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The search for stability through
stabilisation: Case studies from
Afghanistan and Nepal

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Abstract

This thesis focuses on what stability is, and what interventions have supported stability in four communities in Afghanistan and Nepal. It is the author's view that this is the first in-depth village level assessment of how populations conceive of stability and stabilisation and thus presents a challenge to existing analysis and research about how to foster stability in contexts in extreme tension and often violent conflict. The thesis argues that international, particularly Western, notions of stability and stabilisation processes have failed to grasp the importance of local political legitimacy formation, which is a vital aspect of contemporary statebuilding of a 'non-Westphalian' nature. The interventions, across defence, diplomatic and defence lines, have also at times undermined one another and in some cases contributed to instability. This is particularly acute when the interventions have been motivated by the conflicting demands of statebuilding, counter-insurgency (COIN) and development theories. The thesis argues that the nature of the interventions, their conception of stability and exogenously-driven goals limit the ability to promote stability. Research findings indicate that that local processes of stabilisation have, at times, proven to be more enduring but only in circumstances where a combination of local and national political processes have allowed political legitimacy to be formed and maintained. Research findings also suggest that the more successful stability interventions have been critically supported by humanitarian and security activities which have provided for the immediate needs of the population. Longer term stability has only been embedded in contexts which have also been able to exploit economic opportunities.

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Dedicated to my parents, S. & Z. M. D-M.

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Glossary of Terms

Alaaqdari	Sub-division of a district (Dari)
Andolan	Movement (Nepali)
Bati	Brick kiln chimney
Brahmin	Caste group in Nepal
Chautari	Seated meeting area often under a tree (Nepal)
Chettri	Caste group in Nepal
Crore	One million (Nepali)
Dalit	Caste group in Nepal
Firqa	Military unit equivalent to a Brigade (Afghanistan)
Ghund	Military unit equivalent to a Regiment (Afghanistan)
Istirta	Stability (Nepali)
Janjaati	Generic term for indigenous people (Nepal)
Jihad	Lit. struggle, but used to refer to the Afghan resistance against the Soviet invasion (Dari/Pashto)
Jimwal	Locally appointed government representative (Nepali)
Karez	Traditional irrigation system (Afghanistan)
Khalq	Faction within the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan
Khan	Landlord (Afghanistan)
Khukri	Knife (Nepali)
Lakh	One hundred thousand (Nepali)
Madeshi	Ethnic group in Nepal
Magar	Ethnic group in Nepal
Malek	Landlord (Afghanistan)
Manteqa	Neighbourhood (Dari/Pashto)
Mit	Ceremony through which two unrelated girls form a familial relationship (Nepali)
Mujahed	Lit. one who struggles, used to refer to an Individual who fought in the Afghan Jihad (Dari/Pashto)
Mukhiya	Locally appointed government representative (Nepali)

Nazm	Order (Dari/Pashto)
Pahadi	Individual who comes from the Hill region in Nepal
Pancha	Leader within the Panchayat system (Nepali)
Panchayat	Local council in Nepal or the system of Panchayat governance
Panchayati	Informal dispute resolution meeting (Nepal)
Parcham	Faction within the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan
Pashtun	Ethnic group in Afghanistan
Pashuntwali	Social code relating to justice and social relations for Pashtun communities in Afghanistan
Puja	Hindu Religious ceremony
Rupani	Area of land, 20 rupani are equivalent to 1 hectare (Nepal)
Sar Group	Commander of a unit within the Jihad in Afghanistan
Shabnameh	Night letter (Dari/Pashto)
Shanti	Peace (Nepali)
Shariat	Islamic law
Shura	Council (Dari/Pashto)
Subat	Stability (Dari/Pashto)
Tajik	Ethnic group in Afghanistan
Tanzim	The generic term for a military-political organisation in Afghanistan
Tashkeel	Manning or staffing list (Dari/Pashto)
Terai	Plain area in Nepal
Thapa	Caste group in Nepal
Tharu	Ethnic group in Nepal
Wolesi Jirga	Lower House of Parliament (Afghanistan)
Zakat	Islamic religious tax (Afghanistan)
Zamindar	Landowner

Acronyms

3D	Defence, Diplomacy and Development
ADB	Asian Development Bank
AMF	Afghan Militia Force
ANA	Afghan National Army
ANBP	Afghanistan New Beginnings Programme
ANP	Afghan National Police
ANSF	Afghan National Security Forces
APRP	Afghan Peace and Reintegration Programme
BOGs	Basic Operating Guidelines (Nepal)
CDC	Community Development Council (Afghanistan)
CDO	Chief District Officer (Nepal)
CIMIC	Civil-Military Cooperation
COIN	Counterinsurgency
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement (Nepal)
CPAU	Cooperation for Peace and Unity
CSTC-A	Combined Security Transition Command – Afghanistan
CWA	Consent Winning Activity
DDR	Disarmament Demobilisation and Reintegration
DfID	Department for International Development
DIAG	Disbandment of Illegally Armed Groups
DoD	Department of Defense (US)
DPKO	Department of Peacekeeping Operations
EC	European Commission
ECB	European Central Bank
EFSF	European Financial Stability Fund
EU	European Union
FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office
FOB	Forward Operating Base

FPTP	First-Past the Post (Electoral system)
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GIRoA	Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
GTZ	now called GIZ; Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
HAVA	Helmand Arghandab Valley Authority
HN	Host Nation
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IFRC	International Federation of the Red Cross
IJC	International Joint Command
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INGO	International Non-governmental Organisation
JCCP	Japan Center for Conflict Prevention
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
JJYC	Jan Jagaran Youth Club
JTMM	Janatantrik Mukhti Morcha
MNLF	Madesh National Liberation Front
MoD	Ministry of Defence/Defense
MoI	Ministry of Interior
MP	Member of Parliament
MSST	Military Stabilisation Support Team
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NC	Nepali Congress
NDS	National Directorate of Security (Afghanistan)
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
NP	Nepal Police
NRS	Nepali Rupee
NSP	National Solidarity Programme

NWFP	North Western Frontier Province
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OEF	Operation Enduring Freedom
PB	Patrol Base
PDPA	People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan
PLA	People's Liberation Army (Nepal)
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
PRT	Provincial Reconstruction Team
QIP	Quick Impact Project
S/CRS	Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SAMA	Sazman Azadibakhsh-i Mardom-i Afghanistan
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programme
SIGACTS	Significant Actions
SSR	Security Sector Reform
START	Stabilization and Reconstruction Task Force
UCPN(M)	United Communist Party Nepal (Maoist)
UK	United Kingdom
UML	United Marxist Leninist Party
UN	United Nations
UNAMA	United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
US	United States
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VDC	Village Development Committee (Nepal)
WB	World Bank
WFP	World Food Programme
WoG	Whole of Government
WTO	World Trade Organization

Chapter 1 - Introduction

This thesis is about the evolution of Liberal ideology and the paradigm¹ of intervention in other territories by Liberal states in order to maintain international order through stability and stabilisation. Despite stabilisation being a key tenet of intervention fundamental questions about what stability is and how it is formed have remained unanswered. These questions are the focus of this thesis which interrogates how activities that are supposed to promote stability actually impact on communities. Through the data analysis the research asserts a new model of stabilisation which can be used as a tool for designing interventions and creating a theory of stability.

Failed states that are unable to control their territory, respond to climate change, eliminate criminal and terrorist networks, and contain nuclear proliferation are considered to be key threats to the current global system. The states who lead global politics want stability to continue their political affairs, grow their own and others' economies, and allow their citizens to live in peace (Department of Defense, 2012, pp. 1-4; HMG, 2011, pp. 4-5; White House, 2010, pp. 1-6; Cabinet Office, 2008, p. 3). Despite the relative success of ensuring inter-state stability since the end of World War II these leading states view the growing threats from fragile states with great concern; moreover, since the end of the Cold War, they have become increasingly focused on intra-state instability. Recognising that intra-state instability is complex, interventions termed 'stabilisation' have emerged out of the Liberal tradition as conflicts have evolved to incorporate 'war amongst the people' (Smith, R., 2005, pp. 1-4). This innovation has drawn on theories about statebuilding and development as well as new military doctrines for counterinsurgency (COIN).

Despite a lack of clarity about what stability is, or how to achieve it, interventions with the aim of stabilisation have attracted a great deal of attention amongst several major governments as tools for implementing multi-faceted programmes involving multiple government agencies in other states. These states are often hostile environments, and the interventions are commonly employ as a Whole-of-Government approach or Comprehensive Approach or the 3D's – Defence, Diplomacy and Development (Patrick & Brown, 2007, pp. 1-3).² Whilst stabilisation in the modern era is most readily associated with the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, it has also been practised in other regions including South Asia, the Horn of Africa and the Middle East (HMG, 2011, p. 10). However, these types of intervention have also suffered from a lack of

¹ The use of the term paradigm in this thesis is not directly drawn from paradigm as a revolution in science (i.e. a paradigm shift) as put forward by Thomas Kuhn. Instead the paradigm is the framework within which interventions are conceptualised and justified. (Kuhn, T. 1962)

² Throughout this thesis these are referred to as political, security and development interventions.

coherence, and discussions about stabilisation fail to recognise the distorting influence of its modern Western Liberal heritage upon the type of activities implemented.

This chapter, and thesis as a whole, will assert that there are significant challenges in the way stabilisation is conceived, in terms of the paradigm of state failure and what stabilisation means, because it does not grasp the local realities and political legitimacy which must underpin state formation. If the global system is to cope with the increasing stresses on states these local realities must be acknowledged and understood. The lack of clarity in stabilisation theory provides an opportunity not just to improve the efficiency and impact of interventions, but to radically re-think Western Liberal notions of how states can intervene in other territories that they perceive as a risk to international stability.

Managing the global system

It is now no longer possible for governments to ignore threats emanating from within their region and across the world at large. This is partly the result of globalisation - variously defined in economic, political, cultural and security terms (Bhagwati, 2004, p. 3; Giddens, 1999, pp. 9-13; Hobsbawm, 2008, pp. 23,36-7) - which has increased the threats that pervade national and international discourse and include insurgencies, secession movements, environmental disasters, the emergence of criminal and terrorist networks, and most recently the global financial crisis. Instability is now seen as a virus that threatens the Liberal project (see p.4) and it cannot be contained by national borders. Global powers wish to contain and treat this disease.³

However, these threats are not new; before the Cold War they were normally dealt with by giving support to the state or colonial administration; as, for example, in response to the uprisings in Iraq in 1920 (Haldane, 1922, pp. 298-300). At the beginning of the Cold War new rules emerged in the context of decolonisation and the nature of external interventions were changed from colonial to post-colonial support between states with equal sovereignty; however, the Liberal intervening states maintained hegemonic power. Over the period of the Cold War responses to these crises became more interventionist, partially through using modern communication and transportation, which led to the micro-management of the affairs of another state; for example in the case of Rhodesia in 1979 when Britain re-established administration during the transition to the new state of Zimbabwe (Wiseman & Taylor, 1981, pp. 7-22).

³ Along with other authors Patrick (2006, pp. 27-9) asserts that threats in fragile states can have spill over effects, one of which includes the spread of infectious diseases, threats to stability can therefore be seen to be literally or metaphorically as viruses.

The twin processes of increasing intervention at the local level of other states, and the acceptance that seemingly minor crises in remote areas can spread to the rest of the global system, have presented a challenging environment for states in crisis to maintain their independence, freedom of action and integrity. Addressing these threats has also posed a significant burden on Liberal intervening states who are seeking to maintain stability in the international system. Amongst many leading nations including the United States (US), other G8 member states, China, India and the European Union (EU) there is agreement that their main international goal is stability.⁴ The extent that all those partners are 'Liberal' is open to debate, however, in general terms the most Liberal states, which tends to exclude Russia, China and India,⁵ are significantly more interventionist in their foreign policy, military deployments and development spending.⁶

Each bloc obviously has its core interests: for the EU, stability is regionalised rather than global, therefore it takes a keen interest in destabilizing trends in Africa because of the potential for instability to spread to Europe. For China, India and Russia, despite some tensions, the overriding aim is to provide regional stability for them to continue to grow, trade and lift their populations out of poverty (Singh, 2009;⁷ Tan, 2005;⁸

⁴ As an illustration a G8 declaration in 2009 talked extensively about stability, both in terms of macroeconomics (as a result of the recent banking and fiscal crises), but also of social stability and the importance of stability in partner nations (G8, 2009).

⁵ It is beyond the scope of this thesis to fully explain the extent of Liberalism in Russia, China and India, though the following sources provide further insights; China and Russia's commitment (as well that of the United States) to the principles of Responsibility to Protect, an archetypal Liberal instrument, are openly questioned (Lu, 2009, pp. 96-7; Charvet & Kaczynska-Nay, 2008, pp. 279-80). For a discussion on early Chinese Liberalism see Fung, 2010, pp. 128-58. For discussion on early Indian Liberals and the connections between Gandhian thinking and Liberalism see Bourai, 2004, pp. 45-62; 139-142 and on modern re-interpretations of Hindu thinking in the face of political challenges from India's Muslim minority and their position in a secular state see Lal, 1989, pp. 218-224.

⁶ It should be noted that all states are to some extent interventionist, and even smaller nations can be seen to appropriate the terminology and conceptions of stability and stabilisation, including for example Sri Lanka, see Goodhand, 2010, p. 343.

⁷ "India has a vital interest in the stability and prosperity of our neighbours. The highest priority will be accorded to working with our friends in [the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC)] to promote stability, development and prosperity in the region" (Singh, 2009, Paragraph 41).

⁸ This cites outputs from China's 2002 Congress which stated that the three core elements of Chinese security were "to propel its drive for modernisation; to achieve national reunification; and to safeguard world peace and promote common development" (Tan, 2005).

Haas, 2009, p. 3⁹). The US has the most global conception of stability and views threats such as terrorism as warranting significant military responses.¹⁰ As a corporate statement of the leading nations of the world representing 77% of global GDP (estimated from IMF, 2009) and 53% of the world's population (estimated from CIA, 2009) there is, therefore with some regional variation, a significant degree of agreement between the blocs that their main global priority is stability. They may disagree about how to address destabilizing issues, such as the nuclear ambitions of Iran or North Korea or the current civil war in Syria, but ultimately they want to maintain stability.

The Liberal state and the failure of fragility

The Liberal states embody an ideology based around the individual rights of man, democratic political suffrage, property ownership, the necessity of economic growth and of human progress which collectively make up the Liberal project. This political philosophy is discussed in further detail in Chapter 2, but it is clear that these concepts shape interventionist tendencies in the Liberal states which have been the architects and staunchest defenders of the current state system. The sub-strands of Liberal thinking are a key logic driving the concept of intervention, in particular about the role, function and nature of the state, and have driven the types of interventions which are implemented in other territories. This can be clearly seen in their concerns about state fragility where states are considered to fail in their duties to protect their citizens, provide social goods and progress in the face of changes in globalised society and technology.

The refrain coming from states and multilateral organisations over the last two decades is that the biggest threats to global stability come from the threats of climate change, terrorism and fragile states. The primary way of addressing these problems is thought to be coordinated state action, meaning that the best way of addressing climate change and terrorism can only be through the cooperation of 'strong' states (Zartman, 1995, pp. 4-5). Equally this means 'weak' or 'fragile' states are considered to be part of the problem because they cannot address threats to their own or other

⁹ The Russian security strategy is the least focused on global stability, except in Russia's 'near abroad'. However according to Haas "[the National Security Strategy] emphasized the interdependence between civil stability and national security, stating that social economic development was as important as military security" (Haas, 2009, p. 3).

¹⁰ However there is now some recognition that having spent the decade since 9/11 focusing on terrorist groups the US has taken its eye off the strategic issues it faces particularly with regard to foreign policy and security in Asia and it is now focusing on addressing the strategic shifts posed by the rise of China (Department of Defense, 2012, pp. 1-2).

states' stability. However by including the state as a security threat (i.e. a fragile state) rather than a type of regime (i.e. an authoritarian state) the 'state' itself is considered to be the security threat rather than the form of state. This has contributed to the discourse that the world is populated by weak, failing and collapsed states, which has been seized upon by interveners as the rationale for intervening in the myriad of threats facing the international system.

In fact in many conceptions, including the Fragile States Index, even 'strong' states are considered to be at moderate risk of state failure, including half of Europe, North America and large parts of Asia (Fund for Peace, 2012). The essential problem of this discourse is that it promotes a 'one size fits all' understanding of what a state should look like, why a state may be weak, who it may be failing and what would happen if it collapsed; those states are often described as havens for criminal and terrorist networks (Call, 2008, pp. 1491-1507). The state failure discourse also ignores the fact that the existing state system and globalisation itself can place states and territories under extreme pressures. More damningly the very actions of interveners can precipitate fragility, or worse be designed to promote fragility as an excuse for intervention (Chuter, 2009, pp. 27, 33).

As a concept state failure has been criticised as unhelpful and one which leads to extreme forms of external Liberal intervention which are *a historical* and do not consider national and sub-national state formation processes which are critical to stability (Boege, Brown, Clements, & Nolan, 2008, pp. 4-6; Jones, 2008, pp. 181-2; Leigh, 2012). Local processes of state formation and consolidation are poorly understood even by the elites in some states who may buy-in to the Liberal project in the face of opposition from political blocs in their own territories. A case in point may be Pakistan, whose avowedly Liberal political class are struggling to re-gain and maintain control of the state apparatus from the military and Islamic political blocs within the country (Hussain, 1985, pp. 224-5; Bhutto, 2008, pp. 167-70, 218-30).

Instead interveners impose an externally imagined state which looks strikingly similar to the Liberal democratic free-trading countries in the West. This thesis suggests that interventions fail because state formation and consolidation is not simply the result of technocratic processes, be they elections, budget cycles or service provision, but of local political legitimacy formation (Jackson & Gordon, 2007, p. 653). Local political legitimacy seems to have been largely ignored by international relations theorists as too small scale (Huntington, 1991, p. 46) and development practitioners view it as too political for their mandates.¹¹ There is almost no existing literature on the way in

¹¹ Berry and Gabay go so far as to argue that Oxfam, as an example of a development organization, does not just attempt to be *a political* but is in fact anti-politics (Berry & Gabay, 2009, pp. 351-3).

which external support actually has affected local political settlements underneath the state apparatus which absorbs all the attentions of the international community. By ignoring local political legitimacy interveners risk misunderstanding the contexts they operate in, and have no conception of whether their activities have any impact beyond a state structure which may not promote stability or peace.

Different lenses of stability and stabilisation

The general consensus on the need for stability itself becomes more fragmented when looking at the concept of stabilisation. It is important to bear in mind that there are currently no indications of what constitutes 'stability' at a local level, nor which stabilisation activities actually help localities attain stability; these questions are the central thrust of this thesis. However, despite this lack of clarity some Liberal states have developed strategic focuses and bureaucratic systems to support the strategic goal of stability and stabilisation activities, but they have not done this within the constraints of a single Liberal tradition. Instead they have all brought different lenses or viewpoints to the stability problem and the stabilisation response, creating a significant degree of confusion about both concepts.

UK military doctrine on stabilisation notes that the experience from Afghanistan suggests that organisations charged with stabilisation, i.e. the "Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs), are shaped by the contributing nations' political priorities and capabilities" (MoD, 2009b, p. 6 chp. 7); these viewpoints or lenses are the result of the different geographic locations, histories, cultures and bureaucracies of each state's institutions. In effect individual state institutions in different states have evolved a different sub-set of ideas about stabilisation with different operating procedures, intervention logics, aims and outcomes. The confusing use of stabilisation has led some to question whether it has any credibility (van der Meer, 2009, p. 2); others have argued that there remain significant synergies between the states engaged with stabilisation (Blair & Fitz-Gerald, 2009, pp. 3-5) and amongst the tools available, such as Security Sector Reform (SSR) (Fitz-Gerald, 2010, pp. 158-165); this is critical because it explains why stabilisation interventions seem incoherent as strategic, operational and tactical choices.

The table below illustrates the divergence between the US, United Kingdom (UK) and Canada as bi-lateral interveners and multi-lateral EU and United Nations (UN) institutions such as the United Nations' Department of Peacekeeping (DPKO) from which there are several points to note. Firstly, that stabilisation can be a function, an activity or an approach (UK, US and Canada specifically). Secondly, it links directly to grand strategic aims of global or regional stability (i.e. US vs. EU concerns). Thirdly, that the lenses are not coherent, for example within the US view the US Agency for International Development (USAID) has no independent 'development' view on

stabilisation which subordinates its position under the US State Department, whereas the UK's Department for International Development (DfID), Ministry of Defence (MoD) and Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) all specify their roles within an overall approach. Fourthly, each department or ministry's lens colours the national approach (and vice versa) which is shaped by each individual state's geo-strategic concerns (i.e. Canada pushes to the fore stabilisation and working with other states or coalitions, whilst the EU focuses primarily on neighbouring states (i.e. the Balkans, Middle East and North Africa), and the US focuses on global concerns of *all* fragile states). Finally, the starting point for stabilisation is also contested; the UN's DPKO sees it occurring within the context of the Cold War, whilst others see it as a post-Cold War phenomenon. Unique to the UN is the propagation of the idea of Early Recovery which could be seen as a way of regaining some perceived lost ground in developmental operating space (Collinson, Elhawary, & Muggah, 2010, pp. 3, 11).

Table 1. Lenses of stabilisation across selected states and multilateral organisations (Sources various including National Security Strategies and Departmental policy and strategy papers, Author)

State or institution	Definition or use of term stabilisation	Lens
UK	Stabilisation is a function, process and strategy in resolving conflict and supporting states recovering or emerging from violence	Stabilisation is rooted in civil-military activities, and lies on the continuum from peacekeeping to peacebuilding
US	Stabilisation is both a higher level strategic tool for addressing conflict as well "an overarching term encompassing various military missions, tasks and activities conducted outside the United States in coordination with other instruments of national power" (DoD, 2009, p. 1)	Stabilisation is a global force projection tool of the US and is operationally led by the military to provide a very wide range of services, infrastructure and aid but is supposed to be a whole of government approach
Canada	Stabilisation is primarily a military term and focuses on support to host nation institutions. This is despite the emphasis on military action being part of a whole of government approach	Stabilisation is supported by military action through operations other than war, and is part of a Whole-of-Government approach
EU	Stabilisation is a strategic aim, rather than activity of the EU	Stabilisation should be promoted through all the actions of the EU and is regionally focused (i.e. Balkans, Middle East) rather than

		global
UN	DPKO and UNDP do not use stabilisation as a separate term but support Early Recovery; however, they argue that actions contribute to stability	All post-conflict actions are supposed to support stability, and therefore they promote and use peacebuilding terminology

Such an analysis may lead some to conclude that searching for common ground on what stability means is not possible because each state and institution interprets stability and stabilisation differently. Indeed this re-interpretation of stability and stabilisation is not limited to Liberal states but has been appropriated at times by states such as Syria and Pakistan (Black, 2012; Khan, 2011). Leaving the broader usage of stability aside, it is unhelpful to dismiss stability because it is too broad a concept. The focus that states and institutions afford stability in higher level strategic thinking and the plethora of bodies that seek to support ‘stability’ merit investigation.

The evolution to stabilisation interventions

As well as the various traditions of Liberal political philosophy from which the lenses above have evolved there are several levels of intervention which have presaged stabilisation. Given the localised nature of instability¹² maintaining stability is not something that can be worked out at the UN Security Council by the issuing of resolutions by global powers.¹³ What bodies, such as the UN, acknowledge is that the causes of instability are too broad and multifaceted to be dealt with by one state or organisation, and so they permit, promote or allow direct intervention by a range of governmental and non-governmental institutions in the areas of politics, security and development in ‘fragile’ states. However, grand strategic concepts of stability also present implementation challenges because they are often unclear or so broad as to be all-encompassing.

The two most recent UK and US national security strategies talk of the need to promote ‘stability’ and in the case of the US this leads to an all-encompassing project to promote Liberal values, not just victory, through which “[t]he United States

¹² The author recognises that there are global and trans-national components to instability, not least those dealing with nuclear proliferation, e.g. the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA); or financial and fiscal stability (e.g. the loans extended by the European Central Bank (ECB) to improve liquidity in the European banking system or the European Financial Stability Facility (EFSF) which is available to states in the Eurozone). However the focus of this thesis is on localised issues including terrorism and political conflict which present threats to stability.

¹³ For an analysis of the confused nature of UN Security Council Resolutions with regard to Afghanistan see Denny, 2011 pp. 6-8.

supports the expansion of democracy and human rights abroad because governments that respect these values are more just, peaceful, and legitimate ... Political systems that protect universal rights are ultimately more stable, successful, and secure”¹⁴ (White House, 2010, p. 37). For the UK the perception of threats is different and includes a “complex range of threats from a myriad of sources. Terrorism, cyber-attack, unconventional attacks using chemical, nuclear or biological weapons, as well as large scale accidents or natural hazards” (HMG, 2010, p. 3).

These concerns about stability are coloured by the form of Liberal interventionism which grew out of the aftermath of the Cold War. Instead of patronising elites to act as channels for US or Soviet bloc foreign policy priorities, Liberal interventionism holds that it is the innate values imbued by democracy and the process of social and economic development which will secure stability and the people’s willingness to ensure their leaders provide stability (Duffield, 2001, pp. 11-17). As a result there has been an evolution in thinking by Western powers about how to assert stability, one which moves from the macro state level during the Cold War through to progressively more intrusive interventions. Drawing on the table above it may be useful in these terms to view stabilisation as a grand strategic objective, an operational approach (which evolved in the 1990s) and a tactical activity (which evolved post-2001).

Cold War interventions drew their authority from the overall structure of the global system, including the Bretton Woods institutions, and were shaped by the competition between the United States and the Soviet Union. These interventions were often characterised as peacekeeping. Whilst covert support was given to non-state actors who were vying for influence between the two powers, the majority of influence, money and material were given to states as the bulwark against encroaching enemies (Stoker, 2008, pp. 1-2, 8).

Post-Cold War Liberal philosophy freed external intervention from the international competition of the Cold War. Interventions became increasingly nationally focused including the proliferation of bilateral development assistance and externally supported national strategies for political emancipation, security reform, economic liberalisation and development (Duffield, 2001, p. 12). These forms of intervention were often characterised as peacebuilding (drawing from peacekeeping) and latterly statebuilding.

¹⁴ This is consistent with the previous US National Security Strategy under President Bush which stressed that ‘democracies are the most responsible members of the international system, promoting democracy is the most effective long-term measure for strengthening international stability; reducing regional conflicts; countering terrorism and terror-supporting extremism; and extending peace and prosperity’ (White House, 2006, p. 3) and is further development in the new strategic direction of the US DoD (Department of Defense, 2012, pp. 1-4).

The post-2001 period saw a crystallisation of thinking about the ‘fragility’ of some states (Patrick & Brown, 2007, pp. 4-5), the nature of “new wars” (Kaldor M. , 2006, pp. 1-14) or “war amongst the people” (Smith, R., 2005, pp. 371-3), and a radically different security environment for Liberal states in the face of global terrorism which has led to the evolution of interventions focusing at an increasingly sub-national and local level. These types of interventions have often been characterised as stabilisation and are the focus of this thesis.

As well as the overall evolution of intervention systems, the actual activities have become increasingly localised. From international processes developed to manage the international financial system and state sovereignty (during the Cold-War), through to national approaches involving economic reforms such as Structural Adjustment Programmes, state support programmes i.e. (SSR) and elections (from the 1980’s in to the post-Cold War period) recent stabilisation activities now focus on supporting local approaches to address alternative livelihoods, local forms of security, informal justice and local political settlements in the current period. (HMG, 2011, pp. 26-7)

Stabilisation operations, the focus of this work, exist primarily in the latter area, though in effect they can be seen as an attempt to enforce other layers of stabilising interventions because the other layers are still prevalent. This also means that assessing stabilisation is not simply a case of focusing on projects but how those projects sit within a range of international, national and local interventions. In addition, by recognizing the bureaucratic evolution of stabilisation since the end of the Cold War, as well as the different lenses that states and institutions use to conceptualise stability and stabilisation, it is also possible to identify examples of what would now be called stabilisation activities in previous interventions, for example in Oman and Rhodesia in the 1970s and 80s.

Stabilisation: a new term for old practices?

As noted above part of the increase in interest in stability is the realisation that instability is caused by a number of factors (Starr, 2009, p. 1; Lambach & Gamberger, 2009, pp. 105-6). These include traditional ‘conflict’ issues such as insurgencies and wars of secession which may include control over resources (Ross, 2001, pp. 325–61). However, they increasingly include the various impacts of globalisation, which threaten some governments (Chuter, 2009, p. 33) as well as environmental catastrophes that can make a seemingly ‘simple’ security threat exceptionally complicated. For example, in Haiti, whose political and developmental processes were interrupted by the 2010 earthquake and then re-cast by the international community through a UN-led mission (Blot, 2012, p. 195 & 199; Muggah, 2010, pp. S444-5), or Aceh in Indonesia where the conflict dynamic was radically influenced after the tsunami in 2004 (Waizenegger, 2011, pp. 113-7).

The sheer complexity of the problems, which involve violence, providing shelter to displaced people, provision of emergency services, long-term damage to livelihoods often in the context of a 'new' political settlement means that no single agency can provide the expertise necessary to deal adequately with the interlocking problems. This has led to the emergence of the concept of an integrated approach - called the Comprehensive Approach in the UK, Whole-of-Government in the US and 3D intervention relating to Defence, Diplomacy and Development in others - which would allow for more coordinated and ultimately more successful interventions (Patrick & Brown, 2007, pp. 1-3). One element of the stabilisation debate suggests that the Whole-of-Government or Comprehensive Approach is a brand new but ill-defined phenomenon (van der Meer, 2009, pp. 7 - 35). However, closer reading of historical experience across military, intelligence, diplomatic and development actions, seems to present an alternate view whereby states have previously undertaken 'stabilisation' activities in a coordinated manner.¹⁵ The newness of stabilisation may not be in the concept but in the bureaucratic response to evolving situations.¹⁶ The examples from the Dhofar campaign in Oman and the Lancaster House process (which ended the Rhodesian civil war) are briefly described below as an illustration of this.

The Dhofar campaign was waged with international (British) advisors supporting and leading Omani government forces against a rebellion in the Dhofar region from 1965-75. (McKeown, 1981, pp. 21-95). With regard to the Dhofar campaign Air Chief Marshal Sir Jock Stirrup notes experiences of what are now called stabilisation during the campaign in the 1970s "resonate strongly with our contemporary security challenges ... there are some enduring principles here [from Dhofar] that survive the particular and extend to the general ... looking at Oman today, there is ample evidence that the principles, when properly applied, do work." (MoD, 2009b, p. xxvi)

In the example of the transition of the Rhodesian government led by Ian Smith to the forming of the Zimbabwean government led by Robert Mugabe in 1980 it is striking that the attempt by Western powers (the UK) to ensure regional stability as an element of geo-strategic concerns was characterised by what would now be termed as a Whole-of-Government approach (though the term was not used at that stage). The intervention was split into three main activities: firstly, the politically focused Lancaster House negotiations; secondly, the assumption of temporary governance of

¹⁵ This concurs with the argument that stabilisation has antecedents dating back to earlier conflicts, including the Philippines (1889-1902), Algeria (1954-62) and Vietnam (1967-75) (Barakat, Deely, & Zyck, 2010, pp. S301-305)

¹⁶ Van der Meer asserts that it is the frequency of these types of operations that is increasing; I would argue that it is not the frequency but the combination of increasingly intrusive interventions and the need for some Western powers to combine resources that is leading to the new appreciation of stabilisation.

the territory under Lord Soames; and thirdly, the deployment of the Commonwealth Multinational Force to carry out a DDR process and oversee elections; these three components remain classic elements of an international statebuilding initiative. Within a few months the combined political, governance and security activities had transitioned the state from Rhodesia to Zimbabwe under-pinned by a democratic election (Wiseman & Taylor, 1981, pp. 7-22; Stedman, 1988, pp. 177-203).

Using the examples of Oman and Zimbabwe it is clear that stabilisation is not necessarily a new practice in and of itself. It often uses the same tools as peacebuilding and statebuilding, and at times incorporated military action including COIN, all of which were derived from tools deployed during the Cold War. This does not mean all prior experience can simply be used to explain current trends. US and UK conceptions of civil affairs activities in World War II were synonymous with those of military government¹⁷. While there have been changes in the contexts and doctrine there may be instructive lessons from previous interventions. In addition to earlier experience the UK's most recent paper on 'Building Stability Overseas' illustrates that many existing activities can already be categorised as having a stabilisation intent, including those in Afghanistan, the Philippines, Nepal, Yemen, Somalia amongst others (HMG, 2011, pp. 25, 28-9).

Table 2 gives a basic outline of the intervention logic in Liberal peacebuilding and stabilisation to three problems (political, security and development) and the ways in which these approaches would rationalise intervening *using the same activities*. For example, the holding of local elections will improve the 'social contract', secure the population's support for the state, and expand the mandate of the state in the three generic interventions of peacebuilding, statebuilding and stabilisation. Some may see this continuity as a positive – the interventions are working in harmony – however there is little critical thinking exposed through this contrasting of analyses. For example, it is not clear what in the history of state formation would mean that democratic governance in another imagined state would be the 'best', 'most effective' or even 'logical' choice for addressing the 'social contract', securing support for the state and expanding the state mandate in the near-term.

In reality this looks a lot more like an intellectual inability or political will to pursue alternative approaches and the following of ideological dogma rather than using different tools to address complex threats. It is striking that there may be little difference in the prescription of activities from the different approaches. Returning to the international intervention which led to the end of the Smith government in

¹⁷ For a concise summary see Oehring, C. 2009, pp. 1-2. A seminal work in this area was written by Coles and Weinberg whose preface includes an insightful discussion of the issues associated with military actors working in civilian governance capacities (Coles and Weinberg, 1962, pp.ix – xiv).

Rhodesia and formation of the Mugabe government in Zimbabwe many of the basic precepts of peacebuilding, statebuilding and stabilisation are found, including the formal creation of a new political settlement (the Lancaster House process), a process of disarmament and reintegration for combatants, and the holding of an election (Wiseman & Taylor, 1981, pp. 7-22; Stedman, 1988, pp. 177-203).

Table 2 Comparing peacebuilding, statebuilding and stabilisation intervention logics (sources various including UN, government and non-governmental material, Author)

Problem	Peacebuilding Intervention logic	Statebuilding intervention logic	Stabilisation intervention logic	Activity
Governance is unrepresentative	Democratic governance is the best way of building a social contract	The bureaucracy and executive must ensure an open process of forming government to ensure that citizens support the state	A governance structure is necessary to expand the mandate of the central government	Local elections for councils on political and/or development activities
Police are poorly trained and equipped	Better trained police help build the social contract between the population and government	More professional police will help enforce the social contract	Better trained police can counter-arm threats and protect the population	Train and equip programmes to support the police
High unemployment	Employment improves household income helping to kick-start the local economy	Employment helps increase economic activity which will raise tax revenues (possibly through indirect taxation)	Employment stops young men from joining an armed opposition group	Cash-for-work programmes

This is not to say that stabilisation should be simply dismissed as a re-running of old habits – the opportunity that stabilisation presents is much greater than that – however there are some long term systematic processes which have led to the emergence of stabilisation doctrine amongst Western states which have as much to do with external changes in threats and their complexity as they do with internal dynamics of Liberal states. It is here that the lenses from which the interveners conceptualise a threat and develop a response become inhibiting in themselves, and

contribute to the lack of strategic coherence discussed above. This conundrum is central to this thesis and the twin issues of the Liberal heritage of stabilisation and how responses have been developed to address the threats is developed in the literature review in chapter 2.

Outline of the thesis

Stabilisation should not be seen simply as a new model for existing activities, despite the risk that it succumbs to the fate of peacebuilding and statebuilding. Stabilisation offers a radical re-thinking of how states can intervene in other territories they perceive as a risk to international stability by fore-grounding global and national security interests in stability. In order to interrogate this argument this thesis will attempt to understand how interventions by both national and international actors affect local political legitimacy and stability and how this ultimately challenges the Liberal project. It will use case studies from Afghanistan (a focus for Western states) and Nepal (a focus for India and China but also a concern for Western states) to compare approaches that the international community deploys in host nations in search of promoting stability through stabilisation activities and will seek to critique existing practices against conceptions of stability and stabilisation from the field sites.

In Chapter 2 the theoretical discussion sketched in the Introduction is further developed, demonstrating that the key component of intervention is the continuation of the Liberal project. As the state system has been consolidated and dominated by the West, the Liberal states have sought to 'stabilise' the world in their own image. They have sought to do this through a number of approaches; the three most relevant to the field sites are statebuilding, COIN and development in support of stability.¹⁸ The most recent and invasive form has been 'stabilisation' activity in post-conflict environments which incorporates activities along political, security and development spheres. Importantly some literature mistakenly conflates stabilisation primarily with COIN (Blair & Fitz-Gerald, 2009 , pp. 8-9); instead the evolution of both the threats to international stability and the evolution of war amongst the peoples (Smith, R., 2005, pp. 394-8) have meant that 'stabilisation' is simply the most securitised of the range of interventions undertaken by the international community in pursuit of a stable system and draws on multiple theories including statebuilding and development as well as military doctrine.

In Chapter 3 the research methodology is explained from the hypothesis that in order to understand stabilisation it is necessary to understand the impact of interventions

¹⁸ These three theories broadly correspond to political, security and development activities (or diplomacy, defence and development), though as explained in later chapters the author recognises that there is often considerable overlap between these theoretical areas.

(nationally and internationally driven) on both local legitimacy formation and local conceptions of stability. Field research was carried out between September 2010 and November 2011 in the two case study countries, Afghanistan and Nepal. In both countries interviews were collected in two village field sites as well as further interviews carried out at a national level in the search for commonalities and connections within and between the field sites and trends noticeable in other parts of Afghanistan and Nepal.

Chapters 4 – 7 present the field research from the four field sites: Kalakan and Nahr-i Sarraj districts in Afghanistan, and Rolpa and Bara districts in Nepal. In each chapter there is a discussion of the conflict history of the site as well as the impacts of a range of political, security and development interventions by both the state, non-state and international actors. These four chapters present the bulk of the new primary data collected during the research and inform the development of the comparative analysis in Chapter 8 and the theory testing and development in Chapter 9.

Chapter 4, entitled *Indigenous Stabilisation*, discusses the processes of stabilisation, both indigenous and exogenous in the district of Kalakan in the Kabul province, Afghanistan. Kalakan is described by respondents as a stable district, which they explain is due to several factors; chief among them for the respondents is the way in which the population, 'the people', have reached a consensus and addressed some of the grievances associated with the conflict in the 1980s and 90s, and a regional approach to political competition for the districts in the Koh Daman. In addition there have been a number of exogenous activities by a wide range of actors, including the government, NGOs, international military forces and local political actors which have affected stability in the district to varying degrees since 2001. The findings are significant because they describe a substantive process of indigenous stabilisation which can be used to understand why and how stability was achieved in the district.

In Chapter 5, the importance of *Exogenous Stabilisation* is discussed with regards to Village A in Nahr-i Sarraj district in the Helmand province, Afghanistan. It reviews a range of sources of stability, attempts by local and foreign actors to promote stability, and assesses the corporate impact of these activities on stability. The chapter highlights the limitations of exogenous stabilisation when it is far in advance of local political will and physical capability of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA). The chapter is divided into three main sections: the first provides a background to exogenous stabilisation and a conflict history of the district and Village A, which highlights the significant stabilisation themes that emerged in the interviews; this is followed by a section describing attempts at exogenous stabilisation as supported by ISAF primarily as well as civilian projects; the third section analyses the aggregate impact of stabilisation activities on the district.

Chapter 6 discusses the first of the Nepal field sites as a process of *Insurgent Stabilisation* and focuses on the processes of stabilisation that were undertaken by pro-government and insurgent Maoist actors in and around the Gajul Village Development Committee (VDC) in Rolpa district Nepal. Gajul lay at the edges of what the Maoists termed their 'base area' which formed their proto-state of the Magarant Autonomous State, meaning the VDC lay in a conflict zone sandwiched between increasingly confident Maoist forces and government forces that were pushed back from positions in the village during the course of the conflict. As part of this contest insurgent forces used a range of approaches across the political, security and development spheres which it has been argued promoted stability in their attempts to govern the population. Pro-government forces received little external support during the conflict but still employed many of the tactics, and indeed strategies, espoused by Western academics and practitioners, but were ultimately unsuccessful in retaining control of Gajul. As they gradually ceded ground Government of Nepal 'development' activities became increasingly securitised and limited to the district centre. External actors only entered the arena late in the conflict, primarily through development activities which were used by both sides to shore up their 'stabilisation' approaches.

The final field site is discussed in Chapter 7, which focuses on Haraiya VDC in Bara district, Nepal, and is called *Failed self-stabilisation*. This chapter explores the limits of indigenous processes of stabilisation outside of broader political processes and support. The Maoist insurgency arrived in Bara in 2000, and the People's Liberation Army (PLA) and People's Government attempted to assert authority in the district and Haraiya VDC, though ultimately only succeeded in pushing the government back rather than establishing coherent Maoist governance, security and development activities. The conflict did not stop with the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) and the Madeshi Andolan in 2007. The killings of Maoist cadres in the wider Terai region brought a new wave of instability. Throughout this period there were attempts at stabilisation by Maoist forces, the government of Nepal and by self-organised groups within Haraiya but all failed to bring stability in their own way. The case study suggests that none of the political, security, or development interventions provided explanatory evidence for the limited stabilisation that was achieved in the VDC, instead the data suggests that processes beyond the control of Haraiya dictated the extent of stability that was enjoyed by the population.

Chapter 8 is based on data analysis comparing all four sites and demonstrates commonalities in perceptions of stability formation and the relative significance of interventions that could be undertaken as stabilisation activities. This chapter challenges the research hypothesis outlined in Chapter 3 through a comparative analysis across the case studies by looking at: 1) periods of stability; 2) culture and context; 3) the mode of intervention; 4) political legitimacy; and 5) conceptions of

stability. The chapter concludes by suggesting a new stability hypothesis which is tested in Chapter 9 against the three theories of intervention: statebuilding, COIN and development, that underpin the Liberal project, and which are discussed in Chapter 2.

In Chapter 9 the analysis in the preceding chapters is married to present a critique of the Liberal project and stabilisation interventions along political, security and development lines. It suggests that while the stabilisation hypothesis does draw on elements of the Liberal agenda contained in the three theoretical areas of statebuilding, COIN and development, it also breaks new theoretical ground. These critiques are then built upon to present a potential theory of stability as a way to assess stability by considering the connections within and between the political leaders, local elites and the population which would address some of the critiques of existing theories and frameworks. It also suggests a hierarchy of requirements for stability.

Chapter 10 concludes the thesis outlining the main findings and the limitations of the research findings before suggesting potential avenues of further research and provides an epilogue from the researcher's time spent at the Helmand PRT in spring 2012.

Chapter 2 – Literature Review

Introduction

The first chapter described the way in which in current discourse there are overlapping interests in producing and maintaining stability amongst the nations who ensure international security. Stability is threatened by fragile states, which are a risk to their own citizens as well as the Liberal Western states and their ways of life (The White House, 2010, p. 37; IPPR, 2008, p. 5; Patrick & Brown, 2007, pp. 4-5). These states incubate dangerous viruses such as terrorism which can transcend international boundaries and destabilise the international system. Fear of these threats is ingrained in Western society and within the governments which promote and carry out interventions in 'fragile' countries in the name of global stability (Chandler, 2004, pp. 187-206; Duffield, 2007, pp. 24-9; Jahn, 2007, pp. 187-206). Whilst there is some divergence about how to address stability and operationalise interventions to address these threats the logic of the Liberal paradigm in the early 21st Century necessitates this intervention in other countries to ensure 'stability'. As the threats have become more virulent, more and more intrusive interventions have been designed to contain them, the most recent form of which is now referred to as 'stabilisation'.

This chapter focuses first on Liberalism, which has structured and driven Western power and intervention over the last three centuries; it builds on the conclusion in the introduction that in order to understand stabilisation it is necessary to understand the nature of the Liberal state. The second part of this chapter will focus on the modes of intervention undertaken in the name of stabilisation across politics, security and development. This literature review covers substantial ground but is meant to identify the centrality of Liberal thinking to stabilisation interventions through notions of Liberal state formation, interventionism and the changes in the international system since the end of the Cold War, which have necessitated the evolution of stabilisation.

With such a broad approach it is necessary to focus on the core authors and texts within each component of the literature review that have relevance to current interventions. As noted below there is a wealth of literature on political philosophy, but for better or worse it is Liberalism that is the dominant strand of thinking and therefore other traditions are noted only where they have a direct impact on current interventions. Equally, the discussion on stabilisation practice along political, security and development lines focuses on the most significant or common forms of intervention. This excludes overly technical discussions on, for example, trade reform; instead it focuses on the overarching theoretical positions taken from the Liberal tradition in each area of activity: politics, security and development.

Beginning with Liberalism as the overarching narrative within which international order is maintained, the review describes how Western states justify their expansive

and interventionist roles in protecting international stability. This is critically important to recognise because every intervention that is designed or implemented now is carried out within the Liberal paradigm. The discussion identifies several key elements of Liberalism and identifies the ways in which they shape thinking about stability and stabilisation. This includes notions of social order, state formation, democracy, the role of markets and the economy, and social progress based on the writing of Hobbes, Rousseau, Locke, Adam Smith and others (see Hobbes, 1651, Rousseau 1762, Locke, 1690, Smith, A. 1776).

