

Post-accord Crime and Violence

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Introduction

One of the basic expectations of peace accords is that they will reduce levels of violence in the emerging post-war society. However, in reality, most post-accord societies continue to experience alarmingly high levels of violence and run the risk of becoming even more insecure environments than when it was at war. It is all too easy to find examples. In Northern Ireland, violent attacks on the security forces and so-called ‘punishment’ attacks on civilians continue despite decades of ‘peace’ after the Good Friday Agreement was signed in 1998. In South Africa, violent crime and homicide rates rose significantly after the end of Apartheid in 1994. Electoral violence continues to plague polls in Kenya after the National Accord and Reconciliation Agreement of 2008. And after Latin America’s much feted peace deal in Colombia in 2016 between the government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), violence between armed groups has continued and at least 500 people have been killed in the period up to mid-2019 and 210,000 displaced.¹

The ubiquity of post-accord violence raises some important questions: *what* forms does the violence take; *who* are responsible for this violence, *why* does violence continue at such high levels and *how* does it affect post-war societies? This chapter will address each of these questions in turn. Firstly, it will identify three types of violence in post-accord contexts: violence with political, economic and social aims. Secondly, the chapter will illustrate how different groups can be responsible for violence and emphasis will be on the role of the state, organised groups, the community and individuals as perpetrators of violence. Thirdly, the chapter will consider the reasons for continuing violence and lastly, it will consider the effects of post-accord violence.

In answering each of these questions, a central theme emerges: that post-accord violence does not stand in isolation from conditions and factors which characterised either the war or the peace. This violence that follows peace accords is shaped by both the previous experience of war, and by the peace process and the implementation of the accords. The chapter will show how the perpetrators of violence can be either inherited from the war, or be the products of the peace process. Equally, the causes of violence are related to conditions caused by war and by peace and the types of violence that characterise post-accord contexts often have their genesis in the wartime society.

For a long time, the academic attention to violence in the aftermath of peace accords focused on single case studies, with El Salvador, Guatemala, Bosnia-Herzegovina, South Africa, Northern Ireland and Israel/Palestine receiving particular attention. While this literature undoubtedly made important contributions to understanding continuing physical insecurity in these particular societies, a more holistic account of post-accord violence across regions and countries – and indeed, across time – only started emerging over the last decade and remains rare.² These studies identify the shared causes, manifestations and consequences of post-accord violence, irrespective of geographical location, and emphasise how it is found in almost all post-accord contexts. This literature produces a more nuanced understanding of the dynamics of the post-peace accord period as a distinct, and indeed hugely vulnerable, phase in a conflict or peace process.

The argument in this chapter will be illustrated with evidence from post-accord societies since the end of the Cold War. Civil wars are the most common form of violent conflict in the post-1990 period.³ Accompanying this trend, has been a significant increase in the number of peace accords aimed at addressing these conflicts: between 1990 and 2016 more than 1,500 peace accords have been signed worldwide.⁴ The evidence in this chapter comes from civil wars which have been ended – at least officially or temporarily - by substantive peace accords. Unsurprisingly, this is hugely relevant to the violence discussed in this chapter: the violence takes place in a context where there has been no military victory by one side over the other. Rather, violence takes place in the wake of a peace process which (in most cases) included a process of multi-party negotiations and the reaching of a comprehensive peace accord which addresses not only the cessation of violence, but also tackles at least some of the underlying causes of the conflict. As such, these comprehensive (or substantive) peace accords are different from ceasefire accords – the latter are a type of pre-negotiation accord which is specifically aimed at pausing direct violence and they typically precede negotiations for comprehensive peace accords.⁵ Comprehensive peace accords provide a consideration of the political, social and economic dimensions and consequences of the conflict and contains at least some ideas of how to structure the post-war society. Ideally, a comprehensive peace accord provides guidance to restructure and transform society in order to prevent a return to war. Sadly, but not surprising, not all accords become fully implemented and almost half of all peace accords are indeed likely to fail.⁶

