notion of addressing grievances is experiencing a revival thanks to a the United Nations and World Bank *Pathways for Peace* report. An approach focused on CCIs allows for engagement of both, but with a focus on tangible, more neutral expressions of conflict issues that can be examined in the context of agreements and policies.

15 This draws on Rocha Menocal, Alina (2017). "Political Settlements and the Politics of Transformation: Where Do 'Inclusive Institutions' Come From?" *Journal of International Development* 29, no. 5: 559-575, who draws on numerous other scholars to develop this conceptualisation. It also draws on Di John, Jonathan and James Putzel. 2009. *Political Settlements Issues Paper*. Governance and Social Development Resource Centre (GSRDC). Birmingham, UK: University of Birmingham.

16 United Nations and World Bank, 2018, 5-6.

17 While this concept is often equated simply with 'local' peacebuilding, in this study it refers to both: a) the everyday at any level, including at the elite level, e.g. what elites actually do outside the formal agreements; and, b) the everyday at local levels. The concept enables a fuller examination of the degree to which the social contract is societally 'owned.'

18 Adapted from Chan, Joseph, Jo-Pong To and Elaine Chan. 2006. "Reconsidering Social Cohesion: Developing a Definition and Analytical Framework for Empirical Research." *Social Indicators Research* 75 (January): 290.

Our research investigates three drivers of a resilient social contract to attain and sustaining peace, focusing on i) inclusive political settlements addressing core conflict issues, ii) institutions delivering effectively and inclusively, and iii) social cohesion broadening and deepening (see Box 2 for full articulation). We also look at cross-cutting issues: i) state formation processes, ii) exclusion and inclusion, iii) the role of international actors and iv) resilience capacities for peace.

Study Questions, Propositions and Research

These findings were informed by the following research questions:

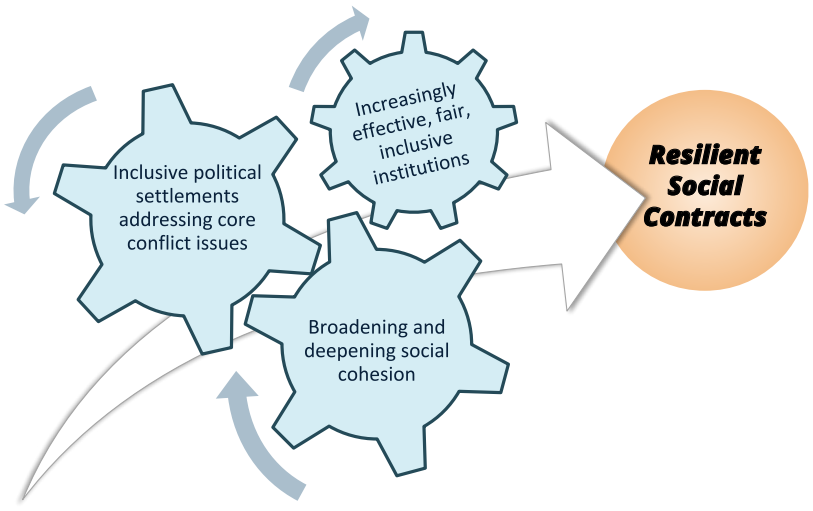
- *What drives a resilient national social contract?*
- *What does a resilient social contract look like, in different settings, and how is it sustained?*
- *How do social contracts evolve/adapt to facilitate and/or undermine the pursuit and maintenance of peace (top-down, bottom-up; path dependencies; sequencing; driver interactions)?*
- *What are the implications for policy and scholarship, including for how international actors support nationally owned pathways towards more peaceful and resilient states and societies?*

Research propositions were:

- A resilient national social contract is indispensable to preventing violent conflict and attaining and sustaining peace.
- A resilient social contract is forged through progress on three drivers related to the nature and quality of political settlements, institutions and social cohesion (see Figure 1 and Box 2).

Figure 1 illustrates the three drivers:

FIGURE 1: THREE DRIVERS OF RESILIENT SOCIAL CONTRACTS



BOX 2: THREE 'DRIVERS' OF RESILIENT SOCIAL CONTRACTS

1. Political settlements and social contract-making mechanisms are increasingly inclusive and responsive to core conflict issues.
2. Institutions (formal, customary and informal) are increasingly effective and inclusive and have broadly shared outcomes that meet societal expectations and enhance state legitimacy.
3. Social cohesion is broadening and deepening, with formal and informal ties and interactions binding society horizontally (across citizens, between groups) and vertically (between citizens/groups and the state).

Explanation of Drivers, Cross-cutting Issues and Sustaining Peace

Driver 1: Inclusive political settlements addressing core conflict issues

The first driver engages the burgeoning literature on the need for political settlements to i) develop and expand inclusion in the peace process[19] and ii) address the root causes of conflict as well as the historic grievances of groups.[20] These two elements are interlinked, with initial agreements including more stakeholders in order to address more issues and work through the details over time.

Our research assumes the need for stronger mapping of the linkages and transitions – conceptual and practical – among peace agreements, underlying political settlements and the institutional arrangements for resilient social contracts. Thus, our research develops and employs a typology of 'institutional spheres and mechanisms of social contract-making' (see Figure 2). These are:

- **Peacemaking** (i.e. through a peace agreement or political agreement);
- **Transitional** (i.e. sequenced dialogues, commissions, truth and reconciliation processes);
- **Governance-related**, including formal mechanisms (i.e. codified structures of government, formal institutions, national development plans, devolution frameworks/policies) and hybrid mechanisms (i.e. where religious/customary/non-state actor and state mechanisms interact); and
- **'Everyday'** (i.e. citizen actions or practices, norms, mores). In this study, the everyday sphere also serves as a litmus test of the extent to which higher-level, formalised agreements or processes represent wider societal views.