Based on these foundational Liberal precepts the chapter discusses the nature of Liberal European state formation including the work of Max Weber and Charles Tilly, as well as Beetham's work on legitimacy formation and the state. Their theoretical work may have significant application to indigenous European state formation but its relevance to exogenous statebuilding is unexplored in the literature. After this introduction to the nature of the Liberal state the chapter outlines the academic literature from anthropologists and historians regarding state formation in non-European contexts. This includes including Asia, Africa and the Middle East, starting with the Early State School of Claessen and Skalnik, which is significant because of the influence that history, culture and context has upon societies today.

This is followed by tracing the way in which the Liberal state has become the template for all states as Liberalism has become increasingly interventionist. In particular it notes the shift since the Cold War as interventions have become increasingly localised resulting in policies which aim to promote stability through stabilisation despite the fact there is no agreed definition of either term. The philosophy of interventionism is structured around the international bodies, primarily the Bretton Woods institutions, which seek to secure Liberal power, as well as promote Liberal values through Human Rights and Democracy. These institutions have legalised interventions since the end of the Cold War in increasingly humanitarian and developmental language, such as the 'Right to Protect'. The final part of this section focuses on the emergence of stabilisation as a policy tool of Liberal interventionism designed to face the threats of the new wars fought amongst the people. Taking the work of Mary Kaldor and Rupert Smith to demonstrate the emergence of new threats that stabilisation is meant to address in the post-Cold War era.

Following the discussion on Liberalism the chapter turns to stabilisation practice as the policy meant to achieve the strategic goals of stability on the three primary spheres of external intervention: politics, security and development. As a corporate collection they are related to diplomacy, defence and development – the 3Ds, often identified as being the three main modes of engagement by states in other territories and also the three primary lines of operation for promoting stability and

stabilisation.¹⁹ These are broad themes and because they originate in the Liberal tradition there is some overlap in their definitions as well as in their implementation. Indeed COIN may be viewed as simply the most robust form of intervention on a spectrum in which development would be one of the least intrusive. There is also a cross over between various strands of political philosophy and different forms of intervention, for example: the intrinsic importance of education forms part of Liberal political philosophy but in execution lies in the development sphere. However, for clarity it is important to discuss political, security and development theories and interventions separately.

Political activity supporting stability in this thesis encompasses external interventions in another state that affects or structures political systems (often in terms of democracy) and systems of governance which may include technical reforms but are generally conceived of as statebuilding. These interventions are rooted in a specific political philosophy about the appropriate role of the state. As a result the literature discussed under politics includes statebuilding and governance sources. The political realm also drives much of the action in the security and development spheres and is discussed first throughout the thesis on the basis of its structuring role for all other actions.

Security actions related to stability include direct military intervention by a foreign state, as well as long-term, often bi-lateral, military to military engagement in terms of training and the supply of material. Beyond physical infrastructure and training it includes the philosophical conception of the appropriate role of the armed forces, police and intelligence services and the relationship between those services and the population. Therefore along with drawing out shifts in the nature of war and conflict, including Rupert Smith and Mary Kaldor as mentioned above, the literature reviewed here also encompasses authors focused on COIN and SSR, including John Nagl, David Kilcullen and Nicole Ball.

Development is in some respects the most amorphous and broad of the Liberal themes. It incorporates the idea of human and social progress often embodied in Western thought in terms of economic expansion and improving living standards, and is termed in this thesis economic and social development. However this theme also includes humanitarian action which seeks to protect life through the meeting of essential needs. The literature discusses the notions of freedom from want and fear as

¹⁹ The author notes that some quarters have identified another area of activity, sometimes called the “4th D” (Mashatt & Polk, 2008, p. 1); however, given that the three primary state bodies represented by diplomats, soldiers and development practitioners actually carry out most of the interventions the other departments are not considered in detail.

discussed by Amartya Sen as well as the economic liberalism of Milton Friedman and Friedrich Hayek. It also notes the connection to humanitarian principles embodied by institutions such as the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and the tensions some have identified with increasing military involvement in, and delivery of, development projects. This has often been through Civil-Military Coordination (CIMIC) or Military Stabilisation Support Teams (MSSTs) in 'hot stabilisation' (IFRC & ICRC, 1994, pp. 1-3; Stabilisation Unit, 2007, pp. 1-2).

Within each of the three lines of operation three theories or policy prescriptions are identified (statebuilding, counterinsurgency and development) which highlight the way in which the policy discourse on stability has outstripped academic theory and are used in the thesis to test the relevance of each theory to the notions of stability and stabilisation. The chapter concludes that the key gaps in the literature are two-fold; firstly, in understanding what local stability is and how it is formed; and secondly, the extent to which external actions support stability. This conclusion is used as the basis to develop the research hypothesis and methodology in Chapter 3.

The Liberal state and Western state formation

Liberalism, which first emerged in Britain and France more than three centuries ago, embodies several of the defining tensions of political and social life in Europe and the wider Western world. The theories of Locke, Hobbes, Rousseau and others may not be entirely consistent with one another (Gray, 1991, p. 158) but they form a conception of the individual who has innate rights, and who confers legitimacy upon a state which has a willingness to engage and intervene in the international system. This provides Liberal states with a natural tendency to export their values on to other states.

There are four components of Liberal thinking which bear relevance to the state and intervention: the structure of the state; the state and religion; the state and democracy; and the market orientation of the state, which are introduced below. The nature of the state was of particular concern for Hobbes who saw it as a way in which man could find shelter from the harsh realities of the world. Indeed he argued that the basic needs of the people were "security, [and] peace" which would be the foundation of legitimate political institutions (Manent, 1995, p. 20). Furthermore, the Liberals also promoted the ideas of the separation of powers between the monarch (the executive), the legislature and the judiciary so that man could be assured that their rights would not be infringed (Gray, 1991, pp. 90-1; Hayek, 1978, pp. 112, 116-7). This principle is now one of the fundamental components of the international system based on the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights (Charvet & Kaczynska-Nay, 2008, pp. 48-50).

Beyond the structure of the state, Liberal thinkers also took aim at other key institutions, especially the church, towards which they were often significantly

antagonistic, though this tension is partly directed at the Catholic tradition rather than the Protestants, who perhaps imbibed Liberal thinking more readily (Manent, 1995, pp. 6, 20-1). Whether or not the Liberal agenda succeeded in constraining the Church in the short-term may be debated, but in the long-term they promoted a process of secularisation which has itself become quasi-religious in its inability to accept faith groups in other states as being legitimate actors. This itself presents a significant tension in Liberal philosophy which has been commented on in India as well as in Europe (Dhareshwar, 1999, pp. 203-7; Charvet & Kaczynska-Nay, 2008, pp. 318-9, 348).

The Liberals also sowed the seeds of democratic governance through their appeal to “classical republicanism” which called on men to rule themselves freely (Manent, 1995, pp. 21-2). This exhortation was built upon the concept of individual rights which also supported the centrality of economic rights, in particular that man has the right to property ownership, which is a requirement for successful labour (ibid., 1995, pp. 42-3; Gray, 1991, p. 146).²⁰ The concept of economic rights is further enhanced with the importance of the free market on economic relations as espoused by Adam Smith (Smith A., 1999, pp. 121-6).

Whilst this may be the broad story of early Liberal thinkers, it is also apparent that Liberalism itself has morphed over time as it has adapted to the world and has been changed by both the French revolution and the political story of the United States. The latter is significant because a key component of the evolution of the United States has been that it has not had to enforce equal citizenship by overthrowing a monarch. Instead citizens were created as equal through their constitution, meaning US conceptions of change and struggle are inherently disposed to seeking rapid, foundational change as opposed to European gradualism (Manent, 1995, pp. 83, 103-5).²¹

This is a heady mixture but these radical changes to European society are all the more important for the rest of the world because Liberalism also contains strong support for the creation and maintenance of empire, drawing on early Roman experience. This

²⁰ This also connects with the work of Moore who argued that the enclosure movement which promoted land ownership (for some, not all) was a key component of establishing a strong democracy despite the fact it was a significant abuse of power by the landed class against the peasantry over a sustained period (Moore, 1966, pp. 20-9).

²¹ The author recognises that this did not apply to women and non-White individuals; de Tocqueville’s point remains valid however because even though female suffrage and black equality were only addressed later – and through significant pressure and violence – those changes did not affect the basic structure of the United States’ governing system, unlike the revolutions in France and the United Kingdom.

may predispose the Western world towards intervention based on Liberal conceptions of the state, government, democracy and economic relations (ibid., 1995, p. 3; Charvet & Kaczynska-Nay, 2008, pp. 359-64). These philosophical innovations have played a critical role in shaping current Western societies and the way in which they conceive of the world around them. Therefore in order to understand the statebuilding paradigm used in the 20th and 21st Centuries it is important to understand this heritage and how it impacts on the understanding of Liberal state formation.

Building on this Liberal heritage, the contribution of social scientists to the assumptions about state formation presents a further dimension of theory. Weber argued that states must attain 'legitimate domination' which demonstrates the extent to which bureaucracy and social groups acknowledge the authority of a ruler to issue commands and rule over lives. Weber outlined three types of legitimate domination: charismatic, traditional and rational-legal with 'modern' society (i.e. Liberal) relating to the last type. Importantly, Weber recognises that legitimacy formation, creation and maintenance were not one-off events, but continual processes based on engaging not just the physical group but also their emotions. This is a quality which is very difficult to convey in matrices and logical frameworks because they promote a projectised approach to understanding an intervention which 'should' occur in a linear fashion (Collins, 1986, p. 155-7). Whilst Weber was concerned with state formation as embodied by bureaucracy, Tillyan thinking focuses on the processes of forming the state, which he argues involves war-making and taxation (Tilly, 1990, p. 16-25). The process of war brings more areas under a ruler's control, which then require maintenance and protection, and in turn taxation and the formation of bureaucracies. Taxation then becomes the primary driver of resource accumulation for fighting new wars (ibid., 1990, p. 87-91).

Tillyan and Weberian thinking have several things in common. Firstly, the formation of the state requires significant violence. Secondly, once in power, elites must monopolise violence. Thirdly, elites must create an administration to raise taxes to provide basic benefits (normally only basic security) and protect the region from external threats or wage more war. These issues are not especially surprising and are relatively 'simple' for Liberal interveners to recognise because they are physical (i.e. security, taxation and the formation and protection of a bureaucracy). However, the lynchpin of these issues is legitimacy.²² Despite some arguing that legitimacy is a 'mushy concept' (Huntington, 1991, p. 46), both Tilly and Weber assert that it is key to

²² Rawlsian theory suggests there other components to state formation, such as justice, which may be more important than legitimacy, though it is not entirely clear why justice and legitimacy should be separate (Peter, 2009, pp. 58-62).

the way in which states more generally have formed and as David Beetham has argued it shapes and controls the use of coercive power.²³

There is a rich literature on political legitimacy in political theory though very little about *exogenously* supported statebuilding presenting an undeveloped theoretical area.²⁴ Even when considering the application of Weberian and Tillyan thought to *endogenous* state formation some believe that their thinking lacks clarity (Beetham, 1991, p. 38). The current theoretical problem in applying Liberal philosophy of the state and experiences of Western state formation to modern statebuilding is that Weber, Tilly and Beetham do not discuss the attributes of externally sponsored exogenous state formation (or statebuilding). This is critical because, as discussed later, the interventions supported by Western states primarily derive their intervention logic from the experiences of European state formation, which were internally driven state formation processes. The following subsection outlines the limitations of basing modern interventions on Liberal philosophy and European state formation theory through an examination of non-European state formation.

Culture, context and the Liberal state

Before the state system was fully codified it is clear that there were variations to European state formation models which have been identified in historical anthropology. The Early State School led by Claessen and Skalnik drew on some of the same components of Western state formation (namely class/surplus imbalances and coercive force (Claessen and Skalnik, 1978, pp. 3-30) to argue that there were multiple approaches to understanding state formation.²⁵ They argued that not only are there several forms of state (an idea which also draws on Weberian thinking) but that *state formation in different parts of the world had distinct attributes*. There may in fact be

²³ This is not just important for state formation but also for the conduct of insurgent groups. As Jeremy Weinstein has found groups who are able to build upon social bonds of legitimacy are less likely to inflict significant casualties on the local population because they derive their power and authority from them. In areas where this relationship is weak insurgent groups replace the legitimacy derived from their social networks to legitimacy derived from resource access and wealth (Weinstein, 2007, p. 7).

²⁴ A notable exception to this is the recent paper on legitimacy formation in fragile states: OECD, 2010.

²⁵ In their typology this includes the inchoate state - where kinship dominates and taxation is ad hoc; the typical state - where kinship is more or less on a par with more distant bureaucratic administration and taxation systems are becoming systematised; and the evolving state - where the importance of kinship is declining and the bureaucratic state is emerging with more complex forms of resource management (Claessen and Skalnik, 1978, pp. 640-5).

several processes of state formation which draw upon local physical attributes (land mass, climate etc.) and the cultures that evolved in those spaces reached toward different forms of states for different reasons. It is in applying this theory to other states that anthropologists have identified a number of forms of state formation *which suggests there is not one species of state, but several species* which have similar attributes but are attuned to their natural and social habitats. These may seem to be ancient history but they can have significant impacts currently on how societies view the state they live in and the boundaries of action the state can take for its own legitimisation and the paths it is driven down through the happenstance of the presence of natural resources or exposure to natural disasters.

There is a rich body of literature which has argued consistently that processes of state formation in Africa, Asia and the Middle East were distinct from those in Europe (Tymowski, 2009, pp. 36-48). Lamont King examined state formation in several parts of Africa over several centuries and noted that there were several forms of nation-states and multi-ethnic states in the pre-Colonial period including: the Pharonic kingdom (middle kingdom) which ruled an ethnically homogenous, territorially defined space in the period between 2000BC and 1600BC (an example of the nation-state); the Kasar Hausa (West Africa) who formed a complex hierarchy of entities within an overarching monarchy which was multi-ethnic, included a tax collection system, the maintenance of an army and a legal framework during the 16th – 19th Centuries (an example of the multi-ethnic state) and finally the Zulu/Mfecane state that emerged at the end of the 18th Century as wealth was accumulated and concentrated after the Zulu conquest. Whilst ethnically led by the Zulus they incorporated other ethnic groups into leadership to further their conquest during the 18th – 19th Centuries (an example of the nation; King, 2006, pp. 26-30, 84-6, 106 and 133-5).

In the Middle East, comprising the Arabian Peninsula, Northern Africa and the Levant, there have also been several forms of state from the Pharaohs noted above to the Islamic Caliphates as well as Turkish and Persian Imperial rule. It is too easy to see ancient Mesopotamia, medieval Europe, or the Islamic east demonstrating processes of state formation as a single moral narrative associated with the Abrahamic faiths, but this is not the case. There are issues with the fact that 'the state' is in some areas, like the Yemen, a more recent phenomenon (Dresch, 1990, pp. 252-287). The Yemen, being largely mountainous and therefore difficult to control, has been ignored by conquerors and empires because it would be too expensive to impose order; therefore state formation in Yemen is distinctly Yemeni. In addition the tribal nature of Arab society has had important influences on the forms of state that have emerged from Morocco to Iraq. At times these social structures with their established loyalties have resisted the state, in other points they have acted as the state's defender

(Khoury, 1990, pp. 1-24). Further central components of Western state formation, like taxation, are manifestly different in the Middle East because of Islamic principles of zakat (Dresch, 1990 pp. 252-287). Devolved taxation systems also highlight the fact that the Ottoman Empire evolved and developed distinct forms of control which were able to cope with the demands of heterogeneous populations for several centuries, something which modern democracies often struggle to do (Bromley, 1994, pp. 48-50).

The Asian experience of state formation is similarly varied, from the nomads of the Central Asia Steppe, the Indic cultures and the fusion of Confucian, Buddhist and Islamic values overlaid by modern experiences of colonialism and independence. Using the example of South East Asia Tony Day argues that Western 'concern' about violence (or stability) in states in Southeast Asia fails to recognise that there are cultural boundaries at play in what the state is allowed to do within its repertoire. Therefore there may be peculiar elements to state formation in Southeast Asia, including the strength of kinship networks and their influence on state formation, which means violence is a more acceptable part of state formation and state maintenance in some non-Western societies (Day, 2002, pp. 288-291). As a result there is a cultural understanding of state violence and state order which is distinct from Western notions, which is overlaid by deep cosmological forms of state formation that drove early state formation in the region and have an enduring impact on the forms of states today in Southeast Asia. Finally, when we investigate the bureaucracies that now exist they are less a form of structure according to the Weberian concept and more of a repertoire which presents a fluid and continually evolving relationship between state and the people (Day, 2002, pp. 205-7).²⁶

In summary, these three regions have shown that state formation can be heterogeneous, which provides a powerful critique of modern Liberal interventionism predicated on bolstering states to address perceived threats. The empirical evidence base for ideas of state formation that rests upon Western European experience may not be entirely applicable to non-Western state formation, particularly those without colonial histories (Ayoob, 1995, p. 71). State formation in the European context was a process of *forming a state system*; whereas nowadays fragile, weak or failed states are not being encouraged to establish the state system but to find a place within it (Sørensen, 2001, pp. 347-9). And the wars that formed European states are not the

²⁶ Interestingly he borrows the idea of 'repertoire' from Charles Tilly, though Tilly's application is on the form of struggle between social classes and the state. For Day, 'repertoire' in the Southeast Asian context allows a discussion on the 'rules of the game' of state function and creation.

same as the 'new wars', which are more likely to be internal or civil wars rather than inter-state wars (Kaldor, 2006, pp. 27-32; Smith R., 2005, pp. 278-89).

Beyond the historical narratives of the formation of states in these regions there is a more recent discourse on the importance of local political economy both on the nature of the state. A component of this focuses on the way in which conflicts are initiated within them and then prosecuted. This includes Cramer's work on Angola and Iraq and which connects not only the economic factors in conflict and civil wars, but also the shortcomings of international interventions in engaging with those realities (Cramer, 2006, pp. 139-161 and 179-195). Similarly other work has focused on assessing the political economy of armed conflict and their relationship to lootable commodities and the impact these have on interventions Bray J. et al, 2003, pp. 107-8; Yannis, A., 2003, pp.167-70). Additional research has focused on how the complexities of each context affect the implementation of programming when investigated from an anthropological or ethnographic lens (Fithen, C. & Richards, P. 2005, pp.117-124; Utas, M., 2005, pp. 139-141). These more modern discussions on the nature of conflict and the state bolster the previous arguments about the complexities of each different intervention location.

Despite this, as a result of both Tilly and Weber providing stages through which rulers must go in order to produce a stable state, the end aim imagined is one which involves the creation of a democratic state run by an efficient bureaucracy with territorial integrity which can raise taxes (Helander, 2005, pp. 194-5; Call C., 2008b, pp. 1491-1507). These theories do not take into account the processes required for externally led (or assisted) state formation and the dangers this may engender (Barnett & Zürcher, 2009, pp. 31-35). Indeed, externally led state formation may require certain pre-conditions to be successful including a homogeneous core of political leaders and the creation of national identity (through ideology) as part of a war (Taylor & Botea, 2008, pp. 48-52).

The bar for state formation is actually incredibly high. There are very few examples since the 17th Century where any sovereign state has actually been able to provide all of the aspired for attributes of the model state in all of its territory (Milliken & Krause, 2003, p. 1). Therefore the concept of the 'failed' state may mean that the states identified as failing are being prevented from growing into their 'statehood' because they are subject to interventions. It is also difficult to compare state formation processes in the early to mid-20th Century with those currently in existence because of changes within the international system. For example Reno (2006, p. 43-56) has made the point that the processes of state formation in the 20th Century Congo are not applicable in the present time because the state system in which Congo finds itself has changed. These changes include economic codification of international trade through

the World Trade Organisation (WTO), the expansion of the Human Rights agenda and the impact of globalisation and technology (Bourdieu, 1998, pp. 94-7). These critiques support the argument that there may not only be different processes of state formation, but that in different historical periods different approaches are required (Bromley, 1994, pp. 119-154).

As described in Chapter 1 each intervening state or body applies their own lenses to the problem of state fragility and the reason that historical conceptions of state formation are important to the debates on stabilisation is that each intervener brings with them their own philosophical traditions about state formation and applies them to the fragile state conundrum. However, in practice interveners fail to recognise that current interventions which are supposed to support the state to tackle problems of fragility are moulded and shaped by a range of factors specific to the tradition of state formation in that area, which may be distinct from Liberal European tradition. This may mean that notions like the social contract are not relevant because the way in which the state derives and maintains legitimacy is different depending on the length and depth of 'state' experience amongst the populations and competing social structures which exist within these societies.

The Early State school and recent global experience of state formation suggests that Liberal interventions to form states or maintain and strengthen fragile states, which is premised on European experience, is likely to be weak and incoherent and does not offer solutions as to how interventions could be conceived to ensure that they are more in tune with local realities. This introduces the second broad gap in the literature, which is that current theory provides little help in identifying how to form, maintain or stabilise a state. Having identified this theoretical issue, the next section explores some of the practical applications of the assumptions made as a result of Liberal state formation models being used in international interventions. This is then followed by a discussion about how this international practice has fed into stabilisation activities.

From the Liberal state to Liberal interventionism and statebuilding

As noted the Liberal states which dominate global politics and statebuilding have sought to promote Liberal values in their engagement with other states and their attempts to manage the international system. There is no one overarching theory of intervention, instead there is a Liberal paradigm through which more discrete theories of governance, security and development are effected. The central thrust of the paradigm is that the state must be strengthened to provide a bulwark against the array of threats facing humanity in the 21st Century. This has led to the emergence of statebuilding as a vehicle to operationalise and implement Liberal values in other countries in the belief that stronger states will promote stability. This section will

outline current thinking on statebuilding as a precursor to discussing how statebuilding has moved from theory to practice, which lays the ground for the final discussion on stabilisation activities as the embodiment of current Liberal interventionism in the political, security and development spheres.

Statebuilding's theoretical foundations are rooted in a Western Liberal interpretation of Weberian thinking about state formation (OECD, 2010, pp. 51-3). This form of Liberalism asserts that the most important way to ensure the legitimacy of the state is to attain a 'rational bureaucratic' system which supports the 'social contract'. It is not necessary to critique the validity of Weber and Rousseau's categories because statebuilding approaches short-cut their theories into a simple remedy for modern fragile states. This remedy includes the imposition of democratic governance, a liberalised trade regime and a process of 'development' (Jahn, 2007, p. 88). It is this intellectual compression, and the nature of the overall package of intervention, which has led to the increasing numbers of interventions by Western countries.

Since the end of World War II interventions have become increasingly robust. Initially interventions were limited by fears over the potential reaction of the Soviet Union and were largely focused at the international and higher state levels. The Cold War had a secondary effect in distorting the originally close relationship between Development and Security as outlined in the Truman Doctrine of 1947, which became siloed as the US and Soviet Union sought influence through development spending (Truman, 1947). The post-Cold War period was characterised by an increasing focus on the need for state-centred interventions, such as Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAP – for trade and economics); SSR (for the control of armed forces, discussed on p. 49) and the expansion of democratic governance (to expand the social contract). This was often through dealing with state structures where the Liberal states asserted the sovereignty of their recently de-colonised territories. For example, Stedman (1988, pp. 176-7) discusses British concerns that their engagement with Rhodesia in the 1970s and 1980s might lead to the perception that Britain was attempting to recolonise parts of Africa.

However the increase in intervention did not provide the peace dividend that was expected from the end of the Cold War as it became clear that the global governance system, including the United Nations and other Bretton Woods institutions, was faced with a growing number of serious, at times catastrophic, crises. This included the unravelling of the state, the challenges from globalisation and the supposed 'end of history' (Fukuyama, 1992, p. xi). It seemed a darker Hobbesian future was emerging. With some hindsight it is possible to see the contours of the process which led to a more engaged international community striving to ensure that governance was secured and expanded in some parts of the world. This section describes the

evolutions in Liberal tools for addressing threats in the international system, with a particular focus on the UN and SSR.

The basis for exogenous statebuilding by the international community comes from a range of instruments, normally centred on the UN Security Council which can mandate interventions, particularly politically orientated UN missions under Chapters 6 and 7 of the UN Charter (Law, 2006, p. 2). The political nature of UN interventions has grown since the end of the Cold War which enabled the UN to take on a more robust role (Boutros-Boutros Ghali, 1992) followed by the Brahimi Report (2000). As a result the number of UN Peacekeeping missions has grown rapidly since the 1990s and the number of missions from 1990 onwards is far greater than those between 1950 – 1989. This has been augmented by expanding multi-lateral interventions, particularly from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), stemming from SAPs in the 1980s, and the World Bank with the agreement of Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) since the late 1990s.

These UN missions gradually evolved since they were formed post-World War II. However, both First and Second Generation peacekeeping interventions were constrained by ongoing US–Soviet competition (Richmond, 2001, pp. 317-348). In order to meet the increasingly political goals individual UN agencies also expanded their remits accordingly. Particularly around the agendas of peacebuilding and peacekeeping, supported by the gradual bureaucratisation of development and statebuilding practice such as SSR (Ball, 2001, p. 45-66).

In conjunction with the expanding multi-lateral programmes bi-lateral donors have also increased their attention, spending and political involvement in programmes aimed at statebuilding in response to their geo-strategic concern for stability. This has involved an expansion of the terminology to address emerging issues, and as peacekeeping evolved into peacebuilding in the 1990s, then statebuilding and latterly stabilisation, an acceptance of intervention at the lowest levels of other states has developed (Richmond, 2001, pp. 317-34; Tuck, 2004, pp. 17-8). These interventions are carried out by a number of institutions and organisations from the UN to the European Commission (EC), to the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the UK's Department for International Development (DfID). Similarly in stabilisation, there are now academic and bureaucratic departments mobilising to cope with the most extreme examples of state 'failure' (introduced below).²⁷

²⁷ The names of some of the departments and basic information about their functions are available at: The Stabilisation Unit www.stabilisationunit.gov.uk; US Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS) <http://www.crs.state.gov/>; Canada Stabilization and Reconstruction Task Force (START) <http://www.international.gc.ca/START->; the Netherlands does not have a dedicated

The statebuilding paradigm which has expanded since the UN mission to Namibia in 1989-1990 to shore-up embattled governments or institute 'peace' has drawn heavily from Liberal traditions of state formation discussed previously. Not only that, they have drawn heavily from modern Western experience and systems of governance which seek to promote accountability, responsiveness and transparency.²⁸ This has been instead of rather than the more nuanced, more ethically challenging processes thrown up by social scientists who saw the formation of states as often being bloody, divisive and heterogeneous. In addition, as David Chuter has argued, when discussing the supposed 'fragility' of states in Africa it is important to recognise that it is Western inspired nation-states that have struggled in the context of being launched into statehood by de-colonisation effort. This is in contrast to the gradual expansion and deepening of state formation that occurred in much of Asia which has arguably been more stable (Chuter, 2009, p. 38).

While this may seem to be problematic on a conceptual level it also affects practical interventions. For example SSR processes which have been driven by the evolution of largely European states to cope with the post-Soviet era are now used to promote the *democratic control of armed forces* in all post-conflict states (Knight, 2009, p. 2-7). Why a state that has little experience of democracy would want to not only re-orientate its political system but also the way that it controls its armed forces (and by extension maintains the monopoly on the use of violence) is not clear, and is not logical. David Chuter (2006, p. 20) acknowledges that the idea that security sectors may be dysfunctional is not a specifically Western problem. There may indeed be requests from national leaders to Western states to assist with reform – however the application of these activities tends to take on Western form and the culture of the advisors themselves. (OECD, 2010, pp. 51-2)

Technical programmes to support statebuilding, including current account reform, electoral law changes or significant disarmament and demobilisation programmes are delivered in a manner which assumes that they are largely the same as the last place they were implemented. The emerging practice is then to implement a form of 'Liberal peace' (Chandler, 2004; pp. 187-206; Duffield, 2007, pp. 2-8) as a path of expanding international, normally Western, influence. This is not dissimilar to the process of learning and application of statebuilding in the colonial period in the 20th Century. In that era in the Middle East British colonial officers drew from experience across the Empire and current thinking about the British state to institute

unit for stabilisation but coordinates amongst the three core ministries (Grandia, 2009, pp. 15-6).

²⁸ McGee & Gaventa, 2010, pp. 4-6; World Bank, 2012, pp. 20-21.

statebuilding across the new Middle Eastern protectorates (Dodge, 2006, p. 187 — 200).

Currently, this can be seen in the new focus on 'core state functions' (DfID, 2009, p. 69-72). This emphasis on service delivery as a method for ensuring the social contract between a population and the state that mirrors Western notions of the role of the state is a core Liberal concept (Ghani and Lockhart, 2008, p. 124-168). These approaches essentially argue that by delivering a number of services, often basic security, education, health, transport facilities and justice, local populations will 'accept' the state and be less inclined to violently resist it.²⁹

However, these approaches fail to take account of the highly heterogeneous nature of states in conflict, within the states themselves as well as between them. Approaches which may be valid in one part of Yemen, Nepal, Afghanistan or Somalia may not only be inappropriate but could be ineffective if not plainly counter-productive to state formation in another (Anten, 2009, pp. 29-31). This heterogeneity means that relabeling interventions for different countries is simply a waste of time – but this is precisely how a large proportion of the peacebuilding and statebuilding sectors function. In an example from Afghanistan a retired military officer working for a consultancy company approached the Ministry of Interior in Kabul with a new plan for securing the capital. The title of the proposal was *Security Plan for Baghdad* (personal communication). This is critical in understanding the troubled processes of international interventions. They are not simply failing because they are not robust enough, focused on too few areas or led by fallible human leadership. They simply are not applying the right types of interventions for the countries they are working in and they often act in an *a historical* manner.

The interventions are further hampered by several factors. :Firstly, that 'intervention' is able to escape the *realpolitik* of international relations (Chandler, 2004, pp. 59-81). Secondly, that in and of itself intervention is in the best interests of the local population who are assumed to be unable to improve the situation (Weinstein, 2005, pp. 4-5). Thirdly, that the population wants or needs the intervention to 'build' their state when it is not clear that all populations want the kind of states that are being built (Hellander, 2005, p. 193-202). Fourthly, at a practical level it is assumed that the intervention will have the intended outcomes (Dennys & Fitz-Gerald, 2011, pp. 6, 16, 18). The failure of statebuilding is arguably the result of significant flaws in applying existing state formation theory to post-conflict situations (Jenkins and Plowden, 2006,

²⁹ These also seem to reflect very closely the discussions on what makes states fragile, e.g. USAID, 2005 and DfID, 2005, and therefore a tautology is reached where a state is fragile because it is not doing something it may not want to do, or its people demand (in the Western notion of demand).

pp. 154-6) or in the *a historical* interpretations of Liberal political philosophy (Shapiro, 1986, pp. 4-6). Despite the weaknesses of Liberal state formation theory and intervention have not stopped them from being used to structure and articulate statebuilding interventions aimed at supporting stability.

The discussion thus far has argued that Liberal political philosophy which drove European state formation and consolidation has been misconstrued to create a modern form of Liberal interventionism which attempts to implement a range of reforms – political, social and economic – in other countries that are deemed to be a threat to the international system dominated by the Liberal states. This section has concluded that the overarching package of Liberal intervention, focused on the state, is not internally coherent and fails to address experiences of state formation that have occurred across the globe, contributing to the failure of interventions. The following section examines the theoretical gaps in stability and how they contribute to the confused discourse and implementation of stabilisation.

The emergence of stabilisation

This section discusses how stabilisation emerged, in the wake of US and NATO-led military efforts in Afghanistan and Iraq, as the Liberal states in the international community struggled to cope with the post-Cold War environment and the ‘new wars’ that occurred amongst the people (Smith R., 2005, pp. 267-9; Kaldor, 2006, pp. 2-11). The argument is that stabilisation draws on the Liberal tradition in three areas – politics, security and development – whose interventions are either constructed in a manner that ignores the philosophical and theoretical underpinning of Liberalism or demonstrate illiberal tendencies.³⁰ This is critically important, and supports the contention that current forms of Liberalism are in fact *a historical*; a point made by philosophers for a generation (Shapiro, 1986, pp. 4-6).

The discussion above argued how interventions moved from structuring the international system to intervening in nation states as a process to support statebuilding and thus the international system. Stabilisation has evolved this engagement to a more local level and takes the distorted Liberal form of exogenous statebuilding. As it emerged in the 1990s on the back of peacebuilding, based largely on Weberian and Tillian thinking about Liberal state formation (Call, 2008a, pp. 7-11) to promote technical reform processes in situations which are in extreme flux.

It has then been assumed that stabilisation processes will produce a state which relates directly to Weber’s rational-legal form of legitimate domination, which will

³⁰ In this regard this thesis concurs with Sultan Barakat et al’s analysis that stabilisation is a new term for old practices which has been adapted in current operations and activities (Barakat, Deely, & Zyck, 2010, pp. 298-9).

promote international stability (ibid., 2008a, p. 7; Morrison, 1995, p. 364). In some senses the increasing localisation of intervention is an extension of the recognition that seemingly marginal 'periphery' states such as Somalia or Afghanistan (in international terms) can have a significant impact on the 'centre' of international order. For stabilisation, threats to the state in any region can undermine the viability of the state itself.³¹ This logic then determines that interventions should be carried out at lower and lower levels of administration from capital to province to district to village.

It is important to recognise that there is no significant theoretical foundation for stabilisation beyond the extension of Liberal interventionism as embodied in statebuilding, COIN and development. Instead there have been a series of practice-orientated evolutions in programming which have attempted to tie almost all forms of intervention to stabilisation.³² The only element of theoretical evolution comes from Jackson & Gordon who assert that 'it (stabilisation) is essentially a process that is ultimately rooted in **local perceptions of the legitimacy** and, crucially, the sustainability of their political authorities. As such, 'stabilisation' involves the construction of a complex political discourse rather than the imposition of any particular political model" (Jackson & Gordon, 2007, p. 653 – emphasis added), Stabilisation is currently more of a policy and political aim than a theory and its application bears testimony to the confusing creation of new bureaucratic systems across the Liberal states and the ever increasing intensity of external interventions.

Across the leading international agencies the UK Government's Stabilisation Unit³³ provides a much more focused aim which argues that stabilisation is "the process by which underlying tensions that might lead to a resurgence in violence and a breakdown in law and order are managed and reduced, whilst efforts are made to support preconditions for successful longer term development" (Stabilisation Unit, 2007, p. 1).³⁴ This encourages a rational-legal framework in the application of

³¹ For example Helmand in Afghanistan, the Ferghana valley in Tajikistan or the Hadramawt in Yemen; also see Jonathan Goodhand's work on centre-periphery relations in Afghanistan (Goodhand, 2009).

³² See for example the Stabilisation Issue Note series published by the UK's Stabilisation Unit which covers everything from SSR, Rule of Law, Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR), Governance, Development (including infrastructure and private sector development) and Gender (Stabilisation Unit, 2010a; Stabilisation Unit, 2010b; Stabilisation Unit, 2010c; Stabilisation Unit, 2010d; Stabilisation Unit, 2010e; Stabilisation Unit, 2010f).

³³ The UK's lead unit for stabilisation.

³⁴ Alternative definitions of stabilisation are offered by the US government, which links stabilisation to stability, security, transition and reconstruction (USAID, 2008, p.

programmes to ‘manage and reduce’ which seems at odds with the recognition that the best that could be hoped for in some cases is a less than optimal outcome. This is further at odds with the political and social context in fragile states which in Weberian terms embody ‘traditional’ legitimacy with patrimonial administrative systems or patron-client relations with the facade of rational-legal frameworks i.e. a Western or Soviet style bureaucracy (Rubin B., 2006, p. 175 – 185; Giustozzi A., 2008, p. 1; Hachhethu, 2009, pp. 42-4).

The paucity in the theory of stabilisation has undermined its use and applicability to ongoing operations and programmes. It raises questions about whether it is another element of the ‘linear’ process from humanitarian aid to developmental support or does it supersede some elements of emergency response. Does it represent a ‘securitisation of aid’ or re-emergence of development as a political tool, or in effect are all interventions from peacekeeping, peacebuilding, aid and development undertaken in the grander process of stabilisation? Alternatively, is it a part of COIN? Is COIN part of stabilisation, or if in fact they are separate, do they require different approaches?³⁵

These are questions which have been asked by many of the commanders and civilian representatives operating in extreme environments not only in Afghanistan and Iraq (van den Meer, 2009, p. 37-43). But they are also increasingly debated in parts of Mindanao in the Philippines, Nepal, Yemen, Somalia and at least a dozen other countries (HMG, 2011, pp. 8-14, 20, 25-8, 30-1; Stabilisation Unit, 2008b). This has led to a high degree of confusion about whether stabilisation should be led by military commanders or civilians, what are the most appropriate activities to undertake to promote stability or even what ‘stability’ looks like. In most states where stabilisation activity is at a relatively low level this confusion may be less problematic, but in environments where there is significant international focus, such as Iraq, where there are effectively half a dozen versions of stabilisation being implemented, it leads to a lack of strategic vision and operational effectiveness.

Even if it is possible to surmount this ambiguity there are several critical issues concerning stabilisation: it tends to assume that its interventions can be implemented in a linear programmatic fashion. For example, there is an assumption that a move

1). For the US military “Stabilization involves activities undertaken to manage underlying tensions, to prevent or halt the deterioration of security, economic, and/or political systems, to create stability in the host nation or region, and to establish the preconditions for reconstruction efforts” (DoD, 2006, p. 2).

³⁵ For example, David Kilcullen observes that one of the critical differences between stabilisation and COIN is that in COIN you want to see the government writ extended, whereas in stabilisation the government is likely to be part of the problem and extending their writ is probably harmful (Kilcullen, 2010).

from emergency aid and hearts and minds activities to force acceptance, to stabilisation operations will flow directly into longer-term development programmes (Collinson, Elhawary, & Muggah, 2010, pp. 3, 11). However, there is growing evidence of both the positive and negative effects of stabilisation programmes. For example the Wheat Seed Distribution programme in Helmand, was largely irrelevant in reducing opium cultivation in 2009 but conversely had surprising governance benefits which were then not capitalised on (Dennys & Fitz-Gerald, 2011, pp. 10-13).

In reality stabilisation interventions are an out-growth of trends within statebuilding and Liberal interventionism which themselves draw on Liberal assumptions regarding democracy, trade and security that may be so ingrained they are not even recognised (Roberts, 2009, pp. 63-86, Richmond, 2009, 324-344). Arguments about the failures of peacebuilding since the end of the Cold-War have not recognised these assumptions and by default have argued that failure means that a more extensive intervention should be tried in the future (Paris, 2004, pp. 234-5). Further there has been a re-discovery of the development-security nexus first articulated in the Truman doctrine as a way of making interventions more comprehensive and complex (Truman, 1947; Chandler, 2007, pp. 356-7). This has promoted development as a way to solve the stability problem rather than attempting an alternative approach.³⁶ This is despite the fact that there is often no single organisation that has the mandate to implement – let alone lead – on such an intervention.

When trying to understand the outcomes of stabilisation it may be useful to remember that not only do interveners have different lenses (as described in Chapter 1) through which they activate stabilisation, but that the host nations can also instrumentalise incoming resources clouding who is benefiting from interventions and why (Goodhand and Walton, 2009, p. 303-323).³⁷ Therefore, as in Figure 1 **Error! eference source not found.** below, it is worth viewing stabilisation operations and their impacts as the result of multiple levels of fractionalisation or distortions as the initial intent for an intervention is moulded and shaped away from the original aims.

Initially the departments of intervening states place their own technical and philosophical lenses on what stabilisation should be (see p. 7); these viewpoints are then transformed by both international and national politics (for example in the framing of a UN mandate or Status of Forces Agreement). This alters the original strategic intent but even from this point it does not continue in a linear fashion

³⁶ Amongst other alternative approaches see Barnett, 2006, who proposes Republicanism; or Roberts, 2009, who suggests Hybrid Polities.

³⁷ The model below does not take into account 'regional' actors or other states not fully aligned with Liberal intervention (such as China, Iran or India) whose activities can have both macro state-level impacts and micro impacts on operational areas.

because both the host nation and interveners have different, at times competing, demands of what a 'stabilised' outcome is. Therefore, in the implementation of stabilisation actions there is a distortion of outcomes. This fractionalisation is on top of the distortion which occurs between Liberal state formation theory and statebuilding reality as noted above, which leads to a dual distortion between the conception of intervention at a strategic level and the reality of outcomes at an operational level.

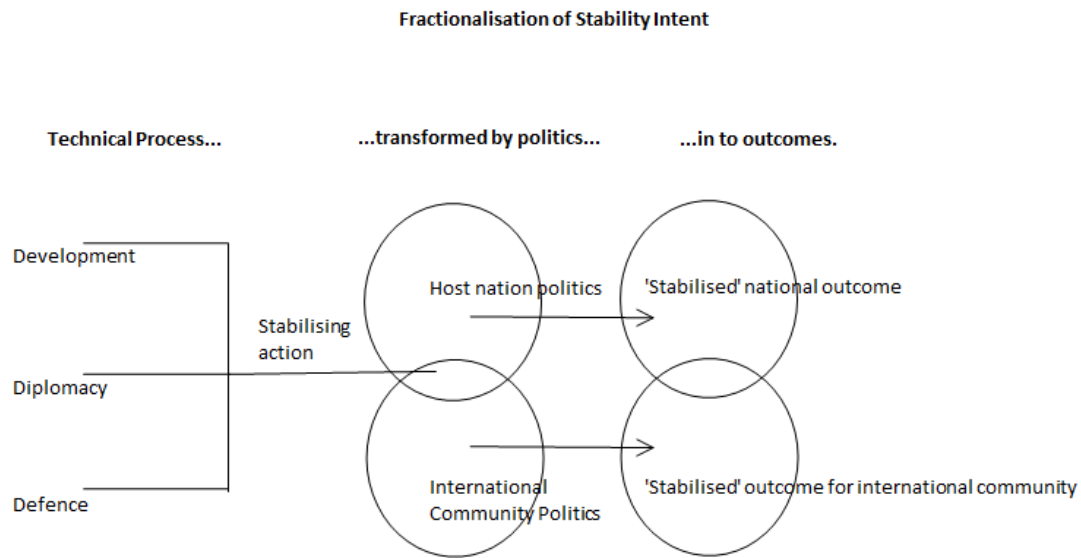


Figure 1 The distortion of stabilisation strategy to operations (Source: Author, 2012)

These distortions are only part of the weakness of stabilisation which also has not adequately addressed the broader issue that the mere presence of the international community can be destabilising (Chuter 2009, p. 39). Stabilisation has not fully accounted for the way in which activities undertaken as stabilisation can be violent, can undermine one another and undermine the ultimate goal of stability. Finally, by aligning itself with statebuilding, stabilisation makes the logical fallacy that statebuilding can be somehow benign. Building states through stabilisation is not a benign process, but one which involves the imposition of a political order, often by violent means, rather than the fostering of local political relationships which were suggested as being central to stabilisation. The technocratic approaches applied in the field mask the reality that statebuilding (or stabilisation) must be violent for it to succeed because state formation theory demonstrates that this cannot be escaped in heterogeneous societies no matter the form of state that emerges.

Stabilisation theory remains under-formulated and seems to continue and extend Liberal interventionism unquestioningly. This contributes to the distortions of interventions so that the connection between the conception shaping the intervention, the desire for stability and the reality of outcomes becomes opaque. This

masks two gaps or questions identified in applying Liberal philosophy to stability: how do you build a state and how can external actions support it by promoting stability? The next section will discuss some of the ongoing activities and approaches in stabilisation practice across the political, security and development spheres before providing some concluding remarks.

Stabilisation practice

This section will examine stabilisation in practice, first by looking at the comprehensive nature in which stabilisation interventions are planned in a multi-national context, secondly through a closer inspection of the main thrusts of activity along political, security and development lines before closing with a discussion on the limitations of stabilisation practice.

Structures to implement stabilisation

The implementation of stabilisation has been built upon the Comprehensive Approach as a bureaucratic innovation that defines how to intervene in fragile states, which has developed over the last decade (Patrick & Brown, 2007, pp. 1-2). These innovations, which are aimed at improving coordination, coherence and the impact of interventions, are known by several terms including the Comprehensive Approach (EU term), Whole of Government (US) or the 3Ds – Defence, Diplomacy and Development (Canadian).³⁸ These approaches do not just focus on the ‘core’ departments of Defence, Foreign Affairs and Overseas Development, but can also include the Departments of Interior (policing in particular), Trade, Industry, Customs, Environment and so on, which are sometimes collectively called the fourth ‘D’ (ibid., 2007, pp. 1-3; Mashatt & Polk, 2008, pp. 1-2).

A detailed discussion on the limitations of the Comprehensive Approach is beyond the scope of this paper as there are a myriad of specific national critiques; suffice it to say that it is not without substantial shortcomings. Firstly, the lack of strong coordinating bodies with actual authority to make major ministries work together causes a lack of direction and allows them to champion their own lenses of intervention. Secondly, even when there is direction there is often not the funding available to the coordinating body to direct activities. Thirdly, where there is both specific unity and funding available there is often no common set of tools, concepts, doctrine and even language between departments, meaning they can discuss the same issue in radically different terms leading to competing activities. Fourthly, despite gallant attempts at a central level to ensure coordination this often breaks down in the field (ibid., 2007, pp. 6-8). These criticisms about the overly ambitious attempts at coordination are magnified by the fact that the majority of interventions are carried out in multi-

³⁸ Coning, Lurås, Schia, & Ulriksen, 2009, p. 10

national operations which draw on a long pedigree of international missions. The assumption is however that in order to improve the legitimacy of international stability operations they must be multi-national military and UN-led missions.

