THE LOGIC OF POWER: ELITE CONTESTATION AND THE ORGANIZATION OF SECURITY IN CONFLICT-PRONE SOCIETIES[1]

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Abstract

This article demonstrates that the nature of elites and elite interests influence the organization of security in conflict-prone societies. These factors also influence the political settlement that can be agreed between national political elites, which influence the organization of security in turn as well, through its 'rules' on power maintenance, coercion and resource distribution. The primary interest of national ruling elites is to ensure continuity of rule and political survival. Elites seek to achieve this through secondary interests that include maintaining their ruling coalition and deterring political competitors. A consequence is that national political elites aspire to use state security forces to maintain political control. Even development-oriented elites will not provide more citizen-oriented security where this jeopardizes existing power structures of which they are part. The extent to which ruling national political elites are able to consolidate power in the form of an authoritative political settlement largely determines how much control over state security forces they can establish and to what extent they may wish to maintain non-state security options to protect their existential interests. In conflict-prone societies with heterogeneous elites, political settlements will tend to be less authoritative and the organization of security more fragmented, as power is more difficult to consolidate and the threat of violent competition realistic. In such settings, national political elites purposely undersupply state security and prevent state security forces from becoming too professional. One of the more provocative implications is that greater levels of basic security may be more easily generated by a smaller core of ruling national political elites that are development-oriented, although this also risks regression into greater corruption and predation over the long-term. The combination of the heterogeneity of national political elites and the extent to which they are development-oriented enables four different levels of basic security in terms of security referents, issues and organizational development of security organizations. Increases from one level to another require strategies that focus on shifting or modifying elite characteristics and interests at the level of political competition for power. This represents a significant change compared to the present dominance of interventions that seek to improve organizational capabilities.

Introduction

A basic level of security is crucial to positive human development.[2] Its absence causes physical harm, fear and trauma. Yet, people in many societies are faced by persistent insecurity. Afghanistan is in its fourth consecutive decade of civil strife, Syria's brutal dictatorship survives after years of intense civil war and lethal organized crime continues unabated in Central America, brutalizing and shattering communities. The list goes on. Conflict-prone societies in particular face a vicious cycle in which fragmented, contested or illegitimate political systems and high-levels of insecurity feed off each other. Life adjusts to a state of permanent insecurity and coping mechanisms develop.[3]

Creating a basic level of security that can face such vicious cycles of violence must resolve two problems. First, it requires agreement on whose security will be assured and on what issues. This determines the level of generality of security provision. For example, dictatorships are likely to provide ample, but selective, security that results in low levels of crime (which increases productivity and ensures popular support), as well as low levels of meaningful political opposition (which ensures regime survival).[4] Second, it requires agreement on the organization and management of security organizations. This influences the reliability of security and the extent to which it can be effectively assured on selected issues. The range of possible answers to these issues suggests that security will often look like a patchwork: security organizations produce insecurity for some groups on some issues and security for other groups on the same, or other, issues with varying degrees of focus, accountability and capability.

Societies have in common that the required agreements on security referents, issues and organizational development that can produce a level of basic security are usually both contested and concluded by elite groups that hold political power and/or dispose of coercive capacities.[5] This indicates that both the nature and the interests of elites are important variables to understand how security is organized. In this paper, 'the nature of elites' refers to their size, permeability and coherence. 'Elite interests' refer to the objectives elites seek to realize to their own benefit. As particular elite groups are generally not sufficiently powerful to rule by themselves, they negotiate and ally with other elite groups to establish a set of rules with temporary and tentative validity that 'regulates' the acquisition of power, the exercise of authority and coercion, as well as the distribution of resources between them. The result is known in the developmental literature as a 'political settlement'.[6] This represents another

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[2] See for example: World Bank, *Conflict, Security and Development*, Washington DC: World Development Report, World Bank, 2011.

[3] The term 'conflict-prone societies' is used here instead of the more ubiquitous 'fragile societies' to reflect that most conflicts at present take place in middle-income countries. These are not typically considered fragile. Referring to 'fragile' in relation to 'conflict' risks maintaining the mistaken impression that conflict is limited to poor, low-income countries – often also associated with Africa. See: Fearon, J., *Governance and civil war onset*, Washington DC: World Bank, World Development Report background paper, 2010; Kaldor puts significant emphasis on 'identity politics' as an explanatory factor of conflict across low and middle income societies: Kaldor, M., *New and old wars: Organized violence in a global era*, 3rd edition, Standford: SUP, 2012.

[4] On this point: Olson, M., 'Dictatorship, democracy and development', in: *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 87, No. 3, 1993.

[5] For example: De Mesquita, B. and A. Smith, *The Dictator's Handbook: Why Bad Behavior is Almost Always Good Politics*, New York: Public Affairs, 2011; North, D., J. Wallis and B. Weingast, *Violence and Social Orders: A Conceptual Framework for Interpreting Recorded Human History*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009; Fukuyama, F., *Political order and political decay*, New York: Farrer, Straus and Ginoux, 2014.

[6] Key sources include: Parks, T. and Cole, W., *Political Settlements: Implications for International Development Policy and Practice*, San Francisco: The Asia Foundation, Occasional Paper No. 2, 2010; Menocal, A., *Inclusive*

variable that influences the organization of security since it indicates which elites are included/excluded in the formal governance of the state (the settlement's openness), what the relative power of the included elite groups looks like (the settlement's authoritativeness) and how elites will use the state to advance their interests (the settlement's orientation).[7] Together, these variables generate the analytical approach below.

Figure 1: Basic analytical approach to understanding the organization of security
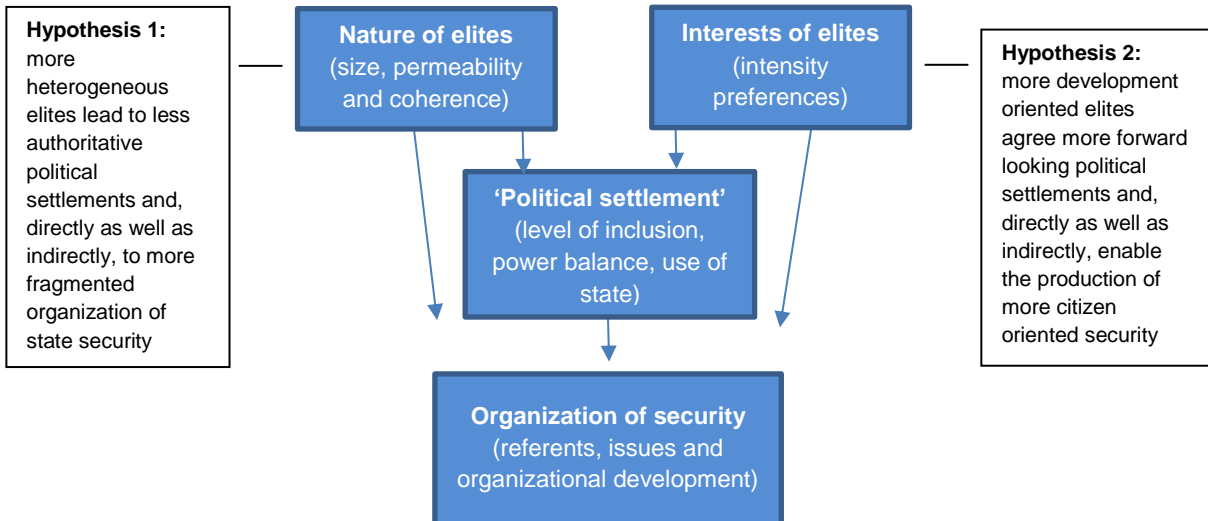
Using a mixed-methods approach, this paper is an exploratory effort to establish initial relations between elite characteristics and the organization of security in conflict-prone countries on the basis of two hypotheses that sit within the analytical approach visualized above.[8] First, it examines whether more heterogeneous ruling elites lead to more fragmented organization of state security, in part by enabling a less authoritative political settlement. Second, it analyzes whether more development-oriented elites agree more forward looking political settlements and enable the production of more citizen-oriented security.