The context of post-accord violence

There are some assumptions and caveats to consider in any discussion of post-accord violence. The term ‘post-war’ violence implies that this violence happens once the conflict is over. This is problematic because it assumes that all peace accords are somehow inherently fair and offer legitimate and appropriate tools for managing the political divisions which underpinned the conflict in the first place. This is not necessarily the case and peace accords are prone to failure. In the Central African Republic (CAR), for example, the latest in a series of eight peace accords between government and rebel groups were signed in February 2019 – after all previous seven accords since the conflict started in 2013 had failed. The previous seven attempts at ending the conflict decisively, clearly had little impact.⁷ And the prognosis

for the eighth accord was not good: just one month later, there were already reports emerging of renewed fighting between insurgent groups.⁸

Peace accords often collapse and witness a return to war, instead of securing long-term political stability, prosperity and physical security for civilians. This raises an important question about whether ‘post-war’ violence is really taking place in a post-conflict context. To what extent is post-accord violence actually post-war violence, or is it simply a continuation of the violent conflict? It may simply be a gear-shift in the conflict, or be a continuation of old animosities at a community level which have been little affected by an elite-level accord. Post-accord violence may thus, at its core, be little more than a continuation of the struggle for political power. It is therefore more accurate to refer to this violence as post-accord violence rather than using the more optimistic term ‘post-war’ violence.

Secondly, there is a tendency to uniformly condemn the violence that occurs in the wake of peace accords. It is seen as a ‘problem’ which needs to be addressed so that it does not derail the political deal. The underlying assumption is that the peace accord is inherently legitimate and that the violence is unwarranted. Most peace accords since the end of the Cold War have been designed, negotiated and implemented in line with the assumptions of Liberal Peacebuilding. Consequently, proponents of the Liberal Peace are likely to see any opposition to the infrastructure of such peace accords as illegitimate.⁹ This does not recognise that the perpetrators of post-accord violence may have, in their view, legitimate reasons for rejecting this particular vision of a post-war society that is contained in the accord. Or, in another example that will be discussed later, it ignores the discrepancy between international norms about what constitutes legitimate economic activity (i.e. what is ‘crime’) versus local permissive norms that may facilitate involvement in the ‘illegal’ economy. Post-accord violence – as with all violence – is thus further complicated by competing and clashing interpretations surrounding its legitimacy.

In addition, post-accord violence takes place in a context of raised popular expectations about the peace dividend – and this includes popular expectations about increased physical safety. When levels of violent crime, homicide rates and gang wars increase, when armed groups continue to carry out inter-ethnic attacks and the state periodically assassinates its political opponents, it could lead to popular disillusionment – and potentially rejection – of the political deal.

It is important to recognise that patterns of violence vary substantially across post-war societies. Post-civil war Lebanon after the signing of the Ta’if accords in 1998, for example, displayed relatively high levels of political violence, but levels of violent crime remained low.¹⁰ In contrast, in Liberia after the civil war ended in 2003, post-war violence took the form of violent crime with very low levels of politically motivated violence.¹¹ There is thus considerable variation across cases and regions in terms of the types, causes and perpetrators of post-accord violence. The following sections will further unpack this diversity in forms of violence.

Types of post-accord violence

This discussion will illustrate how different types of violence which are common to post-accord societies could have political, economic or social goals. It is, of course, entirely possible and likely that one act of violence, such as attacks on returning refugees, could have multiple goals: it could be politically motivated insofar as returning refugees are seen to challenge the political power balance in a town or it could be economically motivated as they put pressure on limited economic resources.

Post-accord violence has political aims when it intends to change the balance of political power in society. Violence can be used at various stages of a peace process, for example, to influence the reaching of an accord, or it could be used to impact on the implementation of the peace accord.

Violence which aims to directly derail or influence the outcomes of a peace process, is known as spoiler violence where force is used by ‘leaders and parties who believe that peace emerging from negotiations threatens their power, worldview, and interests, and use violence to undermine attempts to achieve it’.¹² Spoiler violence is often used in parallel to peace negotiations and serve political aims by destabilising or manipulating the process of political bargaining and compromise. Spoilers pursue various aims during the negotiations and they could be participants in the peace process (so-called ‘inside spoilers’) or they could be ‘outside’ spoilers who have shunned inclusion in the political process.¹³ However, the concept of ‘spoiling’ could also apply to the post-accord phase when groups use violence to explicitly challenge the terms of the accord.