The different lenses of stability outlined in Chapter 1 suggest that there are multiple interpretations of stability and consequently stabilisation which stem in large part from the multiple interpretations of Liberal interventionism. The analysis of departmental and cross-governmental papers about their understanding of stabilisation suggests that stabilisation can be a function, an activity or an approach. Each entity within each government presents their own conception of stabilisation leading to a continual reification of understanding through various lenses such that stabilisation in a multi-national operation can mean all things to all people. This leads to the chief critique of the Comprehensive Approach in addressing fragility, which is the conceptual lack of clarity about what is a fragile state and what form an intervention in such a state should take. These problems lead to a dizzying array of positions, approaches and modalities of intervention (ibid., 2007, pp. 4-6).

Irrespective of the confused discourse surrounding stabilisation interventions, for the UK at least stabilisation is considered a form of support to countries emerging from violent conflict and is operationalised by the four Ps:

- 1) Preventing or reducing violence
 - 2) Protecting people and key institutions
 - 3) Promoting political processes which lead to greater stability
 - 4) Preparing for longer term non-violent politics and development
- (Stabilisation Unit, 2008a, p. 2 and 2009).

The need to implement stabilisation, or address weak states, has led to the formation of units and departments in several Western bureaucracies tasked with promoting stability.³⁹ Whilst a broad discussion on other approaches to 'stabilisation' is beyond the scope of this thesis (there is a useful discussion in Blair and Fitz-Gerald, 2009), it is important to emphasize that the technocratic approach explicit in the design of UK interventions is not unique. It can be broadly applied to other major states promoting stabilisation, including the US, Canada and the Netherlands.⁴⁰

Most of these bureaucratic entities are concerned with three objectives: 1) the management of a fund to support stabilisation activities in target countries;⁴¹ 2) the

³⁹ See footnote 27 above.

⁴⁰ This is in effect a process that began with the Liberal interventionist politics from the 1990s which is now embodied in new bureaucratic responses to Liberal interventionism (Duffield, 2001, pp. 7-12).

⁴¹ In the UK this is called the Stabilisation Aid Fund and is taken from the Ministry of Defence (MoD), though the Foreign and Commonwealth office (FCO) and the

deployment of civilians to posts overseas;⁴² 3) ensuring that the fund and deployed personnel work towards a single plan agreed between the parent ministries of the (stabilisation) department. What is striking in the evolution of these units and the setting of priorities is that there seems to be a disconnect between the politically orientated goals of stabilisation, the technical approaches advocated, and the lack of influence over policy that these bodies have. While recognising that there has been an evolution in stabilisation practice (Gordon, 2010b), the broadest public operational framework is the Stabilisation Tasks Matrix, which covers 14 sets of tasks.⁴³

These tasks are overwhelmingly technical in nature and cover a bewildering array of potential actions from public finance, to education, irrigation, electrification and SSR. Though the matrix is described as a menu to choose interventions from it is striking that the interventions primarily reflect technocratic developmentalist thinking along with an emphasis on military delivery in non-permissive environments like Helmand (Stabilisation Unit, 2008a). This reaffirms the analysis that stabilisation practice has evolved in a theoretical vacuum by extending exogenous intervention to the local or village level.

This is not a criticism that can solely be levelled at the UK, or simply at stabilisation activities. More broadly when looking at governance interventions by international actors they are predominately designed by civilian donors with a heavy emphasis on quantitative progress indicators, used to demonstrate 'impact', and almost no consideration of what governance actually means (Ahmar & Kolbe, 2011, pp. 8-9; Cohen, 2006, pp. 2-4). Services are often used as a proxy for governance and ignore issues of trust in the formation of legitimate government. Most programmes also fail

Department for International Development (DfID) also have budgetary control of the £269m, which was agreed as part of the Comprehensive Spending Review in October 2007 (Stabilisation Unit, 2009).

⁴² In the UK this is the Deployable Civilian Experts and the newly established Civil Service Stabilisation Cadre.

⁴³ The full list includes; (1) Pre-entry Strategy Formulation and Planning; (1b) In Country Stabilisation Oversight; (2) Immediate Security: Enforcement of Ceasefires and Peace Agreements; (3) Counter Starvation, Destitution; Stabilise Population Movements; (4) Effective Peace Processes, Political Reconciliation and Settlement; (5) Public Order: Provide Internal Security; (6) Immediate Restoration of Basic Services, Infrastructure and Livelihoods; (7) Rebuild and Reform Security Sector; (8) Ensure Territorial Integrity; (9) Effective Government Economic and Financial Management; (10) Reconstruct and Reform Justice Sector; (11) Facilitate Acceptable Democratic Political Processes; (12) Re-establish Essential Machinery of Government; (13) Begin Long-term Social Service and Infrastructure Development; (14) Strategic Communications and Support Building (Stabilisation Unit, 2008a).

to recognize that there are negative outcomes from their activities which can undermine legitimate governance, such as corruption.

This section has briefly outlined the Comprehensive Approach used to operationalise stabilisation activities employed by the Liberal states. The following sections discuss some of the basic activities along the three major lines of implementation: Political, Security and Development (or the 3Ds of Diplomacy, Defence and Development). Each section starts with a broader discussion about how, for example, diplomacy has evolved as an external intervention before highlighting some of the activities currently being undertaken. As well as highlighting the deficiencies in each area the section concludes that a more useful understanding of stabilisation is possible by reasserting the primacy of politics which also sheds light on the deficiencies in the statebuilding/stabilisation paradigm. This identifies the areas of focus for the research questions and hypothesis that are developed in Chapter 3.

Politics: The state and stabilisation

Political stabilisation encompasses more traditional diplomatic relations, but is also focused on the implications of activities normally termed governance in support of statebuilding, or in US parlance, nation-building. The term political is retained because both in their implicit intention and in the focus of activities, governance interventions have significant political resonance. In this subsection the theory of democratic nation-building, as derived from Liberal philosophy is introduced as well as the paucity of academic evidence for the impact of local level governance interventions.

Political interventions by Liberal states in other countries draw heavily on Liberal philosophy. At their heart is the assertion behind the 'democratic peace' argument derived from Kantian thinking which suggests that democracies are more likely to be at peace with themselves and their neighbours. This also foregrounds the importance of individual rights and liberty championed by Hayek amongst others. These 'reforms' are completed by reforms to address the market (Smith), labour and land ownership rights (Locke) and to provide the population with services, via the state, to inculcate a social contract (Rousseau). These changes are backed up by the necessity of force to 'protect' the civilian population from themselves (Hobbes, see p. 21).

There are many interpretations of this story which can be used to exemplify Liberal interventionist tendencies.⁴⁴ For the purposes of this thesis the statebuilding theory articulated through the RAND Corporation was chosen because whilst it was published after the Nepal conflict ended and late in the prosecution of the current Afghan conflict it draws on social and political theory from the previous decade, including

⁴⁴ This could include Call, 2008a, pp. 3, 7-16; Duffield, 2001, pp. 9-12; Barakat, Deely, & Zyck, 2010, pp. S315-6.

other work which explicitly links nation-building, military operations of various forms and economic and social development in one package (Dunlop, 2008, p. 180). Their core definition of nation-building (the US term for statebuilding):

“[nation-building] involves the use of armed force [Hobbes] as part of a broader effort to promote political [Hayek] and economic reforms [Smith and Locke] with the objective of transforming a society [Rousseau] emerging from conflict into one at peace with itself and its neighbors [Kant].” (Dobbins et al, 2007, p. 1 – names in parentheses added)

The selection of a particularly US-centric model of statebuilding is deliberate as it is the model under which Liberal statebuilding is likely to be attempted by external interveners, but by adding in the philosophical forebears of the US concept of nation-building it is possible to identify the progression from Liberal political philosophy to modern day Liberal interventionism. From amongst the range of political and governance activities the discussion here will focus firstly on democracy promotion and then introduce other elements of governance activity.

The political concept of democracy, where the majority of an electorate make decisions of concern to them is laudable, but is largely separate from the way democracy is exported through Liberal interventionism which relies on a specific interpretation of Kantian thinking and the functioning of modern Liberal states.⁴⁵ The Democratic Peace agenda argues that democracies are more peaceful than non-democracies, and that in particular they never go to war against each other (Tures, 2001, p. 227). Where this principle was first established is a matter of some debate, but some researchers have suggested that the ancient Greek democratic city states were the first examples of the democratic peace agenda (Weart, 2001, pp. 609-613). The paradigm thus promotes the Kantian view of a perpetual democratic peace (Mitchell et al, 1999, p. 771-792) where democracies do not go to war with each other which may be very attractive but is deeply flawed in implementation (Hermann and Kegley, 2001, p. 237-245; Mann, 1999, pp. 1-34).⁴⁶

Despite the mixed practical applications, democratic systems have been promoted and instituted as part of international interventions in states in a wide range of post-

⁴⁵ The difference between the core concepts of democracy and what Liberal societies call democracy is not readily understood by interventionists, or even some academics and is a point well made by Hayek, 1978, pp. 152-3.

⁴⁶ Academics have sought to measure monadic, dyadic and systemic relations between states (Mitchell et al, 1999, p. 771-792) but interpretations tend to ignore long-term trends. Farber and Gowa (1997, p. 393-417) argue that it is not democracy in itself that produces peace, but a collection of states with common interests (Kupchan, 2008).

Cold War crises including East Timor, Iraq, Afghanistan and Nepal, which all have different political economies.⁴⁷ The promotion of democratic values is ingrained in the intervention strategies of Liberal states and forms a key component of the lens they use to understand conflict (HMG, 2011, pp. 11, 32; The White House, 2010, p. 37). The inherent and inevitable success of the Democratic peace argument has unhelpfully supported the triumphalism of the democratic paradigm after the Cold War and the apparent explosion in 'freedom' and democracy which may not be as sustainable as its proponents hope (Huntington, 1991, pp. 21-6; Diamond, 1993, pp. 97-105, 335 and Puddington, 2009).

Democratisation models⁴⁸ focus on inter-state relations and ignore the basic fact that establishing democracy can be highly conflictual within states (Mitchell et al, 1999, p. 771-792). Much of the literature around the peaceful nature of the democratic system ignores the potentially destabilising impact that the enforced introduction of democratic institutions can cause. Instead they seem much more concerned about promoting the Liberal governance agenda, for example see the work of Freedom House's Freedom Index (Puddington, 2009; or Paris 2004, pp. 40-2). This is particularly problematic in weak and failed states where the imposition of democracy on entities which are still *a priori* conflictual may allow conflict to flourish by allowing space for dissent (Mousseau, 2001, p. 547- 567). The fact that democracy allows space may contribute to the ability for actors to overcome collective action problems and make resistance easier to mobilise.

This rush to support democracy amongst Liberal states fails to acknowledge its shortcomings. One of the causes of instability can be external intervention in the governance system which can be destabilising in and of itself (Stewart and O'Sullivan,

⁴⁷ Roland Paris identified 8 instances between 1991 and 1997 (1997, pp. 54-89).

⁴⁸ Some of the main theories around democracy promotion come from structuralist, modernist and transitional positions. Barrington Moore's structuralist theories about the social origins of democracy and dictatorship relied heavily on using class explanations for the paths taken by different states (Moore, 1966, pviii-ix), though the level of causation between class structure and political strategy is in doubt (Potter et al, 1997, p. 24-30). Lipset's modernist approach argues democracy is a natural evolution as development indices increase – such as incomes or literacy (Lipset 1959, cited in Clague, 1997, p. 91; Rustow, 1970, p. 337-363, Potter et al, 1997, p. 10-23). Inevitably this is linked to the Liberal peace agenda which tries to combine development, economic growth and democratic governance all in one (Duffield, 2001, pp. 9-12; Paris, 2004, p. 41) but it is difficult to identify causality in the variables (Potter et al, 1997, p. 24-30). Rustow (1970, p. 337-363) proposed a theory that relies on the notion of transition, with key requisites including national unity and conflict, and that there must at some point be a conscious decision by all parties to move to a (competitive) democratic system which must be habituated.

1998, p. 27-30). For example, the imposition of democracy on Haiti in the 1990s by the Clinton administration was lauded as a success despite Haiti lurching from crisis to crisis for the next decade (Cramer, 2006, pp. 272-6). David Chuter has suggested that a good indicator of where there will be conflict is where democratic institutions have been imposed by the West (Chuter, 2009, p. 36). There continue to be regular examples of democratic events causing conflict and violence including, East Timor in 2007, Kenya in 2007, Afghanistan in 2009 or Iraq in 2010. Furthermore, most democracy promotion supporters tend to ignore the need for significant coercive force to control a territory. This is in part because they often equate democracy with small security sectors, which given the nature of state formation seems counter-intuitive (ibid., 2006, p. 9). Some point to the more 'successful' cases, but these have been relatively small states, Bosnia and Rwanda for example, whose own processes of democratisation have not been without significant problems (Chandler, 2006, pp. 101-120).

The striking feature of the democratisation debate within political intervention and stabilisation is that the intervention cherry picks convenient elements and ignores unpalatable realities. International practice in conflict afflicted countries unpacks a series of interventions with underlying assumptions about the 'correctness' of certain approaches, including democratisation which do not necessarily fit well within the classic understanding of *how to form a state*. These biases run so deeply that they may not even be realised, leading to inexorable failure (Jahn, 2007, pp. 89-90). This inability to realise paradigmatic weaknesses also leads to assumptions that there cannot be any alternatives to democracy promotion which are viable and legitimate. This blindness may also contribute to the fact there is not enough literature about the way in which democracy promotion can undermine statebuilding.

Whilst there is often a strong focus on the national systems of democratic governance, Liberal states also intervene heavily in local governance systems to promote 'good governance' through a variety of approaches which can broadly be described as being focused on institutional governance to promote local stability. However, it is striking that there is a significant paucity of evidence as to whether sub-national governance interventions promote the state (let alone promote stability).

There is some literature on historical colonial administration; for example the use of political officers in Pakistan's North-Western Frontier Province (NWFP now known as Khyber-Pakhtunkwa). Tripodi (2008, pp. 123-151) argued that whilst the individual officers in the NWFP may have had good cultural understanding this in itself was not enough to keep the peace. They often failed to fully understand the nature family and tribal loyalties; their interpretations of what was happening was subject to re-interpretation by their managers in the administrative hierarchy; and at a strategic

level the options open to the political officers were limited by overriding concerns. However, this was during a period of colonial administration and the application to the modern era where the host nations maintain their sovereignty is not entirely clear.⁴⁹

The little theoretical thinking about political intervention that has addressed sub-state diplomatic action has tended to focus on para-diplomacy (or constituent diplomacy). This looks at the way in which sub-state actors in different countries interact with one another, such as the London Mayor's role in the 2012 Olympic bid or cities boycotting trade with Myanmar. In the case of India cities have engaged with the IMF and World Bank on lending to the Indian (nation) state, which would then in turn benefit that city (Kleiner, 2008, p. 321-349). Again, this is not entirely relevant to the context of one state funding sub-national governance reforms in another state to counter a politically orientated threat such as an insurgency.

This section has highlighted the academic and philosophical concerns with the unbridled promotion of democracy and good governance in fragile contexts. It has further suggested that stabilisation activities which purport to broaden governance engagement follow in the same Liberal vein of thinking and that these twin processes are in tension and may threaten stability as much as they could support it. This tension is particularly acute because there is so little evidence about the impact of political governance interventions at a sub-national level. Changes in *de jure* political and governance processes are irrelevant without the will and capability to enforce them through the provision of security, which acts as a key enabler for any state and is discussed in the next subsection.

Security: Defence and stabilisation

The nature of modern conflicts means war is no longer fought for victory⁵⁰ but rather to protect a population, preserve a peace deal or government, or for stability as an end in itself (Kaldor, 2006, p. 29; Smith R., 2005, p. 17; Angstrom, 2007, pp. 2-5). In addition the range and scale of military activities have increased at the same time as military forces themselves have, overall, shrunk (Addinell, 2005, pp. 27-31). The combined pressures of the changing nature of conflict, increasing demands on the military, in addition to the cutting or restructuring of expenditure and priorities in the context of significant long-term deployments in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere, has forced the Western military organisations in NATO to address their role in promoting

⁴⁹ For similar reasons the application of lessons from civil military activities in World War II must be applied sensitively in the modern era.

⁵⁰ In this regard Karl von Clausewitz's work is the seminal piece on identifying the aims of interstate warfare which simply states; "the object is victory" (Clausewitz, 2006, p. 68).

stability. The following subsections address the two main areas of military activity that have resonance for discussions on stabilisation: COIN and SSR.

Counterinsurgency and stabilisation doctrine

The related emergence of stabilisation doctrine and revision of COIN doctrine in the same period, and the difficulty in distinguishing between COIN and stabilisation operations has been a critical point of confusion about the antecedents of both concepts. This section will briefly outline current doctrinal thinking about COIN and stabilisation.

Insurgency and COIN have been defined doctrines for over a century but have changed significantly since the colonial period. The wars of de-colonisation in Malaya, Algeria and Vietnam are the main sources of 20th Century discourse when COIN doctrine was vigorously debated. This debate has continued in the post-Cold War era encompassing the conflicts in Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, Nepal, the Philippines, Somalia and most recently Syria. Irrespective of the era insurgencies have always been understood as political rather than military crises (Galula, 1964, p. 4; Taber, 2002, p. 10; Nagl, 2002, p. 25).

Doctrine developed in the post-colonial era was found to be wanting in the context of the new wars being fought amongst people in the 21st Century, which led to a revision of military theory and doctrine. A secondary issue has been the technological changes that have affected the way insurgencies can be fought (Nagl, 2002, pp. 24-5).⁵¹ However it has been the changes in the nature of war, where the Liberal states are no longer contesting outright victory but pursuing more prosaic less well defined outcomes, such as stability, that has shaped the locus of military doctrine (Smith R., 2005, p. 23; Cassidy, 2006, pp. 1-4). Irrespective of the changes in doctrine the political imperative and the requirement for a political counterrevolution to insurgency have remained constant components of the literature.

Stabilisation for both the US and UK military is focused on support to fragile states and aims to protect the population.⁵² UK doctrine asserts that the military are there to

⁵¹ Principally the decreasing costs and greater availability of weaponry, explosives and communications technology, which have allowed insurgents to disseminate their messages more easily than the previous generations; see the writings of Che Guevara (Guevara, 2009) or the lengths to which Mao went to mobilise the population in the early phase of the People's War (Mackinlay, 2009, pp. 15-19; Cheek, 2010, pp. 6-13) with evidence of Nepali Maoist or Taliban approaches which utilise social media, mobile video sharing (Gwakh, 2011) as well as more traditional letters and posters put up in villages (Lecomte-Tilouine, 2009).

⁵² In much the same way as COIN focuses on the protection of the population, which is in the top ten COIN principles, the first three principles being focused on organisation

‘support’ other states but it does not reveal how that support can be delivered – nor what the form of the desired outcome is.⁵³ This places stabilisation operations firmly within the Liberal paradigm and links it to both political governance objectives as well as humanitarian imperatives. Whilst this may be laudable, the context in which stabilisation has been developed means that it is also closely associated and reliant upon COIN doctrine. Indeed for some authors, particularly those in the policy domain, stabilisation operations are simply part of the broader concepts of COIN, complex operations and reconstruction (Lindley-French, 2009, p. 9). Others link stabilisation primarily with nation-building, though as argued above the counterrevolutionary nature of COIN means that it is akin to re-making a nation or state. (Binnendijk & Johnson, 2004, pp. xiv-xvi).

For the purposes of this thesis it is important to assert that simply labelling an activity as a stability operation or stabilisation does not necessarily link the activity to, or equate to prompting ‘stability’. They instead link to the Liberal philosophy of intervention.⁵⁴ There is a functional difference between trying to understand conceptions of stability and processes that support it, i.e. stabilisation, which is the aim of this thesis, and doctrine which outlines options for stability operations. Importantly UK stabilisation doctrine identifies the threats to stability being insurgency, failed states and humanitarian disasters - in that order – meaning that COIN and stabilisation operations in current doctrine are closely linked and the stronger heritage of COIN and its dominance in operations means that it should be the primary doctrinal theory tested. (FM3-07, 2008, pp. 2-1)

Comparing US and UK COIN and stabilisation doctrine is instructive particularly as the teams developing the doctrines fed off one another, but it is clear that the primary difference between stabilisation and COIN operations is in the identification of an insurgent threat. In practical terms though the activities and the proposed impact of

and understanding: “1. Primacy of political purpose; 2. Unity of effort; 3. Understand the human terrain; 4. Secure the population” (MoD, 2009, pp. 1-1).

⁵³ “Stabilisation is the process that supports states which are entering, enduring or emerging from conflict, in order to prevent or reduce violence; protect the population and key infrastructure; promote political processes and governance structures which lead to a political settlement that institutionalizes non-violent contests for power; and prepares for sustainable social and economic development” (JDP 3-40, 2009, p. xv).

⁵⁴ The doctrine on Stability Operations states: “Stability operations aim to stabilize the environment enough so the host nation can begin to resolve the root causes of conflict and state failure. These operations establish a safe, secure environment that facilitates reconciliation among local or regional adversaries. Stability operations aim to establish conditions that support the transition to legitimate host-nation governance, a functioning civil society, and a viable market economy” (FM3-07, 2008, pp. 3-2).

those activities (i.e. supporting governance, protecting the population etc.) are very similar despite some confusion about whether stabilisation is part of COIN or vice versa. The UK stabilisation doctrine effectively situates the military contribution to COIN within stabilisation (MoD, 2009b, pp. 1-4), whereas the US military's Counter Insurgency Doctrine JP 3-24 places 'stability operations' as part of COIN strategy (Thruelsen, 2008, pp. 7-15).

The US conception is disputed by some authors such as David Kilcullen, who sees the causes of instability in Afghanistan as being broader than the insurgency, but at the operational level the terms in Afghanistan seem to be used synonymously (Kilcullen, 2010; Ucko, 2009, pp. 10-11; Kilcullen, 2009, pp. 46-8). Given the overlapping nature of COIN and stabilisation, and that COIN has a more significant focus and doctrinal pedigree, this thesis will interrogate COIN theory as one of the concepts against which to test the stability hypothesis developed through the field work. Across the COIN literature this thesis will consider US Counterinsurgency Doctrine JP 3-24 as the primary source.⁵⁵

As well as conceptual similarities regarding their aims, both COIN and stabilisation doctrine pre-supposes the need for robust engagement by civilian actors. This places substantial importance on the political aspects of operations which occur in fragile states,⁵⁶ and then gives military COIN and stabilisation objectives two potentially competing aims. Firstly, is a politically viable state to control the territory of the host nation that the intervention is supporting. Secondly, by placing stabilisation within the concept of state fragility for which the remedy is statebuilding, the military is

⁵⁵ "COIN is comprehensive civilian and military efforts taken to defeat an insurgency and to address any core grievances. COIN is primarily political and incorporates a wide range of activities, of which security is only one. Unified action is required to successfully conduct COIN operations and should include all [Host nation (HN)], US, and multinational agencies or actors. Civilian agencies should lead US efforts. When operational conditions do not permit a civilian agency to lead COIN within a specific area, the joint force commander (JFC) must be cognizant of the unified action required for effective COIN. Ideally, all COIN efforts protect the population, defeat the insurgents, reinforce the HN's legitimacy, and build HN capabilities. COIN efforts include, but are not limited to, political, diplomatic, economic, health, financial, intelligence, law enforcement, legal, informational, military, paramilitary, psychological, and civic actions. As capable insurgents evolve and adapt, counterinsurgents must evolve and adapt" (JP3-24, 2009, p. 12).

⁵⁶ It is significant that military doctrine has also used the concept of state fragility, which as outlined in Chapter 1 has significant deficiencies; for the US "A fragile state still has a viable host nation government, but it has a reduced capability and capacity to secure, protect and govern the population. Without intervention it is likely to become a failed state" Lexicon p. 10, JDP 3-40.

instructed to lay the foundations for statebuilding processes as described in the previous section. Whilst a combined civilian-military effort may promote synergies, efficiency and increasing impact, the processes of statebuilding currently employed by civilian leadership are blunt instruments often not tailored to the differing environments (Call, 2008, p396; Keen, 2008, pp. 116-119). This would seem to suggest that military operations are led into territory they may not be suited to address, such as development and local governance.

Support to Security Sector Reform (SSR)

SSR has been a significant component of the security related interaction between Liberal states and other states that they engage with. Its apparent transformative power is growing in credence since it emerged as a concept in the post-Cold War era as both Western democracies and Eastern bloc countries grappled with how to reform their military forces. SSR has not remained confined to the former Soviet Republics to where it was first exported and has since featured as a key component of most international transitions. However it has defied comprehensive definition amongst practitioners and academics (Hendrikson and Karkoszka, 2002, p. 178-181). The example below has been developed by Nicole Ball and Michael Brzoska which includes the key components;

The security community

- Core security institutions: armed forces; police; paramilitary forces; coast guard; militias, and intelligence services
- Security sector oversight bodies: legislatures and legislative committees; ministries of defence, internal affairs, justice, foreign affairs; office of the president; and financial management bodies (ministries of finance, budget offices, auditor general's offices)
- Non-core security institutions: judiciary, customs, correctional services, and other uniformed bodies
- Non-statutory security force institutions: liberation armies, guerrilla armies, traditional militias, political party militias, and private security companies.

Source: Wulf, 2002, p. 14 citing Ball and Brzoska, 2002, p. 8

Whilst largely focused at a central level SSR has a strong democratizing component which links the structure, control and composition of the security sector directly to the political and governance spheres and the ideals of the democratic peace argument discussed above (Knight, 2009, p. 2-7 and Nathan, 2007, pp. 14-5). At a more local level it is not clear whether stabilisation as a more localised form of intervention is linked to SSR or not. As Fitz-Gerald notes stabilisation has a short-term focus coupled with an overriding national security impetus which competes with long-term, allegedly locally owned, SSR processes (Fitz-Gerald, 2010, pp. 163-5). Irrespective of the theoretical debate, in practice SSR (and DDR) are considered to be closely linked to stabilisation in practice and linked inexorably to the enforcement of political

agreements (Stabilisation Unit, 2010a, p. 1; Stabilisation Unit, 2010b, p. 1). It is instructive that a review of post-conflict SSR in Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Haiti, Kosovo, Sierra Leone and Timor-Leste argued that SSR has to proceed before “any legitimisation of the process through an electoral process” (Law, 2006, p. 2). This calls into question the idea that SSR can in any way be said to include or promote democratic oversight (Knight, 2009, p. 17), but also succinctly assumes that SSR is in some way a natural process that must occur in the post-conflict environment.

Falling between COIN and stabilisation operations and policy and programme orientated SSR lies the issue of ‘train and equip’ programmes which can involve the significant transfer of military expertise and hardware, and this can have implications across the modes of security engagement. These activities have largely been under the purview of Special Operations Forces of which the US army has had particular experience in Latin America (Waghelstein, 2008, pp. 151-167), as has the UK in Nepal through its longstanding engagement with the Gurkhas.

The US programmes, which were initiated after the Cuban Missile Crisis by President Kennedy, have led to the aggressive use of counter-terror and counter-narcotics initiatives that not only have had a range of unforeseen outcomes. This has included the militarisation of police forces and growth of paramilitary forces, but has often fed directly into the conflict dynamics and instability of those states. In addition these trained forces have spread their influence not just to the hard security arena, but to the control of criminal activities that have threatened the state (Spencer, 2001, pp. 1-7). The amorphous nature of train and equip means that in this thesis it is considered a tool for both approaches to stabilisation in the security sphere; statebuilding focused SSR and locally focused COIN support.

This subsection has described how security support in areas deemed to be of interest to the Liberal states has expanded since the end of the Cold War as there has been less international competition and resistance to support by Western states. Current interventions have dealt extensively with COIN operations where external forces have been engaged directly in operations as well as providing equipment and training for host nation forces. At the same time SSR processes, which first emerged in the Western and Eastern blocs in Europe have been applied to other contexts in an attempt to ‘democratise’ the security sector. The multiplicity of interventions with overlapping goals has led to tensions and there are concerns that the implementation of divergent programmes in the security sector may be self-defeating. These pressures become particularly acute when the strategic aim is stability and in areas where military-led COIN and stabilisation operations are being deployed.

Development and humanitarian action

Development, which has been the element of the 3Ds which operated most independently during the Cold War, has become a central tenant of stabilisation practice. The increase in pressure to see ‘impact’ and ‘progress’ in fragile environments where stabilisation doctrine posited that development could be used to instil the support of the local population for political/military operations (MoD, 2009b, pp. 4-11), address root causes of conflict (Eavis, 2003/4, pp. 58-9), and can also be used to explain to electorates at home the reasons for the troops being deployed overseas (Fishstein & Wilder, 2012, p. 24). Whatever the intention of the interventions they are still rooted in developmentalist approaches to intervention and are separated into economic and social development in this discussion. These are tacitly promoted as being part of the Liberal intervention and form a key component of stabilisation, particularly for the United States.

Whilst there are many interpretations of development theory they are fundamentally interventions that aim to promote a “sustainable Economy ... *the ability of the people to pursue opportunities for livelihoods within a system of economic governance bound by law ... [and further] Social Well-Being [which is the] ability of the people to be free from want of basic needs and to coexist peacefully in communities with opportunities for advancement*” (USIP, 2009, p. 2.9). This version of development theory is used as the basis to discuss development interventions and stability.

Alongside development intervention is humanitarian action, which is often conflated with development activities.⁵⁷ The distinctive nature of humanitarian action is the application of principles, most notably those of the ICRC (IFRC & ICRC, 1994), which attempt to de-politicise the activities and to focus solely on the immediate protection of life. This approach in itself contains within it strong political conceptions of the worth of people and the requirement for other nations to respond to their need. Indeed in the statebuilding theory outlined on page 41 the authors expressly link development contexts and humanitarian crises based on the work of Amartya Sen, who advanced the conception of development as a means to freedom from want and fear (Sen, 1999, pp. 15-17, 292-3; Dobbins et al, 2007, pp. 118-9). This is significant because along with the blurred distinction between humanitarian and development activities there is an important element of development theory and practice, which is almost universally ignored – development interventions are almost all assumed to be humanitarian, which they are not, development and humanitarianism are quite

⁵⁷ This is unsurprising given both political leaders and professional bodies blur the lines between humanitarian and development action, the most well-known was Colin Powell’s aphorism that NGOs were force multipliers (Stoddard, 2003, p. 5).

distinct - and further they are also assumed to be positive, or at least have positive intentions.

Humanitarian action has become a central component of the Liberal agenda. Its utility in justifying intervention and the conflation of life-saving humanitarian action and long-term development allows Western states to engage in other states over the long-term on a transformative basis, often with the direct support of elites in recipient countries who tacitly agree with the ideals of the Liberal project (Curtis, 2001, pp. 6-7). Whilst effort in the field sites is weighted towards development, humanitarian action does present some useful issues which challenge the prioritisation of activity in stabilisation. An additional challenge has been provided by the emergence of the concept of early recovery, from the United Nations amongst others, has contributed to the continued blurring of boundaries between humanitarian action and development (Bailey & Pavanello, 2009, pp. 1-2; Collinson, Elhawary, & Muggah, 2010, p. 11).

The conflation of development and humanitarian action belies a historic philosophical assumption about Western ideas of 'progress' (Duffield, 2001 pp. 22-34) but theoretically this can lead to two very significant overestimations of the impact of development. Firstly, that development interventions have the impacts that are ascribed to them (which is often exceptionally hard to demonstrate in insecure environments). Secondly, that development can and will be used against interveners, if only through the re-distribution of resources via corruption (Keen, 2008, p116). Put most crudely, if interventions such as development and incentives such as money can be construed as a weapons system (Mallinson, 2010) then it must also be assumed that the weapon can be turned against those who deploy it. As a result the interveners should develop strategies to cope with this.

At the other end of the implementation spectrum are humanitarian and development activities delivered under the notions of 'hot stabilisation' which are effectively the same potential areas of activity implemented in hostile environments (Stabilisation Unit, 2007, pp. 1-2). Delivery is often carried out exclusively by the military and effected through the use of CIMIC and MSSTs to implement Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) or Consent Winning Activities (CWAs).⁵⁸ The range of potential actions they can carry out is vast, encompassing everything from the provision of emergency food supplies, education aids such as pens and books, to veterinary or health services (Stabilisation Unit, 2008a, pp. 4-37). The interventions can last a day or several months depending on the scale of the project. The interventions are ultimately rooted

⁵⁸ For a discussion on some of the tensions between military, diplomatic and development viewpoints on the utility of these approaches see Gordon, 2011, pp. 36-40.

in the conception that the provision of services can inculcate a population against the overtures of insurgent groups or help persuade the population that they should support the state.

Ultimately all of these modes of intervention, whether through NGOs, private development companies or military personnel are aimed at promoting economic and social well-being. This is discussed further in the following subsection and the discussion is then expanded to focus on whether there is an evidence base to support the idea that these activities support stability or stabilisation.

Economic and social development

The heritage of economic development theory reaches back to the writings of Adam Smith but was pushed further by Milton Friedman in the 20th Century who explicitly linked economic growth and economic development to the pursuit of liberty (Friedman, 1962, pp. 10-14). Whilst this represents the acme of economic progress, authors in the 20th Century have also developed the ideas of John Stuart Mill regarding education to promote an agenda of social development. More recently re-articulated by Amartya Sen who advocated for social, as well as economic, development, as a means to freedom from want and freedom from fear (Sen, 1999, pp. 15-17, 292-3).

It is clear that early conceptions of development and security held that they were intimately linked. The Truman Doctrine of 1947 spelled out the fact that half of the world's population living in poverty was "a threat to them[selves] and the more prosperous areas" (Truman, 1947). In the current discourse this argument is embodied in debates around the root causes of conflict and the need to meet basic needs to prevent conflict.⁵⁹ However, it was the political conditions of the Cold War which prevented development and humanitarian action from being incorporated with security and which in effect distorted their relationship for the next 50 years (Duffield, 2001, p. 35).

Providing support to the security sector (described above) during the Cold War effectively became "an instrument of power politics" (Cooper and Pugh, 2002, p. 4). Security was essentially a military issue – protecting borders and maintaining the state (Cooper and Pugh, 2002, pp. 5-6). This meant that non-military institutions did not engage with military issues in general, and in particular the economic institutions did not engage with the effects of military expenditure (Ball, 2001, pp. 45-66). Development during this period, while linked to foreign diplomatic policy and

⁵⁹ An early assertion of the need to address basic needs can be found in Streeten, 1981, pp. 8-18 and this has been developed in debates regarding conflict and basic needs (USIP, 2009, pp. 2-9;10-162).

overshadowed by the Cold War, was separate from military activities. The space created for development and humanitarian action was often then filled by the non-governmental sector. Towards the end of the Cold War – and with the beginning of the Reagan administration in the US – there was a greater appreciation of the links between security and development as a tool for foreign policy. There was also an understanding that development was useful for democratisation, for example, in El Salvador. However, while some parts of the administration saw this link they admitted it wasn't possible to change the way the military, state and development agencies worked together in practice (Thompson, 1987, pp. 102-116).

Part of the issue with discussing 'development' is the difficulty in separating out economic and social development interventions. This means that while they may be broad, their core assertion that development (in some form) is a moral imperative for humankind is unchallenged. The only real debates are around how that development should be achieved. There is, however, added complexity in the differences between *indigenous* and *exogenous* development processes, often driven by bi-lateral and multi-lateral donors. This makes generalisation difficult in particular when local development is fostered by non-state armed actors.

The developmental approach favoured by the exogenous actions of the international community tend to focus on nationally led processes, often being carried out in the context of a global policy framework. So ubiquitous is the approach that local understandings of development and post-conflict recovery are almost indiscernible from mainstream Liberal interventions which are often referred to as the Washington Consensus (Upreti, 2008, p. 7; Gore, 2000, pp. 789-90). The Liberal paradigm includes the developmental elements of joining the WTO or the production of a Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) for the World Bank. It tends to ignore the strength, relevance and importance of indigenous forms of development, which may lie outside formalised national development processes.

This exogenous thinking is promoted even in stabilisation, with Clare Lockhart's contribution to the Economic Development section of JDP 3-40 focusing on the need to support national frameworks and programmes (MoD, 2009b, Chp. 6A-1).⁶⁰ This is conceptually challenging for development activities aimed at supporting stability which may in reality be focused on a relatively small part of a country. Furthermore, in multi-national complex environments which are highly heterogeneous, it is

⁶⁰ A broader critique of Lockhart's work, on fragile states, is that it focuses on rebuilding states at a macro-level which may not be applicable in all contexts. It may be relevant for a context such as Afghanistan where stabilisation could be argued to be a national process, but in some fragile states approaches need to be localised to be effective for a specific sub-region of a country which is fragile.

questionable that one approach can be replicated easily in other areas without significant modification in implementation. Therefore when discussing development, in the context of processes of statebuilding and stabilisation, it is important to understand whether those processes are exogenous or indigenous, and whether they are managed within a national framework or attuned to local idiosyncrasies.

The *a historical* split between development and the other components of international system management has contributed to the issue identified by Shapiro above, which is that components of the Liberal project have evolved separately and now do not form an internally coherent body of thought (ibid., 1986, pp. 4-6, 274). In effect the wheel has turned and the expansion of developmental space free from specific political goals has tightened the idea of generic development as a public good which supports 'progress'. However it is now clearly instrumentalised to support the winning of the 'hearts and minds' of the local population and promote stabilisation (Stubbs, 1989, pp. 155-6).

In less militarised terminology it represents part of the peace dividend that actors can buy into as a result of not resisting political processes and in some senses it compensates groups for a loss or change in their political power. The military are keen to emphasize this role, and the way in which operations have paved the way for military personnel to interact with the local population often whilst giving development assistance (see Military Operations, 2007). This also serves as a public information goal for home countries and for those keen to emphasize the peace element of military deployments as a convenient fig-leaf for doubting electorates.

Impact of development intervention on stability

These debates however do not help in identifying whether development and humanitarian action support stability. Whilst it may be logical to assume that humanitarian action can be stabilising, through the provision of life saving interventions, the impacts of development aid – both in the short and long-term – on stability seem to be in doubt. This section introduces some of the key literature but it should be noted that whilst there is only limited literature regarding development's impact on stability there is no relevant critical literature regarding the impacts of political and security interventions on stability.

The literature on the impact of humanitarian action rarely uses the term stabilisation or stability and its link to stability remains relatively un-assessed in the field. Academic discourse has noted a number of connections and military doctrine explicitly links stabilisation operations with their role in supporting humanitarian action (for example the provision of military helicopters in support of emergency food deliveries). For Liberal states this kind of humanitarian support has been considered to bolster their own interests as well as provide lifesaving support to the population, although

evidence from the aftermath of the Pakistan Earthquake would not seem to support this assertion (Wilder, 2010a, pp. S414-418). Non-state civilian actors have refrained from determining their humanitarian action as stabilising in part because of their concerns about the erosion of humanitarian space, which has been particularly acute in Afghanistan and Iraq (Collinson, Elhawary, & Muggah, 2010, p. S276). In particular the interpretation of COIN and stabilisation doctrine has led to a significant expansion of military interventions in traditionally civilian activities such as the delivery of health or veterinary services and support to education. This is broader than the strictly humanitarian actors are comfortable with (Gordon, 2010a, pp. S380-2).

Beyond humanitarianism, what is novel in development geared towards stabilisation is the significant interest taken by bi- and multi-lateral donors in the way their activities support their politically orientated goals. Of critical importance in debates about the role of development in stabilisation is understanding the degree to which development can actually contribute to stability and the trade-offs in externally driven development interventions. In the first element it is not clear that development activities implemented in insecure environments necessarily lead to greater stability. One way which development is assumed to promote stability is that it fosters a sense of social contract or support for the state. Some studies have attempted to determine the impact of civilian development action but have often used the first level of sub-national governance as the main level of analysis rather than the village (Lawson et al, 2010, pp. xvii-xix).

Other evidence from the field in Afghanistan seems to indicate that there is no causal link in delivering a development project and increased long-term support for, and legitimacy of, the host nation (Wilder, 2010, Fishstein, 2010, Gordon, 2010b, Zürcher et al 2010, pp. 33-5). Furthermore, in some cases communities seem to have no difficulty in accepting development from the government at the same time as assisting or actively participating in attacks against the government (review of interviews carried out for Ladbury & CPAU, 2009). In other contexts such as in Nepal, some noted that developmental marginalisation was a key driver of armed resistance (Thapa, 2002, pp. 86-9) but this has little explanatory value for why even more politically and developmentally marginalised areas have not revolted in the past (Social Inclusion Research Fund, 2007, pp. 17-29).

In already stable areas in Afghanistan development does seem to have a supporting role in promoting state legitimacy, but those gains are often short-lived and can be reversed by deteriorating security (Zürcher et al, 2010, pp. 33-5). Even when legitimacy can be improved it is not clear that it is state legitimacy that is benefitting, but rather that it might be local leaders or the implementing agency (Wilder, 2010). Therefore whilst development spending can have benefits in opening access to

communities and supporting consent, these are short-term very specific outcomes. They are also generally small scale and have low developmental impacts which have not been linked to stability by other authors (Zürcher et al, 2010, pp. 31-2, Wilder, 2010, Fishstein, 2010).

There is evidence dating back to the 1990s that not only can development be ineffective but that it can also be counter-productive in elucidating stabilisation. Macrae argued in the 1990s “that inappropriately designed rehabilitation strategies can obstruct rather than enable the development of sustainable health systems” (1995, p. 1). Whilst this example is from the health sector a similar process seems to have occurred in Helmand in Afghanistan where aid has been destabilising (Wilder 2010). Nepal’s expansion of the education sector may have been a destabilising factor in its political development (Whelpton, 2005, p. 86).

Whilst these concerns are emerging from the field, there is also broader concern regarding the ability for development aid at a macro level to encourage stability. Evidence from Sri Lanka seems to suggest that international pledges of aid in the context of non-aligned donors and national policies can stymie the potential impact of aid (Goodhand and Walton, 2009, pp. 316-9). Therefore statements such as ‘development leads to security’ would seem to be overstated. There continue to be significant doubts about the impact of development in highly insecure environments. Though in more hard-headed terms this is not so much about respecting the space for development agencies but about demonstrating the impact of military support to development and efficient use of resources (Wilder, 2010 and Gordon, 2010b).

In summary, whilst there is a strong theoretical assumption that aid spending (both developmental and humanitarian) has a positive impact on stability. Field research indicates that the causal link is far from certain in the short-term and that over the long-term development may be destabilising simply because it is a process of change. Humanitarian aid is not linked in the literature to stability because humanitarian actors have sought to distance themselves from military activities that support stabilisation.

This section has demonstrated that none of the main theories used to articulate stabilisation activities, statebuilding, COIN and development, provide a grounded basis from which to argue that their interventions contribute to stability. This presents the final theoretical gap in the literature review which has traced the evolution of stabilisation activity from Liberal political philosophy through Eurocentric ideas about state-formation and the bureaucratic processes developed to intervene in fragile states. This builds on the gaps identified in the liberal philosophy of intervention about what stability is, whether states can provide it and how exogenous activities can promote stability.

The stabilisation gaps

This chapter has attempted to situate the emergence of stabilisation doctrine, operations and activities across the spheres of politics, security and development action within the context of the Liberal states and their willingness to intervene in other territories. It has attempted to establish that there is often an unfulfilled evidence base for claims about which activities support stability and that at a theoretical level there are significant gaps in the conception of stability.

The working hypothesis of stabilisation activity to date has been that all interventions across politics, security and development can promote stability; however, the philosophical evolutions and evidence base for this assertion are weak. As the components of Liberal interventionism have evolved they have each mutated into forms which are no longer necessarily true to the original Liberal intention and which are internally inconsistent because they undermine one another (Gray, 1991, pp. 141-3). Firstly, this also ignores the cultural and context and historical heritage of nations where interventions are implemented, secondly, their historical experience of previous periods of stability, and thirdly, undermines the formation of legitimacy that could create and maintain the state which would then be responsible for a significant degree of security and which would permit development.

Fourthly, stabilisation policy recognises that the goal is a stable political settlement at a local level, but the focus of effort at a local level ignores the degree of influence of national level issues, which are inevitably connected to local political settlements. The activities which are therefore undertaken are at best not going to achieve the desired outcome and could make the situation worse. Finally, this misdirection is made worse because the individual states and agencies that intervene each have their own lenses or conceptions of stability, which make a coherent engagement by the international community in another space almost impossible. It also suggests that the structure of international intervention to support legitimacy formation is incorrect and a significant level of effort and money focused by the international community is in the wrong area. These five areas are analytical themes which run throughout this thesis and are developed further in Chapter 3.

While stabilisation practice is structured along the lines of a Comprehensive Approach it is shaped by the individual agencies tasked with implementing stabilisation. In the context of multi-national interventions these interpretations become reified so that it is increasingly difficult to pinpoint the core values of stabilisation. The confusion brought by departmental variations in stabilisation practice hides the fact that stabilisation flows from the flawed, theoretical conceptions of Liberal interventionism that have evolved in statebuilding (politics), COIN (security) and civilian intervention (social and economic development and humanitarian action). This was a result of the

need to implement activities before a theoretical framework was established. This background noise distracts analysis from the fact there are two very real distortions occurring in stabilisation at a strategic and operational level.