The inquiry is developed in three steps. Section 1 develops the relation between elites, their interests and political settlements in greater detail on the basis of a mix of the case study evidence and existing literature. Section 2 uses the case study evidence to examine the relation between elite heterogeneity, the type of political settlement that may emerge and the nature of the organization of security. Section 3 subsequently does the same for the relation

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political settlements: Evidence, gaps and challenges of institutional transformation, Birmingham: University of Birmingham, 2015; Di John, J. and J. Putzel, *Political Settlements: Issue Paper*, Birmingham: GSDRC, 2009. The term is discussed in greater detail in section 1.

[7] On this point: Putzel, J. and J. Di John, *Meeting the challenges of crisis states*, London: LSE (Crisis States Research Center), 2012; Acemoglu, D. and J. Robinson, *Why nations fail: The origins of power, prosperity and poverty*, London: Profile books, 2013.

[8] The paper's mixed methods include an expert workshop in December 2014, a literature review and two case studies (Lebanon in January 2015; Ethiopia in March and June 2015). The case studies generated 51 interviews with 'national security elites' (see section 1) that were semi-structured and lasted about an hour each. Lebanon and Ethiopia were selected as contrasting cases on the basis of their perceived different levels of elite heterogeneity (higher in Lebanon), the nature of their political settlements (more stable but more monopolistic in Ethiopia) and the quality of their state security forces (higher in Ethiopia). Findings are exploratory because the research developed its hypotheses from the ground up, because interviews do not represent a sample of a well-defined population of 'elites' and because two case studies provide only a modest evidence base.

between the development-orientation of elites, the nature of the political settlement that may result and the organization of security. Finally, Section 4 synthesizes findings and discusses next steps, both practically in terms of elite influencing strategies that can help generate a higher level of basic security and more methodologically by outlining directions for further research.

1. Elites and political settlements

Who are 'the elites'?

The term 'elites' in general denotes the relatively small group(s) of individuals with significant influence on, or power over, decisions with strategic relevance at different levels of human organization (such as private or public organizations, communities, countries or international organizations).[9] Elites include captains of industry, leaders of political parties, community leaders, high-ranking officers, senior (international) civil servants and certain intellectuals. The level of their influence and power are typically a function of the resources they have at their disposal, the formal positions of authority they occupy, the informal leadership they can exercise, their performance and talents, their access to other elite members, and their background in terms of religion, social group and/or occupational status. It is a diffuse term because the size of the elite, the factors that qualify someone as ´belonging to the elite´, the level of elite permeability and the coherence of elites vary significantly across countries.[10]

Analytically more useful is the concept of ´national political elites´, which refers to those individuals with influence on, and power over, strategic political decisions that impact on a country´s management and direction. This significantly limits both the area under scrutiny (politics) and the type of decisions (those related to national development). In short, 'national political elites' refers to those in positions of political command and/or with the ability to appreciably influence political decisions.[11] The scattered evidence available suggests that in conflict-prone societies this group tends to be small, features a high level of continuity, operates largely on the basis of personal relations (instead of institutional ones) and is difficult to identify/delineate due to the formal-informal hybridity of power, which is further complicated by the presence of sources of authority that are nearly extinct in the Western world, such as religious or customary legitimacy.[12] It is difficult to suggest whether these

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[9] Power refers to the capacity of A (a person or group) to bring outcomes about that are favorable to A's preferences or desires. Political power would refer to such capacity in matters of rule-making and -enforcement concerning a broader social group. See: Dahl, R., *Modern Political Analysis*, London: Prentice Hall International (5th edition), 1991.

[10] The conceptual discussion in this section is largely based on: Bottomore, T., *Elite and society*, Second edition, London: Routledge, 1993; Perthes, V. (ed.), *Arab elites: Negotiating the politics of change*, London: Lynne Riener, 2004; Leftwich, A. and S. Hogg, *Leaders, elites and coalitions: The case for leadership and the primacy of politics in building effective states, institutions and governance for sustainable growth and social development*, Birmingham: Development Leadership Program background paper, 2007; Knoke, D., 'Networks of elite structure and decision-making', *Sociological methods & research*, Vol. 22, No. 1, August 1993, 23-45.

[11] Bottomore (1993), *op.cit.*

[12] In analysis of elites in Yemen and Zimbabwe, the core elite is estimated at c. 200-400 members. In contrast, the elites of larger countries like Mexico or Italy at 1000-5000 members and of a country like the US upwards of 10000 members. Phillips, S., *Yemen: Developmental dysfunction and division in a crisis state*, Birmingham: DLP, Research paper, 2011; Bratton, M. and E. Musunungure, *The anatomy of political predation: Leaders, elites and coalitions in Zimbabwe 1980-2010*, Birmingham: DLP, Research paper, 2011; Higley, J. and R. Gunther (eds), *Elites and democratic consolidation in Latin-America and Southern Europe*, Cambridge: CUP, 1992. See also: Valters, C., E. van Veen and L. Denney, *Security progress in post-conflict contexts: Between liberal peacebuilding and elite interests*, London: ODI, Dimension paper 02, 2015.

characteristics are on balance positive or negative due to inherent ambiguities. For example, a high level of elite continuity can be positive if it provides stability and direction to development oriented processes and decisions, but it can also be problematic if it maintains predation, blocks change and impedes the emergence of new generations of elites.[13]

'National security elites' – the focus of this paper – are a subset of 'national political elites'. Throughout the case work, these elites were understood as 'leading figures with agenda-setting influence on the conception and use of a nation's tangible and intangible security resources' including opinion makers, high ranking members of state security organizations, political leaders and leaders of 'customary' security organizations.

Elites and their interests

A major finding of the case studies is that the interests of national political elites have, unsurprisingly, a very strong influence on the nature of elites and on the political settlement that can be agreed.[14] What is somewhat more surprising is that national political elites have a strong set of intensity preferences with regard to their interests, which has a number of effects on their behavior, the type of political settlement they can agree to, the organization of security and how they can be influenced. These effects and their relations have not yet been adequately recognized or discussed in existing literature. The primary issue is that the top level (i.e. existential) interests of many elite groups are identical: they seek to ensure continuity of rule when they are in power and to survive politically when they are not.[15] To these ends they seek to maintain their existing coalition and deter their political competitors. The implications of this observation are profound.

For example, it indicates that the difficulty of reaching an inclusive and authoritative political settlement in a context of elite heterogeneity is not so much due to the diversity of their interests, but due to the need to ensure they all have a slice of political power and feel confident in their political survival. Moreover, it also indicates that even development-oriented elites will resist political opposition or intervention that would threaten their rule or their political survival. Such insights are analyzed in greater detail in section 2 and 3. To set the scene for this discussion, the paper first constructs a rough 'typology' of elite interests on the basis of a triangulation of case study findings with existing literature.[16]

To start with, the primary interests of national political elites across the case studies and in literature is to ensure continuity of their rule when they are in power and of their political survival when they are not. Irrespective of the nature of more substantive objectives that national ruling elites may pursue, they have to stay in power first. This is their overriding objective. If continuity of rule cannot be realized, then political survival provides the back-up

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[13] Lindemann offers an instructive example of these ambiguities: Lindemann, S., 'Inclusive elite bargains and the dilemma of unproductive peace: A Zambian case study', *Third World Quarterly*, 32:10, 1843-1869, 2011a.

[14] The case study evidence has been published in the form of two reports: Van Veen, E., *Elites, power and security: How the organization of security in Lebanon serves elite interests*, The Hague: Clingendael, CRU report, 2015; Van Veen, E., *Perpetuating power: Ethiopia's political settlement and the organization of security*, The Hague: Clingendael, CRU report, 2016. Both are accessible online.