The New IRA is a good example of a spoiler who rejects the 1998 Good Friday Agreement which ended 30 years of violent civil conflict in Northern Ireland. Since the signing of the accord, there have been a range of so-called dissident republican groups who rejected the accord and the peace process because it does not secure the unification of Northern Ireland with the Republic of Ireland.¹⁴ Since 1998, dissident republican groups have killed several members of the security forces across Northern Ireland.¹⁵ A new dissident group, the New IRA, became particularly prominent in recent years. The New IRA was formed in 2012 and have since been involved in killings, gun and bomb attacks on security forces and vigilante violence against its own community.¹⁶ By 2019, there were fears that the organisation was absorbing other dissident republican groups and posed an increasing danger to political stability in Northern Ireland, particularly in a context of a suspended regional assembly at Stormont and the prospective return of a ‘hard’ border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland as part of Brexit negotiations.¹⁷ Dissident republican violence shows how, despite the persistence of a peace accord, spoiler groups (who are unwilling to give up on their original political goals – in this case, a united Ireland) can continue to challenge the political agreement and be a significant source of violence in a post-accord society.

Politically motivated violence can also thwart the implementation of the peace accord. Elections are often enshrined in peace accords and this could provide more opportunities for politically motivated violence. The Nepalese conflict between the government and Maoist

insurgents ended with the signing of a comprehensive peace accord in November 2006. Under the terms of the accord, regular elections would take place to choose the national assembly. However, subsequent elections have been marred by the use of violence by different political groupings, not least groups associated with the former Maoist insurgents.¹⁸ More than 10 years after the signing of the accord, elections remained marred by violence such as the 56 violent clashes, explosions and vandalism across Nepal in the election period of 5-7 December 2017.¹⁹ Electoral violence in the aftermath of peace accords can have clear political objectives insofar as it aims to affect the competition for political power (see the chapter by Borzyskowski and Saunders in this volume). This violence can be the result of new post-war conditions, for example when refugees or those who were internally displaced return to their villages to vote and this creates political tensions in the community.²⁰ However, it often shares close links with the war: elections provide new opportunities for former political and ethnic rivalries to express themselves (often violently) and the political parties involved are often the same (or closely related to) the protagonists in the war and who have not yet fully disarmed or demobilised.²¹

Another common type of post-accord violence, which is not explicitly politically motivated, is violent crime. Violent crime is closely associated with organised crime and youth gangs, especially in Central America.²² Several states in Central America are also post-peace accord societies, with Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Honduras engaging in peace processes in the 1990s. Peace has brought neither economic prosperity, nor safety for these post-accord societies. Drug cartels cooperate with street gangs (called *maras*) in the trafficking and selling of illicit drugs.²³ The reasons for the prevalence of the *maras* in Central America include weak state institutions which are unable to deter involvement in crime; a policy of forced repatriation of refugees (some with criminal links to gangs in the USA) from cities in the USA; a normalisation of violence as a result of the wars and the circulation of small arms in society; high numbers of socio-economically disadvantaged young men who are drawn into gangs; a context of severe poverty and economic inequality and lastly, the geography of the region and its centrality in drug trafficking routes.²⁴ The competition between cartels and gangs to control the lucrative smuggling routes between narcotics producing countries in Latin America and the main consumer markets in the USA have led to extraordinary high levels of violence. Gang violence - as an example of post-accord violence - is largely economic. It is undoubtedly linked to the social and political factors described above, but gang violence in Central America is largely underpinned by the financial profits from the lucrative trade in narcotics.