At a strategic level it is not clear that the Western models of state formation can be applied to 21st Century state consolidation. For example bureaucratic reforms of taxation or the social contract that are promoted in the context of ongoing conflict may be overly ambitious, despite the avowedly restrained aims of stabilisation. This strategic assumption, that it is possible to exogenously promote a rational bureaucratic outcome in the midst of conflict, adds to the second layer of distortion, which lies partly in the inability to link stabilisation activities together in a comprehensive manner. It has so far proved too difficult for interveners to apply a unified series of interventions because of the limitations of the systems for delivering stabilisation (i.e. the Comprehensive Approach). In addition it is impossible at this juncture to assert that the elements of the Comprehensive Approach, political, security and development interventions, actually have the stabilising effects they claim, in particular because they may in fact undermine one another. This leads to the conclusion that it is necessary to try and understand local conceptions of stability in order to identify the nature of engagement and to identify which interventions have an impact on stability. I.e. what should be done and in what order. This is the central focus of the thesis and the starting point for the research questions and hypothesis in the following chapter.

Conclusion

This literature review has shown that increasing instability has led to more and more interventionist approaches that are effectively attempts at state formation using modern Liberal experience and may actually undermine existing state structures. These interventions are inappropriate because they do not understand how exogenous actors can promote local political legitimacy formation that should support stability. Eurocentric Liberal approaches to statebuilding do not always translate to the processes experienced in other parts of the world and Early State theories help explain alternative processes, incentives and impediments to state formation in different regions which may result in an understanding that there is more than one species of state. This also supports the argument that state formation in the 21st Century is very different from state formation previously. However, when state formation is exogenously supported in other countries through stabilisation, because they are deemed weak, failing or collapsed, the interveners do not use a historical Eurocentric view of what the state should be. Instead they employ a modern Liberal paradigm which may be at odds with the context in which they are attempting to build a state. At best this can lead to ineffective interventions, at worst this can contribute to failure.

In practice stabilisation suffers from two weaknesses: firstly, an ill-defined theoretical base which contributes to programmatic confusion about the goals and aims of stabilisation i.e. what is the stability that stabilisation aims to promote? Secondly, the evidence that political, security and development interventions support stability is missing and policy is based on assertions which suggest they have more impact than is actually the case. Therefore in the interventions of the international community to support stability there are two levels of distortion: at the *strategic* level (in statebuilding) and *operational* level (in stabilisation).

These distortions lead to programmes which are not only highly technical and promote an idealised version of a state which may be irrelevant, but may in actual fact promote tensions which undermine strategic and programmatic success and contribute to instability. These distortions are allowed to continue because there is a lack of theory and academic understanding about how to intervene in states which have distinct patterns and processes of state formation which are at the same time struggling to cope with the pressures of the international system and globalisation. However, the current state of world affairs has effectively closed the most common form of state formation – open bloody warfare – and alternatives are required by the international system.

The inability to understand non-European state formation in the 21st Century is a critical issue which contributes to strategic level failure, made worse by the fact that stabilisation has emerged as a policy tool for international interventions which has essentially evolved peacebuilding and statebuilding practices in local level interventions by external states. These processes are then applied in fragile, often violent contexts, and fail to take account of an actual benchmark which would secure stability, namely, the formation of local political legitimacy.

Political activities relating to stability and stabilisation are very broad but have been embodied by central state support for democratisation and local level governance reform activities. Conceptually and theoretically the democratic peace argument which underpins a substantive section of statebuilding theory and localised stabilisation activity has developed in an *a historical* manner, pre-supposing that the imposition of modern Western Liberal institutions will be feasible and stabilising in the context of fragile states with very different state formation histories. This structures the overarching engagement of political activities as well as related security and development interventions. There is also a strong Liberal reformist agenda amongst governance interventions which stretches the fabric of the population's engagement with the state and their politicians, whose reliance on external support continues to undermine their legitimacy.

Security activities relating to stabilisation have resulted in conflating COIN with stabilisation activities, which masks the wider implications of the SSR agenda, and which also seeks to stabilise states by adapting the democratic governance agenda from the political sphere to security institutions and governance systems. Whilst these reforms are attempted centrally they are divorced from the more robust and interventionist forms of COIN and stabilisation support that have been developed in military doctrine in the last decade. These new doctrines build on 20th Century conceptions of COIN but again place substantive emphasis on state formation in the Liberal form and attempt to apply them across a broad array of sectors, though there is little evidence they actually support stability. These competing agendas are not necessarily compatible, but are further complicated by the continued military-military engagement through train and equip programmes which are able to appropriate the labels of SSR, COIN and stabilisation to suit their needs.

Development activities aimed at stabilisation have, in the eyes of some, been heavily affected by military conceptions of stabilisation which has drawn criticism from humanitarians who view military engagement in certain aspects of humanitarian action with suspicion. Despite this military engagement in humanitarian activity has unproven impacts on stability. Longer-term development aid has also been weakly linked to some improvements in the acceptance of military forces, but the impacts are highly localised and other evidence suggests that development interventions seem to have little link to improving stability.

The potential of stabilisation is that it can provide a critique to the Liberal and statebuilding paradigm which has failed to adapt to local environments. Stabilisation offers the potential to refocus international community support and local political will towards an approach which can foster real stability, rather than an externally driven model of the Western state. By developing a stability hypothesis in the following chapter the thesis will attempt to address some of the conceptual and theoretical weaknesses in the simple extraction of stabilisation intervention from Liberal political philosophy.

Chapter 3 - Methodology

This chapter articulates the methodology applied in the research into stability and stabilisation. It provides a rationale for the research based on the argumentation in the preceding chapter that fundamental questions regarding international intervention and stability remain unarticulated and presents a hypothesis which will be tested through the research. It argues that the most effective way of investigating the gaps that have been identified is to root the research methodology in a phenomenological approach which explores local interpretations of stability and stabilisation through qualitative interviewing in support of a case study approach. The chapter also presents the key dependent and independent variables which are drawn from the hypothesis and used in the analysis and testing through the research. Alternative approaches were considered during the research design and are discussed as well as the potential sites for field work that were not selected.

The chapter goes on to describe how the case studies were structured, addressing issues of language, power and access to the field sites and the sampling frame. Following this discussion, each field site is briefly introduced to evidence the degree of comparability within and between the field sites. A description of how the data has been analysed is provided and the chapter concludes with discussions on research ethics, assumptions and limitations. The appendices also include additional information including a risk matrix, Gantt chart, budget and information supplied to research participants.

Rationale and hypothesis

The preceding chapter demonstrated how stabilisation of fragile states or regions is seen as a way of containing international public 'bads' (often described as terrorism, criminal networks, climate change and nuclear proliferation) and promoting international stability which some link to the expansion of globalisation. Governments, particularly in the West, are increasingly concerned about regions, states and territories which seem unable to contain these threats and attempt to employ their resources through political, security, development pressure and assistance to ensure a politically acceptable form of stability. Despite a degree of agreement over the need for stability, the actions required to deliver it, i.e. stabilisation, are contested.⁶¹ It is not clear what should be stabilised or who should do it. It is not clear if, for example, local solutions, possibly via autonomous recovery, would be more effective than external intervention. Would such an approach be feasible and would it produce outcomes that are less politically acceptable for the international community? Operationally, which department(s) should lead and how is

⁶¹ This is not dissimilar to the disagreements about what is required for statebuilding in Liberal peacebuilding discourse see the table on p. 14 as an example.

it best to coordinate national activities in a multilateral intervention in a state which is overwhelmed by a vast array of international actors? As argued in the preceding chapter the answers to these questions across states and relevant departments are vague and varied because fundamentally there is often little coherence to the arguments about which actions contribute to 'stability' or what 'stability' looks like – and it is this starting point that the research attempts to explore.

In order to explore the core question: 'what is stability?' the research has been focused at a local level; this is partly because at a national or even international level there is broad agreement about some key concepts of stability and previous research has tended to focus at the national or first layer of sub-national governance rather than the lower level of a village. It is also because intervening states are quite comfortable engaging with other states, but they struggle with addressing issues within another states' territories which may present a risk or threat to either the intervening states' interests or the host nation state itself.

The lack of understanding about local stability within and between intervening and host nation states at both the strategic and operational levels militates against the creation of coherent strategy and contributes to confusion because it is not clear what the aim is. This also helps to explain the divergent lenses through which stability is viewed have shaped national responses to the challenges of supporting or promoting 'stability' and the action of 'stabilisation' (See p. 7). As a result the second research question is: 'what activities support stability?'

Using these two core research questions the thesis proposes a hypothesis based on the argumentation in Chapter 2. The literature review suggested that there are key theoretical gaps inherent in the Liberal project which means that political, security and development interventions ignore the importance of local legitimacy formation in stability as posited by Gordon and Jackson (Jackson & Gordon, 2007, p. 653). As a result the research hypothesis states *"that stability is driven by local political settlements and produced by local political legitimacy formation which can be supported by interventions."*

In trying to understand how external intervention supports local stability it is necessary to test what supports stability. The hypothesis being tested here is that local stability is supported by local political legitimacy formation. In order to test the hypothesis interventions must be tested in each field site against what the population believes stability is and what is politically legitimate locally. It is critical not to look at these issues just in the present time but to be cognizant of historical trends and experiences, as these are used by local populations to frame and understand the state and the actions of external interveners. By investigating the heritage of the state and interveners in each of the case study locations the research will explore how best to

understand stability and legitimacy as the fundamental elements of state structures and uncover earlier experiences of stability.

Methodology

The research design straddles both phenomenological and interpretivist traditions in understanding social processes. This is necessary because the research is attempting to understand, and to some extent reconcile, the differing viewpoints of host nations and external interveners in the process of stabilisation. The research is trying to identify the ways in which different processes, actions and events affect the production of stability and local political legitimacy, which is defined through intersubjectivity – i.e. that individuals in a group recognise and validate a position or act which has political meaning and value (there is a long and useful discussion in Crossley, 1996). This uses Scheff's definition of intersubjectivity as "the sharing of subjective states by two or more individuals" (Scheff, 2003, p. 8).

The phenomenological approach will be taken to attempt to verify, identify and understand the logic behind stabilisation activities as conceived, planned and executed by both national and international interveners. As noted in Chapter 2 an unvoiced concern in the conception of interventions is that they are grounded in a narrow cultural and historical moment. Therefore in order to understand what interventions 'do' in other contexts one must attempt at least to shed preconceptions about how the intervention should be viewed – an abandonment of dogma to accept the challenges that arise from others' conceptions of the world. This takes as its start point Husserl's central insight that it is not easy to interrogate one's own consciousness and perception and it must be drawn out through philosophical innovation, or in the form of this research design, through discussions where the researcher searches for patterns in the consciousness (or perceptions) of the respondents across the research sites (Moran, 2000, pp. 1-6, 60-61).

There is however a limit to which philosophy can bridge the gap between conscious perception and external realities, as in the critique of Nabert's work. Philosophy cannot reconcile the philosophical desire for freedom of thought with the realities of normative existence (McCormick, 1974, pp. 216-8); instead, a more moderate path absorbing the elements of phenomenology that allow exploration of another's consciousness has been chosen rather than a fully discursive attempt to analyse every word respondents utter, following Heidegger's view that the opportunity provided by phenomenology is that it allows other possibilities to be explored (Moran, 2000, p. 195). In a similar manner the use of ethnographic techniques has not been taken to extremes, though, where applicable they have been utilised and are supported by the association of phenomenology and ethnography in theory development (Maso, 2001, pp. 137, 143-4).

There is a further limitation to consider: the research is not attempting to address the psychology of interventions and how they are viewed, though this may be important for other studies; the attempt is to match perception against actual realities and norms. In this design the focus is on reality or the space through which interventions occur; put another way “space is not the setting (real or logical) in which things are arranged, but the means whereby the position of things becomes possible” (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. 243). It is through understanding those spaces and how acts within them are perceived that the research has been effected.

Bearing in mind the limitations of the external position of the researcher, this will attempt to understand how stabilisation action is viewed by individuals and communities in the host nation. As a result the research will “search for regularities” (Swedberg, 2005, p. 145) over time and between locations and areas with different political economies. This selection is partly driven by the position of the researcher, a white male European, whose natural affinity is more likely to be with interveners rather than the host nationals for a range of linguistic, social and cultural reasons (these biases remain despite the fact the researcher has lived and worked in Afghanistan since 2004, has strong family connections to the wider sub-continent, is fluent in Dari and speaks Arabic).

Given the epistemological approaches being used it is important to clarify the variables being assessed. The independent variables include the stabilisation interventions which are the primary subject of the research. These interventions are intended, at least partially, to address a threat, in each case an insurgency, and have to contend with societal dynamics and local political economy. The particulars of each insurgency and the economic contexts are the other independent variables. The challenge in the research design, in particular the participant selection and form of interviewing, is in separating the internal biases of the researcher (Bowie, 2000, pp. 4-5) from the competing noise of local political economy and the threat that the stabilisation intervention is supposed to be addressing.

The dependent variables are the concepts of stability and legitimacy. Stability is the objective of the interventions and in the hypothesis legitimacy is entwined with stability. These are used in order to understand how the stabilisation intervention in the context of the society and threat affects the twin goals of local political legitimacy and externally driven demands for stability. This approach operationalises the hypothesis, which is that stability is driven by local political settlements and produced by local political legitimacy formation.

As a result there are two levels of falsification: local political legitimacy is either relevant to stability (or not); and externally driven stabilisation interventions directly affect stability (or not). The analysis will attempt to identify causal linkages between

the concepts and stability as described by the participants in the research. A third layer of analysis is that external stabilisation supports local legitimacy formation (or not) which in turn promotes stability (or not). This final step is the central element of the research hypothesis and will be tested in Chapter 9.

An added element of complexity is that conflicts occur over a long timeframe, meaning that time represents an important part of stability formation and maintenance. For example, when looking at an environment that was stable prior to a conflict, concepts of what stable meant then may affect what stability means now or in the future. Further, given many conflicts occur across a significant period of time, they also witness substantial changes in the international contexts in which they are prosecuted. This affects not only the political interests of intervening states (for example between a Cold War and post-Cold War paradigm) but also affects the methods that can be employed as part of the conflict because of technological changes. This presents a challenge to the comparability within and between case studies. To mitigate this and to search for the underlying connections between and within the case studies the thesis will analyse the data by time period across the independent and dependant variables. The diagram below provides a representation of the dependent and independent variables.

Independent Variables		
Insurgency	Local Political Economy	Stabilisation intervention
Dependent Variables		
Legitimacy	Stability	
Time periods		
Pre-conflict	During conflict	Current period

Figure 2 Independent and dependent variables in the research design

The variables are used to structure the thematic analysis of the field sites (Chapters 4-7) and comparative analysis of the data in Chapter 8. Based on the variables the data is analysed according to five themes 1) periods of stability; 2) culture and context; 3) mode of intervention; 4) political legitimacy and; 5) conceptions of stability. The themes are briefly introduced here.

The independent variables of the local political economy and insurgency are addressed collectively under the themes of culture and context, which seek to isolate specific issues within the nature of the field sites and the conflicts which shed light on stability. The range of stabilisation interventions across the political, security and development lines of operation are analysed under the title mode of intervention to

provide analysis across the operational areas to investigate which elements have supported stability and which have not. The dependent variables, stability and legitimacy, are analysed through the themes of local conceptions of stability and political legitimacy which assess the field data according to notions of stability and political legitimacy amongst the respondents. The final theme, periods of stability, interrogates past experiences of stability in the field site and their relevance to stability at the time of research.

Using the epistemological approach outlined above and identification of the variables and research analysis themes, the research has been designed to test the statebuilding, COIN and development theories outlined in Chapter 2 to interrogate the feasibility of indigenously or exogenously supported stabilisation. Out of this process the research will suggest how a new conceptual framework of local stability.

Alternative methods

Several models were considered during the research design, which are outlined in this section, including using macro quantitative analysis and participatory observation. Their relative strengths and weaknesses in comparison to a semi-structured interview based case study approach are discussed which explains why they were not selected. Alternative case study sites were also considered, which are also discussed below.

Quantitative analysis

Early in the design phase it was decided that large scale use of quantitative data across multiple sites, such as panel data used in the Correlates of War project, would be inappropriate (Sarkees & Wayman, 2010). On a conceptual level this is because quantitative analysis often tells a researcher very little about what an intervention feels like to local communities and fixes the analysis at the macro rather than micro level. These are critical issues when trying to understand local legitimacy formation and local stability which is as much an art as a science, and is the central component of the hypothesis being tested by the research. Further, the significant critiques of the work of the Correlates of War project and other macro-econometric approaches to conflict such as Paul Colliers' work suggest that it is not necessarily possible to identify macro-level causality between, say, development assistance and democratic stability (Nathan, 2005).

On a practical level the kinds of quantitative data that could be of use in understanding stabilisation often do not exist for the very practical reason that the areas are usually at war or have endured significant conflict over a substantial period and as a result sufficient quantitative data that would be considered reliable simply does not exist. That is not to say that quantitative data should be ignored where it is available, but it has not been consistently and systematically collected in many states

affected by conflict and therefore has limited reliability. As a result of these issues a small scale case study approach focused on qualitative data has been chosen.

Participatory observation

Within case study based research there are a number of methods through which data can be collected. Amongst the options considered was a participatory observation method whereby the researcher would use his ability to access interveners in a case study country to situate himself on the side of the interveners in return for work. For example, this could have been carrying out a small piece of work for DfID and using the offices of DfID to understand the internal workings of the interveners in stabilisation. This method was attractive particularly because it offered enhanced access to privileged information which would inform analysis more systematically. It does however present both validity and practical issues.

In terms of validity this kind of research would present a rather one-sided view of the intervention. If the researcher was hosted by an agency they would naturally have better access to the intervener than the communities and field sites, which may be unintentional, but is almost unavoidable and may hamper the quality of data collected. On a practical level it was not possible to arrange this kind of participatory observation in both case study countries. Had the research gone ahead with one case study being based partly on participatory observation and one using non-participatory methods there would be doubts about the validity of the results. This is also the rationale for not conducting further research in Afghanistan when the researcher was based in the Helmand PRT after the main data collection phase (see p. 79).

Country selection

In addition to alternative approaches different case study sites were considered. This short section provides a brief description of why those sites, including Somalia, Yemen, South Sudan and Pakistan, were not chosen. The section on the field site areas goes into more detail about the comparability between the two case studies and four field sites (see pp. 82-97).

Sudan, Yemen, Pakistan and Somalia all present interesting and complex issues of intervention, 'fragility' and statehood. The presence of ongoing insurgencies in three countries and the secession of South Sudan from Sudan as a result of an insurgency presented good comparisons with Afghanistan. There are also many cultural (i.e. Islamic) and historical links between these four countries and Afghanistan; and three of them are partly or fully Arabic speaking, which would allow for exploration of Islamic concepts of resistance. Both Yemen and Pakistan receive significant international military support, though not in the form of a conventional international military deployment but rather small special forces and mentoring teams which are often hard to engage as research participants; they are also the focus of a particular

form of stabilisation, sometimes referred to as 'hot-stabilisation' by mainly Western powers, which would mean it would not be possible to disaggregate some of the 'noise' from the processes of what is termed 'hot stabilisation' (see p. 21 for an description) from more common forms of intervention. This is important because one of the contentions in the research design, as outlined in Chapter 2, is that stabilisation is not a new concept but rather the progression of pre-existing approaches. Had the research only looked at one form of intervention it would have limited the extrapolation of potential findings.

Somalia and Sudan/South Sudan both have international military deployments mandated as UN Peacekeeping or African Union deployments, which themselves have their own distinctive characteristics, and there is a rich literature on the history of UN peacekeeping missions (Paris & Sisk, 2009). Alongside the military deployments there are 'stabilisation' activities by a number of UN, bi- and multi-lateral institutions which present complex conflict environments that could have been useful comparators to Afghanistan. However these potential sites presented a number of key weaknesses. For Yemen, Somalia and Pakistan it was primarily an issue of similarity: each country was effectively part of the same conflict system (the War on Terror initiated by the Bush administration). By confining the research sites to predominantly Muslim countries targeted as part of the fight against Al-Qaeda the outcomes of the research would have been criticised for focusing on a specific 21st Century conflict. This would mean that generalisations from the analysis beyond North Africa and the greater Middle East may have been difficult, and the utility of the research would have been reduced. Sudan and South Sudan were also rejected because, despite falling outside the War on Terror, the creation of South Sudan represents a significant new dynamic in that conflict, namely the formation of a new state, which would have skewed the research sample.

Methods applied in field work

The theoretical underpinnings of stabilisation reach back to several other areas of academia, including: Liberal political philosophy, state formation, statebuilding, COIN and development (see Chapter 2). This complexity means, for example, that it would be futile to apply an international relations theory on to military doctrine to understand whether a development activity has had an impact on stability. Whilst some of these concepts will be tested in Chapter 9, they could not drive the research design alone because they would limit the research. Instead, the field methodology has been to invert the complexity in to a simplified research approach which brings together the lived experiences of the communities and the actions of the interveners using phenomenological and interpretivist approaches; this will allow an assessment of the interlocking nature of the political, security and development inputs. The focus on phenomenology and interpretation leads the research design towards ethnography

and anthropology, though due to the complexity of the areas covered, the multicultural aspects of the design and time constraints, the study is not fully ethnographic nor anthropological.⁶² In effect the research approach has been to make a broad audit of the socio-economic contexts of the communities and assess what has happened in the locality (and why) in order to identify if any of those events have impacted on what the local community considers stability.

A key theoretical argument from the literature review that informs the research design is the importance of being able to assess stabilisation activities across a number of factors which relate to one ultimate goal. The hypothesis being tested through the research is that local political legitimacy formation is central to stability, and activities undertaken as stabilisation should be measured against this benchmark. This is different from the manner in which interventions, normally associated with political, security and development activities, are measured against including quantitative outcomes of numbers of kilometres of road built, of children attending school or of security incidents.

By breaking down the research question the research attempts to identify a causal link between action and stability; this helps with a practical research problem which is that no one individual could have the technical knowledge spanning the breadth of fields necessary to carry out research using a project-based approach.⁶³ Therefore it is important to keep a focus on the overall impact of activities and not to try and assess or investigate all of the outcomes from different types of projects across political interventions, security and development. The research is not interested in, for example, the effectiveness of development activities in terms of health benefits or literacy improvements – the impact of the activities on these sectors is incidental to the hypothesis that the intervention may have had an impact on stability.

Recognising the fact that the research has not needed to assess each intervention in-depth allows the research to look across a number of sectors and to investigate the other environmental and incidental issues which may have impacted stability. As a result, within the stabilisation approach (which is cross-governmental and therefore

⁶² As noted above and below, elements of the research design draw on both ethnography and anthropology. The main constraints on employing these approaches lies in the time required to cover the sites in an adequate fashion across multiple different sectors. There are examples which discuss the ethnography of development, anthropology and religion, or anthropology and culture, which in one way or another attempt to revolutionise the methods in their specific sub-spheres but would be inadequate on their own to address the research question (Pocock, 1998, pp. 4-5; Friedl, 1976; Mosse & Lewis, 2005; Bowie, 2000).

⁶³ For example the Stabilisation Unit's implementation matrix has 14 Requirements (sectors for activities) each with multiple activities (Stabilisation Unit, 2008).

almost all-encompassing) the research has looked at a range of actions taken by interveners which have included:

- Humanitarian aid delivery
- Support to health or education services
- Cash and food for work schemes
- Interim justice arrangements and the role of informal justice systems
- Security sector activities including operations, training of the police, army or disarmament processes
- Political appointments, processes and local political settlements

Some of these issues were more relevant than others in the different research sites. For example, education interventions were not a significant element of the story of the site in Nahr-i Sarraj in Afghanistan, however they form an important part of the conflict story in Gajul Village Development Committee (VDC), Nepal. In another example both Haraiya VDC in Nepal and Aqa Sarai in Afghanistan have local brick kilns which form an important part of their local economies and forms part of the reconstruction and stability narrative of two of the four field sites but is not present in the other two field sites. As a result the research topics in each site were moulded around the sectors and areas of interest to the local community and the types of interventions carried out by either the state or external interveners.

Breaking down the research frame to carry out a socio-political audit of four villages informed the selection of the research methods in the field. Primary data collection focused on the semi-structured qualitative interviews which were conducted with 151 respondents (see Table 5, p.79). Further primary data was also collected regarding development expenditure, governance actions and security activities, at times supplied by the interviewees, which were used to triangulate the interview data and enrich the data analysis.

Following on from the hypothesis and methodology the research objectives are:

1. Review existing literature on state formation and stabilisation (Chapter 2)
2. Understand local perceptions of what stability is and challenge the research hypothesis (Chapters 4-8)
3. Identify what actions have been perceived to create stability in the local area (Chapters 4-8)
4. Analyse the impact of both internal and external stabilisation activities upon local (political) legitimacy formation (Chapters 4-8)
5. Based on research findings test the three intervention theories outlined in Chapter 2 – statebuilding, COIN and development – and present a more

comprehensive framework which caters for local stability formation (Chapters 4-7 and Chapter 9)

6. Present a conclusion and recommendations for future research (Chapter 10)

Interviews

In the Afghanistan and Nepal case studies, two sites plus the capital city were selected as field sites, which enables comparison between the two field sites in a single case study as well as between the four field sites. More than one site was chosen in each case study to ensure that one field site does not represent an idiosyncratic example of the conflict in that country. The national level was included to provide a narrative behind the research in the two field sites; to provide comparative insights from international actors and interveners about the specific idiosyncrasies in each field site (and to control them during analysis); and to highlight which trends identified in the field sites were common in other parts of the case study countries. Overall 140 interviews were carried out and used in the analysis⁶⁴ which involved 151 participants.

Table 3 Number of interviews by case study and field site

Number of Interviews					
Afghanistan Kalakan	Afghanistan Nahr-e-Sarraj	Afghanistan National Level	Nepal Rolpa	Nepal Bara	Nepal National Level
25	25	12	34	33	12
Total number of interviews					141

A total of sixty-one interviews were carried out in the Afghanistan case study and seventy-nine for the Nepal case study. The slightly higher numbers of interviewees in the Nepal case study reflects the different governance structures present in Afghanistan and Nepal which resulted in different 'village' sizes and the inclusion of more female respondents in Nepal. In Afghanistan villages tend to be smaller than in Nepal because Nepal has implemented a formalised system of Village Development Committees (VDCs), which are clusters of villages, split into nine wards.

The form of sub-national governance is not yet formalised in Afghanistan. Traditionally most villages will recognise they are part of a *manteqa*, effectively a neighbourhood or locality. In hill areas this is often demarcated by geography, where a *manteqa* may include the upper part of a valley and the villages in that part of the valley would

⁶⁴ Several more interviews were carried out but were not included in the analysis for methodological reasons; some are referred to in this chapter to demonstrate the limitations of the research.

identify themselves by the name of the largest village (which may also carry the name of the valley) but in fact the village extends up the valley.⁶⁵ However, this is not consistently applied and they can vary in size significantly and in particular for external interventions these conventions have for the most part, rightly or wrongly, been ignored.

Formally there are Community Development Councils (CDCs) that govern the implementation of development projects that were selected through the National Solidarity Programme (NSP), however villages of less than twenty-five households were not included in the programme (Beath, Christia, & Enikolopov, 2008, p. 2). Given this limitation and the current security concerns it means that CDCs are not present in all Afghan villages.⁶⁶ There have also been attempts to 'cluster' CDCs into larger groups which would bring an 'Afghan village' into roughly the same size as a 'Nepali village' but these attempts have been sporadic and in any case don't have any relevance to the field sites in Afghanistan. As a result of the lack of coherence in governance structures, it is more valid to focus on specific villages or locally defined *manteqas* rather than use a partially implemented formal system. This has meant that the Afghan sites were physically smaller (from 25 to 300 households)⁶⁷ than the Nepali villages (up to 800 households in one of the cases included in the sample). Further, it was socially acceptable for the researcher to interview some Nepali women which was not feasible in Afghanistan. This meant that the sample size had to be adjusted for the Nepal field sites to ensure an appropriate sample was interviewed.

For the most part interviews were conducted one on one, though a few focus group sessions were useful in order to, firstly, gain consent from the community to carry out the interviews and secondly, to understand how group dynamics and thinking affected individual concepts of legitimacy. The interviews were semi-structured but based on a core set of topics or issues that are the focus of the research (see Table 4, p.75). Given the breadth of the interview subjects the researcher re-visited the field sites multiple times to re-interview respondents and investigate specific issues or subjects. Where possible the interviews were recorded and, where permission was not granted for recording information the researcher and interpreter made extensive notes. Notes taken by hand were written up on the day of the interviews. All transcripts and notes were typed up to be used in the analysis (see p. 95).

⁶⁵ This is in fact also the way Gajul, one of the Nepal field sites, is structured.

⁶⁶ In this research Village A had a CDC which is now defunct; the village in Kalakan district does have a functioning CDC.

⁶⁷ The randomised evaluation of the NSP indicated the average CDC included 136 households (Beath, Christia, & Enikolopov, 2008, p. 39).

In Afghanistan interviews were carried out over a 3-month period from September to December 2010; two additional interviews with external interveners were carried out via Skype during 2011. In Nepal interviews were carried out between July and November 2011. In both case studies several respondents were re-interviewed on multiple occasions when necessary.

Interview structure

The interviews were semi-structured and because the structure is both simple and flexible the researcher did not take interview sheets with him (except for the pilot interviews). Whilst not a fully ethnographic approach (as discussed above), the interview structure does bear some resemblance to ethnographic approaches⁶⁸ (Heyl, 2001, pp. 370-1). For the local national respondents three topic areas were discussed:

- A) The background of the interviewee and their immediate social network
- B) The relationship between the village/district with other forms and layers of the host nation state structure
- C) The actions, legitimacy and impact of interveners (both state and external actors)

The interviews with interveners only addressed topic area C. The interviews were not linear and were often structured around how the interviewee was approached. For example a few respondents who were economic actors were selected because they were known to have local business interests (such as brick kiln owners in Bara and Kalakan); those interviews were structured more around the business interests of the respondents and addressed issues such as investment, capital, economic growth, employment and labour relations as well as the interventions that were going on around them. Other interviewees whose backgrounds were different, for example a teacher or farmer, were asked different questions about interventions because a farmer would not necessarily know about an intervention at a school and equally a teacher may not know much about interventions in local water management systems.

⁶⁸ For example the interview process follows the 7 steps outlined by Kvale and cited by Heyl (2001, p. 373) which are: “thematizing, designing, interviewing, transcribing, analysing, verifying and reporting.”

Table 4 Semi-structured interview framework

Topic area	Respondent group	Areas for discussion	Trigger Question (example only)
A) The background of the interviewee and their immediate social network	Local nationals (all)	The respondent's personal background and socio-economic and political connections; their experiences of the 'state'; their view and experiences of 'interveners'	Can you tell me when you first became aware of the state or government?
B) Relationship between the village/district with other forms and layers of the host nation state structure	Local nationals (all)	When and how does the respondent engage with the state; how does the broader community engage with the state regarding, for example, allocation of water resources	Did you vote in the last election – what was the process like? How do you resolve disputes with the local government?
C) The actions, legitimacy and impact of interveners	Local nationals (all) and interveners	What changes do interveners bring – how does this get used by the community; what is the view of the community/respondents towards the impact of the expatriates	What have outsiders done in this area? How has this changed life in the community?

The longest interviews were carried out with the local nationals which covered the three topic areas. These interviews were carried out over 1 – 3 interview sessions each lasting approximately forty-five minutes to one hour. The interviews with interveners lasted approximately one hour and generally focused on the area of interest to their institution. For example a bi-lateral donor official would be asked about the donor's programming and interpretation of the environment and it would not go into the details of conflict in a particular community if the interviewee did not have the relevant knowledge – equally a local national respondent wouldn't know the systems of the donors who were running a programme in their area and this was not discussed with them.

Sample

In both Afghanistan and Nepal a small pilot was carried out with a handful of interviewees to serve a number of purposes: firstly, to test the translation of terminology into local languages and the flexible semi-structured form of the interviews (as outlined above); secondly, to work with the main interpreters to ensure they understood how to support the research and that there was a good working relationship between the researcher and interpreters; and thirdly, to collect a small sample of data to ensure that the interviews were producing the kinds of data that were required for the research. In Afghanistan the pilot interviews were carried out in Kabul, and in Nepal seven interviews were carried out in Dhading district, a hill district four hours' drive from Kathmandu. In both cases the pilots led to modifications in the translation of interview questions. The pilot was followed by the main research interviews. The sampling frame for the research was threefold: firstly, identifying the research field sites; secondly, identifying local respondents in the field sites; and thirdly, identifying relevant interveners (the selection of the field sites as part of the sampling frame is discussed below on pp. 82-97).

The original sampling design identified five categories of national respondents to be interviewed; economic actors; local leaders; district or provincial leaders and national leaders and external interveners, though this was modified later. The relationships between respondents at a village level were used to identify interviewees at the district/provincial level and then in turn at the national level and, finally, interveners. The four field sites were sampled in such a way as to provide a comprehensive assessment of the way in which those areas function and how this related to the broader geographic, social, economic, political and conflict systems in which they sit.

In the field it was clear that only a few of the respondents conformed to one respondent category: for example an elected official in the Parliament is counted as a national leader, but they are also local leaders and economic actors; equally economic actors are not without agency and some had low level leadership positions, though this may not have been the focus of the interview. Therefore the typology should only be seen as a guide to the stratification of who was interviewed, rather than an absolute categorisation of participants.

With the exception of district/provincial leaders the typology has been maintained during the research. This district/provincial leader category was meant to encompass government officials and leaders with district/provincial level positions (possibly a provincial council member in Afghanistan or District Development Council member in Nepal). In reality this was not a helpful distinction for the reason noted above that most respondents had more than one identity and therefore it was not a distinct category; instead these respondents were categorised as local leaders (including

village, district or provincial positions), national leaders (primarily from national legislatures) or interveners.

The interveners' category had been intended solely for international respondents and had in fact been called External Intervenors. Again, in practice, this was not a helpful distinction because national leaders in government positions tended not to be from the field sites. This mainly applied to Governors (Afghanistan) or Chief District Officers (Nepal) but included some lower level government staff such as a government official in Kalakan who worked in a clerical position. They were, at times, viewed by local respondents (i.e. local residents) as intervening as much as international actors. This was particularly pertinent in the Bara field site in Nepal where the state is viewed as an imperial Pahadi (Hill) government ruling over the Madeshi people living in the plains. This is explored further in Chapter 7, but demonstrates that the host nation state can be considered to be an exogenous actor as much as international actors.

Despite these adjustments the overall concept for the sampling frame has remained intact, which was to carry out research in two case study countries (Afghanistan and Nepal) in two field sites within each country. In each field site twenty-five respondents were to be interviewed with an additional ten intervenors being interviewed at a national level. This would have given a total of 120 participants or interviews; in the end 151 participants were interviewed in 141 interviews; the increased number to accommodate the slightly larger sample sizes in the Nepali 'villages' (as noted above); a few focus groups, female respondents in Nepal and some additional intervenors. A full list of interviews undertaken including their locations, dates, codes and categories can be found in Appendix B.

Therefore, within the adjusted respondent categories the following types of participants were included:

1. Economic actors (farmers, day labourers, small business owners, teachers, health workers)
2. Local leaders (elders, religious leaders, former elected politicians at the district/provincial level)
3. National leaders (elected politicians in Parliament)
4. Intervenors (International staff working for NGOs, bi-/multi-lateral agencies, embassies or government officials in the executive)
 - Intervenors who are classed as being part of the field sites were mainly government officials working in that district or province, or staff operating in that area
 - Intervenors who are part of the 'national level' interviews had a range of connections to either a field site or particular topic, for example

monitoring stability. This sub-category includes all of the interviews for the national level interviews in both case studies

In a case study methodology attempting to provide a broad understanding of each field site maintaining exactly the same numbers of labourers vs. teachers or religious leaders vs. community leaders or men vs. women was not feasible because the sites were themselves very different (see Table 5). Additional interviews in the two Nepali field sites included two religious leaders interviewed to ensure that the research had considered the impact of religious mobilisation in the conflict (a very significant factor in both the Afghan field sites). Religious actors played a minor role in the Nepali conflict and it was known that the interviews may not yield substantive new information, but they were important because the research can now confirm that religious mobilisation is not an essential factor in stability (see Chapter 8). The interviews may have been superfluous to a research design focusing only on Nepal but they were important to ensure comparability between the case studies.

Further access to female respondents varied substantially across the field sites and compared to men there were few female respondents. At a practical level it was problematic for a male researcher to interview female respondents in villages in Afghanistan and attempting to do so would have put the respondents under significant stress and may have damaged relations between the researcher and the male leaders of the community. In the Nahr-i Sarraj case study it was possible to identify a female leader who was willing to speak to the researcher in her capacity as an elected politician.

In Nepal it was more socially acceptable to interview female respondents, however their relevance to the research topic was found to be more limited than male leaders and economic actors. Attempts were made to interview female respondents either individually or collectively in focus groups but these were not always successful or useful. At an individual level not all the female respondents were happy to talk about issues which they felt were beyond their knowledge – for example the history of the conflict in the village, as illustrated below by one female interviewee who was confused by the questions.

Focus groups with women were also held which involved women in both the Rolpa and Bara field sites, however, because of the lack of private meeting space the interviews were held in public and would become very large. The women were often talking under the gaze of their neighbours or male members of their households who stopped by to see what was happening. As a result those focus groups were not free from significant biases, although they were very enlightening in triangulating information that had been garnered from other sources, or in opening avenues for follow-up interviews with individual female participants. Most of the focus groups

have been excluded from the main body of analysis for these reasons. Despite attempts at including more female respondents the researcher acknowledges these social and cultural limitations, which has meant that there are few female participants in the research.

Table 5 Number of participants by case study, field site and by respondent category (numbers in brackets indicate the number of female respondents)

Number of Participants						
Respondent category	Afghanistan Kalakan	Afghanistan Nahr-e-Sarraj	Afghanistan National Level	Nepal Rolpa	Nepal Bara	Nepal National Level
Local community leaders	13	14 (1)		10 (2)	9 (1)	
Local community economic actors	11	5		17 (3)	16 (1)	
National leaders	1	1		3	3	
Interveners	4	7	12 (4)	4 (1)	8	12 (2)
	29	27 (1)	12 (4)	35 (6)	36 (2)	12 (2)
	Total Number of Participants					151 (15)

This section has explained the overall sampling frame used across the research sites; however, in each case study and field site the approaches and access to respondents varied as choices were made about how to initiate sampling in an appropriate manner. This has led to most of the variation in the table above and the following section explains how the sampling frame was initiated in each field site.

Access - Afghanistan

In Afghanistan access to both field sites was achieved through the auspices of an Afghan NGO called Cooperation for Peace and Unity (CPAU) where the researcher worked until the end of the field work in December 2010, which helped to initiate the snowball samples.⁶⁹ For the Kalakan field site the snowball sample was initiated through three approaches; firstly, through the field staff of CPAU who helped in the final selection of the main village Aqa Sarai; and secondly, through connections the

⁶⁹ A snowball sample allows the researcher to use existing relationships and interviewees to recommend other interviewees and to facilitate introductions.

researcher had from a previous research trip to the district in 2004-5;⁷⁰ thirdly, the interpreter was able to facilitate a meeting with a key national leader from Kalakan. The researcher was able to make a number of day trips from Kabul to the district and relevant villages during the research period and interviews were carried out face to face, normally without an interpreter and with some facilitation from CPAU staff.

Access to the participants in the second field site was significantly more complicated and had a three-pronged approach. Initially the research design had intended to include Imam Sahib district in Kunduz province, northern Afghanistan; however, shortly after returning to Afghanistan to start field work the security situation deteriorated rapidly in the district and it was felt to be too dangerous to attempt the field work at that time (autumn 2010). As a result, alternative sites were investigated which included considering talking to groups who had migrated from other areas of the country to Kabul.

After discussing potential communities, talking to those who may consider participating and identifying areas where interviews could take place it was possible to identify one group of Internally Displaced People (IDPs) who had recently moved en-masse to Kabul from a village in Nahr-i Sarraj district in Helmand province. With the support of the interpreter the researcher was able to gain permission from the local community leader to visit the site where the community was living. However, because of the sensitivity of their recent history, and the fact that they knew the researcher was in touch with opposition groups, the government and international actors, they asked for the name of their village not to be used in the text of the thesis; it is referred to throughout simply as Village A.

The next snowball sampling approach was through the social network of a CPAU staff member. CPAU was implementing some projects in Helmand and through existing networks it was also possible to identify individuals from the same village as the IDP group now living in Kabul as well as participants in the wider district and province who were willing to participate in the research through phone interviews. The final approach was through the researcher's existing networks in the province. Interviews were carried out in person with fifteen of the twenty-seven interviewees (these were all with Pashto speaking Afghans and were carried out with interpreters). Of the remaining twelve interviews eight were conducted over the telephone with Afghan respondents and four were conducted via Skype with international interveners in English.

⁷⁰ Only one participant has participated in both research projects. The research paper from the study of reintegration in Afghanistan is available on request.

After the field research was completed the researcher was given the opportunity to work in Helmand for the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) in early 2012 reviewing transition for the Head of Mission. This visit, lasting six weeks, afforded the opportunity for the researcher to visit Nahr-i Sarraj district (though not Village A which is still contested) and to meet and discuss stabilisation with a number of civilian and military officials working in Helmand. Though the information from the Joint Transition Review is not directly used in this research the researcher was able to identify similarities in the issues vexing officials on the ground and those identified by both intervening and local respondents. Importantly the researcher was not able to find any factual information that undermined the validity of the research findings.⁷¹ This provides substantial validation and triangulation to the data collected on Village A despite the fact that the research design had to be adapted to accommodate the restrictions incumbent on the researcher.

Sampling for the 'national level' interviews was slightly different. Sampling occurred through peer-nomination, as a form of reputational snowball, to identify and interview key respondents (Farquharson, 2005, pp. 345-353) in both case studies. In Afghanistan interviews were carried out with twelve respondents in person in English, though they included two Afghan respondents. Four of the international respondents were female. The researcher knew both the Afghan respondents and two of the ten international respondents prior to the research and they were key in facilitating access to later interviewees.

Access - Nepal

Access in Nepal was no less complex and, as with the Afghan field sites, considerable time was spent identifying key interlocutors to initiate the snowball sampling frame, particularly because the researcher had comparatively less experience in Nepal. One of the reasons for conducting pilot interviews in Dhading was to identify the most suitable interlocutors in the Nepali context, which meant that the initiation of the snowball sampling frame was slightly different to the approaches used in Afghanistan.

By inclination it was believed that using an introduction to a community via an NGO would seem less threatening than one through the state or a bi-lateral donor mission and time was spent talking with NGOs in Kathmandu to identify local partners; this led to an introduction to a Nepali NGO network called Alliance for Peace, who introduced the researcher to a local NGO in Bara called Jan Jagaran Youth Club or JJYC. Whilst they were not active in Haraiya VDC, the field site in Bara, they were able to provide introductions to a former employee of an international NGO who lived in Haraiya and acted as a facilitator during the research visits. JJYC were then able to facilitate

⁷¹ The Joint Transition Review is available on request.

contact with other NGOs and government officials and the researcher was also able to use the credentials of Cranfield University/Defence Academy to convince government officials in Nepal to participate in the research (this proved useful in both Bara and Rolpa). Most interviews were carried out in Nepali with an interpreter and six interviews were carried out in Bhojpuri for some of the residents of Haraiya VDC, for which the facilitator acted as an interpreter.

In Rolpa a similar approach via an NGO was considered, however, because of the degree of Maoist influence on the NGO sector in the district it was felt that a more neutral approach could be achieved through a personal introduction to a local leader. After some significant efforts a group of IDPs that had been displaced from Rolpa, who were now living in Dang district (about 3 hours' drive from Rolpa district headquarters), were identified.⁷² Though some of the IDPs were interviewed the primary benefit was a personal introduction to a leader living in Gajul VDC who facilitated contacts with relevant participants in the VDC. A second snowball was initiated by engaging the support of a local business owner who was associated with a non-Maoist party and was able to help identify individuals who could participate in the research. All the interviews were conducted in Nepali with an interpreter.

The twelve respondents who were classified as participating in the 'national level' inputs were all interviewed in person in Kathmandu in English using a reputational snowball sampling frame. Five were Nepali and seven international; two of the international respondents were female. The researcher knew three of the international respondents prior to the research. Discussions with two of them had informed the research design during a scoping visit to Kathmandu during the summer of 2010.

Navigating language and power in the research design

Whilst language and power are rich areas for discussion for the purposes of understanding the research design, the points below are listed to help illustrate some of the fundamental social issues that the researcher had to negotiate.

Language is a fundamental component of the epistemological narrative associated with the research design; it forms the participants' thoughts but also shapes and constrains them within the limitations of that language and their own skill at using the language. The same limitations obviously also apply to the author and affect the way in which he can understand respondents who speak different languages. Whilst Husserl's phenomenological tradition would assert that it is possible to directly

⁷² This also helps with the comparability across the field sites, because both Village A and Gajul currently have IDPs who have moved out of the villages because of ongoing violent conflict or threats of violence.

translate concepts from one language to another in part of a language community, more modern critiques from East Asian academics have suggested that the use of language is itself a process which forms concepts (Daisuke, 2010, pp. 64-6); this is significant because the terms 'peace' and 'stability' are critical to the research topic but are in themselves contested.

Philosophers such as Benjamin and Derrida moved the phenomenological tradition forward by suggesting that other languages present different views of the same concepts, and in the case of Benjamin the range of meaning ascribed and interpretation applied by users of languages means that direct translation is most likely futile (Daisuke, 2010, pp. 70-6). Accepting this futility whilst still searching for commonalities could be interpreted as accepting an early defeat for this research but it is the only viable way of accepting some of the limitations and would be present even if the researcher spoke the same languages as all of the respondents and/or all the respondents spoke the same language.