[15] While this is a clear case study finding, it was observed years ago by De Mesquita and Smith (2011), *op.cit.*

[16] Relevant literature includes: North et al. (2009), *op.cit.*; Dahlström and Wängnerud (2015), *op.cit.*; Whitfield, L. and O. Therkildsen, *What drives states to support the development of productive sectors? Strategies ruling elites pursue for political survival and their policy implications*, Copenhagen: DIIS, Working paper 15, 2011; Di John and Putzel (2009), *op.cit.*; De Mesquita and Smith (2011), *op.cit.*

route for regaining power someday. In situations characterized by low institutional development and poor reliability of legal and regulatory frameworks where the use of violence is feasible, this gives elites a major incentive to retain access to coercive capabilities. Failure to protect this interest may risk life, as the series of assassinations of leading politicians in Lebanon between 2005 and 2007 for example illustrated, or threaten continuity of rule, as nearly happened due to Ethiopia's surprising election results of 2005.

National political elites pursue two secondary interests to achieve their primary interests, namely maintaining their ruling coalition and deterring political competition. The case studies suggest that coalition continuity can be assured through a judicious mix of economic benefits (e.g. aid, loans, trade, mineral exploitation and parastatals), patronage benefits (e.g. jobs in the bureaucracy, security forces or business advantages), ensuring good relations and building a reservoir of trust and legitimacy (e.g. through astute leadership and stable constituency relations). The developmental role of the Ethiopian National Defense Forces in running the country's military-industrial conglomerate called 'METEC' offers a good example of how a vital state security organization is tied into maintenance of the existing power structure while simultaneously contributing its appreciable organizational capabilities to national development.[17]

In terms of ensuring coalition continuity there is a trade-off between the extent of short-term benefits that can be used to ensure loyalty and collaboration and long-term resource and coalition sustainability. If short-term benefits are/become too high, resource may run out and defections occur that result in political instability. Zimbabwe's recent history offers an example of how President Mugabe has managed this dynamic.[18] Existing research suggests that the authority and strength of the executive is a key factor in ensuring a sustainable balance between the short- and long-term.[19]

Deterrence of political competition can take more overt (violent) and more covert (peaceful) forms. The available options depend on the strength of the domestic competition, the existence and effectiveness of enforcement of the legal/regulatory framework for political action / use of violence, the quality of social relations between elites and groups, the level of elite accountability to their constituencies and foreign influence. In the 'more overt' category, it is common for state and non-state security forces to be mobilized to deter domestic political competition. The role of the police and intelligence services in suppressing political dissent in Burundi today offers an example; the suppression of Ethiopia's 2005 election results by state security forces another and Hezbollah's mobilization of force in 2008 to intimidate its domestic political opponents when some of its assets were at risk yet a third.

In the 'more covert' category, methods include skewing the regulatory framework for political competition, use of the judiciary to enforce it and use of media to frame events and opponents. An example here is the wide-ranging use of Ethiopia's 2009 anti-terrorism law to

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[17] Van Veen (2016), *op.cit.*

[18] Consider for example: Bratton and Musunungure (2011), *op.cit.* and International Crisis Group, *Zimbabwe: Stranded in Stasis*, Johannesburg/Brussels: ICG, Africa Briefing No. 118, 2016.

[19] This point was developed in particular by Putzel and Di John (2009) (2012), *op.cit.* Stronger executive power and central control prevent coalition fragmentation, place limits on greed and self-interest and allow for resource-accumulation that can enable broader national development. Such control requires disciplinary mechanisms that keep elites in check – both those included in the political settlement and those excluded from it. See also: Whitfield and Therkildsen (2011), *op.cit.*

suppress political opposition. Even more covert has been the use of TPLF party membership in Ethiopia as 'access ticket' to essential services for rural populations, such as the ability to purchase fertilizer and maintaining secure land tenure.[20] Party membership can also be a condition without which professional advancement in the administration, occupational groups or business is impossible, which helps explain why de de-Ba'athification order of US Coalition Provisional Authority in Iraq was such a disaster for the country's emergent post-2003 political settlement.[21] Such covert methods can create an opaque structure of control that is hard to identify for outsiders but that can have fearsome, because unpredictable, consequences.

The case studies suggest that elites only seek to realize more substantive tertiary interests after their primary and secondary interests are secured, namely the mix of egoistic and altruistic material objectives that they wish to pursue. Egoistic interests, which can be individualistic, group-based or a combination, include enrichment through (ab)use of public position and resources and securing the ability to put rents acquired this way to pleasant use (for example, the ability to travel and move funds). The case studies offer plenty of examples of how such interests are pursued. One of the more interesting illustrations is the compartmentalized 'system' of border control in Lebanon that allows different elite groups to profit from cross-border smuggling.[22] Altruistic interests take the form of creating and sustaining capabilities for national development, which are mainly realized by raising adequate resources and increasing the ability to overcome collective action barriers. While the case studies were not able to examine why particular elites are more self-oriented and others are more developmentally-oriented in any depth, they point to path dependencies, socio-political constraints and human nature as relevant factors.[23]

Political settlements and elite interests: Inter- and intra-elite negotiations

A political settlement can be understood as the set of (in)formal representation, control and distribution rules that national political elite groups agree between themselves to organize governance and resource allocation in a particular country. A key problem with the state of knowledge on 'political settlements' is that differences between such settlements are hypothesized to create different development pathways for countries, mainly because they would allow for different institutional structures and configurations, but that it is far from clear which of their characteristics and what sort of variation actually matter.[24]

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[20] Van Veen (2016), *op.cit.*

[21] For an anecdotic but compelling account: Makiya, K., *The Rope*, New York: Pantheon Books, 2016.

[22] Van Veen (2015), *op.cit.*

[23] Lord Acton's dictum 'Power corrupts. Absolute power corrupts absolutely' remains as close to fundamental law that political science has. It suggests that, if unchecked, human nature and power tend to gravitate towards misalignment between elite interests and the interests of the general population. In short, the social incentive structures for behavior, monitoring mechanisms of such behavior and the predictability and enforceability of consequences matters greatly. Werlin, H., 'Corruption and democracy: Is Lord Acton right?', *Journal of Social, Political and Economic Studies*, vol. 32, pp. 359-376; Dahlström and Wängnerud (2015), *op.cit.* For a related discussion on the tendency of humanity towards violence and egoism versus their tendency towards peaceful acts and altruism: Pinker, S., *The better angels of our nature: Why violence has declined*, London: Viking, 2011.

[24] For instance: Hudson, D. and Leftwich, A., *From Political Economy to Political Analysis*, Birmingham: Developmental Leadership Program, Research Paper 25, 2014; an exploratory effort is made by: Kelsall, T., *Thinking and working with political settlements*, London: ODI, 2016. A part of this problem that is not discussed here seems to be the fact that notion 'political settlement' mixes three separate processes together - coalition building processes between key elite groups, processes of institutionalization that create the machinery and regulatory framework of governance, and leadership processes that create the ideas, relations and action

A useful way to start addressing this situation is to take a step back and focus on the factors that influence the realization of a political settlement. Two process factors matter here in addition to the obvious influence of elite interests as a more substantive factor, and these are inter- and intra-elite negotiations. Elite groups negotiate with each other on the extent to which they can pursue their interests within the boundaries of what their constituencies accept. Political settlements can thus be considered as 'two level games', meaning that inter- as well as intra-elite/constituency negotiations have explanatory value for the sort of political settlement that can be reached.[25] This indicates that elites are neither all-powerful nor existing in isolation. In contrast, they face constituency interests, internal competition and pressures from other elite groups at the same time.

