Success and Failure of Political Settlements

Defining and measuring transformation

Julia Schünemann and Amanda Lucey

PSRP

About Us

The Political Settlements Research Programme (PSRP) is centrally concerned with how political settlements can be made both more stable, and more inclusive of those affected by them beyond political elites. In particular, the programme examines the relationship between stability and inclusion, sometimes understood as a relationship between peace-making and justice.

The programme is addressing three broad research questions relating to political settlements:

1. How do different types of political settlement emerge, and what are the actors, institutions, resources, and practices that shape them?

2. How can political settlements be improved by internally-driven initiatives, including the impact of gender-inclusive processes and rule of law institutions?

3. How, and with what interventions, can external actors change political settlements?

The Global Justice Academy at The University of Edinburgh is the lead organisation. PSRP partners include, Conciliation Resources (CR), The Institute for Security Studies (ISS), The Rift Valley Institute (RVI), and the Transitional Justice Institute (TJI, University of Ulster).

Find out more at: www.politicalsettlements.org

Abstract

This discussion paper develops a conceptual framework and methodology for defining and understanding transformation in fragile and conflict affected states (FCAS) through the lens of political settlements. Peace settlements are understood as the outcomes of ongoing political processes, making them hard to measure. This paper therefore proposes measuring transformation in the context of peace agreements i.e. one-off events. This paper then suggests measuring transformation along the core functions of the state, since peace agreements often deal with state function. Indicators for state capacity have been generated from current international debates, in particular those concerning state fragility and resilience, peacebuilding and statebuilding goals, and measures of inclusiveness. The aim of the paper is not to provide specific indicators of transformation at this stage but to rather provide a range of indicators that will allow for further discussion on the selection of suitable proxy indicators at a later stage. Once determined, different types of peace agreements can be mapped according to different transformative outcomes, which can influence policy making in the future.

The Authors

Amanda Lucey joined the ISS in 2013 and is a senior researcher in the Conflict Management and Peacebuilding division in the Pretoria office. She works on a project that aims to enhance South African post-conflict development and peacebuilding capacity in Africa. Amanda spent time in the DRC where she worked with MONUSCO as a Political Affairs Officer and has previously worked with the UNDP in South Sudan as a Rule of Law Officer. She has a MPhil in Justice and Transformation (specialising in conflict resolution) from the University of Cape Town.

Dr. Julia Schünemann joined the ISS Pretoria office in January 2013 as Senior Researcher and Project Leader for the African Futures and Innovation Section. Before, Julia worked as an independent consultant and researcher with a focus on peace- and statebuilding, state fragility, security, conflict prevention and early warning. In this context, she provided policy advice to the EU, UNDP, the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Interamerican Development Bank, the Honduran Truth and Reconciliation Commission, etc. and also delivered training to the Arab League. Until December 2010, Julia worked as a researcher and project coordinator for FRIDE, a Madrid based think tank and in 2007 for the European Commission's Directorate for External Relations in Brussels. Julia is a member of the Task Force on EU Prevention of Mass Atrocities. She holds a PhD degree in International Relations from Madrid's Complutense University, Spain and a MA in Communication, Political Science and Economics from Ludwig-Maximilians-University, Munich in Germany.

Executive Summary

Policy makers are faced with tough decisions when intervening in fragile and conflict affected states (FCAS). In a more austere global climate, donors are under pressure to spend resources wisely and effectively. At the same time, there is a lack of evidence on what policies really work. The re-emergence of conflict across the world demonstrates the need to find long-term solutions for addressing instability. The relationship between political settlements and development is particularly vexing from an evidence-based perspective. It is generally assumed that political settlements, and peace agreements in particular, impact on the developmental outcomes of a state, but is this really the case or are clauses on paper irrelevant when it comes to actual development outcomes?

This discussion paper develops a conceptual framework and methodology for defining and understanding transformation in fragile and conflict affected states (FCAS). Given that from a methodological point of view it is very complex to measure the outcomes of ongoing political processes, the paper focuses on the outcomes of peace agreements i.e. one-off events.

The paper is divided into five sections:

- I.   **Introduction**
- II.   **Political settlements, Statebuilding and Peacebuilding**
- III.   **What can be measured and how?**
- IV.   **Indicators and datasets**
- V.   **Way forward**

II.   Political settlements, Statebuilding and Peacebuilding

Following a brief introduction to the paper in section I, section II frames the discussion of measuring transformation and mapping such transformation to different types of political settlements within the context of conceptual debate around the term political settlement. It also sets out the concepts of peace- and statebuilding and state fragility and resilience, which are directly relevant for discussing transformation in FCAS.

III.   What can be measured and how?

Section III examines the practicalities of what can be measured and how with regard to transformation in FCAS. The paper reviews the current literature in this area and highlights challenges and opportunities for developing relevant indicators on transformation. Suggested opportunities include analysing political settlements in terms of their elite inclusiveness based on the assumption that the level of elite inclusiveness has at least implications for trajectories of stability and instability, and analysing trajectories of transformation or outcomes along the core functions of the state.

IV.   Indicators and datasets

Section IV scopes out relevant indicators and data sources, for each core function of the state, and highlights potential problems and shortcomings with these indicators and sources. The indicators selected have been chosen specifically for this paper on the basis of their global representativeness (allowing for cross country comparison), time span that they cover,

whether they are regularly updated and whether they are considered measurable and accurate. Choosing the best proxy of this data will be important. Although the New Deal process advocates for combinations or 'baskets' of indicators to capture change in FCAS given that 'no single indicator can in every context tell a full, fair story about progress',[1] many proposed data sets do not currently exist. In addition, each of these routes has successively greater data compilation/data-availability challenges. Perhaps, a more viable route would be to identify an appropriate proxy/proxies that could serve to measure progress over time and allow for cross-country comparisons.

V.   Way Forward

The concluding section of this paper summarises the main findings and suggests a way forward for measuring transformation through political settlements. Intervening in FCAS is complex and requires a detailed evaluation of how transformation can be best achieved. This paper makes a first attempt at defining transformation through the lens of a political settlement. It suggests indicators of transformation derived through different areas of state function according to contemporary debates and suggests analysing this through forthcoming data on political settlements. No measurements will ever be perfect but this does not mean that the data is not useful in providing initial indications of how different peace agreements lead to different outcomes. This paper provides avenues for measuring this in the future, which will allow greater analysis of when and how donors can intervene most effectively.