This researcher is particularly aware of the limitations of language and the ability to express and convey thoughts from one language to another. So it is important to briefly convey the researcher's linguistic background to shed light on why this is significant (which also usefully highlights any biases which may affect the research). The researcher's first degree was in Arabic and Persian, which included learning classical and modern written Arabic and learning to speak Syrian dialect as well as parts of the dialects in the Nejd (Saudi Arabia) and Iraq. After finishing this degree the researcher lived in Japan and was conversant in Japanese and mostly literate by the time he left in 2005. Subsequently he spent much of the last eight years working and living in Afghanistan speaking Dari (a Persian dialect). This explanation is not meant to suggest that the researcher is particularly gifted in languages. Many of the participants in the research spoke a number of languages themselves so this is not a particularly special skill. However in the course of learning these languages the researcher has acquired an appreciation of the complexity of translating a concept from one language to another.

This is particularly important for the research design as it required the translation of complex and often socially loaded words such as 'power', 'legitimacy' or 'stability' into local languages. The researcher carried out all the interviews, which mitigates some of the methodological concerns of research carried out with different language groups (which can involve using different researchers who would interpret the research design differently as noted by Brannen, 2005, pp. 173-184). However, the fact remains that significant time was spent understanding local discussions about legitimacy

formation and the concept of 'stability' in order to identify locally accepted and understood terms as well as formulations for asking questions.

The word 'stability' proved to be particularly complex and some discussion is required to situate the approach taken during the field research. Whilst there are relatively convenient synonyms in Dari and Pashto (*subat*) and in Nepal and Bhojpori (*istirta*)⁷³ for stability they are not necessarily used in the same manner as English or between themselves. Interviewees were also asked what they meant by 'stability', which forms a key component of the data analysis, but it should be recognised that respondents were not always clear themselves about the meaning of the word. In Dari, Pashto and Nepali the nearest synonym for 'stability' is in fact 'peace' – itself a loaded term; for those respondents who struggled to use 'stability' the word 'peace' was introduced.⁷⁴

These are subtle but important changes which have been dwelt on further in the analysis; however for a few interviewees, particularly those less educated respondents, both the concepts of 'stability' and 'peace' were not helpful. In the following example the word 'peace' – *shanti* in Nepali – was confused with a common girls' name:

Interviewer: Does the word stability mean anything to you?

Respondent: My son is working as electrician. My husband is farmer. My son was in the village during the Dashain.

I: Do you know what peace is?

R: My daughter name is not peace (Shanti). I do not have a daughter named Shanti.⁷⁵

For obvious reasons the interview above was one of several that were not included in the research analysis, but it illustrates some of the constraints on the research.

Given the fact that the interviews were carried out in five languages, including Dari, Pashto, Nepali, Bhojpuri and English it was inevitable that the researcher would use interpreters to assist with carrying out the interviews. The interpreters worked with the researcher for the majority of a case study, so in both Nepal and Afghanistan there was one main interpreter with a second on hand if the main interpreter was not

⁷³ It is interesting to note that both *subat* and *istirta* are loan words from Arabic and Sanskrit respectively.

⁷⁴ For example this would change a question about a development project from 'how did you think this school supported stability?' to 'how to you think this school supported peace?'

⁷⁵ Interview with female respondent, Gajul, October 14th 2011.

available. The interpreters were paid to work with the researcher and, with the exception of six interviews carried out in Bhojpuri, they were not from the field sites. Other interviews, predominantly with international actors, were carried out in English though respondents were not necessarily native speakers and care was taken in transcribing interviews.

In addition to the linguistic issues outlined above the researcher was cognisant of the power dynamics involved in a foreign researcher investigating local power, politics and history. The processes of conflict, insurgency and resistance are in many ways expressions of differing views of power formation and distribution, and may involve differing avenues to legitimacy formation. One of the complexities of the research is that respondents may be on one or more sides of the power dynamics in their society. Those inside may see the ongoing legitimacy reproduction in their society as just and right. Equally those outside, possibly in positions of resistance, may offer opposing (if not opposite) views about legitimacy formation, and may present themselves or their ideologies as the process which is just and right. Further, these positions must be mediated by a range of groups which are in between opposing forces (for example elements of civil society) who are 'unable' to engage in the debate or be seen to engage in it for fear of being drawn into it. Bearing this in mind the responses of the female respondent above may in fact have been defensive rather than resulting from a misunderstanding. Similarly in Kalakan an interview with a religious leader was terminated shortly after starting because it was clear to the researcher that the respondent felt uncomfortable talking to him. It was only the following day that the researcher found out that the respondent felt concerned for his safety because he feared a repeat of an incident involving the British Resident Cavagnari in the area some 130 years previously where a local Mullah was allegedly killed by the British Resident.

These issues do not only affect local respondents, representatives from international organisations may be forced to present their organisations' interpretation of its mandate regarding the conflict, which may differ from the individuals' interpretations of the environment. All of these issues are not simply biases which must be identified but they are important in understanding *why* certain individuals and organisations make specific choices during a conflict and are used in the analysis in Chapter 9.

Equally one must be careful not to assume that all respondents are giving accurate, truthful or reasonable information regarding the research topic – particularly one as mushy as 'legitimacy' (Huntington, 1991, p. 46). As Bordieu has outlined, some respondents may in fact be too good to be true and present what the interviewer wants to hear i.e. false, collusive objectification (Yanos & Hopper, 2008, pp. 229-231).

An insurgent or government official's 'authentic' view of legitimacy formation may relate well to a theory of legitimacy formation but it may be out of step with the realities of power, authority and process in their location by dint of the fact that either party may be outside the loop of local reality. A post-modern response to these issues suggests that in some ways it does not matter that some interviewees see the interview as a performance, or decide that they must present a specific version of themselves or their experiences (ibid., 2008, pp. 233-4). However, this does assume that their views would have no impact on the rest of their community and that by interpreting their information at face value the researcher is acting as a basic reflective mirror to their world, neither of which outcome is satisfactory.

Through the research design a number of steps were taken to address the issue of false, collusive objectification, along with additional issues of participants lying and misleading the researcher. Yanos & Hopper identified five ways in which researchers can address these issues which were incorporated in the research design:⁷⁶

1) Active and methodical listening – addressed through the recording of interviews to identify areas where respondents have not understood or answered questions appropriately; also supported during interviews by interpreters (when present) to help identify areas which may be of significance.

2) In-depth knowledge of the circumstances relevant to the respondent – addressed through interviewing respondents from one specific area (the field sites), many of whom were related or had long-standing relationships; carrying out pre-interview discussions and visits with other local people who were not interviewed to gain a broader understanding of the context of each site.

3) Repeated interviews – 10 respondents were interviewed at least twice; these were respondents who represented a key component of the conflict narrative in a field site.

4) Attending to 'clichés behind which each of us lives,' including the interviewer's own biases; addressed through discussing the usage of terminology and the thinking behind the direction of the interviews with interpreters beforehand in order to de-brief after each interview and check the interpretation of the interview environment and discuss each other's thoughts.

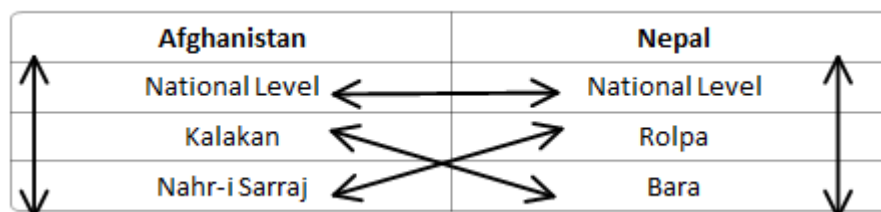
5) Willingness to classify interviews as uninformative – several interviews were not used in the analysis; this was either because of methodological reasons or simply because the data collected was not relevant to the research (for example the two interviews mentioned above).

⁷⁶ Adapted from ibid., 2008, pp. 234-6

The case studies and field sites

This section describes how the case studies and field sites were selected with particular consideration to the comparability of the field sites, which is a foundational element of the research and supports the analysis in Chapter 8 (a more detailed description of the sites themselves can be found in the relevant chapters). Whilst it is important to remain cognisant of the limitations of simple case study comparisons it is the only viable method of producing a fine grained analysis of what local perceptions of stability are and how different factors, including stabilisation activities, affect them. However, to improve the comparability of the case studies and field sites, significant effort and time was spent on identifying the field sites. This was not to find a ‘perfect site’ or one that would prove a preconceived theory, but the sites needed to have enough commonality to strengthen comparisons and ensure that they were not unduly affected by one particular factor or issue. This approach draws on the rich literature comparing case studies in conflict-affected countries and in that vein the research design attempts to emulate the successful application of comparisons across countries (Weinstein, 2007). The table below shows how the case studies and field sites have been constructed so that they provide comparison within each country and between field sites.

Table 6 Comparability within and between case studies and field sites (Source: Author, 2012)



Afghanistan – Kalakan and Nahr-i Sarraj

Afghanistan has been affected by internal conflict since 1979 with the Mujahideen uprising against the Soviet invasion. The withdrawal of Soviet forces in 1989 and the eventual withdrawal of subsidies to the Najibullah government led to the Mujahideen parties taking Kabul in 1992. The ensuing bloody civil war between the parties allowed space for the Taliban, supported by Pakistan, to take over the vast majority of the country by 1997 (Nojumi, 2002, p. 172). Alongside this national contest the Taliban’s relationship with Al-Qaeda and Osama bin Laden was of concern to the international community for several years prior to September 11th 2001 (Kuehn & Linschoten, 2012, pp. 134-43). The attacks on the United States precipitated Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) which overthrew the Taliban government in December 2001. The transitional government that emerged was led by Chairman, now President, Karzai.

Estimates vary but over the last thirty years at least hundreds of thousands of Afghans have been killed.

At a national level in Afghanistan it was possible to collect information from within the implementing agencies of a number of stabilisation activities including the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) Headquarters and International Joint Command (IJC) in Kabul, the PRT in Helmand and other relevant stakeholders amongst the interveners. On the host nation side interviews were carried out with representatives of senior Afghan political elites including the Presidential Palace, relevant ministries (including Interior and Defence), provincial and district authorities.

Kalakan district (see Chapter 4) lies on the main road to the north of Kabul city on the Shomali plain. Aqa Sarai, the main research village, lies approximately 7 km from the main highway to the east. Currently the district is quite secure although it played a key role in the Mujahideen period in the 1980s and several prominent leaders in the current administration are linked to the Shomali plain and Kalakan itself. Control of the district was split between Mujahideen factions and there were parallel state structures run by the resistance which continue to dictate current political relationships. The district was devastated by the Taliban after their takeover of Kabul and attack on the Shura-i Nazar forces of Ahmad Shah Massoud in the north (Snow, Denny & Zaman, 2009, pp. 6-7). The district is quite compact and relies on a mixture of passing trade on the main road, links to Kabul for labour and some agriculture for its economic survival. There have been many stabilisation activities by the government, development agencies and international military forces in the district since 2001 which have included participating in the Afghanistan New Beginnings Programme (ANBP), an internationally sponsored DDR process and police reform.

Nahr-i Sarraj district (see Chapter 5) lies in Helmand province, one of the areas which has seen the greatest contestation in recent times and is variously described as being one of the most violent areas of the country as well as being dominated by the drug economy. Lying to the north of Gereshk municipality, the most significant urban centre in Helmand and the former provincial capital, Village A demonstrates many of these key characteristics. Residents have witnessed several conflicts over the last generation and the population has participated in armed groups as well as being the victims of extreme violence both at the hands of national forces (armed groups and the government), international forces (both the Soviets and ISAF) and local pockets of international jihadist fighters. In addition to this the area is a significant site for the cultivation, production and smuggling of opium. Since 2001 there have been a number of attempts to intervene in the village and wider district, which have included governance reforms, development projects and military action. As of summer 2012 it remains disputed territory.

Nepal – Rolpa and Bara

Nepal is still grappling with the realities of the CPA signed between the Maoists and civilian government in 2006. The insurgency started in the mid-Western hill region in 1996 and quickly spread to other parts of the country, capitalising on the inability of the Kathmandu elites on both the left and right of the political spectrum to engage with local grievances (Thapa, 2004, pp. 34-7). The populist measures of the Maoists garnered substantial support amongst the rural population and marginalised groups; they have however failed to transform this into a stable governance system and a secondary conflict, the Madeshi Andolan, started shortly after the CPA was signed when Madeshi ethnic groups realised their interests were threatened (Mathema, 2011, pp. 25-7). Despite agreement on the integration of Maoist combatants, doubts remain about the integration of the Peoples' Liberation Army (PLA) into the Nepal Army, and there is an increasing deterioration in formal local governance systems across many of Nepal's rural districts (ICG, 2011, pp. 2-4; Kafle, 2010, pp. 8-10).

At a national level in Nepal, data collection included interviews with interveners as well as relevant Nepalese Government bodies' and bi- and multi-lateral institutions. Stabilisation as a concept is not widely used by parts of the international community in Nepal, though it does articulate elements of UK intervention and is understood by Nepali officials (HMG, 2011, pp. 13, 25). Despite this, similar approaches and programmes have been implemented in Nepal by the international community and include DDR and SSR programmes: development initiatives focusing on basic services and support for electoral reform. In order to encompass the different aspects of the conflict the field sites include a hill district, Rolpa in the mid-Western region, and a plains region, Bara in the Central Terai.

Rolpa district (see Chapter 6) lies in the mid-Western region traditionally neglected by the central government, though Gajul VDC, the main village site, has benefitted from schools established there since the 1950s. Development activity in the district dates back several decades and includes a USAID supported integrated river valley development programme for the Rapti River which is fed by the Gajul river (Amatya, 1989, p. 45). Rolpa was the centre of the Maoist insurgency and was one of the first areas to experience the parallel governance structures established by the Maoist insurgency. During the conflict and after the signing of the CPA, a German aid agency, GTZ (now GIZ), began humanitarian and development operations in the district. In addition Rolpa is the site of one of the cantonments of the People's Liberation Army (PLA), which are currently demobilised (though not disarmed or integrated at the time of research). There is ongoing political competition between the Maoists, United Marxist-Leninists (UML) and the Nepali Congress, and the state structures continue to be usurped by parallel structures. Gajul remains a significant VDC in Rolpa with three members of the Constituent Assembly originating from the VDC.

Bara (see Chapter 7) is a Terai, or plain, district to the south of Kathmandu bordering India. Haraiya VDC lies in the central belt of the district just south of the main national highway that runs east to west across Nepal. For much of the 20th Century the district has been a backwater, economically and politically; its larger western neighbour Parsa, which includes the major city of Birgunj, is the main regional economic hub and its eastern neighbour, Rautahat, has benefitted from the political connections of a former resident and Prime Minister, M.K. Nepal. Bara's major economic commodity is timber, which is both legally and illegally felled, and there is a burgeoning smuggling trade in timber and other goods across the border. There has been little development in Bara with few paved roads across the district and poor delivery of both education and health services, though these have been supported by NGOs including Plan International, which has worked in Haraiya VDC for nearly fifteen years. The district and Haraiya VDC have been badly affected by both the Maoist insurgency and the Madeshi Andolan and it is still considered one of the most insecure districts in Nepal by the Nepali government (Kafle, 2010, pp. 8-10).

Comparability between the case studies and field sites

Methodologically it is important to demonstrate the comparability of the field sites and case studies. The previous brief introductions to the case studies and field sites may lead to the assumption that these spaces and conflicts are so unique that they can't be compared. However, there are a number of important connections, in particular elements focusing on the interveners, the host nations and issues of time. Comparing the 'intervener' side across the case studies is clearly feasible. The research focuses on bi-lateral and multi-lateral interventions, and there is a strong comparative background in military and development research produced by both academic and policy institutes (Jackson & Gordon, 2007; Fishstein, 2010; Wilder, 2010). This is also the element easiest to collect material about, from a range of online sources, research reports and papers as well as interviews.

Comparing host nations, in particular those under extreme pressure such as those facing insurgencies and increased international focus, attention and pressure, is more challenging. At a macro level there are a number of important similarities between Afghanistan and Nepal. They are both landlocked, mountainous, and have, or are facing, armed insurgencies with purportedly ideological motivations that have external advantages and freedom of movement. They are both in neighbourhoods which are not necessarily friendly to small country independence (for Afghanistan the lingering impact of the Great Game between the British and Russia, followed by US/Russian competition and the emerging powers of Iran and Pakistan; for Nepal, the long-term reality of British, then Indian, influence balanced by China). Each country also has relatively little experience of colonialism in comparison to many other states. Although both Afghanistan and Nepal were invaded by the British they maintained

their independence to a large degree throughout most of their history (Chaudary, 2011, pp. 22-5; Dupree, 1973, pp. 365-413). In addition, both countries have a highly fragmented, though small, political elite which often form new factions or splinter groups only to re-affirm previous alliances when the political imperative demands it.⁷⁷ Further, their highly heterogeneous populations are split along ethnic and linguistic lines and intra-group fragmentation occurs because of social and armed conflict.⁷⁸

Both have been affected by protracted violent conflict in the form of at least one insurgency (Afghanistan for thirty years and Nepal for a decade) and have significant horizontal inequalities between groups in terms of access to political power, economic resources and development resources (Goodhand, Dennys, & Mansfield, 2011, pp. 249-54; Social Inclusion Research Fund, 2007, pp. 6-29). Other similarities include the distinct differences between mountain and plain regions, the overbearing presence of regional neighbours, economies based largely on agriculture and trade with substantial black market and illicit economies (though this is more marked in the case of Afghanistan), low levels of tax to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) ratios and government spending as a part of GDP (Afghanistan, 7.8% and Nepal, 13.2%),⁷⁹ and finally a long standing focus of development spending in the country by Western and non-Western governments.

At one level the comparability of the states is easy to defend, but ensuring comparability across the field sites is critical to ensure that the analysis derived from the raw data is credible and valid. Clearly, all the field sites described above are unique, however they have a number of important similarities which will aid analysis and the identification of trends and causal linkages. This means that not only can the research claim that there is comparability between Afghanistan and Nepal, but that the field sites within those states are comparable on a number of levels. The table below outlines eighteen variables which at least two of the field sites, and often all of them, have in common.

⁷⁷ On the shifts in the far left Communist parties in Nepal see Thapa, 2004, pp. 24-32; for examples of shifts amongst the Afghan jihadist parties see Dorronsoro, 2000, pp. 148, 161-9.

⁷⁸ For a discussion on the Kham Magars and their early mobilisation in support of Communist, later Maoist, groups see Sales, 2003, pp. 60-5; amongst the Terai/Madeshi groups see Chaudary, 2011. For a description of Afghanistan's main ethnic groups see Dupree, 1973, pp. 57-65.

⁷⁹ These figures are for Financial Years 2010/11 and 2007/8 respectively, see World Bank, 2011, p. 17 and World Bank, 2010, p. 20.

Table 7 Commonalities between the field sites (Source: Author, 2012)

Comparing districts and field sites	Afghanistan		Nepal	
	Kalakan (Kabul)	Nahr-i Sarraj (Helmand)	Rolpa (Mid-Western Zone)	Bara (Central Terai Zone)
Geographic / economic				
Rural community	x	x	x	x
Economy is centred on agriculture	x	x	x	x
Presence of light industry	x			x
The district or province includes an international border		x		x
Conflict dynamics				
Centre for resistance	x	x	x	x
Experienced parallel governance structures	x	x	x	x
Ethnically or tribally mixed	x	x	x	x
Residents have left the community during the conflict	x	x	x	x
Some residents are not able to return		x	x	
International interventions				
Humanitarian	x		x	
Development	x	x	x	x
Security (including DDR)	x	x	x	
Governance	x	x		x
National intervention				
State presence collapsed during the conflict	x	x	x	x
Local services are present (education or health)	x		x	x
Government security forces are deployed in the field site (village)	x	x (at times)	x	x
Political				
Voting has taken place in a national election	x	x	x	x
Multiple political parties or groups are active	x	x	x	x

There is however one fundamental variable that is unique in the case studies relating to Kalakan. Kalakan is a district that lies within one hour's drive of Kabul, the capital city, and the dynamics of a capital city may affect stability and stabilisation to a greater or lesser degree that cannot accurately be accounted for. None of the other sites are near a capital city, though both Village A and Haraiya VDC are within a few hours travel of substantial urban centres, Gereshk and Birgunj; neither of these cities is as large or important as Kabul or Kathmandu.

In addition, there are of course important differences between Afghanistan and Nepal and the sites which must also be recognised. These include: the relatively more coherent and functioning state in Nepal which has slightly better tax-to-GDP ratios (as noted above), higher average annual income and levels of education, and life expectancy.⁸⁰ The different dynamics of the Islamic insurgent groups in Afghanistan whose willingness to inflict substantial numbers of civilian casualties compares with a highly regimented, organised and restrained Maoist People's Liberation Army in Nepal;⁸¹ different stages of violence, intervention and political legitimacy formation have taken place at different times but to some extent are still part of the larger South Asia conflict system;⁸² and finally they have very different social and cultural world views, most starkly seen in the differences in the way women are treated in Nepal, where they are generally able to work and move more freely.⁸³

There are two particular differences which need to be noted; firstly, the history of state formation and national culture and secondly, religious ideology. These issues are introduced here and discussed in more detail under culture and context in Chapter 8.

⁸⁰ The per capita GDP Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) for Afghanistan and Nepal are \$964 (2005) and \$1,597 (2006) respectively; life expectancy was estimated to be 43.1 years and 63.69 in the same years in Afghanistan and Nepal (UNDP, 2009, p. 147; UNDP, 2007, p. 17).

⁸¹ Jeremy Weinstein has argued that the degree of violence used in rebellion is linked to the nature and structure of the groups prosecuting the conflicts (Weinstein, 2007, p. 258); on the structure of jihadi groups in Afghanistan see Dorransoro, 2000, pp. 123-36; on Taliban structures see Coghlan, 2009, p. 141. On Maoist structures for the People's Liberation Army see ICG, 2005, pp. 8-10.

⁸² See for example the edited volume by Mishra and Ghosh which addresses both Afghanistan and Nepal as well as a host of other conflicts in Pakistan, Sri Lanka, India and Bhutan (Mishra & Ghosh, 2003).

⁸³ See for example the difference in the discourse by and about women in Afghanistan and Nepal in Tapper, 1991, pp. 52-8; Rostami-Povey, 2007, pp. 3-13, 41-67; and on Nepali women and agricultural labour see Gurung, 1994.

With regards to the state, the experiences of two mountainous kingdoms in South Asia have some important connections. The form of the state as outlined by the Mongol leader, Babur Shah, who conquered Kabul in 1504 and went on to capture Delhi in 1526 has continued to shape and influence the wider sub-continent (Dupree, 1973, pp. 319-21). The precepts outlined in the Babur Nameh on the subsequent Afghan Durrani dynasty are largely contiguous. However, the Mughal state has been more problematic for the Nepali kingdom. Concerns about the Mughalisation of the state in Nepal has led some to comment on the fact that the Nepali state is set up in opposition to the modes designated by the Mughal empire, and the clearest refutation of Mughal hegemony can be found in the Mulki Ain from 1864 (Whelpton, 2005, p. 56). Bearing this historical issue in mind is important for the analysis but also confirms the fact that these two conflicts, to some extent, remain part of the wider South Asian political and conflict processes that have dominated the region for the last three centuries. These historical issues present themselves in some of the boundaries of action that respondents identify in terms of how they understand the success or failure of a variety of interventions and need to be considered as ways in which local respondents structure their thinking.

The differences in social structure, religion and culture also need to be understood if it is going to be feasible to isolate recurring dynamics of legitimacy formation, because elements are fundamental to the outlook of the populations and their leaders. There are, however, striking differences: Afghanistan is almost entirely Muslim but has a highly heterogeneous Islamic identity including Sunni, Shia and Ismaili groups which use several schools of Islamic Jurisprudence (Sharia) including Hanafi, Jafari and Deobandi. These identities are overlaid on tribal and ethnic identities which link many groups more strongly to neighbouring countries than to the centre. Nepalis are mostly Buddhist and Hindu with a Christian minority.⁸⁴ Religious motivations for conflict have mutated and are subsumed by the range of identity-based conflicts about caste and ethnic group demands. These labels, ideologies and motivations for conflict are then quite distinct, though not necessarily mutually exclusive and have been considered carefully in the analysis.

This section has explained the case study and field site selection for the field research. It has explained the high degree of comparability between the case study countries, Afghanistan and Nepal, as well as the choices made in selecting field sites in the case study countries. Whilst noting limitations on the degree of comparability the preceding discussion presents a robust defence of the level of comparability of the

⁸⁴ This means that the research has to contend not just with the social structures of these religions and sects but also their varied philosophical traditions; an introduction to these can be found in Bonevac & Phillips, 2009.

data and analysis. The following section introduces how the data will be analysed to achieve the research objectives outlined above.

Data analysis

The range of data collected for the research has been significant and includes qualitative interviews as well quantitative data collected from participants (therefore not in the public domain), and secondary quantitative data sources such as economic data. The 140 qualitative interviews have been analysed using the Nvivo software package which assisted with analysing the data. The verbatim transcripts or notes from the interviews were imported into the software with the respondent codes used as the 'source' file codes within the Nvivo software. A list of coding nodes was then used to capture the data from the imported files. These nodes vary across the case studies but there were between 22 and 49 nodes for each analysis section (the four case studies plus the two sets of national level interviews).⁸⁵ The nodes included (but were not limited to):

- Governance/elections
- Justice
- External intervention with sub-categories for:
 - Development, Diplomacy and Security/Military interventions
- Internal intervention with sub-categories for:
 - Development, Diplomacy and Security/Military interventions
- Time periods for the conflict:
 - Afghanistan included pre-1978; 1979-2001; 2001 to present
 - Nepal included pre-1996, 1996-2006 and post-2006
- Economy
- IDPs and migration (where relevant)
- Geographic nodes, for example the Provincial or District capital

Each interview was analysed by coding every part of the interview against one or more of the nodes. The screen shots below give examples of the coding from an interview with a respondent in Nepal:

⁸⁵ The number of nodes used for the Afghanistan data analysis were higher than those used for the Nepal data analysis primarily because it became clear after the Afghan analysis that a number of nodes were overlapping or too focused and needed to be re-named as broader categories; for example on politics and elections there were five sub-nodes in the Afghan case studies, whereas one was used for the Nepal data. Another subset of nodes are completely different and relate to either geography (i.e. village, district, province or city names) or parties to the conflict (i.e. Maoist, ISAF, Taliban etc.).

The search for stability through stabilisation: Case studies from Afghanistan and Nepal

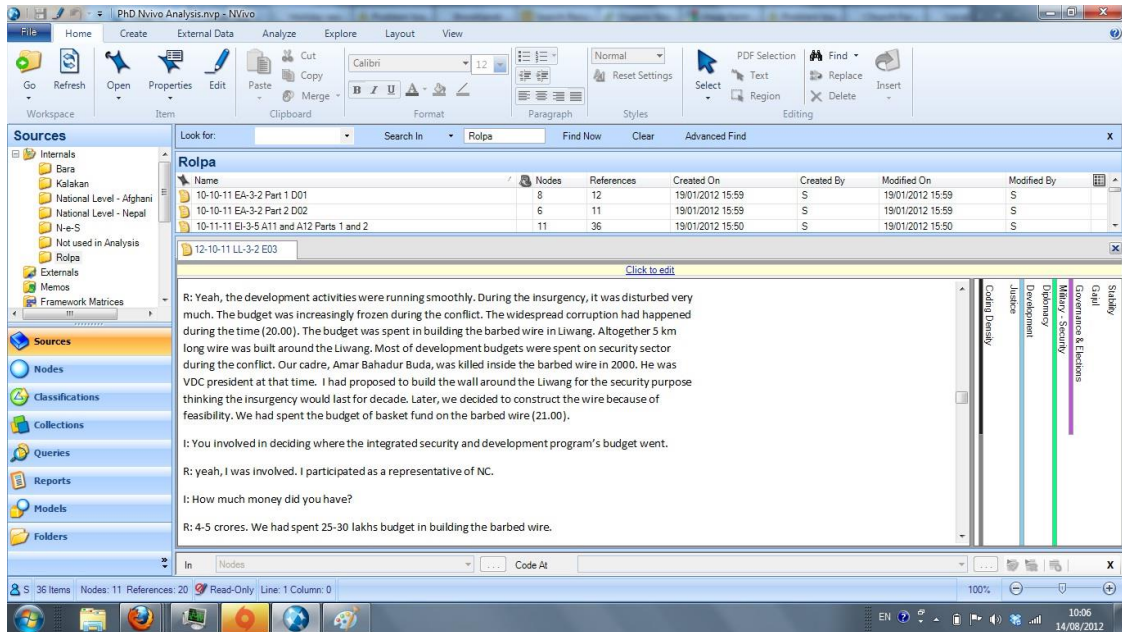


Figure 3 Screenshot of Interview Coding (Example from an interview from the Rolpa case study. Codes on right hand side)

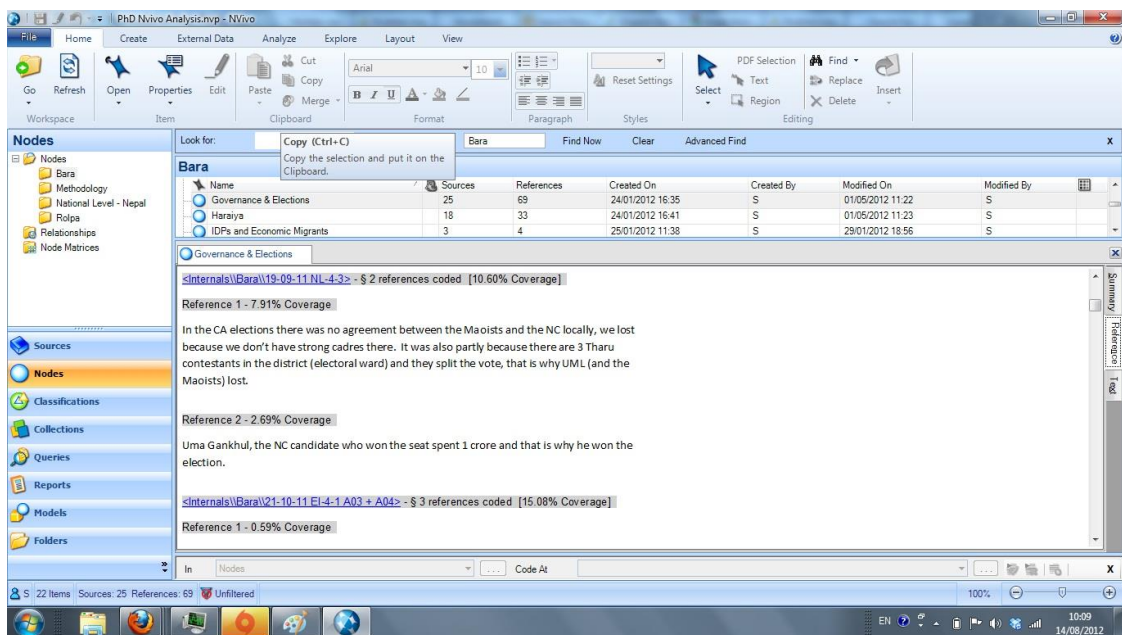


Figure 4 Screenshot of Coded Label (Example of Governance and Elections in Bara Case Study)

Using this approach means that the same data in one interview could be coded in multiple nodes and across multiple case studies; for example, when a 'national level' interviewee refers to a specific issue in one of the field sites this can be coded at the 'national level' node relevant to that piece of data as well as the 'field site' node which is relevant. The nodes were then re-exported out of Nvivo to Microsoft Word. The Word files listed all the data points coded to that node (for example 'Economy – Bara') and above each piece of data the respondent code referring to the individual respondent who provided that piece of data. For each field site and national level node a data pack was printed and the reordered data packs were read by the researcher.

More old fashioned methods, using a pen and paper, were used to identify connections within nodes and across interviews in the data packs, initially over an immersive two day period (each data pack consisted of some 400 pages of data). The annotated nodes were used to support the analysis and drafting of the text, which primarily draws from the interview data. The structure of the data analysis chapters was established once all of the Afghan data had been collated, transcribed and analysed. For record keeping purposes an interview list was maintained throughout the research to name each interview with the appropriate code, which could also be used as a quick reference list during analysis and drafting.

To ensure that the researcher had not interrogated the data to provide an outcome of their choosing the data analysis was made available to two external researchers, one Nepali and one Afghan, who reviewed the way the interviews were coded. This helped validate the research by ensuring that the data set had not been unduly manipulated by the researcher. The chapters based on the data analysis (Chps. 4 - 7) were also sent to two other researchers to provide a peer review and ensure a second level of bias mitigation.

Quantitative data has been used to enrich the qualitative data set, whereby the researcher would return to the quantitative data once the initial chapters had been drafted to see where there were dissonances or supporting evidence for points made during the interviews. The analysis was carried out in this order because participants were not asked to comment on quantitative data sets they did not have access to. This involved the analysis of entire quantitative data sets, such as the Significant Actions (SIGACTS) dataset that was made available through WikiLeaks, as well as single point quantitative data such as GDP or growth figures.

Ethics

Ethical considerations for the research fall into two categories: firstly, those relating to respondent consent and privacy, and secondly, those relating to security.

Respondents were all given an explanation of the research and the opportunity to participate or not which was outlined in English, Dari, Pashto and Nepali. Not all respondents were literate and some were interviewed by phone, so an oral explanation of the letter was given (see Appendix A, p. 304). For respondents with email access the letter was sent to them electronically. In all cases the affiliations of the researcher were made clear, the topic areas, how their data and information would be handled and the fact that they could withdraw from the interview process at any time.

Respondents were offered anonymity even though some agreed to the use of their names voluntarily. Whilst most of the interviewees are not identified, four public figures in elected office, who were all interviewed, are identified by name and gave consent for their names to be used; apart from these individuals all respondents were guaranteed anonymity. Some quotes in the text presented in this thesis have been further anonymised because the information may continue to be sensitive. Interviews were recorded on an MP3 voice recorder, though some interviewees chose to have the recorder turned off for all or part of the interview. When interviews were not recorded they were written up by the researcher, with support from the interpreter where appropriate, based on notes taken during the interview.

Interviews generally took place in locations which were familiar to the respondents, for example a local house in their village for community respondents or offices for government officials or international respondents. In some cases it was more suitable or practical to carry out the interview at another location, for example a national respondent who had formerly worked in Helmand was interviewed at an office the researcher had access to rather than his current employer or home. In those instances the location was agreed with the interviewee beforehand and transport was organised to ensure that the interview was not witnessed by other people as far as possible.

Transcripts and interview notes were written in Microsoft Word and were imported to Nvivo for analysis. All data was kept on secure, password protected systems. Hard copies were also made and stored in a secure location. Interviews were given an alphanumeric code, which have also been used in the analysis and writing of the thesis.⁸⁶ These steps will ensure the anonymity of respondents and their long term safety needs. If interviewees requested a copy of the transcript in English it was supplied to them.

In terms of security, it is clear that both Nepal and Afghanistan are insecure and many of the respondents had been at the forefront of the conflicts of the last generation,

⁸⁶ So for example LL refers to Local Leader; EA is Economic Actor; NL is National Leader and IN is Intervener.

and indeed many had been physically injured. Though Afghanistan has been significantly more dangerous than Nepal for foreign researchers in recent times the field research in Nepal was affected by several security incidents including the use of two improvised explosive devices that an armed group had placed in Haraiya VDC. Therefore the long-term protection of sources and people who helped the research was, and remains, a critical consideration.

Through a number of mitigation steps the ethical issues that are presented by the security risks were addressed. It was important to ensure that the community in particular gave permission for the research to go ahead; not just from a practical point of view to ensure that the researcher had access to the relevant people, but so that misunderstandings about the role of the researcher in that community did not arise, and where respondents or other community respondents had concerns these could be raised in a formal manner to their local leadership (formal or informal as appropriate) so that there were no negative consequences for respondents or for the research team (researcher, interpreter and driver). These considerations were one of the factors that led to the selection of the snowball sampling frame and the insistence on anonymity.

There were also a number of other additional security constraints that were mitigated through the research. The risks are included in Appendix D (p. 314) but, in summary, the initial selection of research sites in both Afghanistan and Nepal had to be changed because of security concerns. Despite these precautions, in both Afghanistan and Nepal, there was localised violence using improvised explosive devices either in or near the field sites. Travel in Afghanistan and Nepal was affected by armed conflict, demonstrations and political unrest, in the former connected to the aftermath of the 2010 Parliamentary elections in the context of the ongoing insurgency and, in Nepal, the fall of one government and the return of a Maoist-led government in autumn 2011.

Assumptions

With any research there will be assumptions inherent to the design of the study; this subsection outlines the most significant assumptions to ensure that the major biases inherent in the design are clarified. The critical assumption of the research is the hypothesis which drives the methodological approach, that local political legitimacy is actually the main driving force behind local stability and, by extension, regional and national stability in the context of 21st Century state consolidation. If this were falsified there would still be a useful outcome from the project, but the research objectives would necessarily be affected as the utility of producing new theoretical models and frameworks would be superfluous.

Similarly, in assessing an approach (stabilisation) by interveners the research project asserts that the 'project' is not a useful mode for analysis and that a project-by-project appraisal of stabilisation activities would not provide information which would inform an understanding of local stability. Again, if this is not the case, that it is necessary to have a very high degree of sector specific expertise (for example in health or policing), there would be challenges to the research methodology and to the findings.

Further, on the ground, it was important to be clear that there are significant power asymmetries between the researcher and the researched in the context of fragile, often violent, societies, which need to be moderated for reasons of both ethics and research validity. This is primarily an issue in field sites, rather than for interviews with interveners. Therefore an assumption arising from the research was the temptation to focus on the 'Other' in the quest to find 'solutions' for 'Us' – especially when the researcher, as noted above, is a white male European (Duffield, 2005, p. 145).

In order to address some of the power asymmetries inherent in investigating power, legitimacy and stability in fragile societies, the research design recognises that one of the independent variables is international action (and therefore international decision making). This is complicated by the fact that the researcher himself is part of these processes and his academic department, the Centre for Security Sector Management (CSSM), is heavily engaged in Security Sector Reform and stabilisation in a number of states trying to recover from, or cope with, ongoing conflicts. It is therefore important to ensure critical reflections of intervention whilst being hosted by a department engaged in intervention itself.

Limitations

Case study research has a number of clear limitations. The first is that it can be difficult to generalise findings beyond the sites selected and the particular dynamics may skew the analysis to the point where trends only apply in the very specific context of these case studies. As argued in the site selection, the comparison between Nepal and Afghanistan and the subsequent field site selections have been designed to minimise this risk but it will continue to affect the generalisations one can make about the findings. Secondly, the researcher's limitations of being male and not speaking all the languages and dialects present in the field sites means that care had to be taken during the interviews and in analysis to ensure that the narratives and analysis formed from the interviews is an accurate reflection of the respondents' intended meaning. This has been in part mitigated by asking two external individuals, one Nepali and one Afghan, to review the coding of the research and provide feedback to the researcher about the analysis.

Thirdly, there was a limitation to the time available for field research which has meant that there will always be issues and questions left unexplored. Again, the site selection

was made partly based on the existing knowledge and experience of the researcher to minimise this risk, but will always remain a limitation of the amount of data that can be collected and analysed effectively. Another limitation of the design, partly due to time limitations, is the lack or inability to carry out longitudinal methods which would deepen the level of analysis. This is, in part, mitigated by the questions focusing on past interventions as well as current interventions. However, the lack of longitudinal data may hamper some of the analysis regarding the long-term effects of stabilisation interventions.

Chapter 4 – Indigenous Stabilisation

Kalakan, Kabul province, Afghanistan

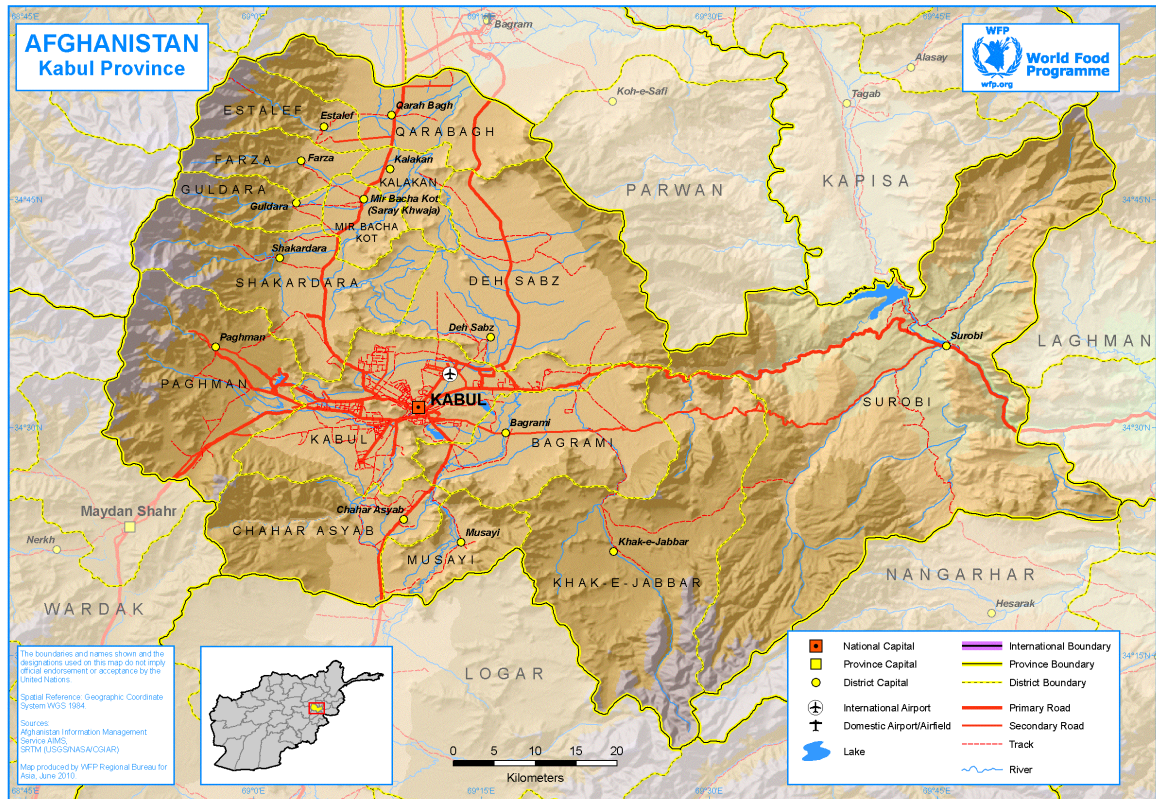


Figure 5 Map of Kabul province WFP

Prelude

“Habibullah Khan was a national person,⁸⁷ a man who wished to be free and have his country free. His first goal was to implement Islam in Afghanistan and secondly he wanted to share power and a governing system with all people. He was illiterate but his vision was not to have a government which was cruel and he never wanted to think only about his kingdom and power. In that time Nadir Shah, Zahir Shah’s father, was in France and he told him [Nadir Shah], ‘if you come back to Afghanistan I will abandon this kingdom to you and I am not eager to be king.’ When Nadir Khan came to Afghanistan instead of negotiating with Habibullah Khan he started to fight against him and had Habibullah arrested and killed him.

⁸⁷ Habibullah Khan deposed Amanullah Khan in 1929 and reigned for eight months before being deposed himself and subsequently hanged by Nadir Shah, the father of Zahir Shah the last monarch of Afghanistan. Habibullah Khan is referred to in some literature as Bacha-i Saqao, or the Son of the Water Carrier, though this is considered a derogatory name by people from Kalakan.

Habibullah's vision was a national vision and he wanted all people to participate in his government's structure. He wanted to lead this country toward development but after his fall many people spread rumours about him. They would say that Habibullah Khan was a thief, but he was a good man with a national personality – it depends on how impartial we are in judging him. He was not educated and didn't have a political thought. He was son of a farmer and his thoughts were like a farmer's thoughts.”⁸⁸

Kalakan and indigenous stabilisation

This chapter will discuss processes of stabilisation, both indigenous and exogenous, in the district of Kalakan in Kabul province Afghanistan. Kalakan is described by respondents as a stable district, to which several factors have contributed; chief among them for the respondents is the way the population, ‘the people’, have reached a consensus and addressed some of the grievances associated with the conflict in the 1980s and 1990s, and a regional approach to political competition for the districts in the Koh Daman (foothills). In addition there have been a number of exogenous activities by a wide range of actors, including the government, NGOs, international military forces and local political actors, which have had differing impacts on stability in the district since 2001.

Kalakan forms part of the Koh Daman or the Shomali plain (northern plain), comprising seven districts north of the capital of Kabul.⁸⁹ In 2001 Mujahideen forces, led by the Northern Alliance, including a range of anti-Taliban commanders and groups, broke through Taliban defensive lines to the north of Kabul and took the city on November 14th 2001, precipitating the fall of the Taliban government in December 2001. The post-Taliban milieu empowered a number of Northern Alliance commanders and leaders in the Transitional and then Interim administrations established by Chairman, now President, Karzai. Local and regional political competition in the area was intense for much of the last thirty years, and the devastation wrought by Taliban forces in the 1990s deeply affected returning commanders and local leaders as they jockeyed for position in the post-Taliban boom. However, a series of agreements, across Koh Daman and within Kalakan itself, have led to the emergence of a new equilibrium in political and social relations engendering a level of stability which has not been experienced since the end of the reign of Zahir Shah in 1973.

The importance of Kalakan to debates about stabilisation is the way in which local and regional indigenous processes of stabilisation create and shape local stability. The exploration and understanding of the agreements between various groups, their

⁸⁸ NL-1-1 19th October 2010, Kabul.