The results of inter-elite negotiations depend on relative levels of power and influence, which is in turn dependent on resources available to a particular group, the presence of existing channels of communication and information exchange between groups, and levels of trust – all of which are necessary to operate relational concepts as power and influence.[26] It is on the topic of inter-elite relations and negotiations within conflict-affected countries that much of the existing literature has so far focused, presumably because it is more easily researched.[27] This results in major breakdowns of political settlements commonly being ascribed to inter-elite group differences.[28]

However, while intra-elite negotiations were not part of the design of the case studies conducted for this paper, they nevertheless pointed to their relevance for understanding how political settlements influence the organization of security. This is largely the case because elite heterogeneity should not just be assessed between, but also within, elite groups as different elites, factions and their constituencies within a single elite group also contend for power. Factors that influence the outcomes of such processes include the extent to which elite-constituency dependency is mutual or one-sided, the level of voice within constituencies to debate and contest elite performance and representation, the presence of shared framing concepts or doctrines that must be heeded by elites and constituencies alike, and the power and number of 'second tier elites' that connect top-tier elites with their constituencies.[29]

The negotiation dynamic between constituencies and elites that results from these factors resembles a cross-over of 'principal-agent theory' (elites are agents if they face sufficiently powerful constituencies) and 'collective action logic' (elites are more firmly in charge when

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required for strategic decisions in respect of the former two – without adequately relating them to each other. The Development Leadership Program has started to explore some connections: www.dlprog.org.

[25] See: Di John, J. and J. Putzel, *Political Settlements: Issue Paper*, Birmingham: GSDRC, 2009; Parks and Cole (2010), *op.cit.*

[26] Knoke (1993), *op.cit.* makes a number of interesting points in this regard. The absence of such channels is what makes peace negotiations difficult when the political settlement is contested. Labelling groups as 'terrorist' further compounds such quandaries. Consider for example the Taliban in Afghanistan or the Touareg in Mali.

[27] For example: Phillips (2010), *op.cit.*; Perthes (2004), *op.cit.*

[28] One can think of analysis highlighting the breakdown of Yemen's National Development Conference due to disagreement between the Houthi elite and other Yemeni elite groups; of Iraq's predicament due to Sunni, Shi'a and Kurdish differences or Lebanon's recurrent political breakdowns as a result of Christian, Sunni, Druze and Shi'a contestation.

[29] These factors are derived from: Booth, D., *Development as a collective action problem: Addressing the real challenges of African governance*, London: Overseas Development Institute, Africa Power and Politics Program, 2012; Olson, M., *The logic of collective action: Public goods and the theory of groups*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965; De Mesquita and Smith (2011), *op. cit.*; Dahlström, C. and L. Wängnerud (eds.), *Elites, institutions and the quality of government*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015.

their constituencies face substantial collective action barriers).[30] Existing research suggests that in conflict-prone societies elites hold the upper hand over their constituencies much of the time.[31] This is largely because of extreme resource discrepancies, low levels of institutional maturity and the personalized nature of rule. High levels of elite continuity and low levels of elite permeability also point to this observation. These factors are visualized in figure 2 below.

Figure 2: Relating elites to political settlements
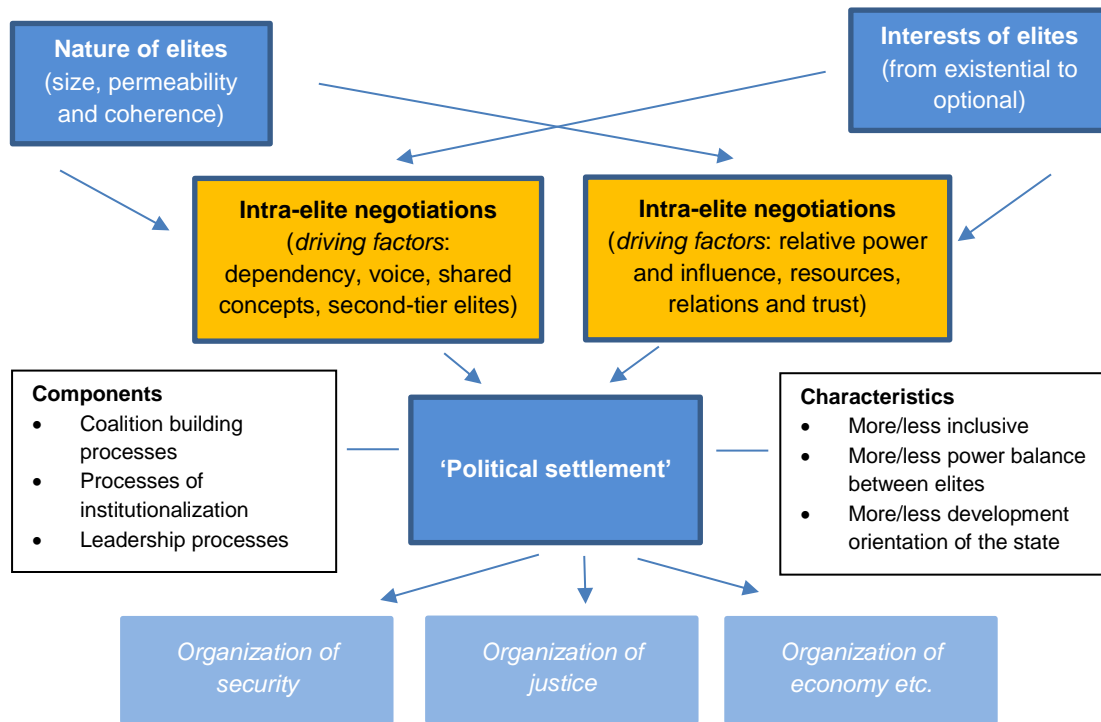
Elites, political settlements and the organization of security

National political elites across the globe typically use their power and resources to advance their interests. When they are sufficiently powerful they do so directly and on their own. The result of such elite dominance is typically a delineated territory or a dedicated sphere of influence within which a particular group exercises power uncontested. Logically, this means that a particular group will organize security to safeguard and advance its interests. The key referent objects of security provision will mostly be the power brokers of a particular elite group themselves. Inhabitants of the relevant area will only be included to the extent that this is necessary to retain basic legitimacy and latent support. Issues on which security will be provided are likely to focus on enforcement of extraction, 'border' control and deterrence, while organizational development of security forces will be weak as brute, unsophisticated power projection serves well enough. It will not surprise that this state of affairs produces nothing more than a very basic level of security that mixes predation with limited provision of safety for the local population. It also features significant deterrence capacity to ward off

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[30] Olson (1965), *op.cit.*; Booth (2012), *op.cit.*
[31] North et al. (2009), *op.cit.*; Van Veen (2015) (2016), op.cit.; Valters et al. (2015), *op.cit.*; Perthes (2004), *op.cit.*

competition.[32] Examples include warlord polities (e.g. Dostum in northern Afghanistan), criminal/gang no-go areas (e.g. Brazil's favela's) or insurgency-held territory (e.g. certain rebel held areas in northern Syria).[33]

It is more usual, however, that elites compete and ally with other elite groups to advance their interests. In conflict-prone societies they do so in both violent and non-violent ways. Where violence (temporarily) dominates, this indicates that either a passive modus vivendi between dominant elite groups has not yet been found, or that one or several such groups expect to be able to expand their power through force of arms. This was for example the case in Lebanon in 1975, 1982 and 2008, when respectively Lebanon's Sunni, Christians and Hezbollah tried their chances.[34] Whatever basic level of security might have existed becomes unstuck. (in)Security will largely replicate pre-existing cleavages between elite groups and over time come to show close similarities in particular territories with the situation of outright dominance of a single elite group as described above. The key difference is that pre-existing state security forces may have (partially) survived the outbreak of violence and can act as constraint on combatant forces loyal to particular elite groups so that the basic level of security that still prevails is slightly increased. Organizational development of such state forces will, however, grind to a halt. An example is the continued relative neutrality of the Burundian army in respect of President Nkurunziza's controversial third mandate.

Where negotiations dominate, processes of inter- and intra-elite negotiation will determine the set of rules on power, coercion and resource distribution that result. Depending on the level of inclusion, balance of power between elites and orientation of the state apparatus (which includes state security forces), a lower or higher level of basic security will result and the organization of security will be more or less encompassing in terms of referent objects, issues and the quality of professional development. The key referent objects of security provision may include a majority of citizens but usually this will be more minimal and focus on those with at least some resources or connections to national political elites. Issues on which security will be provided are likely to include terrorism, chief forms of organized crime - excepting cases that include ruling national political elites – and basic street security, while organizational development of security forces can be significant.