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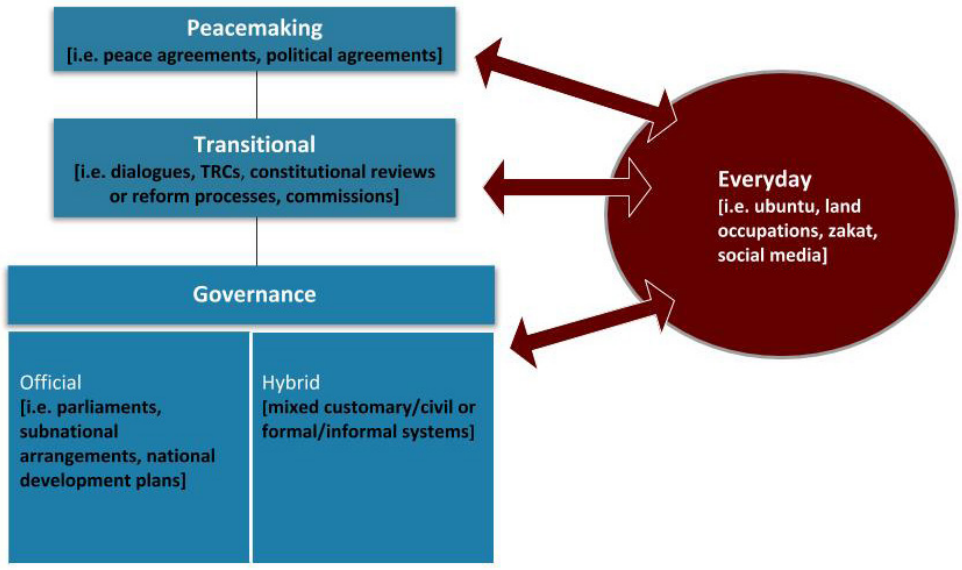
19 The *Pathways for Peace* report exhaustively reviews the evidence base on exclusion as a core driver of conflict and violence and makes the case for greater inclusion across politics and policy (United Nations and World Bank, 2018). Research by Paffenholtz (2014) has renewed a focus on the importance of inclusion for achieving sustainable peace agreements and on the fact that the quality of participation matters. Paffenholz, Thania. 2014. "Broadening Participation in Peace Processes: Dilemmas and Options for Mediators." The Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, 9. See McCandless 2018 for full review of literature on these topics.

20 Recent (2016) twin Security Council and General Assembly Resolutions (A/RES/70/262 and S/RES/2282) highlight sustainable peace as a primary United Nations goal, underscoring the need to address root causes of conflict and inclusive national ownership as criteria for its achievement. The *Pathways for Peace* report has revived interest in the role of grievances in conflict and the need to address them to prevent its escalation, (United Nations and World Bank, 2018).

The research considers how some core conflict issues (CCIs) – defined as those that, the main parties and society broadly agree, are drivers of conflict and discord – and addressed through these mechanisms, and whether and how this results in more broadly owned results. Consequently, this research offers rich insight into what has gone well – and what not well – in various settings and why. At the same time, recognising renewed policy and scholarly interest in what positively drives peace and resilience in society, we investigate how 'resilience capacities for peace' (see Box 1 with definitions above, and cross-cutting issues below) also factors into social contract-making.

FIGURE 2: INSTITUTIONAL SPHERES AND MECHANISMS OF SOCIAL CONTRACT-MAKING



Driver 2: Institutions delivering effectively and inclusively

The second driver responds to the rising awareness in the statebuilding and peacebuilding literature that a causal relationship between service provision and state legitimacy cannot be assumed.[21] This raises important questions about the social contract – especially about the mechanisms through which it is forged, and through which it is forged among whom and about how broadly development, prosperity and wellbeing are distributed. The research on this set of issues seeks to provide a rich comparative analysis of the different ways in which key services are delivered and how, and what actually matters to people. This is particularly important in the context of myriad actors delivering services

21 See, for example, Mallet, Richard and Rachel Slater. 2017. "How to support state-building, service delivery and recovery in fragile and conflict-affected situations: Lessons from six years of SLRC research." Secure Livelihoods Research Consortium (SLRC) Synthesis Briefing, 2. ODI: London.

– including powerful non-state actors with considerable power, authority and legitimacy with at times considerable parts of society. It also assesses why/how this changes amidst conflict and fragility, over time, and how this relates to the way core conflict issues are being addressed. This requires an understanding of how CCIs affect institutions and relationships between institutions and people and how those issues are addressed, including how institutions become more inclusive within political settlements and build social cohesion. To this end, the following issues are explored:

- **Expectations** (of society about the roles of the state and its institutions and of how these expectations change and in relation to what factors);
- **Performance** (the effectiveness and fairness of delivery and outcomes, especially for different groups); and
- **Processes** (for reliable delivery of services, for meaningful participation of all stakeholders and for effective redress of grievances).

We also consider how these issues affect societal understandings of the legitimacy of the state and its institutions, inspired by the OECD typology of legitimacy that identifies four types: input/process; output/performance; shared beliefs; and international legitimacy.[22] Research on hybridity is relevant to questions of legitimacy, while offering new thinking to inform alternatives in the context of templated approaches that have informed 'liberal peacebuilding'. To date however, much of the work has overly focused on the hybridity present in the interaction between international and national actors and institutions; this has insufficiently noted how various groups holding legitimacy with parts of the population, and alternative, endogenous forms of political, social and economic systems and institutions in play, can coexist and interact.

Driver 3: Social cohesion broadening and deepening

The third driver reflects the growing consensus in the policy community around the need to better understand how social cohesion is created, that is, how people and groups bond to support peace. This is necessary for peacebuilding and statebuilding, as a lack of social cohesion contributes to conflict.[23] This requires more insight into the formation of relationships across society (horizontally) and between the state and society (vertically) and how the vertical and the horizontal interact. This is especially important in fragile and fragmented societies where difficult horizontal relationships are worsened when vertical relationships are considered to be the exclusive terrain of certain groups in societies.