⁸⁹ The seven districts are: Guldara, Istalif, Mir Bacha Kut, Kalakan, Shakardara, Farza and Qara Bagh.

significance and how they were reached is critical to understanding indigenous views of stability and stabilisation processes, which also challenges the ways in which exogenous interventions shape some, but not all, factors important to stability in Kalakan. Some areas and political leaders use these interventions in order to promote stability whereas others do not.

Twenty-five interviews were carried out in person with twenty-nine respondents for this case study between September and December 2010, which focused on two villages, Aqa Sarai and Mushwani. These villages lie on opposite sides of an area of light industry which produces bricks. Interviews were also conducted in the District Centre and its immediate hinterland. The respondents included; government officials, elected officials, local economic actors, including shop keepers and owners of brick chimneys (*batis*⁹⁰), participants and beneficiaries of development programmes including the DDR programme, called the Afghanistan New Beginnings Programme (ANBP), and the Disbandment of Illegally Armed Groups (DIAG), and rural development programmes such as the National Solidarity Programme (NSP). Beneficiaries of food or cash for work programmes and humanitarian aid were also interviewed. External interveners who were interviewed included military trainers and government officials from other areas. Additional information collected by the author in previous visits to Kalakan since 2005 has also been used.

Conflict History

Kalakan lies on the Shomali plain about thirty kilometres north of Kabul, or an hour's drive along the asphalted road which runs to the Salang tunnel and Northern Afghanistan. Kalakan is a relatively small district (about forty square kilometres), comprising of twenty-eight villages and over 18,000 individuals.⁹¹ All but three of Kalakan's villages are dominated by Tajiks. The field sites included Aqa Sarai, which is a majority Tajik village, and Mushwani, which is one of the three Pashtun villages. The tribes in the Pashtun villages include Kakar, Suleiman Khel, Sadat and Hazar Meshi amongst others.⁹² The main Highway 1 runs through the district centre, also called Kalakan, which is lined with a range of small shops servicing the traffic on the highway. The local economy is dominated by three sectors: the service sector for transport along the main road; a brick making area consisting of about 40 chimneys employing 3-4,000 people; and finally, the agricultural sector in which the majority of the

⁹⁰ There are two types of brick factory in Kalakan producing dried bricks called *bati* (a Pakistani term) and tandoor. The tandoor are older and smaller chimneys but both are different from kilns which produce baked bricks.

⁹¹ The UNFPA listing states a population of 18,192 six years prior to the research taking place. Local respondents suggested the current population was substantially higher (UNFPA, 2004, p. 2).

⁹² LL-1-10 20th October 2010, Mushwani.

population works.⁹³ A significant but unspecified number of Kalakanis work in Kabul and/or for the government.

The majority of the district lies to the east of the main road, though a few villages lie to the west of the road, and the district can be split into three zones: the first zone includes the district centre and the villages in its immediate hinterland (including the villages to the west of the highway); the second zone includes the outlying villages to the east which run to the edge of the foothills themselves and the two sample villages, Aqa Sarai and Mushwani, which straddle the main industrial zone of the brick factories; this area is approximately half an hour's drive from the main asphalted road along dirt roads; and the third zone, which includes a few smaller villages furthest away from the district centre, about an hour's drive from the main road.

Kalakan only became a district in the 1990s during the government of Ustad Rabbani.⁹⁴ Prior to that Kalakan came to national prominence in the revolt against Amanullah Khan when a local man, Habibullah, raised a force against Amanullah Khan in 1929.⁹⁵ Amanullah had pushed for substantial social reforms in Afghanistan including challenging the use of the veil by women and expanding the provision of female education (Poullada, 1973, pp. 81-6). This move angered the conservative clergy and Amanullah faced rebellions in the east from Ghilzai tribesmen in Khost in 1927. He felt secure enough to go on a European tour in 1928 but was faced by a Shinwari revolt which was compounded by the revolt of Habibullah Khan from Kalakan (ibid., 1973, pp. 48-50; Clements, 2003, pp. 28-9).

The prelude quoted at the beginning of the paper comes from an interview with Haji Dawood, the current MP from Kalakan, and is his interpretation of Habibullah Khan's vision for Afghanistan during his reign. The cause of the rebellion, and its success in capturing Kabul, lies in the cultural mistakes that Amanullah made during his reign and a desire by the religious networks to re-instate *shariat* or Islamic law (Roy, 1985, pp.

⁹³ At the time of this research (September – December 2010) Kalakan had suffered a bad grape harvest, its most significant cash crop, due to a blight. In good seasons Kalakani producers are able to make a substantial profit in selling grapes, fresh and dried, in Kabul.

⁹⁴ LL-1-2 10th October 2010, Aqa Sarai.

⁹⁵ In another significant incident a local story, possibly apocryphal, recounts a Jirga which was convened to meet the British Resident Cavagnari, in which Cavagnari is alleged to have cut a tribesman in two for insubordination securing the pacification of the local people in Kalakan. This story was related by an interpreter on 14th October 2010. Cavagnari negotiated the Treaty of Gandamak in May 1879, which ended the first phase of the 2nd Anglo-Afghan War. Cavagnari was appointed as the British Representative in Kabul, a post he took up in July that year, but he was killed on September 3rd 1879 in Afghanistan after a mutiny (Clements, 2003, p. 45).

65-8). Irrespective of the reasons behind the revolt, Habibullah Khan's forces were forced out of Kabul by General Nadir Khan who took the throne and established the Musahiban dynasty in 1929, which included Zahir Shah, Afghanistan's King until 1973 when he was deposed by his cousin Dawood Khan who became President, who in turn was deposed and killed by the Communists in 1978.⁹⁶ The brief period of Habibullah's reign is significant in Afghan history as it was the first time a non-Pashtun held the throne.

During the following fifty years Kalakan benefitted from the economic growth generated in Kabul and continued to be a place where political opponents to the regime emerged. One of these opponents, Majid Kalakani, was exiled to Kandahar because of his opposition to Zahir Shah before he was deposed in 1973. Majid was instrumental in the establishment of Shulay-i Jawad and later established Sazman Azadibakhsh-i Mardom-i Afghanistan (SAMA)⁹⁷ inspired by Maoist thinking, and it is claimed by existing members that it was the first group in Kalakan to resist the Russian occupation in 1979.⁹⁸ Majid was detained by KhAD, the intelligence arm of the Afghan state and predecessor of the current National Directorate of Security (NDS) in 1980. In early 1981 he was killed, reportedly at the Soviet embassy in Kabul.⁹⁹ Despite this setback SAMA maintained a presence in Kalakan¹⁰⁰ until 1982/3 by which point the remaining SAMA leadership was either killed or forced into exile.¹⁰¹ Kalakan became a battle ground between the remaining Jihadist parties including Jamiat-i Islami, Hizb-i Islami (led by Gulbuddin Hekmetyar), Ittihad-i Islami (led by Sayyaf, whose base was nearby in Paghman), Harakat-i Islami and Jabh-e Nejat-i Milli Barayi Azad-i Afghanistan (led by Mujaddedi).¹⁰²

The Communist government, backed by the Soviet army, was not able to ensure that the District Governor was able to operate in the area, and while Kalakan was only a sub-division, *alaaqdari*, of the district, it meant there was no formal government administration from the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) in the area

⁹⁶ (ibid., 2003, pp. 64-7).

⁹⁷ LL-1-8 19th October 2010, Kabul: SAMA translates as Peoples Liberation Organisation of Afghanistan (Dorransoro, 2000, pp. 213-4).

⁹⁸ LL-1-8 19th October 2010, Kabul: a point borne out by the respondents from Aqa Sarai who mentioned that Hizb-i Islami and Jamiat forced SAMA out of the area in 1982/3 once the Jihad was established. For more on SAMA's activities see Kakar, 1995, pp. 107-8, 204, 240-4.

⁹⁹ Other sources note that Majid was detained in 1980 and killed in the Soviet Embassy (Giradet, 1985, pp. 57, 177-8).

¹⁰⁰ And several other areas of the country including Balkh, Khost, Nimroz and Takhar. LL-1-8 19th October 2010, Kabul.

¹⁰¹ LL-1-8 19th October 2010, Kabul.

¹⁰² The Front of National Resistance for the Liberation of Afghanistan.

for most, if not all of, the 1980s.¹⁰³ This meant that all services, health and education primarily, ceased. In the village of Aqa Sarai, where the local community had built a school during the reign of Zahir Shah, education services effectively halted as madrassa education had not been well established within the village.¹⁰⁴

Administration fell to the local commander of each village, which was normally at the level of *Sar Group*, with different villages falling under the sway of different parties.¹⁰⁵ The allegiances of the *Sar Groups* were not static and some changed between parties as a result of different opportunities or enmities between commanders.¹⁰⁶ The patchwork of commander relationships meant that within individual villages all governance functions were controlled by the commander, often directly, including the collection of taxes, adjudications in local conflicts (i.e. justice) and security provision.¹⁰⁷ This led to the exclusion of opposition groups from within villages, including any remaining members or relatives of members of Parcham and Khalq, two factions of the PDPA, as well as the aforementioned Maoists from SAMA. This may have also contributed to population displacement to Kabul and Pakistan, and to ongoing fighting in the area.

Governance issues became much more problematic when enmities between *Sar Groups*, or their members, became violent.¹⁰⁸ Across the twenty-eight villages there were many killings, though as a collective memory most respondents agreed there were between sixty to seventy killings related to the Jihadi period.¹⁰⁹ The killings in Kalakan entrenched and worsened conflict between the parties, and fighting would erupt often with little or no provocation. In one case between Commanders in two

¹⁰³ LL-1-1 10th October 2010, Aqa Sarai.

¹⁰⁴ When the school was built the state did not provide the resources for building the school but agreed to pay for teachers and materials LL-1-7 19th October 2010, Kabul.

¹⁰⁵ A *Sar Group* is the head of a unit normally comprising of sixty to ninety men, more or less equivalent to a company in Western militaries. Each *Sar Group* is split into *Blocks* which are normally platoon sized units of ten to twenty personnel. The *Sar Groups* would report to a Commander who was the head of a *Firqa*. Although command and control of the fragmented Jihadi forces was often ad hoc, the two main parties in Kalakan, *Jamiat-i Islami* and *Hizb-i Islami* were the most well-organised amongst the seven main Jihadist parties.

¹⁰⁶ LL-1-1 10th October 2010, Aqa Sarai, this was a common feature of the Jihad and civil war periods (Dorransoro, 2000, pp. 147-9).

¹⁰⁷ LL-1-2 10th October 2010, Aqa Sarai.

¹⁰⁸ LL-1-2 10th October 2010, Aqa Sarai.

¹⁰⁹ LL-1-2 10th October 2010, Aqa Sarai, IN-1-11 25th October 2010, Kalakan, LL-1-5 17th October 2010, Aqa Sarai, LL-1-12 25th October 2010, Kalakan, LL-1-15 13th November 2010, Kalakan and NL-1-1 19th October and 19th November 2010, Kabul. These were defined as killings between parties rather than as a result of attacks by or against the PDPA and Soviet military forces.

villages (including Aqa Sarai) a family member of one of the commanders was killed as a result of an argument over the price of raisins. This escalated over time and by 2001 nine people had been killed as a result of the ongoing blood feud.¹¹⁰

By effectively taking over the governance system the Jihadi parties replaced the state in the local area, but the ongoing in-fighting militated against their ability to ensure freedom of movement, the most basic levels of personal security or basic services (like emergency health care). The Mujaddedi government, which took over as a result of the Islamic Jihad Council in Peshawar in 1992, was perceived as being weak and unable to control the commanders despite being based only thirty kilometres away.¹¹¹ During the Rabbani government, following Mujaddedi's brief administration, Kalakan became a district in its own right;¹¹² however, this did not improve the situation in Kalakan and instability became a feature of life.

In 1995 the Taliban approached Kabul from the south and fought with forces loyal to Jamiat-i Islami, the last major Jihadi group resisting Taliban forces after they swept up from southern Afghanistan in 1994 and 1995. Despite an attempt to take the city in 1995 it was not until 1996 that Ahmad Shah Massoud, the military commander of Jamiat, withdrew from the city. Massoud withdrew to the Shomali plain, which leads up to the entrance to his stronghold in the Panjshir valley. By this point a number of local Hizb-i Islami commanders, including the main commanders in Kalakan, had sided with Massoud and decided to resist the Taliban.¹¹³ The front lines criss-crossed the plain and ran through several villages in Kalakan district.¹¹⁴ Eventually the Taliban overcame the resistance in the plain and they swept aside Massoud's forces which retreated to the Panjshir valley where they remained embattled until 2001.

In the Shomali plain the Taliban initially adopted a conciliatory approach to some of the villages, initiating contact with local religious leaders and replicating their methods in southern Afghanistan;¹¹⁵ however, the local religious leadership was on the whole unwilling to cooperate with the Taliban and within two months the Taliban had

¹¹⁰ LL-1-2 10th October 2010, Aqa Sarai and NL-1-1 19th October 2010, Kabul.

¹¹¹ In contrast to the Karzai government which has been able to maintain peace between the Jihadist parties in government for the most part, which was noted as a strength of the current state IN-1-9 20th October 2010, Kalakan and LL-1-14 13th November 2010, Mushwani (Dorrnsoro, 2000, pp. 237-40).

¹¹² LL-1-2 10th October 2010, Aqa Sarai and LL-1-10 20th and 21st October 2010, Mushwani.

¹¹³ NL-1-1 13th October 2010, Kabul (Dorrnsoro, 2000, pp. 254-6).

¹¹⁴ IN-1-11 25th October 2010, Kalakan and LL-1-10 20th and 21st October 2010, Mushwani (Nojumi, 2002, pp. 155-7).

¹¹⁵ IN-1-11 25th October 2010, Kalakan and LL-1-12 25th October 2010, Kalakan see also Chapter 5 p.133.

resorted to increasingly violent tactics to discover who had been commanders or combatants fighting for Jamiat-i Islami under Ahmad Shah Massoud, and attempted to sideline the local religious and elder leadership who had remained during the fighting.¹¹⁶ This failed and the subsequent scorched-earth policy that they adopted was amongst the most brutal anywhere in Afghanistan during the entire civil war and led to the abandonment of almost the entire valley. 95% of the population left the Koh Daman, and in Aqa Sarai a pre-Taliban population of about 300 households was reduced to five to ten.¹¹⁷ A similar level of dislocation was faced in Mushwani.¹¹⁸ The majority of the refugees in the two villages fled to Pakistan at this point rather than attempt to find shelter in Kabul.¹¹⁹ It was not until five years later, in the winter of 2001, that refugees began to return after the fall of the Taliban in Kabul.

The return was led by the elders of the communities, some of whom had fought in the Jihadist groups, and they initiated the rebuilding of their communities. The returnees were supported in Kalakan by NGOs including CARE International, Malteser and ACTED, who provided basic materials for building shelter and food supplies to see the families through the winter.¹²⁰ In addition to the returnees a number of individuals came after having fought alongside the Northern Alliance as they overthrew the Taliban, including Haji Dawood who had been the district commander and was affiliated to Hizb-i Islami. Haji Dawood was injured during the fighting in the Shomali plain and was not with Northern Alliance forces as they entered Kabul on November 14th because he had to spend ten days convalescing. He reached Kabul the day after the Taliban fell.¹²¹ The triumphant nature in which forces from Kalakan, and the wider Koh Daman region, had supported the overthrow of the Taliban meant that they were able to gain positions of power and influence in the transitional, interim and full administrations led by Hamid Karzai. The Jihadi commanders spent some time in the armed forces, primarily in the Afghan Militia Force (AMF) as part of Firqa 8, which was

¹¹⁶ IN-1-11 25th October 2010, Kalakan and LL-1-10 20th and 21st October 2010, Mushwani.

¹¹⁷ LL-1-2 10th October 2010, Aqa Sarai: UNHCR records indicate that the district population in April 2002 was 700 people of which 193 had returned in the last few months (i.e. the elders that returned prior to the start of the UNHCR resettlement programme) out of an estimated population in 1990 of 28,117 and expected returnee population of 40,000, though both of these figures seem to be over estimates (UNHCR, 2002, p. 1).

¹¹⁸ LL-1-10 20th and 21st October 2010, Mushwani.

¹¹⁹ LL-1-10 20th and 21st October 2010, Mushwani.

¹²⁰ LL-1-2 10th October 2010, Aqa Sarai, LL-1-10 20th and 21st October 2010, Mushwani and NL-1-1 13th October 2010, Kabul.

¹²¹ NL-1-1 13th October 2010, Kabul.

led by Amanullah Guzar, under whom Haji Dawood was posted as a commander of a ghund (a regiment),¹²² drawing substantial forces from Kalakan itself.¹²³

The regional Jihadi leaders also formed a council, called the Koh Daman Shura, which was meant to provide regional level political leadership and ensure the perspective of the Shomali plain was acknowledged at the highest levels of government.¹²⁴ In Kalakan the district council was re-established, which for several years was led by an opponent of Haji Dawood, Haji Hakim,¹²⁵ and appointments to the District Governor and Chief of Police stayed amongst other Shomalis, often from the districts of Shakardara, Farza and Qara Bagh. Though the appointment of a Chief of Police from Parwan four years later was a slight departure, it was within the political network of Jihadist political leaders because the Chief of Police was himself a mujahid.¹²⁶

There continues to be vibrant and ongoing non-violent political competition amongst the major political stakeholders in Kalakan, who variously claim historical local heritage, Jihadi credentials or reformist ideology as the basis for their political platforms.¹²⁷ The extremes of the political spectrum, those who supported the Maoist groups and those that supported the Taliban, have been marginalised. The former Taliban district governor, Mullah Abdul Raziq, who was from Mushwani village, is apparently now in Farah,¹²⁸ and the Maoists are no longer able to carry out political activities (though their representative stood in the 2010 elections).¹²⁹ In between these two extremes most of the political competition is between the remaining Jihadi groups and more traditional elders networks,¹³⁰ however to a large extent opponents of Haji Dawood have been side-lined.

¹²² A ghund normally lies beneath a firqa and a liwa in the Afghan command structure (though this was not always consistent in the AMF). A typical ghund consisted of 900-1200 personnel; Haji Dawood's forces were part of Firqa 8 (Brigade 8) which numbered 3,179 in 2005, though the number that entered the DDR programme was in the region of 2,900 (Dennys, 2005, p. 12 and information held by author).

¹²³ At a senior level Northern Alliance leaders secured Ministerial level positions including Abdullah Abdullah (Ministry of Foreign Affairs), Marshall Fahim (Minister of Defence) and Yunis Qanooni (Ministry of Education).

¹²⁴ LL-1-8 19th October 2010, Kabul, NL-1-1 19th October and 19th November 2010, Kabul.

¹²⁵ LL-1-7 19th October 2010, Kabul.

¹²⁶ IN-1-2 13th November 2010, Kalakan.

¹²⁷ NL-1-1 19th October 2010, Kabul; LL-1-7 19th October 2010, Kabul and LL-1-8 19th October 2010, Kabul.

¹²⁸ LL-1-2 10th October 2010, Aqa Sarai.

¹²⁹ LL-1-8 19th October 2010, Kabul.

¹³⁰ LL-1-7 19th October 2010, Kabul and NL-1-1 19th October 2010, Kabul.

The international community has implemented hundreds of projects across the Shomali plain, including several dozen within Kalakan itself; they have generally occurred in three phases: the first was the emergency response led by NGOs such as CARE international; secondly, projects were developed to focus on national level priorities including formal and informal disarmament programmes run by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and NGOs such as the Japan Center for Conflict Prevention (JCCP) and the National Solidarity Programme (facilitated by the Sanayee Development Organisation, SDO);¹³¹ thirdly, the military engaged in hearts and minds and stabilisation projects which have variously included digging wells, building small infrastructure such as bridges, providing school supplies and constructing offices and guard posts for government officials and the local police. Indigenous stabilisation activity focused on political legitimacy formation and relationship building alongside exogenous support for state interventions and direct interventions by non-governmental and military actors which makes Kalakan an important focus for the debate on stabilisation.

Stabilisation interventions

The following section examines the ways in which both indigenous and exogenous actors have attempted to stabilise Kalakan since 2001. It discusses the major elements of these interventions from 2001 to 2010, though within that decade the interventions can roughly be split into two periods: 2001-2005, a period of emergency response, changing state political structures until Parliamentary elections in 2005 and the emergence of a coherent political arrangement for the Koh Daman region; and 2006-2010, which included the period of the first Parliament until the outcome of the second Parliamentary elections in 2010, during which time the emergency response gave way to development processes which stalled despite rapid private sector growth. During both periods projects were implemented intermittently by international military forces.

Political interventions to support stabilisation

Kalakan has benefitted from regional and local Afghan political leadership which has been willing to accommodate some opposition and address grievances from earlier conflicts. In Kalakan's case the appointment of District Governor Talwar in 2001, a local Kalakani leader, was an auspicious start given his credentials as an honest, hardworking government representative who, importantly, treated the local elders with respect.¹³² The influx of returning Internally Displaced People (IDPs) and refugees in 2001-5 meant there was a constant re-jigging of political relationships as the elder

¹³¹ LL1-1-10.

¹³² LL-1-1 10th October 2010, Aqa Sarai and LL-1-2 10th October 2010, Aqa Sarai.

community reasserted itself after two decades of being marginalised.¹³³ Whilst some of the elders had a Jihadi background the government was able over time to recognise the people's representatives (selected by villagers), as well as appoint its own Maleks.¹³⁴ In Mushwani and Aqa Sarai these individuals knew each other well, and were happy to work together and act as a mutual referral system for issues that arose in the villages; these issues would range from conflicts over water distribution and the implementation of development projects to more serious security and criminal issues referred to the local police.¹³⁵

Within this context the stabilisation activities which supported political and governance related stability in Kalakan occurred at two levels: the first was within and between the villages that comprise Kalakan; and the second across the Koh Daman region. The village level stabilisation in relationships was initiated by local elders who understood that the outstanding blood feuds and enmities that had arisen as a result of the Kalakan killings would ultimately lead to widespread instability. As early as 2003 and 2004 the elders discussed how to address the conflicts and provide a meaningful and lasting resolution. They were assisted in their efforts by District Governor Talwar, who had been moved in 2003 to the neighbouring district of Qara Bagh, but who retained a substantial degree of standing in the community until his death.¹³⁶ As described in the conflict history above, there were between sixty and seventy cases in Kalakan involving almost every village and community in the district and involving senior leaders including Haji Dawood.¹³⁷ The process settled upon by the local elders was rooted in Afghan conceptions of justice and involved the two parties being asked to forgive each other, through the mediation of elders.¹³⁸ This process took some time, and although most of the work was carried out in about one year, it took two years to address all the cases because some of those involved were not from Kalakan

¹³³ Interviews carried out with elders in Kalakan by author in 2005.

¹³⁴ The Maleks in this case act as the lowest level of formal governance but are unpaid, and they do not have administrative support. This is not necessarily typical because subnational governance in Afghanistan is highly heterogeneous. In some areas Maleks are not government appointed but derive their status from other factors such as landownership, social/tribal position or simply local norms. They may also have varying concepts as to what their roles and responsibilities are. For further discussion about subnational governance in Afghanistan see the following (Nixon, 2008; World Bank, 2007).

¹³⁵ LL-1-1 10th October 2010, Aqa Sarai; LL-1-2 18th October 2010, Aqa Sarai; LL-1-5 17th October 2010, Aqa Sarai; LL-1-10 20th and 21st October 2010, Mushwani.

¹³⁶ LL-1-1 10th October 2010, Aqa Sarai and LL-1-2 10th October 2010, Aqa Sarai.

¹³⁷ IN-1-11 25th October 2010, Kalakan.

¹³⁸ IN-1-11 25th October 2010, Kalakan and LL-1-10 20th and 21st October 2010, Mushwani.

itself; for example, a delegation had to visit a party to a conflict in Jalalabad, the capital of Nangarhar province in Eastern Afghanistan.¹³⁹

The reconciliation process was completed by the holding of a peace event in 2006 which involved the signing of papers stating that both sides forgave one another. All the elders, representatives from the cases, the local government and some representatives of the Kabul administration attended.¹⁴⁰ This in effect closed off the legacy of the Kalakan killings and their potential to be a source of instability. This is not to say that all issues have been addressed. There were a number of killings between Taliban and Northern Alliance belligerents stemming from the period from 1995 to 2001 that have not been accounted for, but given the current insurgency, there seems little opportunity for them to be addressed.¹⁴¹ Despite this limitation, at a village and district level it has been possible for the communities, the elders and the local administration to develop overlapping, mutually reinforcing relationships, which have directly led to the sentiment across the respondents, governmental, security related and local civilian elders that stability comes from 'the people' – more specifically from the people consenting to the government's administration, which in the Afghan context is fostered through the way in which the government interacts with the elders.¹⁴²

In this instance stability has been self-generated, according to the respondents, and they believe it is mutually reinforcing: the government must reach out to the elders and treat them fairly, trust them to make some decisions with a degree of autonomy and in return the elders will work with the government to the degree that their own authority allows in their individual villages.¹⁴³ As a result, self-reinforcing relationships have been formed with elders participating in governance in multiple overlapping forms. So, for example, the people's representative in Aqa Sarai is also the chair of

¹³⁹ LL-1-12 25th October 2010, Kalakan.

¹⁴⁰ LL-1-2 10th October 2010, Aqa Sarai and LL-1-15 13th November 2010, Kalakan.

¹⁴¹ LL-1-2 10th October 2010, Aqa Sarai

¹⁴² LL-1-2 10th October 2010, Aqa Sarai; NL-1-1 13th October 2010, Kabul; LL-1-6 18th October 2010, Kalakan; IN-1-2 13th November 2010, Kalakan.

¹⁴³ Whilst it is beyond the scope of this research, it is worth noting that the social structures in Aqa Sarai and Mushwani are slightly different, and that the Pashtun population and leadership of Mushwani may provide a more directive type of local leadership where it is the decisions of the people's representative and the Malek that are implemented; Aqa Sarai's elders by comparison seemed to be slightly more open to allowing other village leaders autonomy in making decisions. This approach would suggest that there are several types of local leadership that can foster a stable outcome and not one ideal type, but beyond that conclusion the data does not suggest what types may be more or less supportive of stability.

their village's Community Development Council (CDC) as part of the NSP.¹⁴⁴ Elders are also members of Peace Councils established by an NGO which works on conflict resolution and peace education in the district.¹⁴⁵ There are dangers with this approach, where the elders control too much power within their village, but the prescient selection of government appointed Maleks in Aqa Sarai and Mushwani means that there are alternative ways of obtaining access to the government – and those interviewed who were not connected to the elder structures also stated that they would feel comfortable circumventing the elder leadership line to take a petition or complaint directly to the relevant government department or the elected member of Parliament from Kalakan, Haji Dawood. However, they said they would prefer to use the elder system if possible because it is a more traditional way of getting things done.¹⁴⁶

The elders in the twenty-eight villages of Kalakan are not the only creators of stability. The second source of instability which was addressed by the regional Afghan political leadership was a series of agreements addressed through a shura¹⁴⁷ relating to the way in which Jihadi Islamist parties would transform their violent political conflict into non-violent political conflict. The forum for these debates has been the Koh Daman Shura, which included many of the Jihadi leaders empowered after the fall of the Taliban in 2001, including Amanullah Guzar MP,¹⁴⁸ Irfanullah Irfan MP,¹⁴⁹ Haji Dawood MP¹⁵⁰ and Anwar Orya Khel MP.¹⁵¹ This group is in effect the political vanguard of the Koh Daman in the current government. The creation of the Koh Daman Shura has led

¹⁴⁴ LL-1-2 10th October 2010, Aqa Sarai.

¹⁴⁵ Cooperation for Peace and Unity (CPAU) has worked in Kalakan since 2004.

¹⁴⁶ LL-1-1 10th October 2010, Aqa Sarai and LL-1-2 10th October 2010, Aqa Sarai.

¹⁴⁷ A shura is a consultative group and can be either formal or informal and provide a core structure in Afghan governance systems.

¹⁴⁸ Guzar is from Mir Bacha Kut and is the former head of Firqa 8 in the AMF under the MoD. Several of his forces moved to the Ministry of Interior (MoI) and were alleged to be involved in trafficking of narcotics. Guzar left the MoI and stood for Parliament in 2005, and is the current head of the Koh Daman Shura (ICG, 2005, p. 7).

¹⁴⁹ Irfan is from Farza, and was elected MP for Kabul, effectively representing Farza, in 2005. He was not re-elected in 2010.

¹⁵⁰ Haji Dawood is from Kalakan, a former commander of a Ghund in Firqa 8 under Amanullah Guzar, and a member of Hizb-i Islami, though has also received support from Jamiat-i Islami in the past. He is a political opponent of Guzar given the latter's stance regarding the Northern Alliance leader Yunis Qanooni, the former Speaker of Parliament.

¹⁵¹ LL-1-6 18th October 2010, Kalakan.

to a degree of macro stability for Kalakan (just as the international community has provided some types of macro stability for the Karzai Administration).¹⁵²

The shura itself has been through various stages and at the time of this research may not have been particularly active as the result of the attempts by Guzar to control it.¹⁵³ However, it has been a resource that Koh Daman leaders can use reflexively to respond to emerging threats and opportunities, or as a way of actively promoting the Koh Daman's broader interests (for example in electrification, see below). Its membership varies between thirty and forty people and it has had a changeable leadership, though in the last few years this seems to have been passed rather competitively between the four MPs mentioned above.¹⁵⁴ The shura is then able to promote the area in terms of cultural importance, political issues or development priorities, for example, the history of Habibullah Kalakani being of close interest to Haji Dawood who supports a monthly newspaper Habib-ul Islam, which promotes Kalakani and Koh Daman interests through the prism of Habibullah Kalakani.¹⁵⁵ They can then draw on a range of political, security and private sector leaders from across the seven districts to attract additional resources, for example in government budget allocations, development projects or out of the funds of the members of the shura themselves. It is this group which seems to provide Kalakan with macro stability, in the context of internal stability addressed through the actions of the local government and elders.

External intervention in the political arena in support of stabilisation has been minimal in Kalakan, except for the structuring principles of the Constitution and electoral systems. Therefore local elites and elders have been left to decide how they will vie for political power more or less autonomously. There has been some training provided to the Afghan National Police (ANP), and most significantly an office and living quarters compound has been built under the auspices of the Afghanistan Stabilisation Programme (funded by UNDP), which provided some infrastructure for the district governor to operate in. Respondents noted that while these things were good, they were clear that much of the indigenous stabilisation work which occurred in the early phase was carried out in people's homes, mosques and out in the open, because that was what the local government had to work with, so the buildings and equipment helped the government do a good job better, rather than improving a bad job.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵² IN-0-1 7th October 2010, Kabul.

¹⁵³ LL-1-7 19th October 2010, Kabul and NL-1-1 19th November 2010, Kabul.

¹⁵⁴ NL-1-1 19th October 2010, Kabul.

¹⁵⁵ A full back catalogue from 2008-2010 is held by the author and NL-1-1 19th November 2010, Kabul.

¹⁵⁶ LL-1-1 10th October 2010, Aqa Sarai and LL-1-2 10th October 2010, Aqa Sarai.

Importantly, it is only through both local and regional approaches that Kalakan has achieved stability. Respondents were careful to note the difference in stability experienced by residents of nearby Shakardara and Qara Bagh as being qualitatively different, and worse, than stability in Kalakan.¹⁵⁷ Much like Kalakan those two districts have benefited from the same regional agreements amongst Jihadi leaders and they have, in the main, benefited from the same kind of international development funding and projects. The material difference for the respondents in Kalakan was the fact that those districts had been unable to deal with the legacy of the preceding twenty years' conflict. Respondents said there were still outstanding enmities, and that the local political leadership was unable to support processes where the elders and communities could achieve some level of reconciliation. These comments were based on the fact that after the Kalakan peace conference in 2006 there had been some interest in replicating the process in other parts of the Koh Daman. However, as a result of poor local leadership and a certain amount of 'laziness' amongst the elders the initiatives gained no traction and failed. The elders reasoned that you were safe enough to walk around twenty-four hours a day in Kalakan and you would be unwise to try the same thing in other districts and that this was the result of issues from previous conflicts not being dealt with.¹⁵⁸

In summary, actions to support political stabilisation have been largely untouched by international intervention, except for the broader structuring of the constitutional and electoral processes, which have by and large been accepted by the local leadership despite their internal divisions. It is feasible to imagine a situation where the structuring components were different and Kalakan would still attain a stable outcome.¹⁵⁹ The influence of two levels of political stability organised in an ad-hoc, locally-driven manner have been crucial to the region; on the one hand they have ensured agreement that stability in the region is in the interests of various Jihadi

¹⁵⁷ LL-1-12 25th October 2010, Kalakan and NL-1-1 19th October 2010, Kabul: the author has worked for several organisations that have operated in various districts in the Shomali plain. Flashpoints were noted in Shakardara, Istalif and Qara Bagh for a range of inter-personal, economic and political factors.

¹⁵⁸ LL-1-12 25th October 2010, Kalakan.

¹⁵⁹ For example local interpretations of democracy, Islam and the state, were at odds with issues commonly of concern to Liberal political philosophy such as gender equality and freedom of speech. In their view the importance of the democratic system was that they felt they could subordinate it to the more important Islamic governance principles espoused during the Jihad. As a result the democratic element of governance was not the significant element of stability, the leaders simply worked within the democratic system because it was *the* system. LL-1-1 10th October 2010, Aqa Sarai, LL-1-2 10th October 2010, Aqa Sarai, LL-1-8 19th October 2010, Kabul and LL-1-15 13th November 2010, Kalakan.

actors despite their differences and, secondly, the elders in Kalakan have addressed local grievances to ensure stability within the district and encourage 'the people' to engage with the state.

Security interventions to support stabilisation

Security in Kalakan has been relatively benign since the overthrow of the Taliban in 2001 but there have been a number of stabilisation interventions to bolster security. The number of incidents has been low and security according to the respondents has been very good.¹⁶⁰ This is not to say that there are no security incidents; during one interview there was an interruption whilst an elder had to report an incident to the local police because someone had set up an illegal checkpoint on the road exiting the village. The importance of this incident is that it demonstrates that the community was able to access support from the local police force relatively quickly to address a threat they felt they could not deal with.

During a Peace Day celebration in Kabul the Police Commander gave a speech thanking the assembled elders, participants and students of the Peace Education implemented by CPAU for their support in maintaining security in the district. He stated that it was only because of the people's help that the district was secure and that everyone, in effect, was a policeman, i.e. a representative of law and order (rather than a representative of the state), which was also reflected by Haji Dawood.¹⁶¹ This is not just a heart-warming rendition of how security is maintained in Kalakan but instead demonstrates a critical way in which security is supported through regular state-society engagements. According to a military trainer working in the Shomali plain the Ford Rangers that were supplied to the district Chief of Police were not allocated enough fuel and as a result would not be able to carry out sustained operations or investigations, meaning that security literally lay in the hands of the population and their consent to be governed.¹⁶² The security inputs were primarily focused on training and equipping the thirty or so ANP, as well as providing them with a base from which they could operate – a compound which also housed the District Governor, the local judge and District Attorney. A small patrol base was also constructed on the hill above Aqa Sarai, though this seemed to cause some

¹⁶⁰ Data from ISAF's SIGACTS dataset lists only thirteen incidents between January 2007 and May 2010. Most were explosive hazards, i.e. unexploded ordinance, single rockets left to detonate and fired towards passing convoys. There was a single event of hostile gunfire. Two incidents were of 'hostile preaching'. Information held by the author.

¹⁶¹ NL-1-1 19th October and 19th November 2010, Kabul.

¹⁶² IN-1-4 17th October 2010, Aqa Sarai: according to Ford (www.ford.com) the Ranger has a fuel consumption of twenty-seven miles per gallon, which means the weekly eleven litre fuel supply would allow each vehicle to travel just over 100 kilometres.

bemusement to the local respondents as they wondered why the outpost was on the side of the hill rather than the top.¹⁶³

The training was not entirely welcomed by the participants, and the local population was unsure about the degree to which training would help improve policing, although there was a general opinion present that any input might be useful though their inclination was to approve of the training despite not knowing its content or impact.¹⁶⁴ The trainers themselves, a mixture of US military and Dyncorp, viewed the police force as a paramilitary force and focused their training on the elements they saw as important in helping the police survive a fire fight.¹⁶⁵ This idea seems at odds with the views expressed by the District Governor, Police Chief and local respondents about how their police should serve the population.¹⁶⁶ As a result, the training seems to have had little bearing on the relationship between the population and police force.¹⁶⁷

The military officers involved in the training were unaware of the activities of other military units in the area. This meant that whilst there were consistent patrols by international forces across the district, often as mounted patrols, they were deployed under different missions, for example the Multi-National Brigade Kabul, which focused on civil-military relations and the protection of Kabul International Airport. Others conducted training as part of the Combined Security Transition Command – Afghanistan (CSTC-A).¹⁶⁸ Whilst this may not have been considered significant, the lack of coordination was more apparent in terms of CIMIC activities and projects (described below). As a result one international military unit would suggest projects, but these would often only be assessed based on consultation with the District Governor and District Chief of Police and seemed to confirm the view of respondents

¹⁶³ LL-1-2 10th October 2010, Aqa Sarai, LL-1-10 20th and 21st October 2010, Mushwani – some of the respondents had an excellent knowledge of the defensive positions in Kalakan as a result of their experiences during the Jihad, and the positioning of the patrol base was not considered optimal, though it may have been for other reasons not known to the respondents.

¹⁶⁴ IN-1-2 13th November 2010, Kalakan and IN-1-4 17th October 2010, Aqa Sarai.

¹⁶⁵ IN-1-4 17th October 2010, Aqa Sarai.

¹⁶⁶ LL-1-6 18th October 2010, Kalakan and IN-1-2 13th November 2010, Kalakan.

¹⁶⁷ At the time of this research there were ongoing pilot projects focused on Community Policing in nearby Qara Bagh which are seeking to address this supported by NATO Training Mission – Afghanistan (NTM-A). There were also efforts with UNDP's community policing programme in the Shomali plain. Interview with NTM-A Officer, 12-10-10 and ACSF, 2010, pp. 3-7.

¹⁶⁸ IN-1-11 25th October 2010, Kalakan, NTM-A Officer, 12-10-10; information held by author from French CIMIC team operational in the Shomali plain in 2006.

that projects sponsored by international military forces tended to occur with less local consultation.

The other major internationally sponsored activities on security were the DDR and DIAG programmes. Given their weak developmental impacts, and the fact that the programmes seem to have only engaged a small proportion of the combatants and collected a very small number of weapons it is not clear that the programmes had a specific impact on security. At the time of disarmament in 2005, there did seem to be some tension around the process and some undue influence of commanders in the area, although this never became violent (Dennys, 2005, p. 7); however, the low security impact of the disarmament programmes may have been caused by the AMF structures based in Kabul city in which Jihadi commanders found themselves, therefore there was not necessarily a large armed presence in the Shomali for extended periods.¹⁶⁹ This meant that the disbandment of the groups would have had an economic impact primarily because of lost income to the individuals and families. The development input in the ANBP only captured a small proportion of those in the AMF, so questions remain about what happened to them.

Whilst it was not possible to trace every single combatant, the respondents indicated that there were three main groups: those that joined the development programme (i.e. DDR training programmes) which was the smallest group; those who simply left the armed forces and were tired of being armed; several of these individuals were noted as now working in Kabul, often on the fringes of the economy as hawkers or labourers;¹⁷⁰ and finally, there were those who moved into other areas of the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF), some going to the Afghan National Army (ANA), with most transferring before the AMF was disbanded (ICG, 2005, p. 7; ICG, 2003, pp. 5,9). Respondents believed there were upwards of 100 Kalakanis in various security positions in the ANSF, some were based in the ANP in Kalakan itself, while others had been attached to other units in the police and army.¹⁷¹ Importantly, there was no suggestion from respondents that the members of the armed forces were drawn from one group or set of villages within Kalakan – they were in effect part of the fabric of Kalakani society and one of the many ways in which the district was connected to the Afghan state.

In summary, stabilisation activities relating to security largely occurred in a benign environment, building on the political stability that was ensured by indigenous actors. Exogenous support for police training and improving equipment and state

¹⁶⁹ Firqa 8 is listed as an 'independent unit' at the MoD in the AMF structure and was based in Kabul. Information held by author.

¹⁷⁰ LL-1-10 20th and 21st October 2010, Mushwani.

¹⁷¹ Author's estimate.

infrastructure is noted with satisfaction, but views amongst the respondents indicate that these have had a minor impact on state security capability and no impact on the inclination of the state forces to act. DDR and DIAG programming seems to have been only weakly associated with improved security, especially given the trajectory of personnel from Firqa 8 into the ANP and ANA. Strikingly, the security sector provides another way in which the Kalakani population is connected to the state, able to capture resources and protect the interests of the district, though this would seem to serve as a function of governance rather than security.

Development interventions to support stabilisation

Development activities to promote stability in Kalakan have been extensive and included: humanitarian aid delivery, traditional development projects through NGOs, military stabilisation activities and finally some broad-based economic growth. This section tests all four of these interventions against the perceptions of stability amongst the respondents.

Humanitarian

Humanitarian aid started to flow into the Shomali plain shortly after refugees and IDPs started to flood back following the fall of the Taliban government. The degree of displacement in the Shomali plain was exceptionally high and in large parts of the valley there were few buildings left standing after the scorched earth policy of the Taliban during their advance against Massoud's forces in the 1990s. As a result the returnees found that they had little or no shelter and food with which to sustain themselves when they returned. Whilst some people may have received returnee packages of basic food supplies from the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) some of the elders returned before receiving hand-outs and before their communities returned in order to see the degree of devastation for themselves and protect what remained from looting.¹⁷²

In this context three NGOs – CARE International, Malteser and ACTED – responded by providing emergency humanitarian aid in the winter of 2001 in to 2002.¹⁷³ The aid primarily consisted of food and basic shelters (which included tarpaulins) to ensure that the returnees were able to see out the winter on their own land. The support provided at that time to the respondents in Aqa Sarai and Mushwani was gratefully received and several noted that it was critical in paving the way for the elders to remain on the land over the winter and prepare the ground for the wider community, including dependent women and children.¹⁷⁴ As a series of discreet interventions the

¹⁷² LL-1-3 14th October 2010, Aqa Sarai and LL-1-2 10th October 2010, Aqa Sarai.

¹⁷³ LL-1-2 10th October 2010, Aqa Sarai, LL-1-3 14th October 2010, Aqa Sarai; LL-1-1 10th October 2010, Aqa Sarai.

¹⁷⁴ LL-1-2 10th October 2010, Aqa Sarai.

humanitarian aid delivery in the region was instrumental in the restoration of communities and laid the foundation for stability to emerge out of the political processes discussed above.

Development – NGO and military implementers

There has also been a substantial programme of building wells and the National Solidarity Programme (NSP) was active across the district, implemented by the facilitating partner, Sanayee Development Organisation (SDO). Within the case study villages of Aqa Sarai and Mushwani, a school was rehabilitated, a clinic built and wells have been drilled in both villages. In addition, access roads to both villages were improved, and despite the road not being asphalted to date (though it is planned), a pedestrian bridge and car fording point were built by the French CIMIC team that operated in the region for several years.¹⁷⁵ The CIMIC team also funded part of the school rehabilitation in Aqa Sarai.

As well as infrastructure and hard inputs there have also been several programmes that have attempted to improve economic opportunities, including a number of cash for work programmes¹⁷⁶ and training for former combatants. The large number of combatants coming from the Shomali plain, who found themselves in the AMF in 2001, were slated for participation in the Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) programme; the political and security implications are discussed above, here the discussion focuses on the developmental impacts. There were both formal and informal disarmament projects, the formal sponsored by the ANBP through UNDP and a smaller project run by JCCP which was based in the district centre of Kalakan. Both programmes offered participants training in a range of skills, including carpentry, tailoring and metal work. The UNDP programme also included one-off benefits such as wheat seed and some materials for building shelters, and if the participants chose agricultural options they received livestock. Leaving aside the varied complaints about the actual implementation,¹⁷⁷ the programme was not widely

¹⁷⁵ The author was in touch with French CIMIC Liaison officers in 2006 that provided information about projects supported in the Shomali. The CIMIC team was based in Multi-National Brigade Kabul which became Regional Command-Capital (RC-C) as ISAF expanded.

¹⁷⁶ For example one respondent was working on a WFP funded cash-for-work programme that was building a road from Kabul to the eastern side of Kalakan. The main highway runs along the western side of Kalakan. EA-1-3 14th October 2010, Aqa Sarai.

¹⁷⁷ From a technical point of view respondents were not satisfied with the brevity of training in metal work, tailoring and carpentry, and the quality of livestock provided by UNDP was also criticised. EA-1-1 12th October 2010, Aqa Sarai; also see Denny, 2005, pp. 4-5; Rossi & Giustozzi, 2006.

seen as supporting stability, despite the fact that it precipitated the transfer of some of the leaders (mentioned above) from the AMF to other positions and eventually to Parliament. This may have contributed to macro stability but was not closely associated by the respondents to stabilisation in the villages.

The reasons for this conclusion may be two-fold, firstly a recognition that the DDR programme did not actually engage with a large number of combatants. There were at least sixty to seventy combatants in Aqa Sarai and twenty to thirty in Mushwani led by two Sar Groups, however only ten individuals from Aqa Sarai and four from Mushwani participated in the disarmament initiatives. In this context, participation in the disarmament process became a survival strategy for a small number of former combatants but did not actually assist the combatant groups as a whole. Secondly, not only was the number of participants low, the level of support was also considered to be quite small. This is not only noted in their concerns about the quality of training but also because the impact of the disarmament programme in Kalakan and the two case study villages was fairly minor.