It would be wrong to assume that violent crime cannot be highly politically charged, especially so in post-war environments. A good example is the violent attacks on (mostly white) farmers in post-Apartheid South Africa. Since the end of Apartheid in 1994, thousands of (mostly white) farmers and members of their families have been killed on farms and smallholdings in South Africa in what are commonly referred to as 'farm attacks'. The figures are disputed, but in the 10 years between 1993 and 2003, some 1500 people – mostly white Afrikaners - were killed in farm attacks.²⁵ Some years later, official Police statistics recorded 140 murders and 1069 farm attacks in 2001/2.²⁶ These rates are extremely low when

compared with national homicide rates, but these farm attacks are politically highly charged: Evidence shows that the vast majority of farm attacks are motivated by robbery²⁷, but - because the perpetrators are mostly black Africans - white Afrikaners interpret the violence as a form of persecution, ethnic targeting and with the intention to repossess their land.²⁸ This interpretation of farm attacks holds negative consequences for reconciliation between different groups and it shows how violent crime can carry huge political meaning in post-accord environments.

Another common type of violence that often characterise post-war settings is vigilante violence. This form of socially motivated violence is focused on maintaining or structuring social relations and order rather than to influence configurations of political power or achieve material gain. Since 1996, post-war Guatemala remains one of the most violent countries in the world, with high levels of organised crime and gang-related violence. In the immediate aftermath of the peace accord, between 1999 and 2006, Guatemala's murder rate increased by 120 per cent and reached a shocking 108 murders per 100 000 civilians in the capital city.²⁹ In response to these rising levels of violent crime and the failure of state responses, communities increasingly took matters into their own hands. Since the 1996 peace accords, vigilante violence in the form of lynching by mobs, known as *linchamientos*, have increased exponentially.³⁰ These vigilante groups in Guatemala are, in some ways, relics from configurations of violence during the conflict. During the conflict, the Guatemalan state co-opted members of rural communities into paramilitary structures (so-called Civil Self-Defence Patrols) to 'protect' these communities against communist infiltrators.³¹ After the conflict, these paramilitary structures persisted in local practices and former paramilitary leaders are often involved in the lynching of alleged criminals.³² Furthermore, the practice of lynching also stems from the public executions of 'criminals' by both guerrilla and army forces during the war – often by setting victims alight.³³ This illustrates how the conditions and practices entrenched during the war (in this case, the practice of lynching by guerrillas and the army, and the militarisation of rural communities) and conditions from the post-peace period (the rise of violent crime and the state's perceived inability to respond effectively), interact to produce high levels of violence.

This section has shown how the violence that follows on from peace accords can, generally speaking, take three forms based on the motivations that underpin them: it can be classified as political, economic or social violence. In reality, as explained at the start of the section, these distinctions might not be so obvious: an act of violence could hold multiple motivations and serve multiple goals simultaneously. Yet, it is important to recognise that these different types of violence are linked with a variety of factors and perpetrators which either stem from the conflict itself, or are the direct result of the peace process. In many ways, peace accords' failure to deliver the expected or desired political, social or economic benefits to the wider society is responsible for these different forms of violence.

The perpetrators of post-accord violence

The examples discussed above point to the existence of a wide range of perpetrators who carry out violence in post-accord contexts. These range from organised groups to individuals,

from the state to the community. It will become clear that the perpetrators of post-accord violence are rarely the products of the peace process, but indeed, often predate and survive the peace accord.

Organised groups who engage in violence include paramilitary groups or criminal gangs, as discussed earlier. These groups may have existed – and indeed, have directly participated in – the conflict, such as the National Liberation Army (ELN) in Colombia which killed 21 people and wounded 68 others in January 2019 – three years after the peace accords between the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and the government.³⁴ Alternatively, they could be the products of the peace process itself (such as the dissident republican groups in Northern Ireland). Their links to organised crime and their potential to mobilise and recruit local populations make violence by these groups particularly significant after peace accords.

Of course, individuals carry out violence without belonging to a larger economic or political organisation (although they may share the views of such an existing group). They could carry out ‘lone wolf’ terror attacks, which could be seen as spoiler violence with political motivations.³⁵ A good example is the assassination of Israeli prime minister Yitzhak Rabin in 1995 (after the Oslo peace accords between the Palestinian Liberation Organisation and the Israeli government) by the Israeli far-right sympathiser Yigal Amir.³⁶ Individuals can also be opportunistic and engage in violent crime in a context of lowered opportunity costs due to the state’s limited law enforcement capacity.