An example at the minimalist side of the political settlement spectrum is Yemen under President Saleh that was geared towards maintaining a patrimonial system of rent-seeking and self-enriching elites with significant elite groups being excluded. State security was very much a haphazard product under this settlement although a basic level was assured in most urban areas for non-political incidents.[35] A more positive example is the more development-oriented but TPLF-dominated political settlement in Ethiopia where security is more reliable and more evenly provided, keeping the country free from most form of terror and organized crime, but at the price of suppressing political opposition. In addition, the Ethiopian army is experiencing significant professional development.[36]

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[32] For example, on warlord dynamics in Afghanistan see: Giustozzi, A., *Empires of mud: War and warlords in Afghanistan*, London: Hurst and Co. 2012; Malejacq, R., 'Warlords, intervention and state consolidation: A typology of political orders in weak and failed states', *Security studies*, 25:8-110, 2016.

[33] For a rich account of rebel dynamics and politics in Syria: Lister, C., *The Syrian Jihad: Al Qaeda, the Islamic State and the evolution of an insurgency*, London: Hurst & Co, 2015.

[34] Van Veen (2015), *op.cit.*

[35] Clark, V., *Yemen: Dancing on the heads of snakes*, New Haven: YUP, 2010.

[36] Van Veen (2016), *op.cit.*

However, even when a functioning political settlement is in place, its rules do not necessarily fully govern the organization of security. If a settlement excludes major elite groups, represents a clear dominance of one or several elite groups over others (that are all included) or sets the state security apparatus up for predation, elites continue to have significant incentives to retain coercive capacities within or outside of the state security forces. Elite capacities within state security forces take the form of ethnic dominance of top positions, maintaining parallel lines of command, dominance of a particular elite group in a particular security force or the existence of organizational units within a particular security force that are more loyal to one set of elites than to others. Such influences largely incapacitate state security forces and prevent them from performing effectively – on purpose and with the aim of becoming a threat to a particular elite group. The Lebanese security forces provide a case in point as some of them are clearly seen to be dominated by particular sectarian groups, which renders them ineffective in politically sensitive security events – the Internal Security Forces are perceived as Sunni dominated, the General Security as Hezbollah dominated and the Lebanese Armed Forces as comparatively neutral.[37] Elite capacities outside of state security forces take the form of (youth) militias, private armies or criminal gangs with close political connections. Examples include Hezbollah in Lebanon or the *Imbonerakure* in Burundi.

2. Elite heterogeneity and the organization of security

One of the hypotheses underpinning the case work was that elite heterogeneity, understood as the existence of a significant number of more or less equally powerful but competing elite groups that differ on at least one major characteristic, results in a more fragmented organization of security. This was hypothesized to be the case for two reasons. Firstly, when several elite groups of more or less equal strength compete in a crowded marketplace for political power, they have an appreciable incentive to retain (access to) coercive capabilities to ensure their own survival, thus increasing the number of security actors and decreasing the level of authority with which anyone of them can operate. Second, if a significant number of elite groups manage to agree a political settlement, the range of interests that needs to be satisfied is likely to infuse the agreement with a lowest common denominator logic. This will make it weak in terms of the level or effectiveness of central authority that can be agreed which, in turn, fragments the organization of security in terms of its referents, issues and organizational development.

Considering this hypothesis in light of the rough typology of elite interests outlined in the previous section suggests that in societies with heterogeneous elite groups these elites pursue - to a large extent - the same primary and secondary interests, namely continuity of rule and political survival by means of coalition maintenance and deterrence of political competition. While this indicates a lower degree of interest divergence than heterogeneity of elites implies, the nature of these interests has the same effect. The case study evidence from Lebanon, for example, makes it clear that more or less evenly matched elite groups seek to secure as much institutional control (consider the sectarian division of the presidency, the speaker of parliament and the prime minister), create as many legal and

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[37] International Alert (2015), *Perceptions and Prescriptions: How Lebanese People View Their Security*, International Alert: Beirut; Van Veen (2015), *op.cit.*

operational safeguards on operations of security forces (consider the doctrine of the Lebanese Armed Forces) and generate as many veto-points (consider decision-making procedures in the Council of Ministers) as they can. This renders the overall settlement highly change resistant but also sensitive to political crisis. For example, the changes from the Taif agreement (1989) to the Doha agreement (2008) were modest, notwithstanding the tumult around the 2005 murder of Rafik Hariri and the 2008 crisis during which Hezbollah occupied West Beirut by force of arms.[38]

In consequence, a few broad and provisional conclusions can be drawn in respect of the relation between elite interests and political settlements on the basis of the case study evidence. First, societies with more heterogeneous national political elites (as defined in this paper) do seem to feature less authoritative political settlements that are more vulnerable to instability and outbreaks of violence. Beyond Lebanon, Yemen, Afghanistan, the DRC and Algeria provide alternative examples.[39] Second, the financial, developmental and strategic cost of political inclusivity in countries with heterogeneous elites might be underestimated, which gives cause for further reflection in pushing power sharing governance models as a standard element of conflict resolution packages.[40] Third, as elite groups in such societies seek to maintain their rule and/or ensure their political survival, their heterogeneity can reduce the space for developmental progress because of the many safeguards and controls in governance they put in place.

This points to the possibility that development prospects may be better served by a smaller core of development-oriented elites.[41] Its corollary is that neither the level of political inclusivity,[42] extent of democratization or level of publicly accountability in the security sector may offer the right criterion for assessing the ability of conflict-affected countries to avoid a return to violence. In fact, ruling elites are likely to resist all three and possibly violently. Instead, more focus might need to be put on the quality, effectiveness and inclusivity of governance *outputs* – defined in terms of the ability of national ruling elites to achieve

[38] Makhzoumi, F., 'Lebanon's Crisis of Sovereignty', *Survival*, 52 (2): 5–12, 2010. Bosnia-Herzegovina is a case with interesting parallels to the Lebanese situation: Marijan, B., *Assessing the impact of orthodox Security Sector Reform in Bosnia-Herzegovina*, Kitchener: Center for Security Governance, 2016; Berg, L-A, 'From weakness to strength: The political roots of security sector reform in Bosnia and Herzegovina', *International Peacekeeping*, 21:2, 149-164.

[39] See for example: Barfield, T., *Afghanistan*, Princeton: PUP, 2010; Werenfels, I., *Managing instability in Algeria: Elites and political change since 1995*, London: Routledge, 2007.

[40] For critical reflection on the demerits and merits of power sharing in the context of failed elections: LeVan, C., 'Power sharing and inclusive politics in Africa's uncertain democracies', *Governance: An International Journal of Policy, Administration and Institutions*, Vol. 24, No. 1, January 2011 (pp. 31-53). On the advantages and disadvantages of consociationalism in post-conflict settings: Noel, S., *From power sharing to democracy: Post-conflict institutions in ethnically divided societies*, Montreal: McGill Queen's University Press, 2005.