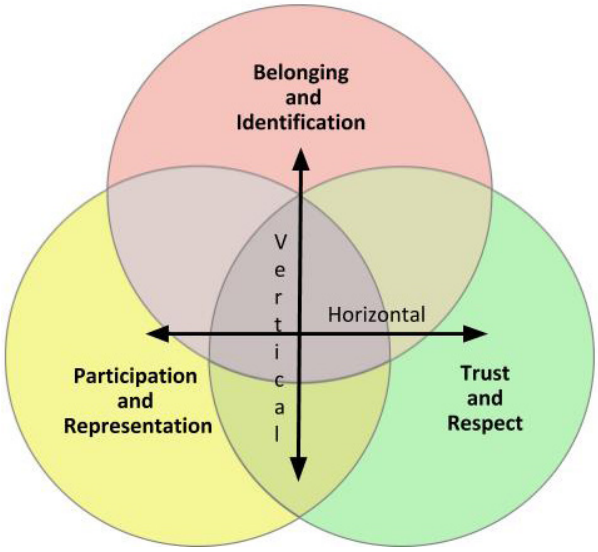
Although there has recently been much research in this area, there is no consensus about how to define social cohesion, let alone how to measure it. Figure 3 illustrates the study's approach to social cohesion. It examines how people bond vertically and horizontally through three domains that are grounded in policy research and scholarship: *belonging and identification; trust and respect;* and *access, participation and representation.* This research contributes to thinking about how social cohesion

22 Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development. 2010. The State's Legitimacy in Fragile Situations: Unpacking Complexity. OECD, p. 27.

23 Sisk, 2017, points to examples, including Turkey, Indonesia, Kashmir, Kosovo and Ukraine.

is strengthened (and/or undermined) as CCIs are addressed (Driver 1), as core state functions are undertaken and as services are delivered (Driver 2). This produces a more adaptive idea of social cohesion that can inform better policy and practice around how resilient social contracts are forged in ways that attain and sustain peace.

FIGURE 3: SOCIAL COHESION



The three drivers capture substantive, material aspects of the social contract: what needs to be delivered; the rights, responsibilities and expectations around these; and the process, i.e. the nature of participation, exclusion and inclusion, and forms of accountability. Their interactions are also important in thinking about a resilient social contract – how they might be mutually reinforcing through processes and outcomes that transform root causes of conflict and prevent it from recurring, and moving countries towards achieving and sustaining peace.

Cross-cutting issues

Across the three drivers, four cross-cutting issues are examined. The first two – state-formation processes and international actors – influence the creation of resilient social contracts. The latter two – exclusion and inclusion, and resilience capacities for peace – are cross-cutting drivers in their own right, as they directly facilitate or prevent the forging of social contracts to attain and sustain peace.

State-formation processes, sometimes conflated with statebuilding processes, help shape political settlements and social contracts. Research over the last several decades, by scholars from different continents, has resisted suggestions that particular

state-formation experiences (notably, those of Europe) can be generalised.[24] In Europe, states were forged and nations built through great expenditures of blood and money, forming and relying on bureaucracies and administrations that levied taxes. In contrast, other continents were subject to colonisation and decolonisation; they were and continue to be subject to extreme and diverse forms of international and regional intervention, which have fostered different incentive structures, societal expectations, institutions and relationships (vertically and horizontally in society and with the state). Our research considers this cross-cutting issue and the differing views underpinning it.

Intersecting with the three drivers are questions around the roles of **international actors and issues** in their influence in and support for how national social contracts are formed. This topic is crucial for international actors working in and on transitional settings seeking to ensure they do not unwittingly do harm – across work relating to political processes, political settlements, peacebuilding, statebuilding and development. There should be greater clarity about the roles that international actors can play in 'accompanying' local actors as they strive to understand how to live together and about how this affects understanding of the nature and durability of a social contract. How international actors support societal efforts (directly) versus government efforts (directly) and processes that link them is key; the politics around this and around the implications for a nationally owned social contract to sustain peace remains as challenging as it is important. At the same time, there is need for a much wider conversation around how exogenous factors and issues, including norms, practices and processes that transcend national borders – i.e. migration and refugee movements, trade and finance flows, and climate change – both generate and fuel grievances and drivers of conflict, and affect the shaping of national social contracts.

While recognising the importance of international actors and exogenous factors in the shaping of national social contracts, this research nonetheless takes the national context as the starting point, reflecting the agreed international consensus of the need for national ownership of peacebuilding, statebuilding, development processes. This demands greater understanding of the roles, interests and efforts of national actors at the heart of forging a national social contract.

Exclusion and inclusion are investigated across the three drivers and also emerge as an independent finding. In many cases, CCIs are variants on the theme of exclusion. Inclusivity is examined with respect to how CCIs are addressed through each of the social contract-making spheres. We also pay attention to how this affects adaptations of the process, as well as its results. This includes the capacity of substantive policy results or institutional practices and their implementation to produce more inclusive peace and development outcomes. In looking at service delivery, authors examine how 'who delivers' matters, when and how participation matters, as well as results (subjective and objective). In our social cohesion research, inclusion is examined in

24 For example, Charles Tilly's postulation, based on the European experience, that war makes states and states make war, does not hold true for countries in Africa, Latin America and Asia (see McCandless, 2018, for fuller discussion). Tilly, Charles and Gabriel Ardant. 1975. *The Formation of National States in Western Europe*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

different ways, including with respect to how perceptions and practices hold people, communities and societies together.

Finally, in addition to investigating select CCIs, we examine **resilience capacities for peace**,[25] (see Box 1 with definitions, above). This approach is consistent with policy endeavours to understand how national actors can better engage their endogenous capacities to address conflict and to understand wider shocks and stressors in ways that transform the drivers of conflict and fragility and foster new or revitalised structures and systems that support peace. The authors reflect on how resilience capacities are present in the design and implementation of peace efforts and how those capacities can better support, in mutually reinforcing ways, the achievement and sustaining of peace.

Assessing sustaining peace

While the notion of sustainable peace has long held value, neither the policy community nor the academic community has reached consensus on either its definition or the privileged way to achieve it. 'Sustaining peace' is now a top priority for the United Nations, along with a revitalised focus on conflict prevention (see Box 1 with definitions above), as is evident in the twin Security Council and General Assembly resolutions[26] and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This study reflects on priorities for sustaining peace within these agendas through the forging of resilient social contracts, addressing root causes of conflict, building national visions and fostering inclusion around important issues.

While there has been much investigation of social cohesion (both vertically and horizontally), not enough attention has focused on the link between processes of trust and inclusivity, on the one hand, and the strength of commitments to implement substantive agreements, on the other hand. We know little about how keeping or not keeping commitments affects outcomes (e.g. considering institutions and policies that deliver needed services with broadly shared results, and that address grievances that led to conflict in the first place while providing ongoing and trusted means for addressing grievances). Making and measuring progress on sustaining peace requires rigorous examination of particular cases, focusing on the interactions and outcomes of these processes.