The state is often a major protagonist in the violent conflict, and can continue to be a significant perpetrator of insecurity afterwards. Post-accord states could use violence to assassinate political opponents or suppress political opponents. State violence is usually carried out by the state’s own institutions such as the security forces, but it could also employ other groups to carry out violence on its behalf. The state’s continued involvement in various forms of violence in post-accord settings is particularly stark in Central America.³⁷ The Salvadoran state has long been accused of carrying out extrajudicial killings targeted at gangs and other ‘antisocial’ elements.³⁸ By 2003 there was evidence that a new generation of state-affiliated death squads have emerged to kill gang members.³⁹ In Honduras too, death squads aligned to the state were still targeting street children and youth gangs well after the end of the conflict in the late 1980s.⁴⁰

The community also remains a common perpetrator of post-accord violence, as the earlier example of Guatemalan *linchamientos* illustrated. Here violence springs from the community itself, rather than from a (semi) permanent non-state armed group. Vigilante violence often seem spontaneous and reactionary. In South African townships, mob vigilantism has become a feature of daily life in response to high levels of crime and the state’s incapacity to respond effectively. Again, however, the ‘mob’ is not always entirely spontaneous: in South African instances of vigilantism the punishment of crime suspects is often led by local community organisations called ‘street committees’.⁴¹ These street committees originated during Apartheid’s low intensity conflict to function as sites of local-level democratic decision-making. They became some of the building blocks of the post-Apartheid ‘community policing’ approach which emphasised the role of community structures in local policing –

and which is widely seen as a contributing factor to the prevalence of community-based vigilantism in South Africa.⁴² This illustrates how even non-violent community structures which preceded the peace accords can be active in committing violence in its wake.

Another example of the community as a perpetrator of post-accord violence can be found in post-war Bosnia-Herzegovina. Attacks on returning refugees (whose return to villages and towns are provided for in the terms of the accord) by ethnically divergent groups in the community were common in the first few years after the Dayton accords in 1995.⁴³ For example, when 800 Bosnian Muslims and Croats returned to their former homes in a Serbian controlled town of Doboje in 1996, it led to a violent confrontation involving 1500 Serbs.⁴⁴

Apparently spontaneous community-driven violence can mask involvement by armed organised groups. So-called 'recreational rioting' by youths in Northern Ireland illustrates how seemingly impulsive community-based violence can be closely linked with armed groups. The persistent pattern of rioting between Catholic and Protestant youths on the streets of Northern Irish cities in the summer months, especially, have been labelled 'recreational' as it is seen to be devoid of political motivation and rather, be underpinned by youthful boredom.⁴⁵ However, in reality, there is substantial evidence that paramilitary armed groups are often active behind the scenes to direct and manage the communal rioting between youths of opposing communities.⁴⁶ The behind-the-scenes involvement of organised armed groups in violence by the community testifies to the central role that these groups continue to play in the daily lives of their communities, despite pressure to disarm and demobilise.

This section has showed how the perpetrators of post-accord violence are varied and range from individual acts of opportunistic low-level crime, to orchestrated campaigns of violence by armed groups, to extrajudicial state killings and seemingly spontaneous mob violence in the community. Many of these perpetrators have originated during the conflict and managed to outlive the peace accords.

The causes of post-accord violence

Unsurprisingly, violence that follows peace accords has multiple causes. Many of these causes are related to either the preceding conflict, or the dynamics of the peace process (or both).⁴⁷ The timing of post-accord violence is crucial in understanding its causes: this is violence that takes place in the immediate aftermath of (often prolonged) periods of violent conflict. The violence is the result of conditions which have been created during the conflict, as well as conditions associated with the transition from war to peace. It can sometimes be tricky to identify the accurate causes of violence. Berdal⁴⁸ points out that economic factors often stimulate post-accord violence, but that these causal conditions can be subordinate to political and ideological factors. It is tempting for policymakers to simplify the causality of violence by focusing on one economic set of conditions, but this can ignore the complex interaction between political, ideological and economic factors.