[41] There is a fair amount of evidence indicating that a number of 'successful exits' from fragility, meaning countries experiencing prolonged periods of largely sustainable peace and incremental development, have been rather autocratic in nature: Putzel and Di John (2012), *op.cit.*; Fukuyama, (2014), *op.cit.*; World Bank (2011), *op.cit.*; Booth (2012), *op.cit.*; North et al. (2009), *op.cit.* See also: Boege, V., A. Brown, K. Clements and A. Nolan, *On Hybrid Political Orders and Emerging States: State Formation in the Context of Fragility*, Berlin: Berghof Foundation, Berghof Handbook Dialogue No. 8, 2008; Allen, C., 'Understanding African Politics', in: *Review of African Political Economy*, No. 65:301-320, 1995. A non-published paper based on five case studies for the World Development Report 2011 pointed to similar points in respect of exits from fragility. Olson notes that development minded elites that are more autocratic in nature inevitable run up against the question of how their orientation can be sustained through periods of succession. See: Olson (1993), *op.cit.*

[42] See for example: Lindemann (2011a), *op.cit.*; Lindemann, S., *Do inclusive elite bargains matter? A research framework for understanding the causes of civil war in Sub-Saharan Africa*, London: LSE, Crisis State Research Center discussion paper no. 15, 2011b. While inclusive elite bargains may enhance political stability, this is not the same as enabling developmental progress. Lindemann notes the cost associated with inclusivity and suggests trade-offs exist between conflict risk, political stability and developmental progress.

balanced results in the contested and highly political process of development in poor and resource-scarce environments.[43]

Furthermore, the case study evidence also points to a few broad and provisional conclusions in respect of the relation between elite interests and the organization of security in a context of heterogeneous elites. To start with, national ruling elites seem to purposefully undersupply security and under-organize (parts of) state security organizations as a precautionary measure to their own rule and survival. The aim is to avoid that any such organization might come to threaten its primary interests in a competitive political situation. In addition, the nature of security provision, including by agents of the state, acquires a more informal nature because key interests of elite groups tend to trump the rules set out by the political settlement as it features a low level of authoritativeness. This means that connections to elite groups matter more for who can obtain what kind of security on what issues. Finally, elite groups may maintain additional coercive capacities in addition to purposefully undersupplying the level of state security. This is, however, not a given and will depend on path dependencies, external events and the orientation of elite constituencies. For example, Hezbollah's militia is in part a legacy effect of its role as champion of the Palestinian cause and defender against Israel, while the leadership of Lebanon's Sunni movement has become more globally and commercially oriented over the past decades, which makes it more difficult and less relevant to retain coercive capacities.[44]

3. Elite orientations towards development and the organization of security

The other hypothesis underpinning the case work was that more development oriented elites enable the production of more citizen oriented security, both directly and by agreeing a more forward looking political settlement. This was hypothesized to be the case because elite groups committed to national development are expected to attach greater priority to meeting the needs of their citizens and seek to stimulate a broad-based process of mobilization of resources and popular support that requires citizen cooperation and goodwill.

The case study findings suggest that this is not what actually happens. Both development-oriented and non-development oriented ruling elites seek control over the state security apparatus first and foremost to ensure continuity of rule, maintain their coalition and deter political competition. In short, the organization of security mostly serves the retention of power. The extent of power consolidation by national ruling elites influences how much control they can establish and to what extent they may want to maintain non-state security options to safeguard their primary and secondary interests. Elite heterogeneity is an important factor that influences how easy or difficult it is to consolidate power. It is generally more difficult when more and more varied elite groups compete for political power.

As discussed, the case work in both Lebanon and Ethiopia indicated that the national ruling elites of these countries frame their interests largely in terms of preserving their rule and

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[43] See for example Barfield (2010), *op.cit.*; Van Veen, E., *Mistakes, means and opportunities: How donors understand inclusive and legitimate politics in Afghanistan*, The Hague: Clingendael, CRU report, 2016 on input versus output legitimacy in Afghanistan.

[44] This, incidentally, is creating space for a leadership challenge for popular support by more radical Sunni religious leaders that is now amplified by the Islamic State and others. Lefevre, R., *The roots of crisis in northern Lebanon*, Beirut: Carnegie Middle East Center, 2014.

relative political power.[45] In both cases studies do national ruling elites use state security organizations to ensure their own political survival. However, there are some key differences between these cases in line with the dynamics discussed above. First, the state of Ethiopia is dominated by a single party (the TPLF) that finds its origins in a particular elite group whereas the Lebanese state is subject to permanent and destabilizing competition between c. 7 significant parties. Second, Ethiopia's national ruling elite, in part enabled by its greater political control, has harnessed its consolidated power to a positive vision of national development, at least in the socio-economic sense. In contrast, Lebanon's elites focus on maintaining group influence, survival and privileges, which are typically framed in sectarian and not in national terms. Third, it appears that Lebanon's national ruling elites (ab)use their political power, positions of influence and public resources for private gain to a greater extent than their counterparts in Ethiopia.[46] Part of the explanation might lie in the greater development orientation of the Ethiopian ruling national political elite while another part may lie in the stronger executive it has managed to create, which puts more effective constraints in place on elite demands of the state. The major risk is, of course, that there is no countervailing elite power in Ethiopia, in contrast to Lebanon, and that nothing would prevent a sudden re-orientation of ruling national political elites from development to 'predation'. There is of course the powerful fact that Ethiopia's national ruling elite came to power after a 17-year armed struggle against a brutal and predatory dictatorship that it vowed never to see the like of again, but the leadership generation that accomplished this feat and recast the governance of Ethiopia is ageing. In consequence, the country is reaching a tipping point of sorts. In Lebanon such a sudden swing seems unlikely as there are far too many blockages and veto-players. More gradual regression remains a risk though.

However, the resulting dynamics between elite interests, development-orientation of national political elites and the organization of security forces are still in need of further unpacking. On the one hand there is Lebanon, a country that is stuck in a kind of political stasis where developmental progress is frozen and whose national ruling elites focus more strongly on individual and group material benefits. At the same time, the country seems better insulated against deeper crisis and instability – as its resilience in the face of the Syrian civil war has shown - and against massive predation of the kind that occurs in the DRC or Zimbabwe. Against this political backdrop with a heterogeneous elite, state security forces are purposefully kept weak since their political aim is to serve as a mutual check on different elite groups without becoming powerful enough to be a decisive factor of their own. Moreover, the weakness of state security organizations allows elite groups to take recourse to extra-legal violence and coercion should it see an existential interest threatened, without fear of retribution. State security forces also become resources for competing elite groups that they use for patronage and financial gain. The Syrian civil war has put significant pressure on this state of affairs because Lebanon presently actually needs strong security forces to ward off the various external threats it is exposed to – from a tricky refugee situation to the import of radical Islamism – but one of its key political factions, Hezbollah, is a party to the conflict, which makes a change of course difficult.

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[45] The next paragraphs are based on Van Veen (2015) (2016), *op.cit.* and the literature cited in these works.
[46] The case work correlates with the relative positions of Ethiopia and Lebanon on the Transparency International's corruption perception index of 2015: Ethiopia holds #103 and Lebanon #123. Online: http://www.transparency.org/cpi2015#results-table (accessed 2 September 2016).

On the other hand, there is Ethiopia, a country that is characterized by both a political monopoly and a strong push for socio-economic development. A number of its national political elites are firmly excluded from its political settlement that is dominated by a long-serving insider group. This generates stability and a sense of progress due to the policies it produces, as well as resentment. While the country shows appreciable developmental progress, it is also brittle in the sense that political violence and instability seem never far away despite firm control of the ruling national political elite over state security forces. The recent protests in Amhara and Oromia illustrate both the brittleness and control.[47] Against this political backdrop with a heterogeneous national political elite but a homogeneous ruling national political elite, state security forces protect the country's development progress from the external threats that emanate from Ethiopia's many turbulent frontiers, lend manpower and organizational strength to its development process (mostly the military), ensure maintenance of the existing power structure by suppressing dissent where it arises and serve as a check on the emergence of new elites.

It is clear that despite a development-oriented national political elite not 'all good things' necessarily go together.[48] The conception that the developmental process is benign in nature and therefore politically neutral, continues to inform parts of the development discourse and practice. Yet, it is also well known that development is a process of difficult political choices, focused resource mobilization and temporary inequalities and imbalances that can last a long time.[49] This requires tough choices that will not suit or serve everyone. In fact, it is likely to produce centrifugal forces that need to be kept in check. There are many ways to do so, including paying the right elite and voter groups off (as in Timor Leste or Algeria)[50], using broad-based ideology or religion to create a powerful uniting narrative (as in Vietnam) or simply engaging in the more mundane process of daily negotiation of interests and policy content (as in Mozambique or Liberia). It should be kept in mind that security forces are also a method to keep centrifugal forces in check. Out of the case studies, this can be witnessed most clearly in Ethiopia, but alternative examples of authoritative political settlements that also show (some) developmental promise – and are well enforced - include Rwanda, Syria until 2011 and, increasingly, Turkey.[51]

On this basis, the case study analysis allows a few broad and provisional conclusions in respect of the relation between elite development-orientation and the organization of security. First, when elites are more development-oriented, state security organizations may serve national and citizen security interests to a greater extent than when elites are less development-oriented, but only to the degree that the ruling elites does not perceive such interests as undermining their own. Second, strategies to promote development of the organization of security are feasible where national ruling elites are development-oriented as long as they respect or only indirectly affect the ruling elite's ability to retain political power.