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25 This approach draws upon on an Interpeace paper that lays a foundation for conceptualising a 'resilience for peacebuilding' approach, distinguishing the concept that "has thus evolved from a more narrowly defined notion of a set of attributes, qualities or capacities that enable a society or community to endure, respond or 'bounce back from external shocks,' to a more process-oriented and relational concept, that speaks particularly to the agency of individuals, groups, communities, institutions and societies in shaping their environment, including dealing with stressors and conflict within the context of complex adaptive social systems" (McCandless and Simpson, 2015, p. 4).

26 U.N. Security Council 2016 and U.N. General Assembly 2016.

Methods

The research approach was exploratory and explanatory,[27] involving case study analysis authored by nationals of the countries under study. Across the three drivers, authors considered the different concerns of social groups, especially women, youth and ethnic and religious communities. They also reflected on the experience of different regions in relation to the drivers.[28] While the emphasis of case study research is qualitative and context-rich, interviews, focus groups, a wide examination of primary and secondary material, and survey data from six major global indices were used to triangulate data and buttress research findings.[29] External reviewers and experts in the study's working group peer-reviewed each of the case studies. Findings have been validated in numerous ways, especially scholar-policy dialogues. The working group of the project (Annex A) and 'methods' advisers reviewed multiple drafts of the framing documents, guidance for authors and case study drafts, which independent experts also peer-reviewed.

Assessing the quality of the social contract in this study focused on how well the drivers help us understand resilience of the social contract in the countries under investigation – its inclusiveness (breadth and depth), dynamism and directional movement – and the implications of this for different countries in attaining and sustaining peace. Also, development of indicators across the three drivers supported insight into their movement, be it forward or backward. The research examined how the drivers interact with, catalyse, and mutually reinforce one another – or not.

Planned future research will draw on findings to develop a mixed method approach to assess the social contract and its implications for preventing violent conflict and attaining and sustaining peace. This may include the development of an 'expert-based' scoring scheme around the three drivers.[30] This will enrich the comparative policy findings and impact and serve as a pilot for the development of a social contract index and/or a participatory assessment tool.

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27 This is consistent with a pragmatic research methodological paradigm. Creswell, John W. 2013. *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. Fourth Edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

28 Authors were asked to investigate three locations for comparative purposes: the capital plus two regions that have benefited differentially from state-supported development supported.

29 These indices were mined by the project team with support from methods advisers to distil a strong set of existing indicators to support analysis of the three drivers. The indices included: Global Peace Index, Positive Peace Index, Fragile States Index, Commonwealth Youth Development Index, Gender Inequality Index (from UNDP Human Development Index) and Social Institutions and Gender Index (OECD).

30 The analysis's quantitative scoring dimension will draw upon the author's qualitative research as well as available quantitative data.

Findings

Findings are presented in relation to the three drivers of a resilient social contract, in relation to cross-cutting issues and in relation to how such contracts can facilitate attaining and sustaining peace, as detailed in the conceptual framing. A full report is also available online,[31] with summary findings accompanied case studies from nine countries.

Driver 1: Political settlements and social contract-making spheres and mechanisms are increasingly inclusive and responsive to core conflict issues.

1.1 **The early stages of political settlements or peace negotiations (and notably the peace agreement) or political transitions offer possibilities for redefining parameters for inclusion and exclusion, and positioning of different groups and issues, often with long-term effects** (positive or negative) (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Colombia, Cyprus, Nepal, South Africa, South Sudan, Tunisia, Yemen, Zimbabwe).

Findings from the case studies indicate that this redefinition of the parameters for inclusion/exclusion and positioning of groups and issues occurs through:

- The catalysing of more inclusive politics (Colombia, Nepal, South Africa, Tunisia);
- The development of separate ethno-nationalist institutions (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cyprus, South Sudan);
- The feeling of exclusion (Nepal, Yemen, Zimbabwe) or disaffection (South Sudan), which sometimes transforms groups into spoilers; and,
- The propensity for informal agreements to undermine official agreements/ processes (Yemen, Zimbabwe).

Some power-sharing (South Africa, Nepal, Zimbabwe) and transition-monitoring mechanisms (Colombia) have brought new parties into the equation. Similarly, some peace negotiations (Yemen, Nepal) have guaranteed the participation of diverse actors (although not always in meaningful ways – Cyprus). These have allowed societies to more inclusively overcome the historical impasses around core conflict issues. Progress is, however, difficult to sustain (Yemen, Nepal, South Africa). In South Sudan and Zimbabwe, where power-sharing arrangements were negotiated, these reflected entrenched elite political settlements and ultimately failed.

31 All project publications are available on the project and institutional home websites, www.socialcontractsforpeace.org, https://www.wits.ac.za/wsg/research/, as well as our partner websites: http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/ourwork/global-policy-centres/oslo_governance_centre/social-contract.html. http://www.fesny.org/.

1.2 **Social contract-making 'spheres' and 'mechanisms', which can trace how core conflict issues and grievances are addressed, are often treated in disconnected or parallel ways that undermine the implementation of coherent and effective peace agreements and the development of an increasingly inclusive political settlement** (Colombia, Cyprus, Nepal, South Africa, South Sudan, Yemen, Zimbabwe; exception: Tunisia).

The case studies illustrate that this occurs through:

- Missing or ineffective transitional mechanisms (Cyprus, Nepal, Zimbabwe);
- Peace agreements or political agreements that contain or allow for the development of provisions that do not align with previously stated visions (South Africa) or follow-on agreements or policies (Colombia), preventing them from fundamentally altering power relations. In cases of intractability, processes may depend on parameters that do not reflect current contextual realities (Cyprus); and,
- Successive social contract-making mechanisms not maintaining agreed approaches to issues (i.e. constitutional reform processes, Nepal) or not ensuring a more inclusive political settlement (i.e. customary systems, Yemen, Zimbabwe).

In some settings, inclusive constitutional reform and referendum processes widened inclusion in political settlements and created societal ownership around policy directions (Nepal, Tunisia, Zimbabwe). Implementation of these, though, has broken down for reasons such as instability, the frequent rupture of political parties (Nepal), and a lack of political will, resources and capacity.