Violent crime that is related to organised crime has its underlying causes in the political economy of a particular society. Post-accord environments present conditions which can be highly favourable to organised crime, such as limited law enforcement, high levels of

corruption and the availability of resources and networks which can be utilised by organised crime groups. However, these organised crime networks are rarely unique to the post-accord context. Indeed, they are instrumental in determining viability, intensity and longevity of the war itself. The relationship between organised crime and violent conflict has been the subject of a growing body of literature investigating this crime-conflict nexus.⁴⁹ Most armed groups are, in one way or another and to varying degrees, involved in the illicit economy during the conflict because it provides them with funds to buy weapons, pay combatants and control populations. Equally, already existing organised crime groups cooperate with political protagonists in a conflict because it provides them with recruits, access to markets and political influence. These illicit economic networks, trafficking routes and corrupt liaisons often persist into the post-accord phase, where they expand and play an even greater role in the ways the state and society function.

Organised crime is closely associated with corruption, and it is worth emphasising how violent conflict can establish corrupt practices which persist once the war has ended. Iraq provides a good example of how corruption, organised crime and conflict interact. Saddam Hussain's regime in Iraq became heavily involved in the shadow economy in an attempt to circumvent international sanctions in the 1980s and 1990s. The state's involvement in such sanction-busting activities created fertile ground for corruption to become endemic.⁵⁰ These high levels of corruption have persisted after the 2003 USA-led invasion of Iraq and the overthrow of the regime. Le Billion argues that liberal peacebuilding, in particular, is particularly conducive to corruption due to the uncertainties (such as the threat of dismissal and electoral loss) and economic opportunities (such as the availability of imported goods; aid and improved transportation links) which accompany the transition from war to peace⁵¹. Ex-combatants could also view their newly acquired appointments in the civil service (and the accompanying opportunities to supplement their salaries) as reward for their previous sacrifices. In post-Saddam Iraq, officials in the Health Ministry cooperated with organised crime syndicates to pilfer medical supplies and drugs intended for hospitals at every stage of the supply chain.⁵² In addition, ordinary civilians often have little choice but to participate in these shadow economies and the corrupt relationships which underpin them, in order to secure everyday goods and services. Incidentally, this may provide caution against hasty post-war anti-corruption policies: corruption and the illegal economy with which it co-exists, provides local populations with a level of political, social and economic security and stability in uncertain times. Radical interventions to tackle corruption – in the absence of viable economic alternative livelihoods - may leave sections of the population particularly vulnerable.⁵³

The economic conditions which underpin crime and violence may have been inherited from the conflict, but could also be the result of a particular model of peacebuilding. Low levels of economic development and high levels of unemployment make involvement in criminal groups or activities an attractive option for civilians. Neoliberal economic reforms, another key component of the Liberal Peace paradigm, are notorious for exacerbating existing economic cleavages and inequalities and increasing the economic burden on the most vulnerable sections of society.⁵⁴ Peacebuilding and the post-war period also create new

opportunities and spaces for illegal economic activity due to improvements in the import and export of goods, greater freedom of movement and limited institutional capacity to curb crime. If peace accords are unable to provide an improvement in the economic lives of civilians, it could push them towards the illegal economy to make ends meet – especially when such activity is not viewed as being ‘illicit’ (i.e. not in conflict with local custom or morality).⁵⁵

A major contributing factor in post-accord violence is the inability and ineffectiveness of state institutions in societies emerging from violent conflict. There is an absence of state institutions that can inhibit and regulate the use of force, whilst providing security and stability to its citizens.⁵⁶ This context of limited state capacity in delivering social, political and economic good and services provide fertile ground for crime and violence.