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[47] See for example recent BBC reporting on 8 August: http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-37015055, and 22 August: http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-36940906 (both consulted 8 September 2016).

[48] See: Jarstad, A. And T. Sisk (eds.), *From war to democracy: Dilemma's of peacebuilding*, Cambridge: CUP, 2008 for an exploration of trade-offs between objectives in post-conflcit peacebuilding processes that are not necessarily compatible; also: Valters et al. (2015), *op.cit.*

[49] For example: Di John, J., *Conceptualizing the causes and consequences of failed states: A critical review of the literature*, London: LSE (Crisis States Research Center), Working paper no. 2, 2008; Acemoglu and Robinson (2013), *op.cit.*; North et al. (2009), *op.cit.*

[50] See Weidenfels (2007), *op.cit.* on Algeria

[51] See Briscoe, I., F. Janssen and R. Smits, *Stability and economic recovery after Assad: Key steps for Syria's post-conflict transition*, The Hague: Clingendael, CRU report, 2012.
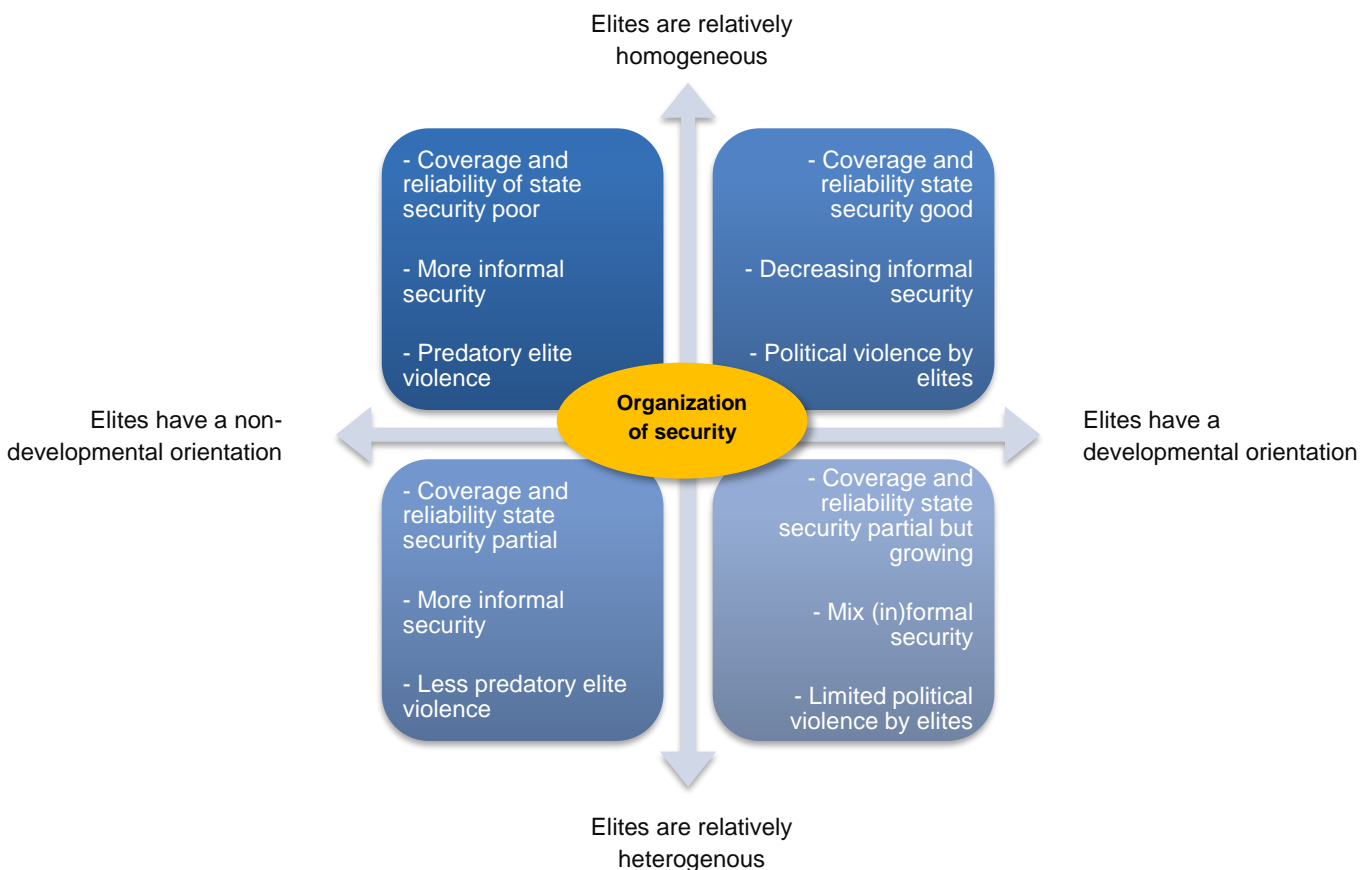
Third and finally, the more development-oriented national ruling elites are, the higher the chance that security provision will aim to protect developmental gains, but this does not mean that either national ruling elites or state security forces are incentivized towards greater public accountability, transparency or respect for human rights.

4. Synthesizing findings: Now what?

It is clear that the basic premises of the research were sound. To understand the organization of security in conflict-prone environments, it is necessary to examine both the nature of elites and elite interests. Both also have significant influence on the type of political settlement that can be reached and this forms an important intermediary variable in understanding how security is organized. The case studies focused on elite heterogeneity (as one characteristic of the nature of elites) and on the extent to which elites are development-oriented (as one of their interests). It turns out that national political elites prize the ability to stay in power and survive politically above all else. This helps explain both why greater elite heterogeneity will typically lead to less authoritative political settlements and more fragmented state security, and why even development-oriented elites will not provide citizen security to the extent that might be expected.

Recalling the notion of 'a basic level of security' discussed in the introduction, a few overarching conclusions can now be reached by using elite heterogeneity and elite development-orientation as variables that produce different forms of basic security. As other factors undoubtedly exist, figure 3 is best considered an element of a larger puzzle.

Figure 3: Elite heterogeneity, elite development-orientation and levels of basic security

Elites are relatively homogeneous

- Coverage and reliability of state security poor

- More informal security

- Predatory elite violence

- Coverage and reliability state security good

- Decreasing informal security

- Political violence by elites

Elites have a non-developmental orientation

Organization of security

Elites have a developmental orientation

- Coverage and reliability state security partial

- More informal security

- Less predatory elite violence

- Coverage and reliability state security partial but growing

- Mix (in)formal security

- Limited political violence by elites

Elites are relatively heterogenous

As case study, Ethiopia fits quadrant 2. Its ruling national political elite is homogeneous and development-oriented. This makes its political settlement authoritative and reasonably progressive as it seeks to raise living standards and increase non-political opportunities for its citizenry. The state (party) is firmly in control of state security forces that are effective. This increases the coverage and reliability of security. It also decreases the need to maintain informal security mechanisms at community/citizen level and makes it difficult for elite groups excluded from the political settlement to maintain informal security mechanisms. Finally, it enables and produces political violence by ruling national political elites against opposition movements, forces and/or armed groups.