1.3 **There are considerable commonalities of CCIs across the cases, reflecting issues around political and economic exclusion, particularly between identity groups. Common are conflicts over:**
~ Power distribution and power-sharing (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Colombia, Cyprus, Nepal, South Sudan, Yemen, Zimbabwe); and,
~ Distribution of land and resources (Colombia, Cyprus, Nepal, South Sudan, Yemen, Zimbabwe).

While these are conceptualised slightly differently in the case studies, as highlighted below (1.4), they cluster around the main issues of access to, management of, and distribution of power and resources. This aligns with the United Nations and World Bank 'Pathways for Peace'[32] argument that people tend to fight over common, salient 'arenas of contestation' – access to power, land and resources, equitable delivery of services and responsive justice and security – that commonly involve the state. The use of CCIs enables understanding the issue more inclusively while addressing grievances and perspectives of different parties and stakeholders through institutions and sectors.

32 United Nations and World Bank, 2018, pp. 140-1.

1.4 CCIs tend not to be effectively addressed, including through previous peace processes and agreements; this directly undermines the inclusiveness of the political settlement. They have not been addressed:
~ In the design of agreements (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cyprus, Yemen, Zimbabwe);
~ Through poor implementation of agreements (Colombia, Nepal, South Africa, South Sudan, Tunisia, Zimbabwe); and/or,
~ Due to contradictions that undermine agreements (Colombia, South Africa).

In many cases, these CCIs can be traced back to state formation and/or to the history of decolonisation. Sometimes, they have not been effectively addressed through consecutive political agreements and social contracts (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Colombia, Cyprus, Nepal, South Africa, South Sudan, Zimbabwe). For example, CCIs are often rooted in processes that:

- Protect the interests of elites or regions and often of particular ethnic groups via centralised vs. decentralised governance structures (see 2.1, 4.1) (Colombia, Tunisia, Nepal, South Sudan, exception: Bosnia and Herzegovina);
- Are linked to the entrenchment of identity politics (see 3.1) (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cyprus, Nepal, Yemen, Zimbabwe); and,
- Generated conflict when performance disappointed expectations, particularly where service delivery was vulnerable to political patronage and produced uneven results (see 2.3) (Tunisia, Yemen).

Driver 2: Institutions (formal, customary and informal) are increasingly effective and inclusive and have broadly shared outcomes that meet societal expectations and enhance state legitimacy.

2.1 State institutions, which can be seen as the hardware for implementing formal agreements (including peace agreements, political covenants, power sharing agreements, etc.) and fostering more inclusive political settlements, are often not sufficiently or effectively engaged in core conflict issues (CCIs), including at subnational levels (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Colombia, Cyprus, Nepal, South Africa, South Sudan, Tunisia, Yemen, Zimbabwe).

The case studies illustrate that this occurs through:

- The strengthening of institutions in ways that undermine or exacerbate CCIs, i.e. by developing ethno-national, segregated, polarizing institutions (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cyprus, Yemen) or by prejudicing the strengthening of security institutions without sufficiently addressing developmental needs, such as high unemployment rates (see 2.3) (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Tunisia);
- Failing to link peace agreement/political agreement commitments to formal governance institutions, especially through devolution and decentralization to subnational levels, and/or diluting commitments to do so (Colombia, Nepal, Tunisia, South Africa, Zimbabwe); and,

- Corruption and poor governance of institutions (South Africa, South Sudan, Zimbabwe).

2.2 State institutions (electoral bodies, administrative and social services, and institutions designed through political settlements or peace agreements to address CCIs) regularly fail to deliver on their mandates (due to lack of political will, lack of capacity and resources, and corruption, all of which tend to reflect informal dynamics and power relations among actors at different levels) (all countries).

2.3 Societies express deep concern about the effectiveness of state institutions (especially service delivery and related poverty and inequality, as well as wider government accountability) through protest, illustrating a lack of faith in official governance mechanisms (for grievance recourse and meaningful inclusion) (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Colombia, Nepal, South Africa, Tunisia, Yemen, Zimbabwe).

The case studies reveal that this occurs through:

- Expression of deep frustration with the state's ability to deliver basic services (all cases);
- Resorting to activism (Colombia, Nepal, South Africa, Tunisia, Yemen) or even violence (Nepal, South Africa) to pressure the state in the absence of responsive formal state mechanisms. However, repression and fear can circumscribe forms of protest and fuel more innovative (Zimbabwe) or informal approaches that circumvent the state (Bosnia and Herzegovina);
- Using social media can create greater inclusion and voice, allowing mechanisms for ongoing accountability, contestation and redress (Nepal, South Africa, Tunisia, Zimbabwe).

Resistance measures such as protest can be an important indicator that expectations of the social contract are not being met. While protest illustrates societal willingness and capacity to make demands of the state, it does not automatically suggest a resilient social contract. The latter depends on the state's response. Government responses are often not conducive to resolution, with the use of violence resulting in heightened civil society outcry (Nepal, South Africa, Tunisia) or coup (Yemen). In other cases, government backlash creates fear of protesting (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Zimbabwe).

2.4 Customary, informal and other non-state structures and systems play important, though at times contested, institutional functions, particularly at subnational levels, yet, for the most part, they are neither officially nor systematically integrated into an inclusive political settlement, resulting in overlapping – and at times competing – social contracts (Colombia, Nepal, South Sudan, Yemen, Zimbabwe).

In many countries, especially during transitions but also in developing country contexts, customary authorities (i.e. kinship-based and religious authorities, chieftainships) and other non-state actors with strong constituencies (i.e. associations linked to insurgent groups) hold the allegiance of local populations and may play critical governance functions (i.e. delivering services in the absence of, in protest against and/or in an effort to replace the state). Their inclusion in political agreements and the consideration of how they can be linked to state institutions and policies help ensure that they complement, rather than undermine, state institutions and state legitimacy. The case studies illustrated that:

- Customary authorities, and other non-state actors with powerful, often parallel institutions with strong constituencies, are often side-lined in political processes, particularly at the national level, even where commitments to inclusive political settlements are in place (Colombia, Nepal, South Sudan, Yemen, Zimbabwe).
- Customary authorities, and their associated structures and systems – some that existed prior to the establishment of an independent state and some that have evolved in or through conflict and fragility to represent local populations – often hold considerable support, power and influence. The reasons for this are that they are close to local populations and that the state may be absent and may lack capacity and/or legitimacy (South Sudan, Colombia, Zimbabwe, Yemen). Support for these structures, systems and institutions can also be uneven if particular groups or the state itself (Zimbabwe) have co-opted them and they promote conservative norms that conflict with human rights and other international norms, such as women's rights (Yemen).
- While at times these actors develop and operate overlapping or competing structures and institutions with the state or each other in particular sectors (i.e. non-state actors in the security sector or NGOs in service delivery), they sometimes span multiple sectors and may be so comprehensive that they suggest the existence of social contracts that are parallel to the state (i.e. rebel groups in Colombia) or customary institutions (Nepal, South Sudan, and Yemen) that support or challenge the forging of a resilient social contract (see 2.5 and 6.1).
- In some cases, the security sector protects or jeopardises particular social contracts, frequently straddling the line between formal and informal activity (South Sudan, Zimbabwe).