A second round of disarmament programming was designed as part of the DIAG programme which ran from 2005 until 2011 when it was merged with the Afghanistan Peace and Reintegration Programme (APRP).¹⁷⁸ Instead of offering incentives to individual combatants in the same manner as the DDR programme, DIAG attempted to engage entire communities across a district in handing over weapons corporately. Kalakan participated in the programme, though the level of weapons handed in was paltry. Mushwani for example handed in one weapon.¹⁷⁹

Irrespective of the impact on security from DIAG, as a reward for submitting weapons Kalakan was allocated \$350,000 in funding for development projects, which according to respondents was allocated for the electrification of the district via the electricity pylons which had been installed across the Shomali plain to deliver electricity from Tajikistan to Kabul.¹⁸⁰ At the time of research this project had not been implemented despite the high level intervention by Haji Dawood with the Ministry of Energy and Water which was tasked with implementing it.¹⁸¹ The frustration due to the lack of implementation was significant, but the elders and local leaders were happy to push

¹⁷⁸ The annual reports of UNDP regarding DIAG offer illuminating insights into the failures of disarmament programming in Afghanistan: UNDP, 2006; UNDP, 2011, p. 21.

¹⁷⁹ There are evidently weapons still stored in the area given the fact that a stash of fifty weapons were uncovered and handed over to the police just before the field research began. LL-1-10 20th and 21st October 2010, Mushwani.

¹⁸⁰ EA-1-1 12th October 2010, Aqa Sarai and LL-1-10 20th and 21st October 2010, Mushwani.

¹⁸¹ NL-1-1 13th October 2010, Kabul.

for progress through the political system and administration of the Afghan government, however slow and corrupt that may be.¹⁸²

The example of DIAG demonstrates the kinds of issues where the communities wanted to see change. The biggest issues were normally described as education, electricity and roads,¹⁸³ all of which enable communities to develop themselves economically, and importantly, these were linked by respondents to stability. However, with the exception of education, most development projects were focused on other areas, and this was a source of frustration for the respondents who knew there had been substantial road building in Kabul (and often rebuilding of existing roads)¹⁸⁴ as well as improved electricity supply. This is also significant in the two case study villages which lie at opposite sides of the brick making area of Kalakan. There was a very clear link made by participants between economic development and stability, and they felt that the lack of support for sectors such as light industry (which requires electricity) and transport infrastructure (so they could export their produce) was quite negative.¹⁸⁵ Their main frustration was the slow pace of development which was not allowing them to achieve their personal goals¹⁸⁶ – as noted in the earlier chapter the notions of progress and improvement seem to be linked to understanding present stability. The lack of achievement in this area meant that development was largely seen as being ineffective in supporting stability. This is not to say that the respondents did not appreciate the projects – on the whole they did – it was an issue of their scale and impact.

The other element which was significant in Kalakan was the fact that respondents did not have any particular concerns about who implemented development projects, although they were clear that the larger ones (electricity and roads) were generally under the purview of the state. As a result, the range of state, NGO, and international military interveners was generally not considered to be an issue, rather it was their styles of engagement and local participation which differed.¹⁸⁷ There was a perception amongst the respondents that there was little community involvement or consultation in projects implemented by international military forces. They preferred, in principle,

¹⁸² LL-1-10 20th and 21st October 2010, Mushwani.

¹⁸³ LL-1-2 10th October 2010, Aqa Sarai, IN-1-11 25th October 2010, Kalakan, LL-1-5 17th October 2010, Aqa Sarai, LL-1-10 20th and 21st October 2010, Mushwani.

¹⁸⁴ The author notes that several roads in and around central Kabul have been repaired and re-laid on several occasions.

¹⁸⁵ LL-1-6 18th October 2010, Kalakan.

¹⁸⁶ LL-1-10 20th and 21st October 2010, Mushwani.

¹⁸⁷ LL-1-1 10th October 2010, Aqa Sarai, LL-1-2 10th October 2010, Aqa Sarai, EA-1-1 12th October 2010, Aqa Sarai, IN-1-11 25th October 2010, Kalakan, LL-1-5 17th October 2010, Aqa Sarai.

the approach of the NSP, which allowed the community greater flexibility and responsibility, but that did not mean they were against a range of implementers working in their area.¹⁸⁸

Economic growth

The final area of discussion is economic growth. Kalakan and the broader region have undoubtedly benefitted from the overspill of Kabul's economic bubble associated with the influx of foreign capital and the burgeoning narco-economy, which have both fuelled construction and consumption.¹⁸⁹ Kalakan's residents have gradually rebuilt their houses in the last decade and expanded and diversified their income streams. Some Kalakanis work in government service whilst others have migrated to Kabul for work in the private sector. Those remaining in Kalakan have been able to support themselves through a mixture of agriculture, paid labour and cash for work on development projects providing a degree of livelihood sustainability.¹⁹⁰ These are all long-term components of Kalakan's economy and provide the backbone to the population's livelihood.

However, economic growth and expansion has come through two sectors, localised exports of the grape harvest,¹⁹¹ and the production of bricks from *batis* established in the last five years.¹⁹² The twenty or so *batis* supply the Kabul construction trade and provide substantial employment with each stack employing several hundred people.¹⁹³ Though many of the *bati* owners are not from Kalakan a number are, and many of the other capital investors are politically associated with the elite of the Koh Daman, meaning that capital investors and wage labourers come from the same

¹⁸⁸ LL-1-7 19th October 2010, Kabul, LL-1-14 13th November 2010, Mushwani.

¹⁸⁹ Analysis from the World Bank suggests consumption and the licit agricultural sector have been the main engines of growth since 2003, with construction playing a smaller role, though it is dominant in Kalakan itself (World Bank, 2011, p. 4). The opium economy has continued to grow and is currently worth \$1.4bn or 9% of GDP (UNODC, 2011).

¹⁹⁰ EA-1-3 14th October 2010, Aqa Sarai.

¹⁹¹ Though at the time of research the 2010 harvest had been affected by blight and was unlikely to provide significant income; author observation and discussion with local respondents.

¹⁹² One of the *batis* is owned by Haji Dawood Kalakani MP. LL-1-7 19th October 2010, Kabul and LL-1-10 20th and 21st October 2010, Mushwani.

¹⁹³ Local estimates ranged from 2,000 to 4,000 male employees, given that the estimated population is approximately 18,000, half the population are male, and half again are of working age (18,000 halved to 9,000 and halved again to 4,500). So the level of potential employment in brick making in Kalakan is very high and whilst not all employees are from Kalakan respondents believed the majority were. LL-1-14 13th November 2010, Mushwani.

political system. Above all other development interventions the local respondents saw the *batis* as providing the best form of stability because it was long-term, sustainable and largely self-driven.¹⁹⁴

There are two significant findings from the discussion about development interventions in support of stability; the first regarding who implements projects and the second focusing on which activities seemed to promote stability and which do not. Firstly, the range of implementers in Kalakan, from state, to NGO and international military, was noted by the respondents and discussed at length. Whilst they prefer the consultative and participatory approaches of the NGOs they were not averse to accepting projects implemented and paid for by international military forces. The CIMIC projects may have had developmental impacts but have been weakly associated with stability formation, though they may have provided a low level hearts and minds impact. The slow progress in state-delivered projects including road construction and electricity supply were resented, but there is no suggestion that this would lead the communities to rise up against the state. Despite the lack of improvement in infrastructure local entrepreneurs have developed and expanded the brick making industry in the district, which provides substantial employment and, local pollution aside, was seen as one of the most stabilising elements of Kalakan.

Secondly, there has been a wealth of humanitarian and development programming in Kalakan. The most significant element for stabilisation was humanitarian aid at the beginning of the period after the Taliban fell. Subsequent development activities, whether related to national programmes such as the NSP or DDR, or more ad-hoc programming on behalf of individual NGOs such as CPAU or military CIMIC teams, have been an added boon for the district. They are, however, considered by the respondents as being insufficient in addressing the long term stability of Kalakan. Instead respondents linked proper development to the provision of electricity, roads and education *in order to support economic growth*. Therefore social development activities, whether implemented by the military or development NGOs seem to be weakly linked to stability and challenge the component of the development hypothesis being tested as part of this research, which suggests that stability can be attained through social development processes.

In summary, Kalakan has provided an example of indigenous stabilisation based upon local and regional political networks. In this context, exogenous stabilisation activities which support stabilisation through political interventions have largely been confined to a structuring role through national reforms and have allowed local political competition and governance to advance with little external oversight. Security interventions have been focused on DDR, and preparing the police to fight a COIN

¹⁹⁴ LL-1-14 13th November 2010, Mushwani.

campaign through ISAF's train and equip programme. In addition, military actors have been engaged in the development sphere, which has also included a number of state and non-governmental programmes and projects. However, development interventions need to be seen in the context of the more significant impact of early humanitarian interventions and ongoing long-term capital investment and growth.

Thematic analysis – Kalakan

This section provides an analysis of Kalakan's experience of stability and stabilisation through the five analytical themes outlined in Chapter 3, which are rooted in the independent and dependent variables of the research design. The themes are couched in periods of stability across which the area experienced conflict and attempts at stabilisation. The themes of culture and context and the modes of intervention are drawn from the independent variables of the local political economy, the insurgency and the stabilisation interventions. The dependent variables of stability and legitimacy are discussed through political legitimacy at local and national levels and local conceptions of stability.

The political economy of Kalakan, with its majority Tajik population who had resisted the state on numerous occasions, which had attained the singular achievement of placing a non-Pashtun on the throne in Kabul, lends the area a degree of self-belief and political consciousness which has continued to spawn national level political and military leaders. Its ability to turn significant periods of instability to its advantage in the post-2001 period and the close connections that local commanders have to the new administration have caused the community to benefit from some engagement by the state. This has been bolstered by the transfer of significant numbers of residents to the security forces of the newly formed ANA and ANP after their main military formation, Firqa 8, was demobilised in 2005. This reassertion of commander influence in the post-2001 period has worked with the grain of the Karzai administration which has seen a number of significant commanders and warlords achieving high office, and has re-established the power of the strongman which emerged during the Jihad in the 1980s, except in the current period political competition has remained largely non-violent.

The localised stability experienced in Kalakan has been significantly structured by both local level and national political legitimacy. The higher level political agreements and networks which entwine the Koh Daman region link the district to the central government through an elected representative in Parliament, Dawood Kalakani.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹⁵ The electoral system means that Parliamentary candidates stand in provincial level constituencies rather than district level ones; therefore whilst provinces may be allocated a specific number of seats it is not assured that every district will be represented.

The combination of the regional political network and the connection to the centre presents a strong logic for the enduring stability of the region. However, other districts in the region demonstrate varying degrees of stability and Kalakan is seen to be the most stable because of the local response to addressing conflict era grievances.

Kalakan has been through a number of significant destabilising events since 1978, the most significant of which were the internecine killings between the Jihadi groups in the 1980s and 1990s and the displacement of most of the population in the 1990s by the Taliban. These devastating events had seared themselves on the collective memory of the communities and their local political leadership, who perceived, correctly, that upon their return in 2001 they had to address outstanding grievances from the conflict period. This self-generated movement towards what external actors would call conflict resolution or transformation is instructive and indicates that former periods of extreme instability do not preclude the formation of stability, but are insufficient to generate engagement by all communities. This form of conflict resolution was not undertaken in other districts in the Koh Daman despite indigenous and exogenous attempts to do so.

In this context of strong local and national political legitimacy the bewildering array of exogenous interventions that were undertaken in Kalakan had little connection to stability. This includes the majority of the development activities by NGOs and the military and the district level security support in police training. Exogenous actions relating to politics and the DDR component linked to stabilisation had a structuring effect but have largely allowed indigenous processes and political competition to arrange power in a way which provides stability (though there is some doubt about whether it could be termed democratic in the Western sense). Instead, the exogenous interventions that had the most relevance to stability were actions by humanitarian agencies in 2001-2 which stabilised the communities on their land. However, there was also a significant impact from the wider effects of the Kabul construction boom and expansion of the national opium economy which significantly expanded economic opportunities leading to long-term economic growth.

The positive outlook on stability in Kalakan must not lead to assumptions that Kalakan's stability is now secure; it is not, and in discussions about the future stability of the area the significance of indigenous stabilisation comes to the fore. There were deep concerns amongst some respondents about the future actions of the international community, in particular ISAF and the counterrevolution that will occur when ISAF forces leave. This is not because the respondents have daily interaction with ISAF (with the exception of the police training most Kalakanis do not interact with ISAF), but because they believe that ISAF provides, what a respondent in the

Karzai administration described as ‘macro stability’.¹⁹⁶ There are concerns that when ISAF leaves, and more particularly, when the money is turned off, there will be war again in the Koh Daman. This was largely seen as coming from an external threat (i.e. the Taliban).¹⁹⁷ Though there was an underlying current for the potential fighting between Jihadi groups who have currently agreed to carry out their political disagreements in a non-violent fashion.¹⁹⁸

The logical progression from this is that money flows around the Koh Daman and amongst the regional leadership allowing them to improve their positions, without resorting to zero-sum politics and undermining other commanders’ or competitors’ gains. This raises the concern that when the money stops the Taliban will return.¹⁹⁹ Therefore the noise of intervention – political, security or developmental – does not seem to have actually addressed what Kalakanis see as the biggest threat to stability which is the intervention itself, because they know it cannot continue forever. What the external intervention has allowed for is the space for indigenous processes to take root, but whether they can survive the transition of ISAF is yet to be seen.

Herein lies the paradox of Kalakan’s stability: it was largely led by indigenous actors who formed multiple levels of engagement between themselves and the state and, despite their political differences and individual grievances, they agreed to pursue power and restitution non-violently. However this was only achieved in the shadow, or shade, of international intervention. This has provided macro stability to allow indigenous stabilisation at a sub-regional and district level. The main threat for Kalakan and Koh Daman, as for the rest of Afghanistan, is the removal of that macro stability as ISAF transitions out, and the money dries up. Despite improvements in the stability of the region over the last decade the threats on the horizon loom large.

The significance of long term economic opportunities comes to the fore amongst local respondents’ conceptions of stability, which were primarily concerned with long-term incremental change, enabling them to provide better lives for their children. This would seem to suggest that development could be linked to stabilisation, though the respondents were hesitant to do so; instead they linked stability to long-term economic opportunity, represented within Kalakan by the *batis*. The second, more significant, component of stability was the agreement of ‘the people’ to work with the state, and for the state to respect and listen to the population. This is striking on the one hand because this is a largely self-generated understanding and on the other

¹⁹⁶ IN-0-1 7th October 2010, Kabul.

¹⁹⁷ NL-1-1 19th October 2010, Kabul.

¹⁹⁸ NL-1-1 19th October 2010, Kabul; LL-1-7 19th October 2010, Kabul and LL-1-8 19th October 2010, Kabul.

¹⁹⁹ NL-1-1 19th October 2010, Kabul.

because several of the interventions on SSR, such as the DDR programme, and ongoing police training, were poorly linked to promoting these linkages. Instead they tried to degrade the networks of commanders that provide stability in the region through disarmament or provide training to the police in paramilitary survival strategies rather than population-focused policing, which is what the population were interested in.

In summary, the analytical themes indicate that while discrete humanitarian interventions were important in providing a platform for stability to emerge, the stability that exists in Kalakan is the result of local conflict resolution processes bringing people closer to one another and the state, within the overarching framework of a regional political settlement. If this hypothesis is accurate it would suggest that other interventions aimed at promoting stability, including many of the development activities, and elements of the political and security interventions, are less significant.

Theoretical analysis

This analysis now allows the theories outlined in Chapter 2 to be tested, which include statebuilding, COIN and development. The statebuilding theory²⁰⁰ suggests that both political and economic reform processes are required for stability. While it is accurate to say that statebuilding as a process of political interventions affects stability and has played a structuring role it is not clear that the model espoused by the international community, which is that of democratic governance, would be any more stable than another political configuration that allowed certain basic freedoms. Exogenous political interventions have had only a structuring role rather than an implementing one, and local conceptions of democracy, governance and politics do not conform to Liberal forms of governance.

Returning to the prelude at the beginning of the chapter, there are clearly localised indigenous political visions which are more relevant to the stability of Kalakan and the Koh Daman region than the centrally mandated electoral processes and constitution making. The monthly newspaper, *Habib-ul Islam*, and the establishment of the Koh Daman Shura, provide examples of indigenous processes which attempt to unify the region as a political bloc. This re-visioning of Afghan society and politics is important because it reflects changes that have been seen in practice over the last decade in the Shomali plain and it highlights two important facets of Kalakan's stabilisation. There is the importance of a coherent political vision – one that reaches back to the historical example of Habibullah Khan in 1929 mentioned in the prelude to this chapter – but critically this is supported by a vision of Afghanistan that is free from external

²⁰⁰ See Dobbins, 2007, p. 1 quoted on p. 47.

interference. The imposition of democratic governance then is weakly associated with this vision which explicitly criticises exogenous interventions.

While there was no ongoing insurgent activity in Kalakan at the time of research, many of the respondents had been insurgents in earlier conflicts and warily watched developments in other parts of the country. The importance of COIN theory²⁰¹ to the discussion about Kalakan focuses primarily on the nature and intent of a revolutionary form of conflict. The conception of COIN, which underpins the overall ISAF deployment in Afghanistan, is one of revolution: to remould a society which can resist the overtures of insurgent forces. However, this seems to be weakly associated with the two main modes of engagement in the security sphere, which are aimed at promoting stability. On the one hand the DDR programme did not provide development benefits to many of those engaged in Firqa 8, instead many ended up in other parts of the security forces or private economy, which may promote stability but is incidental to the programme. On the other hand ongoing training is preparing the ANP in Kalakan to fight an insurgency, which may not be relevant to the local security concerns of the population. Given the communities' experiences of Taliban rule it is unlikely that they would do anything but violently resist Taliban overtures. As a result the application of a COIN model in Kalakan seems irrelevant to stability.

The sentiment embodied in development theory²⁰² is that both economic and social development is required to promote stability. It says little about the significance of humanitarian aid, which in the case of Kalakan, seems to have been the most significant locally implemented exogenous intervention. By ignoring humanitarian action, development theory overstates the importance of some activities and ignores others. Furthermore, the implication of the theory is also that development is a positive change and that interventions labelled as development would therefore have a positive impact. This has not been evident in Kalakan whose stability has not been driven by exogenous interventions which have built culverts, wells, schools and clinics and have tended to support social development; instead, economic development has come from indigenous investment in the brick kilns. Combined humanitarian aid and economic growth has stabilised the population, not the social development actions of the NGO community and CIMIC teams, and although their interventions may have had developmental or hearts and minds impacts they are weakly linked to stabilisation.

In summary, this analysis suggests that the theories of intervention across statebuilding, COIN and development provide weak explanatory value in understanding the nature of stabilisation in Kalakan and the way in which respondents view and experience stability.

²⁰¹ See JP3-24, 2009, p. 12 quoted on p. 53.

²⁰² See USIP, 2009, p. 2.9 quoted on p. 55

Conclusion

Kalakan's story of indigenous stabilisation demonstrates the comparative weakness of exogenous interventions at a sub-district level to promote stability. Whilst the interventions were not resisted, and in many cases were welcomed, they were not of significant scale to alter substantially the political economy of the district or its stability. Exogenous activity in the political sphere was almost non-existent, which allowed a relationship of trust to emerge between the local government representatives and the local population.

Importantly, the relationship was based on the state treating the local population fairly and with respect; in turn the population or their leaders gave consent for the government to function i.e. local political legitimacy. In addition, the previous experiences of violent destruction and mass dislocation seem to have reduced the appetite of the population and their elders to violently resist the state. The fact that there is growing local political legitimacy does not mean the population and the state necessarily agree with the current democratic system, nor have they necessarily benefitted in the ways which they would like (i.e. electricity and road construction). External humanitarian support was stabilising but the majority of exogenous developmental activity has had little or no impact on stability because it focused on social development. Stability has however been maintained by on-going indigenous investment in economic development.

Kalakan's experience is instructive for stabilisation interventions because it highlights the ways in which internal processes can be as strong, or possibly stronger, than exogenous activity in promoting stability; however, it also reveals the primary weakness in Kalakan's stability – that it was brought about through the macro stability (i.e. country level) of the international intervention. This allowed Kalakan, its elders and regional leaders, to compete non-violently. So despite local stabilisation being achieved by indigenous means, exogenous intervention also played a structuring role in attaining and maintaining stability. The challenge in the future will be to maintain stability in the face of changes to the ISAF deployment until 2014.

Chapter 5 – Exogenous Stabilisation

Nahr-i Sarraj, Helmand province, Afghanistan

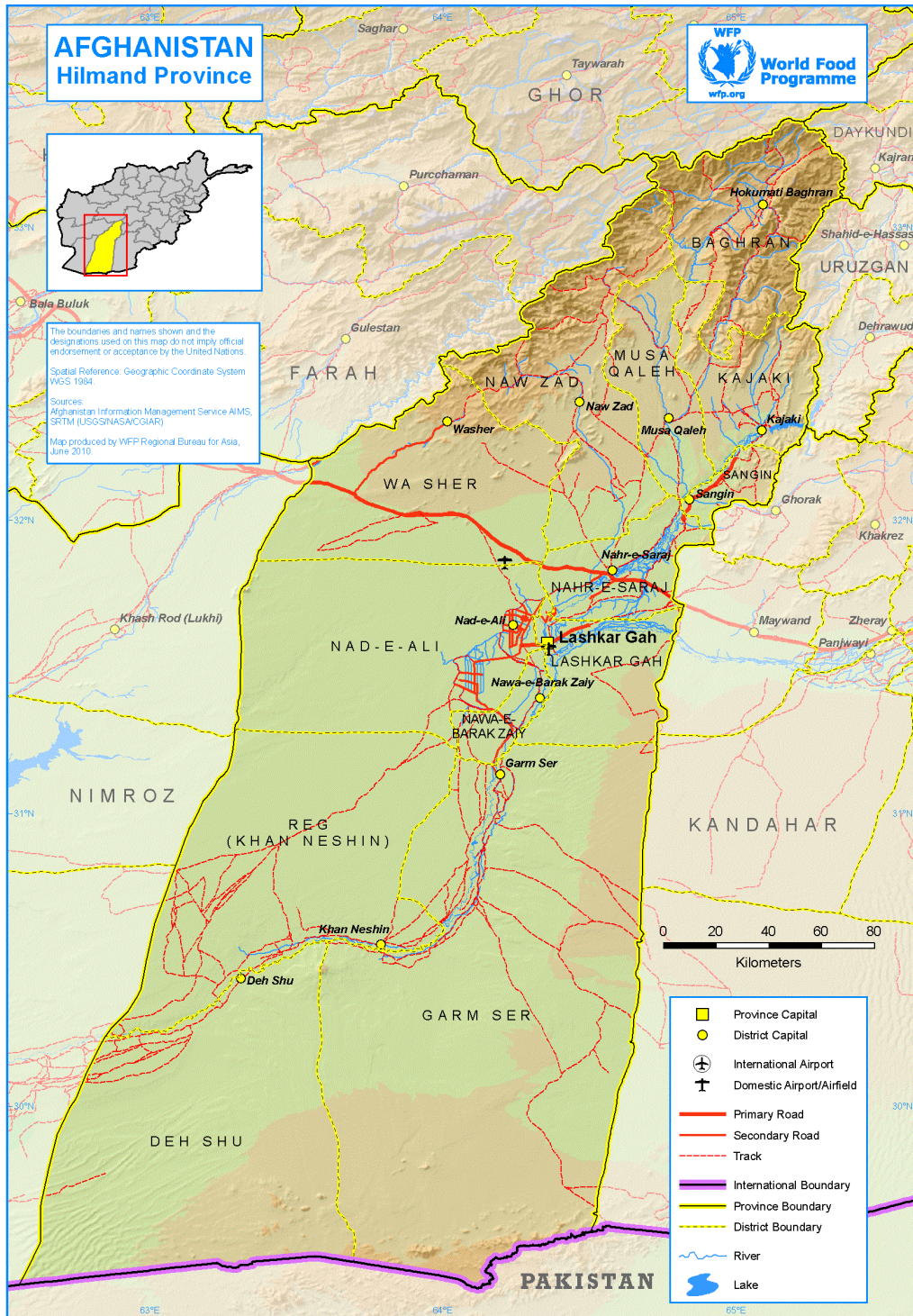


Figure 6 Map of Helmand Province WFP

Prelude

“What I want is cooperation from [the] government with us. If there was no foreigner in Afghanistan I would never leave my village. Now foreigners are in our country. Whenever they fight they shoot everyone including women, children, old people and everyone.

Now foreigners’ presence in our country is just like the story of Hindu. Once there was a snake in a Hindu’s house. He told his son to go and find a Muslim to kill this snake. We will pay him 2000 if he wants 1000, 5,000 if he wanted 2000 and 10,000 if he asked for 5,000, as long as he kills the snake.

His son went out and saw a Muslim man walking in that area. He told the man that there was a snake in their house and his father wanted him to kill the snake. The man asked how much will you pay for killing that snake? The boy said my father will pay you good money but didn’t tell him the amount. The man went and killed the snake. Then he was paid and he left the house.

When the Muslim man went out, the wife of the owner of that house became angry and told her husband that why did you do that? I could kill the snake, you could kill it and even our son could do this. Why did you ask a Muslim to do this and paid him? The Hindu man said you don’t know about what I did. In fact neither the Muslim nor the snake were my friends, so I got a Muslim to kill the snake because whoever was killed between them I would be very happy.

Now the same is happening with the Americans. When they throw bombs on an area they don’t care who gets killed in the bombardment. Our own military forces and even the Taliban know which people are civilians and they don’t kill the civilians. But the Americans do not care who gets killed in their fight, either Taliban or civilians. Even they kill our security forces and call it a mistake.

We all want peace and security in our country. Karzai is also this country’s son and he is from Qandahar. We want him to remain President of this country but we want the foreigners to leave our country so we can go back to our area and live there like when we had a simple life before. We will never forget those places where we have spent many years of our life.”²⁰³

Nahr-i Sarraj and exogenous stabilisation

The case of Village A in Nahr-i Sarraj district highlights the limitations of exogenous stabilisation when it is far beyond local political will and the physical capabilities of the host nation. Periods of stability have been experienced in Village A and the wider district, most recently under the Taliban government until 2001, but those

²⁰³ LL-2-2 21st November 2010, Kabul.

experiences are in marked contrast to the exogenous interventions across the political, security and development lines of operation which have had a number of intended and unintended consequences. In particular this chapter highlights the disconnect between technical governance innovations and systems led by civilian reformers at national, provincial and even district levels with military-led village level stabilisation activities.

The post-2001 story of Nahr-i Sarraj can best be described as the ongoing competition for the will of the people between three governments: the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA), ISAF and the Taliban.²⁰⁴ ISAF believed they were acting to support GIROA but it is a sentiment not shared by many respondents and the state itself had little inclination to support stability because it was captured by local actors. Therefore ISAF and the government, to some, were like a snake and a scorpion fighting,²⁰⁵ whilst others thought ISAF was using the population to fight its own war as in the prelude, where ISAF was using one enemy (the Muslim) to kill another (the snake).

From 2001 to 2005 the abusive actions of the Jihadi leaders who took over the state apparatus in Helmand opened up opportunities for insurgent leaders to re-group and prepare for violent resistance. The perception was that international forces in Helmand supported Governor Akhunzada and other Jihadi leaders who persecuted their opponents leading the local population to conclude ISAF was supporting an abusive regime.²⁰⁶ This was coupled by the national DDR programme, which disarmed the AMF in Helmand before the deployment of sufficient ANA forces. To address the industrial scale insurgency that took hold from 2006 there was a massive increase in the international military deployments to the province, which by 2009 had settled on a population-centric COIN concept of operations. In this context stability was seen as a critical element to meet the goal of promoting the Afghan state to contain the insurgency and drug economy.

Interviews for this chapter were carried out in Kabul, in person and by phone, with respondents in Village A, Nahr-i Sarraj and Lashkar Gah between September and December 2010. The respondents included a range of village, district, provincial and national political leaders; former and current government officials; local

²⁰⁴ This point is not lost on interveners who stated that at times since 2001 the local population have relied more on Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) and ISAF for basic services rather than the Afghan government (IN-2-3 9th December 2010, Kabul).

²⁰⁵ LL-2-4 8th December 2010, Gereshk.

²⁰⁶ Though in reality this was more mixed: US forces also supported other leaders who provided information which led to associates of the Governor being sent to Guantanamo Bay (Martin, Forthcoming).

representatives of the Taliban; economic actors (such as farmers and salaried staff of non-governmental organisations); and external interveners involved in stabilising the district at various stages between 2006 and 2010. In total twenty-five interviews were carried out with twenty-seven respondents, twenty Afghans and seven external actors; with one exception all the Afghan respondents were male, and were from a number of tribal groups and sub-groups, including the Barakzai, Noorzai, Ishaqzai and Popalzai. Local respondents from Village A specifically asked that the name of their village not be used in the thesis. As described in the methodology chapter data collection was focused on the period up to the end of 2010. The researcher worked in Helmand during spring 2012 and some contextual information has been added though it is not directly used in the analysis.

Conflict history

Nahr-i Sarraj district lies to the north of the provincial capital, Lashkar Gah, and is bisected by Highway 1 which runs through the district capital of Gereshk. The provincial capital was moved from Gereshk to Lashkar Gah and the province renamed Helmand in 1964 under US pressure as the Helmand Arghandab Valley Authority (HAVA) headquarters were there.²⁰⁷ Gereshk has remained the economic hub of the province and is economically more important than Lashkar Gah. The district includes a number of tribal groups and within Village A alone there are Barakzai, Noorzai, Popalzai, Alikozai and Achakzai people, and there are also small communities of Hazara and Shia Tajiks in other parts of the district.

The district is split roughly into three main populated zones: firstly, the district centre, which is a municipality, as the economic and administrative hub; secondly, the areas on or near the road to Lashkar Gah and areas lying between the Helmand river and Nahr-i Bughra canal to the west of Gereshk; and finally, the area straddling the Helmand River to the north and north-east along the roads to the districts of Sangin, Kajaki and Musa Qala. This chapter focuses on the district centre, Gereshk, and Village A, which lies along one of the roads between Highway 1 and Sangin to the north. Some of the respondents were from Malgir, which lies in the southern region of Nahr-i Sarraj towards Lashkar Gah, however interviews with those respondents focused on their current activities in the district centre.

²⁰⁷ Though the main beneficiary areas of Helmand are not the focus of this chapter it is worth noting that the US funded development process related to the creation of the irrigation system and the resettlement of nomadic groups significantly complicated social and tribal relations in Helmand making it more difficult to govern in the long-term (Martin, 2011, p. 26; Cullather, 2002, pp. 532-7).

For much of its history Nahr-i Sarraj has been on the margins between two major power centres: Herat in the west and Kandahar in the south of Afghanistan.²⁰⁸ During the Jihad and subsequent civil war (1979-1994) the district often experienced substantial fighting. As in other areas of Afghanistan there was ongoing and sustained competition for resources between elder networks and political tanzims to carry out the Jihad against the Russians and Afghan communist forces.²⁰⁹ At least six of the seven main Islamist parties had a presence in the district, including Hizb-i Islami, Harakat-i Inqilab-i Islami, Ittihad-i Islami, Mahaz-i Milli, Jamiat-i Islami and Jabha-i Nejat-i Milli; in Village A four tanzims were present: Hizb-i Islami, Harakat-i Inqilab-i Islami, Jamiat-i Islami and Jabha-i Nejat-i Milli.²¹⁰ Affiliation to parties was not decided simply along tribal lines. In Village A, as elsewhere in Afghanistan, commanders and their subordinates shifted allegiances for a number of reasons throughout the conflict.²¹¹ During the Jihad and the period of the Rabbani government (1992-1994) governance fragmented and elder-commanders asserted local control whilst a substantial proportion of the population fled to Pakistan.²¹² As a result of social dislocation and the deaths of a number of the elders individuals who would not normally have been considered for leadership attained power and authority often at quite a young age.²¹³

Services were badly affected, with education transferred from the state-run schools to madrassas where they could function. Village A used to have a school, built in the period of Zahir Shah,²¹⁴ and local religious leaders took over teaching responsibilities, turning it into a madrassa or using the other madrassas in the village.²¹⁵ Only two

²⁰⁸ From 1867 the province immediately to the north-west was Farah en-route to Herat.

²⁰⁹ LL-2-1 15th November 2010, Kabul and LL-2-4 8th December 2010, Gereshk. Though there were overlapping forms of mobilisation in essence the early resistance movements were generated by elders and landowners on the one hand representing traditional Afghan leadership and on the other political organisations that either became armed entities or developed armed wings to prosecute the Jihad e.g. Jamiat-i Islami or Hizb-i Islami (Roy, 1985, pp. 127-134).

²¹⁰ LL-2-1 14th and 15th November 2010, Kabul: some of the tanzims also split into factions, including Hizb-i Islami, both of whose factions were present in Helmand.

²¹¹ LL-2-1 15th November 2010, Kabul and LL-2-4 8th December 2010, Gereshk; Dorronsoro, 2000, pp. 147-9.

²¹² LL-2-1 15th November 2010, Kabul: the majority of refugees returned to the district during the Taliban period and by 2002 the number of displaced individuals registered with UNHCR in Pakistan was 2,458 or less than 3% of the district's population (Martin, 2011, p. 43; UNHCR, 2002, p. 1).

²¹³ LL-2-4 8th December 2010, Gereshk.

²¹⁴ LL-2-1 15th November 2010, Kabul.

²¹⁵ LL-2-1 14th and 18th November 2010, Kabul.

state schools were listed in Nahr-i Sarraj in 2005: one of them in Mirmandow and another in Yakhchal which together had a paltry 701 male students.²¹⁶ The old state school in Village A is not listed and the local respondents did not say it was functioning; it doesn't appear on GIS maps from the PRT.²¹⁷ Village A never had a health centre and the remaining health centres in the district effectively ceased to function during the conflict. There was some support from independent American or Pakistani medical practitioners during the Jihad and civil war but serious cases were transferred to the Sherpoor Hospital in Quetta, Pakistan.²¹⁸

The district centre of Gereshk relies on its position on the main Highway 1 for goods transiting from Pakistan and India to Herat in the north-west and Iran. Village A relies on the production of a range of crops including wheat, opium and various vegetables, and has access to a number of canal sluice gates from the Helmand River and *karez* (underground water channels) for irrigation. More recently some residents have constructed private wells. In the past there had been a collaborative effort from residents along the canal, at least up to Sangin, to clean and maintain the irrigation system, but it fell into disrepair because of the conflict.²¹⁹ The significance of the canal irrigation system is not that it provides for subsistence agriculture but that it supports the lucrative production of opium as a cash crop.

It is difficult to underestimate the significance of the opium economy in Helmand, whose production in 2011 was worth an estimated \$600m (Pounds & Dennys, 2012, p. 27). Opium was a traditional crop in northern Helmand before the Soviet invasion, but under the direction of Mullah Nasim it became not only a way of financing the fight against the Communist government but an object of conflict between the Mujahideen

²¹⁶ Education Management Information System, Ministry of Education, 2004 (held by author). The population of the district was estimated to be over 166,000 in the household listing survey, with the school aged population being approximately 40% of the overall population, the potential school population in Nahr-i Sarraj would be approximately 66,000 students (UNFPA, 2004, pp. 2, 9). Anecdotal evidence from respondents and from UNHCR reporting in 2002 suggests that there were more schools operating and up to 6,600 students in school. (UNHCR, 2002, p. 2). The discrepancy is most likely a reflection of the continued use of some private schooling and gaps in the Ministry's monitoring system.

²¹⁷ Data held by author, and EA-2-2 4th December 2010, Gereshk and EA-2-5 6th December 2010, Gereshk: interestingly the Afghan respondents in Village A did not discuss education projects in general, not just in Village A, where activity was absent from their responses. Instead they focused their discussions on health projects, implying possibly that these were more significant to them, or simply that they knew about these projects primarily and not others.

²¹⁸ LL-2-1 15th November 2010, Kabul.

²¹⁹ LL-2-1 14th November 2010, Kabul.

parties itself. Opium allowed Mullah Nasim to cultivate links to international smuggling networks and he was effectively independent from Harakat-i Inqilab-i Islami, the tanzim to which he nominally subscribed, because unlike most commanders he did not rely on foreign assistance from the ISI, CIA or Saudi Arabia to finance his operations (Martin, 2011, pp. 34-5; Peters, 2009, p. 7). The search for independent financing was not simply to gain independence, but to reduce reliance on funding from KhAD, the PDPA's intelligence organisation, who had funded Mullah Nasim to fight Hizb-i Islami since 1980 (Martin, Forthcoming).

Nasim's nephew is the former Provincial Governor Sher Mohammad Akhunzada, who exploited his governance position to continue the family's attempts to exploit the opium economy by, for example, using government property to store some nine tons of opium in 2005 which he had stolen from Mualem Mir Wali (Blanchard, 2008, p. 14; Martin, Forthcoming). Nahr-i Sarraj's own production of opium is not on the industrial scale found in neighbouring districts but Gereshk's bazaar is central to Helmand's opium economy because it lies on the main highway connecting Herat and Kandahar as well as the roads north from the city, past Village A, and benefits from producers and smugglers spending some of their profits in consumption (Dressler J. A., 2009, p. 25). As well as connections between government officials and the drug economy there has been consistent reporting that Taliban commanders have also benefitted from the opium trade through levying taxes and providing protection to smuggling convoys confirming its significance to the conflict dynamic in Helmand (Peters, 2009, pp. 17-21).

Aside from opium-related conflicts, there were an unspecified number of killings during the conflict within and between the communities and several occurred in Village A. The conflicts were not always addressed at the time, though some, with the help of local commanders, religious leaders and elders were addressed through the use of Pashtunwali codes of jurisprudence.²²⁰ There was some sense in the 'period of the tanzims' during the 1980s and 1990s that the commanders acted as a kind of police force, who would detain suspects for justice to be delivered by the local religious leaders or elders at a village level, but there was also an Attorney based at Gereshk appointed by local commander Mualem Mir Wali.²²¹ An Alizai commander became Sar Ketab (Head Scribe) of Gereshk after Najibullah's government collapsed in 1993, and a commander from Hizb-i Islami (Khalis Faction), Sher Mohammad, became

²²⁰ This is significant because later Taliban conflict resolution promoted Sharia jurisprudence.

²²¹ LL-2-1 14th November 2010, Kabul and NL-2-1 11th and 15th December 2010, Kabul: the Attorney's name was Mawlawi Mohammad Alem.

the Chief of Police.²²² However, the tanzims and former government militias could not peacefully agree how to govern the area and eventually after several years of conflict and in-fighting Rasoul Akhunzada (Nasim's brother), and his brother Ghaffour, managed to provide some stability by providing sufficient security enabling refugees to return (Martin, 2011, p. 44; Nojumi, 2002, pp. 135-6; Davis, 1998, p. 44).

In 1994 the Taliban emerged from neighbouring Kandahar and whilst they had managed to secure the peaceful withdrawal of Ghaffour Akhunzada's forces from Lashkar Gah to Musa Qala, their subsequent demand for him to disarm was rebuffed and intense fighting ensued. Ghaffour was defeated and fled to Ghor, but he returned to Helmand as part of Ismail Khan's forces from Herat and for a week in March 1995 succeeded in retaking much of Helmand, including Gereshk. After 2,000 of their men were captured, Ismail Khan and Ghaffour returned in August and managed to re-take Gereshk again as well as Musa Qala. The ensuing Taliban counter-attack, which included the forces of the 93rd Division, at that time led by Rais Baghrani, may have been supported by Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) agency and the Pakistan military, left Ismail Khan's forces overextended and ultimately led to the Taliban capture of Herat in the autumn of 1995 (Martin, 2011, p. 44; Nojumi, 2002, pp. 145-8; Davis, 1998, p. 44).

The Taliban system of governance co-opted some but not all of the existing local leadership; for example they forced out some of the provincial and district level commanders including Haji Qadir (Popalzai) and Mualem Mir Wali (Barakzai), formerly a militia commander with Hizb-i Islami who switched sides in 1990 to become the commander of a government militia called the 93rd Division (Martin, 2011, pp. 38-40). In Village A most of the elders were allowed to stay as were some of the low level commanders or those out of the fight, and they took a lower profile in local governance.²²³ This left many of the elder-commander relationships intact with the additional element of Taliban affiliated representatives from amongst the same communities. This is an important example of governance co-option where local leaders were largely kept in place and only more senior opponents were forced to leave.²²⁴ In Village A the Taliban period also precipitated a shift in local power towards

²²² LL-2-1 14th November 2010, Kabul and NL-2-1 11th and 15th December 2010, Kabul: note this is not Sher Mohammad Akhunzada, who fought with Harakat-i Inqilab-i Islami

²²³ For example one of the former Sar Groups (Group Head, normally a unit of up to thirty combatants) who was aligned to Gulbuddin Hekmetyar's Hizb-i Islami was injured at some point in the conflict and was allowed to remain in the village despite being aligned to both an opposing tanzim as well as an opposing tribal group. LL-2-1 14th and 15th November 2010, Kabul.

²²⁴ LL-2-1 17th November 2010, Kabul.

religious leadership. If the Jihadi period can be characterised as producing a shift in power to the local commanders (many of whom would not otherwise have become leaders),²²⁵ the Taliban period shifted power towards another group of previously less empowered local leaders, the religious elite.²²⁶

Local respondents tended to look back on the Taliban rule in the 1990s as stable.²²⁷ The improved stability brought the return of a few refugees from Pakistan. UNHCR figures indicate they assisted 1,549 families from Helmand to return from 1996-1999; however, because of poor economic opportunities and degraded local infrastructure (in particular the irrigation systems) some refugees remained in Pakistan (UNHCR, 2000). Several respondents noted the lack of services, which meant it was necessary to access health care in Pakistan, though there were some Arab and Pakistani doctors operating locally.²²⁸ Despite the lack of jobs, services and prospects, respondents referred to the 'tight security' or 'tight government' during the Taliban period and the fact they had freedom of movement.²²⁹

The post-2001 period can be broken into two main stages; the first running from 2001 to the deployment of UK forces in 2006, and the second running from 2006-2010. During the initial period after 2001 there was a rapid change in local leadership. Some of the provincial and district Jihadi leaders sided with Jamiat-i Islami, who played a central role in the campaign to oust the Taliban, in an effort to bolster their positions. The fall of the Taliban in Gereshk and Village A was not precipitated by fighting; rather the local Taliban leadership melted away, some across the border to Pakistan, whilst many others simply went home.²³⁰ The Taliban commander for Gereshk, Mullah Mohammad Azam Akhund (Noorzai), called a meeting before leaving the area where

²²⁵ In other parts of Helmand the leadership of Mullah Mohd Nabi and Sher Mohd Akhunzada's father may have given greater power to Helmandi religious leaders than was generally experienced by religious leaders in other parts of the country.

²²⁶ This view was complicated by the background of those who described it. A commander-elder suggested little changed in the position of the religious elite, maintaining they had always been central to decision making (LL-2-1 17th November 2010, Kabul); others more sympathetic to the Taliban suggested they had attained new levels authority (LL-2-5 13th December 2010, Nahr-i Sarraj). The fact that the elder-commander also suggested that the Taliban take over precipitated the departure of some other commanders (including himself), would suggest that the takeover did represent a substantial shift, even if the respondent did not wish to recognise it.

²²⁷ LL-2-1 15th November 2010, Kabul; also see Martin, 2011, p. 44.

²²⁸ LL-2-1 15th November 2010, Kabul.

²²⁹ LL-2-1 15th November 2010, Kabul.

²³⁰ LL-2-1 15th November 2010, Kabul

he redistributed money the Taliban had collected for projects and distributed weapons to the elders.²³¹

The Jihadi leadership of Helmand, including Sher Mohammad Akhunzada (Alizai), Dad Mohammed (Alikozai), Abdur Rahman Jan (Noorzai) and Mir Wali (Barakzai) took over provincial government positions, respectively the Provincial Governor, Chief of NDS, Chief of Police and Head of 93rd Division, a unit within the AMF, which was on the MoD payroll.²³² There were a few remnants of the Taliban leadership who managed to transfer to the new governance system, including the Chief of Policy Haji Mohammad Khan, and Mualem Ibrahim. However they ended up being forced into violent opposition resulting either in their detention (for Haji Mohammad Khan) or they were killed by ISAF (Mualem Ibrahim).²³³

Several Afghan respondents spoke of the initial period as one of great expectation where the population wanted engagement by the state to better their situation (for example improving livelihoods, education or health). What they experienced instead was a systematic marginalisation of the former Taliban leadership – rather than governance co-option, they faced a governance system enforced by brutality. External patronage, through cash payments for intelligence, allowed local political leaders to provide false information against their erstwhile enemies in order to have them detained or killed and the heavy Western backing of these leaders effectively gave them *carte blanche* to behave in the way they did (Martin, Forthcoming). These were significant trends, because the defining experience of the respondents in Village A, of all political persuasions, was one of either neglect or abuse.²³⁴ Neglect in the fact that there was little or no government engagement on the one hand and on the other hand those that had connections to the Taliban or were political enemies of the newly empowered Jihadi elite faced persecution. In the view of the residents of Village A the government was resolutely and consistently not in Nahr-i Sarraj to serve the people.