Democratisation and its associated freedoms and rights (which are often part of the Liberal Peace package) create new spaces and freedom for organised crime and other illegal and violence actors to operate with relative impunity.⁵⁷ There is often a push for multi-party competitive elections (a key component of liberal democracy) before sufficient levels of security, political stability or institutional capacity have been established. This can lead to further lawlessness and corruption as organised criminal groups use the institutional vacuum to form alliances with new political incumbents.⁵⁸ An ineffective justice system can lead to the increased popularity of vigilante justice where civilians become perpetrators of violence themselves.⁵⁹

Security sector reform (SSR) and a downscaling of the security services often take place under the terms of the peace accord, but this can significantly weaken the post-accord state’s ability to respond to violent crime. In Guatemala, for example, the reduction of the security services’ abilities and mission was a necessary concession to get the leftist opposition groups to the negotiating table. The resulting large number of influential ex-soldiers with few economic prospects and the incompetence of the remaining security apparatus undoubtedly contributed to the country’s alarmingly high post-accord violent crime rates.⁶⁰

A cultural permissiveness towards the use of violence can also contribute to the use of violence, both during the conflict and afterwards. A so-called culture of violence (the social norms and values which allow and justify the use of violence) is both a result of prolonged exposure to violence and a cause of further violence.⁶¹ Various factors, which are closely associated with armed conflict, can encourage a culture of violence: a hyper-inflated masculinity is often promoted during conflict in order to foster a warrior culture; and states and non-state armed groups justify, reward and encourage the use of violence by civilians and against civilians. As society becomes accustomed to the widespread use of violence during a protracted civil war, violence becomes a legitimate and acceptable response to solving everyday conflicts. A culture of violence is thus both a consequence and a necessary condition of intrastate armed conflict⁶². This impact lingers on after the war: Civilians became desensitised to violence and, because norms and values are slow to change, this permissive context continue into the post-accord society.

However, much more work still needs to be done on the manifestations and causes of a culture of violence. Berdal⁶³, for example, points out that some countries do not exhibit high levels of post-war violence across the board, despite the brutality of the previous conflict. This suggests that the link between prolonged exposure to violence and the use of violence might not be as automatic as the culture of violence literature implies.

A last obvious cause of violence after peace agreements is the availability of weapons and the presence of poorly demobilised ex-combatants in society. The link between post-war violence and wartime violence is particularly stark here: it is common knowledge that Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) projects are rarely successful in completely removing all weapons from society and helping combatants make the transition back to civilian life.⁶⁴ Weapons which fuelled the conflict often remain in circulation after the conflict and are used in crimes committed in the post-war period. Equally, the release of large numbers of (mostly) young men who are ill-prepared for civilian life into communities can lead to increased criminal and political violence.⁶⁵ Ex-combatants might also harbour particular expectations about the peace dividend, which could remain unmet. In East Timor the struggle against Indonesian occupation ended when independence was granted in 1999, but the state's failure to provide the expected support and employment to war veterans was a major cause of the violent riots that rocked Dili in December 2004.⁶⁶ Large numbers of frustrated ex-combatants in a post-war society provide fertile ground for continuing political and criminal violence. The inadequate demilitarisation of war-time special military and security units means that these state-affiliated organisations outlive the peace process and can become increasingly involved in organised crime and violence after the war.⁶⁷

The causes of violence that follow in the wake of peace accords are varied, but they tend to be closely connected to the violent conflict. The availability of weapons, the presence of large numbers of ex-combatants, adverse economic conditions, weak state institutions, and the presence of organised crime groups are all factors and conditions which predate the peace process. However, there are certain causes of post-accord violence which are directly related to the peace accords: for example, the promotion of a neoliberal economic agenda which either leave unjust structures and processes in place, or further exacerbate poverty and economic inequality. Either outcome can lead to popular frustration with the 'peace'.

The implications of post-accord violence

Unsurprisingly, post-accord violence poses many risks to states and societies emerging from conflict. Firstly, it could be a sign that the conflict is not really finished and that the peace process is doomed to failure. Violence is also indicative of the failure of peace accords to reverse patterns of socio-economic decline.