2.5 State legitimacy is influenced by many variables (historical, cultural, social, economic and political), and is supported or undermined by citizen expectations around service provision, corruption, avenues for participation and delivery on promises (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Colombia, Cyprus, South Africa, Tunisia, Yemen, Zimbabwe).

The case studies support the emerging literature on rebuilding/strengthening of state legitimacy in countries affected by conflict and fragility. This suggests that legitimacy[33]

33 OECD, 2015.

is highly context-specific and is informed by multiple factors and that many narratives exist. The case studies also generally agree with the ODI findings[34] around the need to be cautious when postulating simple causal associations between service provision, improved state legitimacy and stronger state-society social contracts. The case studies, however, are more mixed regarding the proposition that the quality of service provision is more important than access (and that these cannot be decoupled). Our findings suggest that:

- State legitimacy (and how societal expectations factor into this) often relates to citizens' perspectives of service provision, corruption, avenues for participation and delivery on promises (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Colombia, Cyprus, South Africa, Tunisia, Yemen, Zimbabwe);
- Citizens generally do want the state to deliver services, as evidenced by protests across countries (see 2.3), although their expectations can wane (or disappear) if their experience of state delivery of services is bad (poor or non-existent, discriminatory, rent-seeking) (Colombia, South Africa, Zimbabwe);
- Populations can recognise multiple forms of legitimacy with respect to government. While one form of legitimacy might weaken (e.g. around service delivery performance), another can be sustained (e.g. shared beliefs with charismatic leaders) or strengthened in political processes (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Zimbabwe);
- Low levels of state legitimacy are often rooted in expectations around state delivery of services that arose during state formation (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cyprus, Tunisia, Zimbabwe) and transition (South Africa);
- Involvement of international actors in pursuing particular strategies and upholding international norms can undermine or enhance the legitimacy of local institutions (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cyprus, South Africa, Tunisia, Yemen, Zimbabwe; see 5.1 for more details).

Driver 3: Social cohesion is broadening and deepening, with formal and informal ties and interactions binding society horizontally (across citizens, between groups) and vertically (in the relations between citizens/groups and the state).

3.1 The legacies of state formation and poor progress in achieving inclusive political settlements and providing fair service delivery can weaken vertical cohesion (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Colombia, Cyprus, Nepal, South Africa, South Sudan, Tunisia, Yemen, Zimbabwe).

The case studies illustrate that poor vertical cohesion, evident in opinion polls and surveys, low voter turnout, protest and measures of public participation, results from:

- State-formation processes, including colonisation and decolonisation, and the historical narratives that persist and develop around them, that have enduring effects on state-society relations and that shape vertical and horizontal

34 Mallet and Slater, 2017.

relationships in ways that are difficult to change. This is particularly the case if historical political settlements continue to privilege elites and to entrench ethnic divisions and inequalities (see 1.4) and generally do not address the asymmetries that underpin grievances and become core conflict issues (Cyprus, Nepal, South Africa, South Sudan, Yemen, Zimbabwe);
- Poor progress in Driver 1 (achieving a more inclusive political settlement that increasingly addresses core conflict issues) (Cyprus, South Africa, Tunisia, Zimbabwe);
- Poor progress in Driver 2, including declining trust in states and their institutions and/or dissatisfaction with performance (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Colombia, Cyprus, Nepal, South Africa, South Sudan, Tunisia, Yemen, Zimbabwe).

The case studies also illustrate challenges in forging a common national identity, an issue also often rooted in historic state-formation processes (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cyprus, Nepal, South Africa, South Sudan, Yemen). Zimbabwe illustrates an important caveat, where vertical cohesion is not always tied to poor state performance, i.e. strong national identity holds weight. Trust in the state can also be increased, even when service provision is low, through formal channels of communication between citizens and the state (Tunisia).

3.2 **Horizontal inter-group social cohesion holds promise at the level of daily interactions, i.e. between neighbours** (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Colombia, Nepal, South Sudan, Tunisia, Zimbabwe), **but tends to be negatively affected by the polarising political dynamics and non-inclusive governance practices that can weaken vertical social cohesion** (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Colombia, Cyprus, South Africa, South Sudan, Tunisia, Yemen, Zimbabwe).

The case studies illustrate that this occurs through:
- Daily interactions between groups, such as neighbourly relations and as fostered by diaspora (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Colombia, Nepal, South Sudan, Zimbabwe). These are often not a problem until political issues provoke, catalyse and/or enhance group divisions, whether by design or chance. This is the case especially where there are perceptions that the state favours some groups over others (South Africa, Yemen, Zimbabwe) or where ex-combatants are involved (Colombia, South Sudan);
- State-designed horizontal cohesion initiatives not being very effective (South Africa, Zimbabwe), while citizen-initiated ones seem to hold promise (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Colombia, Nepal, South Sudan, Tunisia);
- Polarisation processes driven by elites, such as mobilising identity, fear, and prejudice for political purposes (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cyprus, Yemen, Zimbabwe);
- Peace processes that are structured around strong intragroup identities can reinforce patterns of intergroup polarisation, which external state actors can exacerbate (see 5.1) (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cyprus; see also Zimbabwe for variation on theme).

Cross-cutting Issues

Exclusion and inclusion

4.1 Inclusive processes do not automatically or quickly produce more inclusive results, as intervening factors can affect outcomes (political will, misuse of power, capacity and resources, poor design and/or process, poor or lacking implementation frameworks) (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Colombia, Nepal, South Africa, Yemen, Zimbabwe).