Lebanon more clearly fits quadrant 4. Its ruling national political elite is heterogeneous and self-/group-oriented. This makes its political settlement less authoritative and creates political stasis that is vulnerable to crisis. State security forces are purposely kept weak and divided, requiring cross-party consensus to operate effectively. This results in partial coverage and reliability of state security, the provision of which is dependent on the political sensitivity of security events or issues. Given that sectarian considerations have come to permeate most aspects of Lebanese society even innocuous security matters can come with a sectarian charge. This situation increases the need for informal security mechanisms, such as Hezbollah's armed forces, the resistance brigades, various other sectarian militias that are organized and armed to different degrees and protection forces at the community level.[52] Finally, there is less predatory violence by elites compared to a situation in which elites are homogeneous and non-development oriented, but a significant element remains.

Practical implications: Strategies to enhance security

To endow the analysis so far with greater relevance, the penultimate part of this paper must inquire what can be done to increase the basic level of security in conflict-affected countries given the nature and interests of their elites and the dynamics of their political settlements. The standard policy recipe since the early 2000s is to engage in Security Sector Reform (SSR), which basically amounts to a set of largely technical and sometimes politically-oriented programs to improve – in tandem - the capabilities and accountability of state security forces so that they develop towards impartial providers of reliable security to the citizenry.[53] Yet, the findings in this paper suggest that this 'bottom-up route'[54] of organizational focus on state security organizations must be complemented, perhaps replaced, by a 'top-down route' of political focus on elite characteristics, interests and political settlements. It is at this level that the broad parameters that influence the organization of

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[52] On this point see also: Boustani, M., H. Gebara, G. Romanos, A. Strachan & M. Warren, *Beirut, a safe refuge? Urban refugees accessing security in a context of plural provision*, The Hague: Plural security insights, 2016.
[53] Numerous works of applied analysis have been produced on this issue area. See for example: Sedra, M., *The future of SSR*, Waterloo: CIGI, 2010; Van Veen, E. and M. Price, *Securing its success, justifying its relevance: Mapping a way forward for Security Sector Reform*, The Hague: Clingendael, CRU policy brief, 2014. Program-specific works include: Van Veen, E., *Improving security and justice programming in fragile situations: Better political engagement, more change management*, Paris: OECD Publishing, 2016; Denney, L., *Justice and Security reform: Development agencies and informal institutions in Sierra Leone*, London: Routledge, 2014; Marijan (2016), *op.cit.*
[54] Initiatives to promote community security arguably are even more 'at the bottom', but the focus here is on the organization and provision of security at the national level.

security are set. Working towards a higher level of basic security suggests that elite characteristics, interests or parameters of the political settlement need to shift.

However, the small size, longevity and low permeability of (ruling) national political elites in conflict-prone societies combined with their primary interest of staying in power, if necessary by violent means, suggests that solely engaging with such elites is unlikely to appreciably raise the basic level of security. Naturally, political windows of opportunity for SSR exist - usually after an existential crisis or war (e.g. Ethiopia after 2000, Iraq after either 2003 or post-Islamic State or Mali after the 2012 Touareg conflict) - but such moments are typically not blank slates and characterized by at least as much resistance (due to continuities) as reformist zeal (due to breaks with the past). It also happens that leaders come to power with the political capital to push meaningful SSR forward domestically, as happened in both Ethiopia and South Africa, but these seem to be few. In short, a more political focus on security must include a focus on the loci where political incentives and interests are shaped and negotiated, and demands engagement with such processes.

A first strategy for such elite-interest engagement that the research for this paper would suggest is to pay much greater attention to the ability of elite (group) constituencies to increase and leverage their bargaining power and hold 'their' elites to account. This amounts to improving the ability of constituencies to undertake collective action and to exert voice.[55] Constituencies are typically not monolithic but contain organizations such as trade unions, professional associations, civil society and faith organizations that can be empowered or capacitated for this purpose. The inevitable consequence in some cases will be increased levels of social contestation that may turn violent. The risk of this would need to be anticipated and mitigated to the extent possible.

A second strategy might be to increase elite permeability and work towards a higher level of elite rotation. Providing emergent or 'second tier' elites[56] with peaceful opportunities to join the ruling national political elite can provide a safety valve, mediate between the interests of older generations of elites and their constituencies, and introduce new interests and ideas. This is part of the challenge facing Ethiopia today and an element in the success of the Algerian ruling national political elite in sticking together since the early 2000s.[57] It is important that such opportunity paths are relatively well known and accessible to avoid individuals taking recourse to 'nuisance methods' (including violence) to enforce accommodation by the ruling national political elite by way of pay-off strategy on their part. Entry points that could be considered without resorting to dangerous attempts at social engineering include improving the quality of tertiary education, creating long-term leadership development programs and promoting long-term education and exchange programs between donor and conflict-prone countries.[58]

A third and final strategy that may be appropriate for serious cases where the basic level of security is sufficiently low to merit consideration of more radical options, is to increase capacities for social contestation and contention. One of the principal methods in the

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[55] Booth (2012), *op.cit.*; Olson (1965), *op.cit.*
[56] This notion is taken from De Mesquita and Smith (2011), *op.cit.*
[57] Van Veen (2016), *op.cit.*; Weidenfels (2007), *op.cit.*
[58] Consider for example the Burundi leadership program: H. Wolpe, 'Rebuilding state and state capacity in war-torn Burundi', *Round Table*, Vol. 93, No. 375, 457–467, July 2004

repertoire of social activism is direct action that does not threaten public order or continuity of rule directly, but raises the profile of an (security) issue by visibly but peacefully disrupting the normal course of social and political routines.[59] Key success factors of successful campaigns of nonviolent civil resistance include, for example, generating high levels of mass participation and ensuring diversity in such participation. This has the effect of making prolonged disobedience and noncooperation costlier for ruling national political elites because it erodes legitimacy, induces economic cost and may trigger crucial security force defections.[60] The Iranian revolution of 1979[61] or, more recently, the 'Arab Spring' of 2011 in Tunisia are examples of successful nonviolent campaigns. A risk is that such campaigns turn into mass movements. Their inherently intolerant and fanatical nature can trigger prolonged bloodshed or radical change that worsens the pre-existing situation.[62] The rise of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt under President Morsi arguably provides an example of this possibility.

This short analysis definitely requires further empirical research to assess the effects of such strategies on elite interests and political settlement parameters from the perspective of the (re)organization of security. But it offers a starting point of thinking about the politics of security at an entirely different level than much of the current discourse and practice.

Methodological implications: Future research

The final issue that must be addressed given the exploratory character of this paper is what future research is needed to validate its findings and to explore the broader puzzle of which they are part. At least three issues merit consideration:

- Two further case studies should be undertaken in countries that fit the criteria of quadrants 1 (homogeneous national political elites that are not developmentally oriented) and 3 (heterogeneous national political elites that are developmentally oriented). Candidates for the former could be Zimbabwe or Algeria; candidates for the latter Tunisia or Somaliland. The same dynamics and hypotheses should be explored as in the two case studies already conducted. This would put the research findings on firmer footing.

- A framework and methodology should be developed that enable more rigorous identification and mapping of national political elites in conflict-prone societies. This method should subsequently be tested in a particular country. It would provide the basis for more detailed analysis of the intra- and inter-elite group negotiations that are so relevant to the dynamics and characteristics of the political settlement that may emerge.[63]

- An event-based study should be undertaken that maps and analyzes the trail of discussion and decision-making between national political and security elites who were faced with a major security event, how they handled it and what effects this had. This will help to understand better how national ruling elite characteristics influence the possibilities and parameters of collective leadership in the face of (security) crisis.

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[59] Tarrow, S., *Power in movement: Social movements and contentious politics*, 3rd ed., Cambridge: CUP, 2011.

[60] Chenoweth, E. and M. Stephan, *Why civil resistance works: The strategic logic of nonviolent conflict*, New York; Colombia University Press, 2011.

[61] It should not be confused with the preceding guerilla campaign against the Shah throughout the 1970's.

[62] Hoffer, E. *The true believer: Thoughts on the nature of mass movements*, New York: Haperperennial, 2010.

[63] This could build on Perthes (2004), *op.cit.* and take advantage from works such as Moyser, G. and M. Wagstaffe, *Research methods for elite studies*, London: Allen & Unwin, 1987.