



Social Accountability in Post-Conflict and Fragile States

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Outline

- A View of the Current Political Map in Africa
- Definitions of “fragile states”
- Pre-conditions to Social Accountability
- Phases of Recovery and Reconstruction
- Decentralized governance as a tool for peace
- Establishing social accountability in fragile states
- Case studies



A View of the Current Political Map in Africa

- Countries without control or influence over the entirety of their territories: DRC, Chad, Somalia, the Republic of Congo, Sudan, Ivory Coast, Central African Republic...
- Countries where there exists a real and constant threat of political instability: Guinea, Zimbabwe, Togo, Somalia, Nigeria...



A View of the Current Political Map in Africa

- Countries which are in a post-conflict phase or are about to exit a situation of conflict: Rwanda, Uganda, Burundi, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Angola, Mozambique, Ivory Coast...



Common Feature

- The institutional environment in many of these countries is often so weak that the government lacks the capacity or the willingness to deliver core functions to the majority of its citizens.



Definitions

- Fragile states are those that have yet to establish a stable political and security environment that would allow governments to extend their influence and to deliver core services over the entirety of their territories.



Definitions (OECD)

- Fragile states share a common [frailty], in two particular respects: State policies and institutions are weak in these countries, making them vulnerable in their capacity to deliver services to their citizens, to control corruption, or to provide for sufficient voice and accountability. They face risks of conflict and political instability.



Notes

- Fragile states are not necessarily conflict or post-conflict countries however.
- Good governance and accountability are generally lacking in fragile states



Pre-conditions to Social Accountability

- Post-war or post-conflict countries, must complete a transitional process, during which issues of justice, victims' reparation, and national reconciliation are addressed.



Phases of Recovery and Reconstruction

- Emergency phase
 - establishing a safe and stable environment
 - providing emergency humanitarian needs
 - resettling IDPs and refugees
 - consolidating the DDR process
- Transition phase
 - reconciliation, restoration
 - rebuilding and rehabilitation of productive sectors and the macro economy
 - foundations for new political, legal, and economic structures and institutions
 - framework for governance put into place



Phases of Recovery and Reconstruction

- The development phase
 - political institutions (from consensus agreement) strengthened
 - governance institutions strengthened through broad-based participation: decentralized governance.



Decentralized Governance as a Tool for Peace

- Can reduce the chances of conflict by granting previously marginalized groups political influence
- Creation of democratically elected local councils for example, can help to enhance participatory local governance structure providing hitherto marginalized populations an opportunity to develop trust in the political system in place, and feel safe to engage actively in the decision-making process at the local level (Hartmann, 2002, 2006)



Decentralized Governance as a Tool for Peace

- Offers an opportunity for the de-escalation of conflict (Braathen and Hellevik 2006)
- Granting political powers to local institutions that have better knowledge of these resources would help better manage conflict, the argument goes
- Can be used as an instrument of conflict management in that it increases political competition across ethnic boundaries and provides “breathing space in hostilities” to the parties in conflict.



Decentralized Governance as a Tool for Peace

- May be used as a “cooptation” strategy by the central government
 - integrate separatist groups into a political institutionalized structure at the regional and local levels in order to keep peace and unity and reduce chances for conflict



Decentralized Governance as a Tool for Peace

- Decentralized process that promotes a fair and equitable distribution of resources across regions reduces the inter-regional differences in access to resources, thereby decreasing the chances of conflict.



However... Decentralization

- might exacerbate the existing divisions
- may reinforce local identities and cleavages and lead to demands for secession
- may provide an excuse for local legislatures to use their devolved political powers to adopt laws that may discriminate against local minorities



In the end success depends on...

- the degree of political participation and accountability
- the degree of trust in government by local communities
- the pace and prospects of economic recovery and reconstruction
- the degree of empowerment of local politicians
- the degree of empowerment of local communities
- transparency and accountability from bottom up
- the quality of service delivery at the local level



Establishing Social Accountability in Fragile States

- Social accountability can contribute to citizens' building trust in the governance system, and ultimately, in the government, be it local or national
- In fragile states, particularly in post-conflict countries, certain pre-conditions must first be established, to allow for citizens to develop trust in their government again



Establishing Social Accountability In Fragile States

- “Quick results” approach: use of Rapid Rural Initiatives (RRIs) (for example in Sierra Leone)
- Promotion and support of independent media
- Promotion and support of an autonomous and active civil society
- Adoption of a code of conduct based on a set of ethics and values that are conducive to building trust between government and local communities
- Empowerment of local communities through IEC
- Involving local communities in local financial decisions, including budgeting, expenditures and resource mobilization decisions
- Strengthening local governments planning and management capacity
- Strengthening national government capacity



Recapping...

- Peace and political stability must first be achieved and consolidated in fragile and post-conflict states, setting up the environment for the implementation of the traditional social accountability mechanisms and tools.



Case Studies

- Uganda
- Rwanda
- South Africa



THANK YOU!