Secondly, it places significant pressure on the state to respond to violence by apprehending and prosecuting perpetrators at a time when policing and defence budgets are under pressure, judicial reforms are perhaps beginning to take place and police forces are undergoing significant restructuring processes. States are under pressure to abandon longer-term development projects in favour of dramatic immediate interventions in crime, which

addresses the symptoms rather than the causes of violent crime. This could lead to popular support for those parties which advocate a rejection of the peace deal and a return to conflict. It could also lead to support for groups who are seen to resist physical insecurity by using violence themselves, as evident from the examples of vigilante violence. High levels of insecurity can lead to popular calls for the death penalty, a restriction on human rights and the introduction of draconian measures to ‘fight crime’. In El Salvador, for example, post-accord violence dominates electoral politics and political parties promote populist policies of crime management. The hugely popular *Mano Dura* (meaning ‘strong-handed’) crime policy in El Salvador encapsulated an iron-fisted approach to crime management, including giving the military a role in policing crime and suspending due process of law in certain cases.⁶⁸ This emphasis on crime management in policymaking also happens at the expense of policies and debates which address other urgent issues facing the post-accord society.

Thirdly, continued post-accord violence further embeds violent and armed groups in the structures and daily lives of communities. This has a spiral effect where violence and insecurity make civilians more reliant on violent entrepreneurs in their quest for protection, who in turn, have more opportunities for further violence.

Fourth, post-accord violence affects social capital. Social capital refers to the bonds of trust and networks which exist between individuals and groups in a society and which is essential for community development and cohesion.⁶⁹ War generally destroys social capital (or is the consequence of low levels of social capital – particularly between groups in society), but it is extremely sought-after for societies who engage in reconciliation and social reconstruction activities.⁷⁰ Continuing high levels of violence after war can inhibit the building of trust and cooperation between previously antagonistic groups in society. The examples of farm attacks in South Africa are a good illustration of how post-accord violence can cause a particular ethnic group to consider themselves as being deliberately selected as targets, thus creating distrust and fear towards other groups in society.

Conclusion

Post-accord violence is common in societies that emerge from prolonged period of war. This chapter has shown how it often has its genesis in the conditions created by the war – and, ironically, by the conditions of the peace. Violence that occurs after peace accords have been signed is thus the product of both the preceding conflict and the peace process. This is particularly evident in *who* carried out the violence as the main protagonists during the conflicts often survive the conflict and continue their use of violence afterwards – possibly with an ostensibly different purpose. The *causes* of continuing violence are often similar to the factors which caused the war in the first place. Equally, the perpetrators of violence often pursue similar aims with their use of violence before and after the peace accord.

Post-accord violence rarely appears out of the blue. It is more likely to be a continuation of the use of force by perpetrators of violence during the conflict who have managed to survive the peace process. These actors can continue using violence, often in pursuit of the same objectives and for the same reasons as before. This is not to say that the processes of

peacebuilding are not influential in causing and determining the nature of post-accord violence – far from it. Peace processes and the implementation of peace accords create novel conditions and generate new actors which are also conducive to violence. The Liberal Peace, in particular, has much to answer for in this regard: it promotes neo-liberal economic policies which nurture violent and organised crime and promotes a liberal democracy which encourages premature elections in unstable societies. Peacebuilding should not be a blunt instrument with which to tackle post-accord violence. Strategies aimed at reducing violence should be adapted to its specific manifestations and conditions and policymakers may have to be pragmatic in their approach to violence. This may mean collaborating – in the short term, at least - with alternative structures and groups in society which serve the social, political and economic needs of local populations. For example, organised crime groups are well known to play an important role in the daily life and survival of communities. Rather than adopting harsh anti-corruption and anti-crime strategies which would strip local populations of the only (however imperfect) safety net they have, it might be more effective to explore ways in which such forms and the providers of non-state governance could be incorporated into peacebuilding efforts. Over the longer term, though, it remains imperative that peacebuilding addresses the root causes of post-accord violence and find ways to transform the actors who perpetuate this violence.

In the end, continuing high levels of violence after war and the inability of the state to respond effectively, can lead to a popular disaffection with the peace dividend. It raises questions about the quality of peace that followed the peace accord when high levels of physical insecurity persist: if peace is not the absence of direct violence, then what is it? This continued physical insecurity and its various links to the previous conflict also illustrates the impotence of many peace accords to translate into positive change in the social, economic and political fortunes of civilians.

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