The case studies illustrate that translating inclusive processes into sustained, inclusive results is a complex, multifaceted endeavour requiring sustained efforts. Additionally and in support of other research findings, only steadfast commitment ensures that processes target and/or create policies that are then implemented.[35] Tunisia illustrates how a commitment to forging an inclusive social contract through myriad (especially citizen-driven) processes for greater inclusion can produce substantive results and meaningful outcomes. This includes processes across social contract-making spheres, mechanisms and sectors.

Challenges in ensuring that inclusive processes yield inclusive results are related to the following:

- A lack of political will and/or abuse of power (Zimbabwe, South Africa, Colombia);
- Poorly run processes and/or superficial commitments (Nepal, Yemen, Zimbabwe) – specifically, politics undermining commitment to quotas (Bosnia and Herzegovina, South Africa);
- Violent backlashes (Nepal) derailing planned outputs and results;
- Incomplete or failed efforts to decentralise power, which limits the ability of citizens as they shape more inclusive social contracts (Colombia, Tunisia, Nepal, South Sudan, exception: Bosnia and Herzegovina);
- Cultural values and beliefs preventing some groups (women, minorities, castes, etc.) from taking advantage of the formal measures of inclusion established by state institutions (quotas, institutions) (Nepal, Yemen).

International actors and issues

5.1 While the international community (including regional actors) vitally supports countries in transition, their positions in support of peace agreements and the social contract-making mechanisms that follow can undermine the ability to address CCIs (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Colombia, Cyprus, Nepal, South Africa, South Sudan, Tunisia, Yemen, Zimbabwe).

Recognising the complex ways in which international actors and exogenous issues influence the shaping of national social contracts, this research nonetheless focuses on national actors, institutions and processes. It thus does not dwell upon the promising or problematic practices of international actors. This reflects the agreed international consensus on the need for national ownership of peacebuilding, statebuilding,

35 Donais, Timothy and Erin McCandless. 2016. "International Peacebuilding and the Emerging Inclusivity Norm," *Third World Quarterly*, 38 (2), 291-310.

development. However, some key findings emerged across the cases in relation to the the roles and impact of international actors and processes, suggesting avenues for deeper research.

These findings support much of the familiar critiques in the existing literature, including that:

- International financial institutions' (IFI) policy requirements can undermine political settlement commitments (South Africa, Zimbabwe); and,
- International (and regional) actors are perceived as non-neutral and/or fuelling conflict, depending on how particular processes are promoted or facilitated (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Colombia, Cyprus, Nepal, Yemen). Specifically, international actors play conflicting roles, often undermining state and local actors and approaches by supporting conflicting agendas, strategies and programmes (Colombia, Cyprus, South Sudan), failing to respect expectations for managing aid resources (Colombia, Nepal) and fuelling ethnic nationalism and group tension through the politicization of peace (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cyprus, Zimbabwe).

At the same time, international actors arrive in contexts affected by conflict and fragility because the state is often not functioning or fully in control. They play critically important roles in often highly volatile and precarious contexts. These include:

- Providing vital budgetary (Nepal, Zimbabwe) and programmatic support across core government functions and service delivery that supports the functioning and capacity development of government institutions and contributes to the building of state legitimacy (most countries);
- Providing technical and financial support to peace and transition processes (Cyprus, Tunisia, Yemen, Zimbabwe).

Resilient Social Contracts and Attaining and Sustaining Peace

6.1 A resilient national social contract is an indispensable component of preventing violent conflict and of attaining and sustaining peace. Resilient national social contracts contribute to more peaceful and resilient states and societies when one or more of the following factors is present:
~ There is virtuous movement of drivers (all countries) and virtuous, mutually reinforcing interaction among the three drivers (virtuous cycles: Tunisia; vicious cycles: Cyprus, Yemen, Zimbabwe).
~ CCIs are attended to in inclusive ways, in and through social contract-making spheres and mechanisms (positive: Tunisia; negative: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Colombia, Nepal, South Sudan, Yemen, Zimbabwe).
~ Resilience capacities in society are mobilised and supported for peace (positive: South Africa, Tunisia, Zimbabwe; negative: Cyprus, Nepal, Yemen).

The case studies illustrate *(through positive and negative experience and evidence)* that important elements for moving a country towards a resilient social contract likely include:

- Virtuous movement of each of these drivers, as findings related to each of the three drivers above suggest, and virtuous, mutually reinforcing interaction amongst the drivers. This presumes or suggests the need to understand how the interactions of drivers can move a transition in more virtuous directions (e.g. Tunisia) or into vicious cycles of cascading failures (e.g. Cyprus, Yemen, Zimbabwe) and proactive efforts to promote the former while working to prevent the latter;
- CCIs being resolutely addressed through different social contract-making spheres and mechanisms. Cases illustrate this requires that:
  - Political settlements are rooted in official, transparent and inclusive agreements that accurately articulate and address CCIs, with power-sharing to enforce implementation that expands state decision-making, participation and the delivery of services to subnational levels (positive: Tunisia; negative: Yemen, Zimbabwe);
  - Constitutions are in place and supported, with clear provisions to resolve CCIs (positive: Bosnia and Herzegovina, South Africa, Zimbabwe; negative: Nepal);
  - Institutions (design, reform and/or transformation of) are factored into implementation of political/peace agreements, including at subnational levels (negative: Colombia, Nepal, Yemen, Zimbabwe); and,
  - There is engagement and integration (where appropriate) of informal and customary systems and institutions into peace and development processes (Bosnia and Herzegovina, South Sudan, Yemen, Zimbabwe). For example, customary systems and institutions bring marginalised actors into dialogue and foster cohesion (Nepal, South Sudan, Zimbabwe). They also offer non-state alternatives for maintaining justice, security and service provision, even if this decreases state legitimacy (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Yemen); and,
- Activated resilience capacities in and through political settlements and state institutional delivery (drivers 1 and 2), i.e. active, engaged civil society demanding accountable, substantial change (South Africa, Zimbabwe), culture of dialogue (Cyprus, Nepal, Yemen), strong sense of national identity (positive: Zimbabwe; negative: South Sudan).

Competing social contracts present clear challenges for achieving resilient social contracts that facilitate peace. The findings suggest the necessity of bringing parallel systems and structures, which may even constitute competing contracts, into greater dialogue. This means creating incentives to recognise and harmonise their contributions, and thus of ensuring that the competition between them does not undermine peace efforts. Examples include: (Bosnia and Herzegovina (elite and everyday); Colombia (FARC rebels and the state); Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cyprus and South Sudan (separate nationalist social contracts); Yemen (national/official and customary); Zimbabwe (competing political contracts).

Policy Recommendations

The following policy recommendations are based on the findings of our research and informed by our many validation workshops and policy dialogues and through considerable discussion within our working group of advisers and authors. The findings are organised around the main lines of the project framing: the three drivers of the social contract, cross-cutting issues and the implications for preventing conflict and attaining and sustaining peace. Our work demonstrates that the social contract has wide appeal in and across settings, making it a highly useful heuristic and normative policy tool to support national actors as they address conflict, forge a common vision and create the institutions and relationships to uphold this. The recommendations hold particular value for policymakers in the context of the revived international policy attention focused on prevention and sustaining peace.

Based on our study findings and rooted in wide bodies of scholarship, three 'drivers' of resilient social contracts - i) inclusive political settlements addressing core conflict issues, ii) institutions delivering effectively and inclusively iii) social cohesion broadening and deepening – should be valued and policy recommendations around them should be supported, with the following considerations for policymakers:

Driver 1-related: Support political settlements that build inclusion and address core conflict issues. Specifically:

- Identify and strengthen 'social-contracting' mechanisms *(dialogue, constitutions, national development plans, subnational arrangements)* to foster inclusion and coherence while addressing conflict issues and new forms of responsive governance that transform institutions at all levels.
- Coherently target conflict issues of wide concern across state and society in order to build consensus around the issues and construct 'social-contracting' mechanisms to address them. This will promote momentum and trust in these processes, which will help actors address other conflict issues.
- Endeavour to understand and engage the 'everyday' sphere (including communities and informal actors), incorporating perspectives in the reshaping of agreements to reflect everyday concerns and interests, building ownership in and around the issues. Otherwise, peace processes risk creating gatekeepers to and spoilers of peace.
- Approach conflict issues from a context-informed and holistic, rather than reductionist, perspective that recognises that issues are not locked in history that allows only one diagnosis and a final prescription. Rather, social-contracting efforts are dynamic and ongoing and should re-engage and respond to issues as they evolve.

Driver 2-related: Support institutions (formal, customary and informal) to deliver effectively and inclusively and establish and sustain more peaceful and resilient states and societies. Specifically:

- Seek to better understand societal expectations of the state's role in core functions and delivery of services, on the one hand, and participation, on the other; factor in appropriate participation and grievance mechanisms for this.
- Identify, appreciate and support locally appropriate (including non-liberal) alternatives, models and approaches to governance and delivery of services; support the harmonization of these with formal processes and each other.
- Ensure that institutions deliver in ways that deepen the inclusiveness of the political settlement and institutionalise approaches to addressing the conflict issues and ongoing grievances.

Driver 3-related: Support the broadening and deepening of social cohesion – horizontally between groups and vertically through groups/citizens and the state. Specifically:

- Seek means for building social cohesion across drivers in ways that are catalytic and context-specific – attuning to aspects of social cohesion most needed/desired, i.e. promoting a sense of national belonging *(e.g. through a national dialogue on implementing the constitution),* trust *(e.g. fair provision of services) and* participation *(e.g. in a budgeting process).*
- Promote social cohesion through service delivery, that is, through concrete measures that deliver results and build connections between citizens and the state *(e.g. designed with a peacebuilding lens, having grievance recourse mechanisms, participating in local decision-making and accountability structures, etc.).*
- Create safe and constructive spaces for revelatory everyday interactions and practices among groups that may not normally come together; promote citizen-driven efforts that improve intergroup relations and foster social cohesion; recognize and support resilience capacities that serve peace.

Cross-cutting issues-related:
To ensure that international action supports social contracting that builds resilient states and societies and facilitates attaining and sustaining peace, international actors should support national social contracting by:

- Supporting mechanisms to address conflict issues dividing state and society.
- Preventing the uptake of conflicting provisions and commitments in political and peace agreements and implementation plans.
- Cultivating leadership for social contracting among domestic actors at the national and subnational levels, with a focus on drivers and support for locally appropriate and transformative approaches.

Ensuring that inclusive processes translate into sustained, inclusive results calls for:

- Steadfast commitment that allows for progress and setbacks; inclusive processes take more time.
- Understanding that the 'quality of inclusion', and specifically modes of and preferences for inclusion, are context-dependent; different modes of inclusion are acceptable and effective for different groups, in different sectors, and varyingly at different phases/times in transition.
- Ensuring that inclusive processes target a variety of social contracting spheres and mechanisms to support effective and coherent implementation of agreements, including policy creation and clear implementation plans.

Preventing violent conflict and attaining and sustaining peace related:

To support resilient national social contracts likely to achieve and sustain peace calls, policymakers should:

- Promote virtuous movement of the three drivers (as highlighted above) and virtuous interaction among the three drivers.
- Inclusively address core issues of conflict in and through social contract-making spheres and mechanisms.
- Identify and support resilience capacities in society, *i.e. aversion to political violence, willingness to engage in political dialogue, socio-economic resilience, strong sense of national identity and strong civic culture, etc.*
- Bring parallel systems and structures and competing social contracts into dialogue while creating an overarching national social contract.

Promoting resilient social contracts in these ways supports priorities of current policy agendas *(the 2030 Agenda , and the Security Council/General Assembly resolutions focusing on sustaining peace and conflict prevention)* by offering:

- An inclusive concept with appeal across contexts that frames the notion of a national vision, which is at the heart of the UN resolutions.
- A theory of change for how countries can sustainably pursue the development of resilient social contracts by:
  - Building more-inclusive political settlements and embedding agreements in enduring institutional arrangements *(i.e. social contracting mechanisms)* and efforts to deepen relationships *(i.e. social cohesion programming)* that support peace;
  - Resolving persistent core issues of conflict *(i.e. through social contracting spheres and mechanisms); and,*
  - Offering integrated, context-centred treatment of politics, security, peace and development.

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