By 2004 the picture started to change; for some time the former Taliban leaders felt that they had enough freedom of movement to move back into the villages, including Village A, and they re-established contact with their supporters.²³⁵ The level of government interaction fell rapidly after the Presidential election in 2004, where the local population were able to go to Gereshk to meet campaigners for President Karzai and the Parliamentary election the following year when the local population did not

²³¹ LL-2-1 15th November 2010, Kabul.

²³² Interview IN-2-4 20th July 2011, Copenhagen; NL-2-1 11th and 15th December 2010, Kabul (Gopal, 2010).

²³³ LL-2-4 8th December 2010, Gereshk and Kennedy, 2010.

²³⁴ EA-2-1 3rd December 2010, Kabul and EA-2-3 5th December 2010, Gereshk.

²³⁵ LL-2-1 15th November 2010, Kabul.

engage.²³⁶ Three political and security factors may have contributed to this: firstly, the parliamentary election was of less political significance to the Karzai administration than the Presidential election and the previous Constitutional and Emergency Loya Jirgas (2003 and 2002 respectively) when the administration had reached out to 'reliable' local representatives to secure its position;²³⁷ secondly, the disbandment of 93rd Division, whose leader Mualem Mir Wali stood for the parliamentary elections in 2005, was exploited by Governor Akhunzada to disarm his erstwhile enemy and was interpreted by some Taliban combatants as an opportunity to increase their activities;²³⁸ thirdly, the withdrawal of Afghan forces under the military chain of command occurred in the context where only 250 of Helmand's 1,900 police did not report to parallel command structures outside the chain of command either to former Jihadi commanders or drug barons.²³⁹ In effect from 2005 there was no Afghan security force that could be entrusted with the protection of the state and the administration was not interested in protecting what power it did have except with regard to opium; this situation was made worse after UK pressure led to the removal of Governor Akhunzada, who turned his militia over to the insurgency, which helped to precipitate a drawn out COIN campaign by ISAF to reclaim lost ground, a pattern repeated by Mualem Mir Wali and other Helmandi political leaders (McElroy, 2009; Martin, Forthcoming).

In summary the conflict history of Nahr-i Sarraj suggests that there were previous experiences of stability during the Taliban era which involved a degree of governance co-option that allowed the return of some refugees from Pakistan. The post-2001 environment promoted a governance model based on exclusion and abuse coupled with nationally mandated electoral processes which had little support outside the municipal areas. The state could not rely on any loyal security forces by the end of 2005 because all the government forces had parallel informal command lines to malign actors (both within and outside government) which provided space for the insurgency to grow. In the context of the conflict, development activity had little bearing on stability except in the support provided to refugees to return home, and

²³⁶ LL-2-1 18th November 2010, Kabul.

²³⁷ LL-2-1 18th November 2010, Kabul.

²³⁸ EA-2-1 3rd December 2010, Kabul: interestingly some specific government officials, including Mir Wali, were restricted in their movements from an earlier stage, and Mir Wali also moved himself and his family to Kabul after taking up his Parliamentary seat in 2005 (LL-2-1 15th and 18th November 2010, Kabul). Others also note that the historical leadership of 93rd Division, which included Rais Baghrani, had meant that parts of the 93rd Division were coming under the patronage of the Taliban, further weakening Mir Wali's command and control (Martin, Forthcoming).

²³⁹ IN-2-4 20th July 2011, Copenhagen, and Schmidt, 2009, p. 26.

economic growth was spurred by the burgeoning opium economy which also contributed to violent competition.

Stabilisation interventions

The following section outlines the range of activities undertaken to support stabilisation in Nahr-i Sarraj and Village A since 2001 by the Afghan state and ISAF with a particular focus on activities from 2006-2010. Whilst acknowledging the crossover between the subsections it is split between political, security and development interventions in order to demonstrate the relative importance and weight of different types of activities.

Political interventions to support stabilisation

This subsection focuses on district and village level governance interventions relevant to Village A, and political power and authority in Nahr-i Sarraj. The data is presented by looking at two forms of political governance related intervention, but a brief introduction to the relevance and importance of the shura as a body around which exogenous stabilisation interventions were structured is provided first to give context.

Traditionally one of the most significant elements of governance in Afghanistan has been the formation of provincial, district and village councils, commonly referred to as shuras. These shuras provide a number of functions and can be both formal and informal. Examples of informal shuras include village level water shuras, led by the local Mir Aw (Lord of Water) or the Koh Daman Shura discussed in the preceding chapter, which provides a regional platform for political leaders of that area. Their central role in decision making has meant that they have also been seized upon by international interveners as ways of structuring Afghan sub-national governance, which has been hampered by a lack of coherent government policy (World Bank, 2007, p. xiii; Nixon, 2008, pp. 55-6). In part this is the result of the perceived need to promote 'good governance' linked to the statebuilding agenda, but it is also tied to the prosecution of the COIN campaign by providing a viable alternative to Taliban governance systems that were established from 2004 - 2005. An added frustration, from the perspective of interveners, has been the perpetual postponing of district level elections and the unwillingness, or inability, of the Karzai administration to improve local governance; as a result exogenous governance interventions to support shuras were seen to be filling a void.

In the context of Nahr-i Sarraj and Village A the external interveners concerned with stabilisation saw the engagement and establishment of shuras as one of their key lessons i.e. that community participation is necessary for a successful local buy-in.²⁴⁰

²⁴⁰ IN-0-1 7th October 2010, Kabul, IN-2-3 9th December 2010, Kabul, IN-2-9 3rd December 2010, Washington and IN-2-4 20th July 2011, Copenhagen. Others have

This is a lesson that the non-governmental sector learnt some time ago and an area where the implementation experience of NGOs has influenced mainstream Liberal thinking about statebuilding.²⁴¹ However, unlike the ad-hoc local arrangements that the NGO community has espoused the stabilisation approach has been dominated by two competing demands: the first is formal governance promotion which focuses on process and local elections implemented at the provincial or district level, and the second is informal governance promotion at a village level, which was implemented through military teams from Forward Operating Bases (FOBs) and Patrol Bases (PBs). External interveners argued that both levels of activity were part of stabilisation, though there is no agreement about the relative importance of each approach, with those based in the districts favouring working with at times unique district and sub-district networks; and those working at provincial or national levels favouring more rigid, systematic approaches using formal elections.²⁴²

Formal governance approaches to sub-national governance focused on building institutions and included the creation of Provincial Councils, District Development Assemblies, and the Afghanistan Social Outreach Programme (ASOP) shuras, which in Helmand were carried out through District Community Councils (DCC).²⁴³ These bodies were almost entirely funded by international actors, centrally or locally. Each body was created separately and did not have mutually reinforcing mandates, which contributed to the idea that there were three governments in Helmand, though there were extensive attempts to encourage coordination (Nixon, 2008, pp. iv-v; Martin, Forthcoming).

From 2006 civilian activity focused on working through the Provincial Council and other provincial bodies in Lashkar Gah, whilst supporting military teams working at a district level at the Gereshk Municipality, District Council or with village councils, as in Village A.²⁴⁴ By 2008 there were also civilian district level stabilisation advisers working

questioned whether the civilian and military leadership within the ISAF deployment in Helmand have really understood local buy-in or see it as a box ticking exercise. (Martin, Forthcoming).

²⁴¹ There is a long tradition across the NGO sector which seeks to engage and empower local communities; some of the tools they use in the field include Participatory Rural Appraisal, which was developed in the 1980s (Chambers, 1994 , pp. 957-8).

²⁴² IN-2-9 3rd December 2010, Washington, IN-0-4 28th November 2010, Kabul and IN-2-4 20th July 2011, Copenhagen.

²⁴³ It should be noted that the ASOP was a national programme implemented in a number of provinces. Though the UK approach to ASOP in Helmand was distinct from other provinces predominately led by the US, this chapter does not seek to provide a comparison of the two approaches.

²⁴⁴ IN-2-9 3rd December 2010, Washington.

on governance in Nahr-i Sarraj, but the first non-military background deployee was not in post until early 2009. The civilian advisers at that time worked with the formal structures, and the military with the informal because they had greater physical presence outside the district centre.²⁴⁵ By 2010 this broad split in engagement had been established, whereby civilian interveners led on governance engagement at both provincial and district levels though they also provided advisory support to military teams working at a village level.²⁴⁶

There was a mixed response regarding the extension of formal governance systems which started in 2006. All formal governance interventions were coloured by higher level national issues connected to the Presidential (2009) and Parliamentary elections (2010). Both were marred by corruption in Helmand and there were allegations against Mualem Mir Wali in 2010 which were upheld. He was disqualified after securing the votes for his second term in the Wolesi Jirga.²⁴⁷ The allegations of corruption against the national bodies undermined confidence in Provincial level governance systems including the Provincial Council which in any case had no significant power and authority (Katzman, 2012, pp. 21-31, 39). Gereshk municipality was officially governed by a Mayor but it was difficult to get other stakeholders to work with Muhiadeen Alizai, a Tajik Shia, because he was politically isolated and vulnerable. His weakness may have contributed to the fact that his son was kidnapped, allegedly by the Taliban, and the Chief of Police in Gereshk, Dur Ali, paid the ransom to ensure he had leverage over the mayor.²⁴⁸ The Chief of Police is in many respects the real power holder in Gereshk, but most appointees only last a few months before being moved on, either because they have been outbid for the job or because other political factions want to increase their stake in Gereshk's politics. Much of this jockeying for position is connected to the drugs trade rather than the need to police the district (Schmidt, 2009, p. 26).

The failure of national, provincial and municipal governance systems to provide a responsive form of governance did not stop the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) in Helmand²⁴⁹ from designing new district level governance interventions. In an

²⁴⁵ IN-2-4 20th July 2011, Copenhagen.

²⁴⁶ A similar split is noted by Gordon, 2011, p. 3.

²⁴⁷ LL-2-6 13th December 2010, Lashkar Gah and NL-2-1 11th December 2010, Kabul: after the research was carried out, Mualem Mir Wali was re-instated in Parliament, though only after a strong and vociferous campaign against him and several other candidates (van Bijlert, 2011).

²⁴⁸ IN-2-9 3rd December 2010, Washington and Martin, Forthcoming.

²⁴⁹ The original PRT in Helmand had been established by the US; the UK PRT was established in 2006 and provided civilian leadership to the UK mission, and coordinated cross-departmental civilian and military interventions; this chapter does

attempt to support military operations in seven districts, local elections were held in Nahr-i Sarraj using a limited suffrage of elders who selected representatives to join the DCC.²⁵⁰ While there were concerns about the level of representation within the DCC in Gereshk, amongst the interveners it was given high priority up the chain of command by the PRT who viewed it as a critical component of stabilisation success in Helmand. Local respondents from within Gereshk and Village A were deeply sceptical of the representativeness of the DCC and the ability of the DCC to wield any influence.²⁵¹ Their scepticism was partly because they had witnessed the collapse of the Community Development Councils (CDCs) which had been established at village level across Helmand under the auspices of the National Solidarity programme (NSP). Some interveners believed that the CDCs had a stronger social and legal anchoring in the district and while attempts were made in 2009 to locate former CDC members in Village A none were found to be present, which corroborated the fact that significant elements of the community had left by this point.²⁵²

Given the lack of access by formal governance actors, and doubts over the degree of authority that the purported representative of Village A had in the DCC, and the ongoing violent contest within Village A itself, military teams also attempted to bolster governance through ad-hoc governance interventions, though they were of patchy quality and consistency. In 2008 to mid-2009 there was a Military Stabilisation Support Team (MSST) in the area operating from a nearby FOB, but they could only meet the elders from Village A once a month. On average fifty to one hundred people would attend the engagement was somewhat limited,²⁵³ however, the discussions in their meetings tended to focus on compensation, the regularity of patrolling and potential projects, which related primarily to security and development (these are outlined below). The governance impact of these events seems in doubt given the reluctance of Taliban members to participate (except to spy on the rest of the leaders) and the fact that participation in the meetings could result in deadly violence against the participants.²⁵⁴

not seek to review the PRT as this has been adequately covered in existing literature (Gordon, 2011, pp. 31-4).

²⁵⁰ Also referred to as the ASOP Shura.

²⁵¹ IN-2-3 9th December 2010, Kabul and Walker, April 2010, p. 30.

²⁵² IN-2-4 20th July 2011, Copenhagen: in some areas there were also concerns that the CDCs had become corrupt, though this was not specific to Village A (Personal Communication).

²⁵³ EA-2-1 3rd December 2010, Kabul.

²⁵⁴ EA-2-1 3rd December 2010, Kabul: this was a common occurrence across Helmand; Walker (2010, p. 56) notes that several DCC members in Helmand had been

Just after the DCC election in Gereshk a Patrol Base (PB) was established in Village A in mid-2009 with one dedicated CIMIC member who was mentored by a civilian stabilisation advisor based in Camp Price outside Gereshk. That individual, and the broader unit of twenty-five to thirty Danish soldiers, had almost daily interactions with the local community and identified key leaders in the area, including the water manager (Mir Aw) as well as a local teacher. An innovative, low-key and low-expenditure approach was taken in engaging with the community, which focused around building confidence through very small scale development interventions. There were signs that elements of Village A's remaining leadership was able to carve out a small space to operate and co-operate with ISAF and there was some engagement between the local teacher and Department of Education officials in Gereshk but there was little, if any, engagement within Village A by GIRoA officials. However, the overall effort was critically undermined by the shutting down of the PB eight to ten months after it was established which in all likelihood contributed to the disappearance of several individuals who had cooperated with ISAF, and to the halting of the development activities.²⁵⁵

By the end of 2010 a number of salient short-comings were apparent with the range of governance interventions that were supposed to be promoting stability: firstly, the majority of the activities, whether formal or informal, were not initiated, promoted or necessarily supported by GIRoA and in particular by Provincial Governor Mangal – whilst the interveners may have correctly understood that accountable governance systems were vital for stability the lack of willingness or ability of the Afghan counterparts to engage in these processes without substantive hand-holding by international actors revealed that there were strategic problems in the external interveners' approach; secondly, the conflict history from 1978 demonstrates that there were a number of governance structures, both Jihadi and Taliban, that were continuing their conflict, however, the lesson from the period of stability during the Taliban government, their ability to co-opt governance structures locally and only displace key opposition leaders, seemed to have been lost; for the most part co-optation was not feasible in the new formal governance systems whose electoral processes tended to be highly rigid and rule bound.²⁵⁶

threatened with Shabnameh (night letters), and in 2008 the Judge in Gereshk was murdered.

²⁵⁵ IN-2-4 20th July 2011, Copenhagen.

²⁵⁶ There was an exception to this in Sangin where the DCC was effectively expanded to include members from a region poorly represented in the initial DCC election on the orders of Provincial Governor Mangal; subsequent DCC elections in Nahr-i Sarraj (spring 2012) were believed to have broadened local representation, though not in

It was the issue of representation that was at the core of the failure of political stabilisation for Village A and was noted by several respondents. These criticisms were mainly centred on the fact that the DCCs and other governance bodies established by the current administration, or convened by ISAF, did not contain the 'real' elders.²⁵⁷ The real power holders did not want to participate in sham councils and were separate and distant from the decision-making that was agreed at these shuras.²⁵⁸ There were multiple truths in these observations: the first was that a large number of elders, commanders and religious leaders had been killed, not just in this period of conflict, but over the last thirty years and there was the sense that current elders are not what elders used to be in the mythical past; secondly, there was the very real concern that the district level DCC did not contain a broad representation from all parts of the district and could not function because of Taliban threats against its members;²⁵⁹ thirdly, any council established during the on-going conflict couldn't be representative because there were entire segments of communities who had left the region, as in the case of Village A. When and if these groups returned new accommodations would have to be made and the rule-bound nature of elections provided limited opportunity for those changes.

Stabilisation governance in Nahr-i Sarraj has suffered from the political structures put in place at a national level and the way in which former Governor Sher Muhammad Akhuzada, and other leaders such as Mualem Mir Wali and Dad Mohammed (Head of the NDS), used the provincial state apparatus to persecute political rivals and the local population, which was supported by US forces, and negatively affected all engagement by the international community. Exogenous attempts to recover lost ground have led to greater representation at a district level, though the breadth of that representation is in doubt in both official reviews of shuras as well as in the accounts of respondents in the district. More significantly, military-led village level attempts at governance were hampered by the extent of violence and displacement in

the case of Village A, which the government in Helmand continues to ignore (Observations by author, Helmand Spring, 2012).

²⁵⁷ A respondent present at meetings held in Village A noted that many of the attendees were not elders (EA-2-1 3rd December 2010, Kabul); another argued that because some elders now receive a salary (referring to members of the ASOP Council) they no longer have the stature of the 'real' elders of the previous generation because the current elders just use their position to secure resources such as aid for their own benefit. EA-2-3 5th December 2010, Gereshk.

²⁵⁸ LL-2-4 8th December 2010, Gereshk: one intervener noted that the governor managed to 'drum together' the participants in the election meeting for the ASOP shura IN-2-4 20th July 2011, Copenhagen.

²⁵⁹ EA-2-1 3rd December 2010, Kabul, LL-2-2 21st November 2010, Kabul and Walker, 2010, p. 32.

Village A and the entrenched position of the Taliban in and around the village. Ultimately, the failure of Afghan leadership, either from lack of inclination or lack of capability, has meant that governance was for the most part exogenously driven and by the end of 2010 lacked real purchase in the political environment in the district. Exogenous governance activities to support stabilisation failed because there was no robust leadership and initiative from the host nation to support the interventions.

Security interventions to support stabilisation

This section discusses the strengths and weaknesses of security interventions by external interveners in promoting stability through either COIN operations by ISAF and through the related establishment, training and mentoring of the ANSF. While security activities have proved adept at securing the state in urban and municipal areas it has struggled in outlying rural communities. The data suggests there are distinct limitations on security organisations – indigenous or exogenous – in promoting stability in the absence of coherent political support from the host nation government.

The original coalition deployment to Helmand under Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF)²⁶⁰ was relatively small until 2006 and tended to focus around Lashkar Gah and bases south of Gereshk in Malgir and on Route 601, which runs between Gereshk and Lashkar Gah.²⁶¹ The US-led deployment was small and undertook limited military or CIMIC activities (Thruelsen, 2008, pp. 18-9). Their interactions were primarily focused on Mualem Mir Wali, and even within the narrow anti-Taliban pro-Jihadi political base of the local administration this was striking and commented on by several respondents.²⁶² Therefore the international military presence in Gereshk was light and Village A was not troubled with dismounted patrols, though US military vehicles drove through the village to and from Sangin on occasion.

Despite the small footprint the early interactions between the US military and local residents were not always positive. On one occasion residents from Village A were

²⁶⁰ OEF is the mission under which most US forces served in Afghanistan until the expansion of the ISAF mission outside of Kabul, authorised by the UN Security Council Resolution 1510 in September 2003 and the unification of the OEF and ISAF commands in 2008. Although ISAF forces did not arrive in Helmand to undertake combat operations until January 2006. OEF was originally called Operation Infinite Justice but the name was changed, apparently to avoid giving offence to Islamic clerics (Brown, 2001).

²⁶¹ EA-2-1 3rd December 2010, Kabul.

²⁶² LL-2-6 13th December 2010, Lashkar Gah and NL-2-1 15th December 2010, Kabul: and is in marked contrast to the way in which Afghan governance works where consensus and consultation is essential, which often relies on a network of individuals (Bray, 2012, pp. 34-8; Martin, Forthcoming).

attending Eid prayers with a crowd of approximately 20,000 people in Gereshk.²⁶³ Soldiers filmed the event which, according to Village A residents, was not acceptable to the crowd, who attacked several US military vehicles. Some of the respondents' neighbours were arrested by Mir Wali's forces who were providing security. The following day the elders went to Mir Wali, petitioned for their release, and were questioned by the US commander who was told that his forces did not have permission to film the event.²⁶⁴ The new Afghan government leaders also used the auspices of Coalition Forces to provide information to the US military to detain and sideline potential and actual political opponents. It was clear to the respondents from Gereshk and Village A that this was done deliberately, though at this stage they do not blame US forces for the detentions (as they later blamed ISAF for civilian casualties). Instead they blamed the Afghan political elite in Helmand for persecuting them so that "when Coalition Forces were beating the people, the people thought the government was beating them."²⁶⁵

The situation changed during and after 2004 precipitated by three trends; firstly, the local administration continued to utilise government and international security forces to persecute individuals who were affiliated with the previous Taliban government which inflamed resistance; secondly, the DDR process removed a significant element of the Afghan security forces which provided stability; and thirdly, Taliban members gradually started to return as they realised that there was a significant amount of freedom of movement to engage in armed revolt because of the light presence of both Afghan and international forces. As a result the movements of government officials were restricted and the area that they could visit gradually shrunk until they were essentially no longer safe returning to their home villages, for example to Malgir to the south of Gereshk.²⁶⁶ By this point the Taliban had effectively taken control of Village A, were providing basic security and supporting the rule of law; it is in this context that UK deployment occurred.

The stabilisation of security in Nahr-i Sarraj, and Village A specifically, was exceptionally violent. From January 2007 to May 2010 there were some 4,500 significant events in Nahr-i Sarraj, and around Village A and the associated Forward Operating Base (FOB) there were some 300 events, leading to a substantial level of

²⁶³ Residents of Village A also stated that their Friday mosque was actually in Gereshk, despite there being several mosques within Village A. This weekly meeting in Gereshk served as a traditional way of interacting with other local villages and tribal networks. LL-2-1 15th and 18th November 2010, Kabul.

²⁶⁴ LL-2-1 15th November 2010, Kabul.

²⁶⁵ EA-2-1 3rd December 2010, Kabul.

²⁶⁶ EA-2-5 6th December 2010, Gereshk, EA-2-3 5th December 2010, Gereshk.

destruction within Village A itself.²⁶⁷ Nearby development projects (see below) including bridges, mosques and clinics, that the residents of Village A had used, were destroyed, damaged or shut down.²⁶⁸ A number of civilians were killed in the area. Irrespective of the reality of who actually caused the deaths they were blamed almost entirely on ISAF.²⁶⁹ The first major battles around Village A started in 2006 when UK forces met fierce resistance. Incursions to Village A were costly and ISAF and the Afghan government had no control of the area. The repeated incursions and lack of progress in northern Nahr-i Sarraj, also known as the Upper Gereshk Valley, culminated in a number of large clearance operations, some directly involving Village A, including: Operation Silicon (May 2007), Operation Palk Wahel (Sept 2007), Operation Panchai Palang (Panther's Claw – June 2009), Operation Omid Do (Hope 2 – Jul 2010), Operation Omid Seh (Hope 3 – Aug 2010) and Operation Omid Char (Hope 4 – Oct 2010).²⁷⁰ The operations led to a series of FOBs and PBs being set up on both sides of the Helmand river and whilst these were increasingly partnered with ANSF, they were not successful in subduing the insurgency in the Upper Gereshk Valley which remained virulently strong.²⁷¹

Attempts to enhance Afghan security engagement in the province began as early as 2004 but only gathered pace after UK forces deployed in 2006 and a detachment from the ANA's 205th Corps was deployed to Helmand from Kandahar in support of Operation Herrick, the name of UK operations in Helmand.²⁷² However the glaring oversight in international intervention meant that as 93rd Division had been disarmed in 2005 there was a significant lag before the relief deployment (205th Corps) arrived in 2006 and even then they were not in substantial numbers.²⁷³ The initial deployments were clearly insufficient and by 2010 the ANA tashkeel for Helmand had

²⁶⁷ Within the vicinity of Village A and the FOB there were seventy-five direct fire incidents, sixty-seven IED explosions and 135 IEDs found or disposed of (along with a smaller number of indirect fire, threats and hoaxes). Information from ISAF and SIGACTS (dataset held by author).

²⁶⁸ EA-2-2 4th December 2010, Gereshk.

²⁶⁹ See quote at the beginning of the chapter; LL-2-2 21st November 2010, Kabul and LL-2-1 15th November 2010, Kabul; it should be recognised that the United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan's (UNAMA) monitoring of civilian casualties at the time suggests that the insurgents caused 75% of civilian fatalities (UNAMA, 2011, p. 1).

²⁷⁰ Hennessey, 2009, pp. 178-204; Hall & Stringer, 2007; ISAF, 2009; UK MoD, 2010; PJHQ, 2010; ukforcesafghanistan, 2010.

²⁷¹ At the time of writing there were ongoing operations attempting to dislodge insurgents from areas close to Village A.

²⁷² Pullen, 2004; Radin, 2011, pp. 3-5.

²⁷³ McElroy, 2009; Hafvenstein, 2007, p. 507.

been substantially increased.²⁷⁴ The Afghan ANA elements in Helmand and neighbouring Nimroz province that had been rebadged as the 215th Corps were estimated to have reached 10,000 personnel in 2010,²⁷⁵ with a planned increase to 12,000 by June that year. The 3rd and 6th Infantry Battalions of the 3rd Brigade of 215th Corps were based in Gereshk.²⁷⁶

Alongside increases in ANSF numbers, the ISAF deployment increased from 3,300 UK forces in 2006, to 30,000 personnel from the US, UK, Danish and Estonian armed forces in 2010. The Danish battle group was in command of Nahr-i Sarraj,²⁷⁷ numbering up to 750 personnel at its peak, and was supported by a UK deployment in the district (Danish MoFA/MoD, 2011, p. 6). Military operations carried out from 2009 used a population-centric COIN approach with a strategy based on a model of Clear-Hold-Build across several of Helmand's districts which, as noted, led to a rapid increase in the number of permanent FOBs and PBs across the district.²⁷⁸

Near Village A a building that would contain the FOB was captured in late 2007. This clearly changed the security dynamic in which the previous rounds of incursions were replaced with a permanent ISAF presence; however, in Village A this was largely an international effort despite attempts to partner with ANA forces more broadly in Helmand (Dressler J., 2011, p. 24). As mentioned above, a PB was established at least once within Village A in 2009-10.²⁷⁹ From early 2008 to early 2010 respondents noted only seeing the ANA deployed in the area three times. Each deployment was about fifty personnel but would only last for a week to ten days. As a result, the military

²⁷⁴ Until 2009 the ANP tashkil for Helmand was 2,161, which was recommended to be increased by nearly 200% to 6,061 (Chilton, Schiewek, & Bremmers, 2009, pp. 90, 100).

²⁷⁵ The 205th Corps which covered southern Afghanistan was split when ISAF separated the Southern Command into Regional Command South and Regional Command South-West (RC-SW).

²⁷⁶ Radin, 2011, p. 5. There is likely to be a significant difference between reported force strengths and what was actually fielded in terms of personnel due to high rates of absenteeism amongst both the ANP and ANA (Giustozzi, 2007, pp. 48-54). The figures provided are the author's estimates from various sources. These figures exclude any militias that may have been operating under contract with ISAF forces either as force protection or in operational support roles.

²⁷⁷ The sub-provincial Areas of Operation for battle groups in Helmand did not always match Afghan district boundaries and changed over time, for example, during Spring 2012 Nahr-i Sarraj was split into Northern and Southern commands, the southern command also covered northern parts of Nad-i Ali district.

²⁷⁸ For a discussion on the operations from 2009-11 in Helmand see Dressler J., 2011, pp. 10-24.

²⁷⁹ IN-2-4 20th July 2011, Copenhagen.

deployment in the village primarily consisted of international military, specifically Danish forces.²⁸⁰

Patrols continued to be a dangerous prospect with ambushes orchestrated by Taliban forces. Taliban fighters could operate very close to the FOB and PB and would hide messages in the cracked mud walls for other fighters. Whilst the combatants in Village A were believed to be Afghan, in nearby villages there were foreign fighters operating.²⁸¹ The presence of the nearby FOB and the PB in the middle of Village A also meant there was sustained fighting, which led to the destruction of property and casualties amongst the population. One of the main forms of contact that the local population had was through the claiming of damages against the joint UK and Danish CIMIC Teams deployed in the FOB.²⁸² Despite the cost of establishing the ISAF presence the PB was shut down in early 2010, which may have led some residents who had cooperated with ISAF being directly targeted by insurgents.²⁸³

In addition, the broader increased deployment of ISAF forces from 2009 on the road north of Gereshk, initially severely restricted the freedom of movement for the local population as well as Taliban combatants. Economic actors, including farmers, managed to establish a series of pedestrian routes from Gereshk to Village A and some, who had been displaced by fighting in the village, would return every few days to tend their crops. Only those who had no resources stayed behind in the village.²⁸⁴ The increased conflict negatively affected freedom of movement, access to economic livelihoods, education, agricultural maintenance (canal cleaning), though this did not affect health vaccinations which in the climate in Nahr-i Sarraj were viewed as a necessary resource by all sides of the conflict, and non-governmental providers managed to establish security guarantees from all sides to continue their activities.²⁸⁵

Whilst Village A experienced a substantial amount of violence, the security threat decreased within Gereshk municipality as a result of larger deployments of ISAF and ANSF which improved freedom of movement sufficiently to allow Provincial Council members to drive south of Gereshk to Lashkar Gah.²⁸⁶ Government employees were provided with a purpose built compound in which some also lived. These were not insubstantial improvements and changes brought about by police training were noted

²⁸⁰ EA-2-1 3rd December 2010, Kabul and IN-2-4 20th July 2011, Copenhagen.

²⁸¹ LL-2-1 15th November 2010, Kabul and LL-2-6 13th December 2010, Lashkar Gah: there were also believed to be British nationals fighting in the area, though none were reported in Village A. IN-2-4 20th July 2011, Copenhagen.

²⁸² EA-2-1 3rd December 2010, Kabul.

²⁸³ IN-2-4 20th July 2011, Copenhagen.

²⁸⁴ EA-2-3 5th December 2010, Gereshk.

²⁸⁵ LL-2-3 8th December 2010, Gereshk.

²⁸⁶ LL-2-7 14th December 2010, Gereshk and LL-2-6 13th December 2010, Lashkar Gah.

as being part of that change.²⁸⁷ Respondents expressed a preference for the new ANA, as opposed to the reformed ANP, which was known to have a number of informal parallel lines of command.²⁸⁸ These gains were however very fragile. One respondent said “there is 100% stability in Gereshk compared to before. There used to be suicide bombings and attacks and now they have stopped,” but he went on to state: “I will never go far from my office because of security ... I can’t go to the villages.”²⁸⁹

As interviews were being carried out it emerged that ISAF was in the process of establishing an *arbakai* to support their security operations known officially as the Afghan Local Police. In many respects this may be logical given the reality that any gaps that emerge during the drawdown of the 30,000 international forces will need to be filled by ANSF who will not have sufficient numbers to be deployed at all the sites used by ISAF.²⁹⁰ However there were substantial concerns amongst local political leaders about the formation of the *arbakai*, which was said to include former members of 93rd Division, the disbanded AMF unit formerly led by Mir Wali.²⁹¹ Irrespective of the composition of the force the Taliban viewed the members of the new *arbakai* with scorn, alleging they were all drug addicts.²⁹²

Security stabilisation since 2006 did improve the security and stability of Gereshk municipality; this was however contrasted with the degree to which successive military operations, mentoring deployments and ANSF expansion were unable to improve security and stability in Village A. Herein lies one of the paradoxes of stabilisation. The stabilisation of Gereshk municipality was the result of larger ISAF deployments and a larger and better trained ANSF presence *in territory already held by the state*. The attempted stabilisation of Village A after 2006 was exceptionally violent, increasing displacement of the population to a larger extent than may have been experienced during the Russian invasion and Jihad *in territory lost by the state* since 2001. Using the respondents’ general view of stability as being linked to peace and the ‘tight security’ that they experienced during the Taliban period it is not clear from the data that stabilisation can be enforced solely by kinetic and stabilisation-orientated military operations.

²⁸⁷ LL-2-7 14th December 2010, Gereshk.

²⁸⁸ LL-2-2 21st November 2010, Kabul.

²⁸⁹ LL-2-7 14th December 2010, Gereshk.

²⁹⁰ This might represent some learning from the experience where AMF were disbanded in 2004-6 before adequate ANSF could replace them.

²⁹¹ HRW, 2011, pp. 1-7; PTRO, 2011, pp. 1-4; and author observations in spring 2012. One of the ALP units switched back to the Taliban in 2012 (Martin, Forthcoming).

²⁹² LL-2-5 13th December 2010, Nahr-i Sarraj.

Development interventions to support stabilisation

This section discusses development activities in two periods from 2001-2006 and 2006 onwards. The first era of development tended to have little stabilisation intent though it can be argued that it was supposed to provide a peace dividend or incentive for the population to support the state. During this period projects implemented through the US deployment tended to focus on services, mainly health as well as some education, though neither service was instituted in Village A as most of the projects were clustered around the district centre or the home villages of senior political figures in the province.

The Afghan government was also active and projects approved through CDCs under the NSP were implemented. Though often viewed positively at a national level the programme was not necessarily effective in the case study area. For example the implementation of a generator project in Gereshk municipality was not appreciated by the local population as they could not maintain the generator because of the cost of fuel.²⁹³ In Village A there was a CDC though no projects were implemented. It did not survive the increase in violence from 2006 and its members were scattered, with some presumed killed.²⁹⁴ In Village A there was also an NGO that managed to implement some well construction and the local population rehabilitated the canals and three bridges around the village.²⁹⁵ Local respondents argued that the projects implemented until 2006 were not considered to be very relevant in terms of stability.²⁹⁶ While they form part of the story of intervention it is largely a negative one because much of the infrastructure built during that period was destroyed as the fighting intensified after 2006.²⁹⁷

Despite local concerns about the military deployment prior to 2006, military involvement in projects was not considered to be particularly controversial; however, the subsequent destruction of clinics in nearby Mirmandow and Malgir, and the fact that the remaining Basic Health Clinic in Shurakay subsequently had to operate from a private house caused some consternation amongst Afghan respondents. As one interviewee stated “the projects can help stability, only if both sides agree on the project and the NGO that gets the project implements it honestly. Some of the projects create problems for the people as well, because some of the projects people have died.”²⁹⁸ Recognising this issue one of the interveners stated that the placement

²⁹³ EA-2-1 3rd December 2010, Kabul and LL-2-4 8th December 2010, Gereshk.

²⁹⁴ IN-2-4 20th July 2011, Copenhagen.

²⁹⁵ LL-2-5 13th December 2010, Nahr-i Sarraj.

²⁹⁶ EA-2-1 3rd December 2010, Kabul and EA-2-5 6th December 2010, Gereshk.

²⁹⁷ EA-2-3 4th December 2010, Gereshk and EA-2-5 6th December 2010, Gereshk.

²⁹⁸ EA-2-5 6th December 2010, Gereshk: another stated that the NSP had caused disunity, suggesting that the poor representativeness of local shuras was not simply an

of projects, in this example wells in Malgir, was extremely important because it sends a political message about who is supported and who is not and can create jealousies between groups, worsening stability rather than improving it.²⁹⁹ However if the local respondents do not equate projects with stability unless they are seen to be implemented in an *a political* manner it is not evident that development projects orientated towards the political aims of stabilisation can support stability.

The second period (2006-2010) of development activity was more tightly focused on stabilisation. In keeping with the dynamic identified in the section on political activities supporting stabilisation, there were two distinct lines of intervention reflecting the competition between the approach to support Afghan institutions to deliver programmes, which was primarily confined to the district centre, and the alternative approach supported by the military in the FOBs and PBs.³⁰⁰

In the first form interveners attempted to use formal shuras, including the Provincial Development Council, District Development Assemblies, and DCCs to identify, design, approve and oversee the implementation of projects; in theory building upon the governance work discussed above. These included small scale irrigation and canal cleaning projects to larger scale projects such as building a new Provincial Council building in Lashkar Gah. This approach was chosen because interveners argued that for projects to be sustainable they had to link up to a national system; so, if a school was going to be built it had to be in the Ministry of Education plan and have a budget for staff and resources.³⁰¹ Within this category ten priority projects were drawn up in conjunction with the Mayor of Gereshk in 2008, to be supported and implemented by UK military forces.³⁰² This approach was limited in the extent to which the governance institutions were representative – as noted in the previous section they were not necessarily seen as containing the real power holders by some community members.

issue affecting exogenous state actors but also the NGO community. EA-2-3 5th December 2010, Gereshk.

²⁹⁹ IN-2-9 3rd December 2010, Washington.

³⁰⁰ There is a third strand which was not directly relevant to Village A and was excluded from the analysis, but other literature has suggested that it was also not relevant to stability, which was USAID's development spending through NGOs and private sector development agencies. It should be noted that the US approach led to huge variability in spending levels and was almost entirely focused on counter-narcotics. For example in FY2010 USAID spent nearly \$22m in Nahr-i Sarraj alone, \$20m of which was spent on the alternative livelihoods programme. Spending on all other programmes by USAID in the district remained between \$1.6m and \$2m for Financial Years 2009/2010 and the first three quarters of FY2011. Data held by author and Pounds & Dennys, 2012, pp. 27-8.

³⁰¹ IN-2-3 9th December 2010, Kabul.

³⁰² IN-2-9 3rd December 2010, Washington.

It simply was not possible to ask councils or individuals such as the mayor to support projects in areas where they had no influence, even if it were possible to get the council members to look beyond their own localism, cronyism and corruption.³⁰³ Therefore this approach had limited, if any, effect in areas like Village A, which were beyond the writ of the government.

In the second strand MSST or CIMIC officers³⁰⁴ met with local communities, including in Village A, to agree local projects. These were, however, not always successful, with some projects rejected or abandoned because of poor security and the concomitant threat to beneficiaries if they participated in the projects. For example the Danish CIMIC team offered to pay for a generator to be brought to Village A but the project was not agreed because none of the local community members would agree to be the maintenance worker for the generator; they did not feel secure enough to be able to maintain the generator after it had been delivered.³⁰⁵ Despite the constraints there were success stories: larger projects, including the construction of a bridge to the south of Village A and the digging of new wells were approved, though some of the participants in the meetings suggested they would rather have had peace and security than the projects.³⁰⁶ Smaller initiatives were also implemented including the repair of a wall in one of the mosques in the village and the extension of Department of Education support for an informal school, which had fifteen to twenty male students in 2009.³⁰⁷ These were significant engagements and indicated that there were some local leaders willing to engage with the international military forces and their district government officials (the teacher was involved in discussions with the Department of Education about the method of salary payments and supply of books and certificates

³⁰³ IN-2-9 3rd December 2010, Washington: as a postscript this model was further extended in 2012 through promoting a provincial budget pilot scheme involving four line ministries and linking DCC decision making to the selection of development projects (by those four line ministries and other government bodies).

³⁰⁴ The UK Forces used MSST, the Danish forces continued to use the term CIMIC, though the activities undertaken were broadly overlapping. The main US vehicle for carrying out this strand of activity was called the Commanders Emergency Response Programme (CERP) which spent \$84m in Helmand. In the first three quarters of FY2011 spending in Village A was found to be negligible (CERP spending in Nahr-i Sarraj included \$850,000 in the first 6 months of FY2012), primarily because it was in a Danish and UK Area of Operations, which had less funding available. Information held by author.

³⁰⁵ EA-2-1 3rd December 2010, Kabul.

³⁰⁶ EA-2-1 3rd December 2010, Kabul.

³⁰⁷ IN-2-4 20th July 2011, Copenhagen.

for students).³⁰⁸ These glimmers of progress were however short-lived and the closure of the PB halted all activities.

At both levels the relevance of the projects implemented from 2006-2010 to stability is unclear. One of the rationales for some of the priority projects in Gereshk Municipality was simply to get things moving rather than stability.³⁰⁹ This may have had governance spin-offs but it is unclear whether doing something was better than doing nothing when it comes to stability, especially when the recipients and their leaders vociferously complained about the quality of the projects and corruption.³¹⁰ Out in the villages, the 'getting something done' mentality was also present, but activities may have been aimed winning the consent of the population for the presence of ISAF rather than stability. In Village A the CIMIC team offered to renovate several mosques, which they had noticed had either been damaged or fallen into disrepair.³¹¹ In and of itself this may not have been a bad thing, but the activities' connection to stability was not evident.³¹²

Reviewing the development actions undertaken to support stabilisation two issues stand out from the interviews: the first is that by and large respondents did not think that the projects had any real connection with stability – referring back to the last time the area had stability, one respondent noted that the Taliban did not provide many services, but it was still stable;³¹³ secondly, the actual implementation of the projects seemed to have the potential for a net destabilising function. Development practitioners will recognise that development is a change process, and a change process is by its very nature destabilising and in the context of Nahr-i Sarraj and Village A, destabilisation was life-threatening. The destabilisation stemmed from local corruption, unequal representation and poor delivery of the projects, and was directly connected to the violent environment in which the projects were implemented. This is important because the destabilisation occurred not just because of the poor execution of one project but an overarching set of projects which were poorly implemented.

In summary, Village A and Nahr-i Sarraj present an extreme version of exogenous stabilisation interventions. The stabilisation interventions in the field site have been divided by the tension over the requirement to intervene rapidly in hostile environments led by ISAF, and those that support working through the host nations'

³⁰⁸ IN-2-4 20th July 2011, Copenhagen.

³⁰⁹ IN-2-9 3rd December 2010, Washington.

³¹⁰ IN-2-9 3rd December 2010, Washington.

³¹¹ EA-2-1 3rd December 2010, Kabul; IN-2-4 20th July 2011, Copenhagen.

³¹² For similar examples elsewhere in Afghanistan see Fishstein & Wilder, 2012, pp. 54-64.

³¹³ LL-2-1 15th November 2010, Kabul.

systems to promote some form of social contract and state centred stability. This tension is evident throughout the political, security and development interventions which challenge assumptions about the potential of exogenous stabilisation processes to effect stability.

Thematic Analysis – Nahr-i Sarraj

This section will provide an analysis of the corporate impact of activities undertaken across the political, security and development lines of operation in order to promote stability in Village A and Nahr-i Sarraj. It will utilise the five analytical themes identified in Chapter 3, including the period of time across which the conflicts occurred, the culture and context, the modes of stabilisation intervention (linked to the independent variables), political legitimacy and conceptions of stability derived from the dependent variables.

The conflict of the last generation inevitably altered the context in Nahr-i Sarraj. It was governed by a changing array of commanders with traditional, Jihadist and/or religious credentials who were increasingly reliant upon opium production and smuggling to pay for their power base, which was rooted ultimately in the use of force. The shift in the pattern of governance and state formation meant that the state was largely irrelevant for much of this period and the population used both traditional codes of governance, such as Pashtunwali, as well as more modern evolutions such as the period of Taliban governance inspired by Deobandi teaching and ideology. The shifts in power and authority, and the previous experiences of conflict, still structure the context in Helmand; commanders who resisted the Taliban in the 1990s re-captured the state and used it to continue their civil war by other means, which precipitated the virulent insurgency experienced since 2006.

Irrespective of what GIRoA and ISAF did from 2006 the inescapable logic of the intervention, in the eyes of local respondents, was that the foreign interveners and GIRoA were responsible for the largest share of destabilisation, first because of GIRoA abuses prior to 2006 and subsequently because of ISAF's adoption of an aggressive force posture. This was a negative starting point, and the localised gains made from exogenous intervention must be couched in the context of an exceptionally poor environment. Looking further back, earlier periods of stability had been achieved, though not necessarily because of development, which if anything can be seen to be both destabilising in the short-term and in the long-term in Helmand. In the short-term participation in development projects was fatal for some local people; in the long-term it also altered local social structures and power in areas affected by USAID's HAVA programme and, in particular, created a significant number of land conflicts. Furthermore, the exogenous nature of funding meant that the local population did not necessarily attribute the expansion of services with the emergence of a social

contract between the population and the state.³¹⁴ The ongoing generational aspect of delivering projects by non-Afghan state bodies, starting with the HAVA, has weakened the idea that those services can be used to form a social contract. Building on this shaky foundation, development activities to support stability have been caught in the dilemma of supporting slow and often corrupt governance structures to deliver services (and the social contract), and the pressures for swift implementation by military forces, which also contributed to corruption in contracting.³¹⁵

This dichotomy runs through all interventions to support stabilisation where significant and incompatible trade-offs were made between supporting the formal state through civilian-led governance reforms, and development spending with substantial military support to train and mentor the ANSF in areas held by the government on the one hand, and on the other activities carried out across all lines of operation by ISAF beyond the writ and will of GIRoA. Where security has been provided (confined largely to the municipal area of Gereshk) political and development activities were initiated, though the degree to which they supported stability was questioned by local respondents, in part because of corruption. In the rural areas north of Gereshk the ability for GIRoA to engage was extremely limited, largely because senior government figures promoted an abusive form of governance which contributed to the start of the insurgency. GIRoA did not demonstrate the will or capability to engage the area, which includes Village A and yet significant international effort was expended in engaging with the population, promoting governance, implementing development projects and supporting security. None of these activities ultimately succeeded in promoting stability in Village A, largely because they were implemented so far in advance of the central government's and the Provincial Governor's political will and capacity.

Local conceptions of stability focused primarily on the nature and form of the governance system and particularly the ability of a governance system to flex and adapt in response to changes in local political power and to be guardians of order and the rules of the game. Respondents preferred processes of governance co-option (as

³¹⁴ This was clear from the earlier attempts of development through USAID's HAVA programme (Cullather, 2002, pp. 532-6); also EA-2-1 3rd December 2010, Kabul stated that the clinics were supported by Ibn Sina and then ADHS, an Afghan NGO, and that the state is only one of three actors (NGOs and Coalition Forces being the other two) that have built schools in the district. Another part of Helmand which demonstrates a similar dynamic is the northern districts which have electricity supplied from the Kajaki Dam but have largely remained immune to exogenous intervention and state attempts at exerting control (Personal Communication and observations in Helmand Spring 2012).

³¹⁵ EA-2-4 5th December 2010, Nad-i Ali and IN-2-4 20th July 2011, Copenhagen

experienced during the Taliban regime) rather than fighting, with one stating that “stability can be brought when the people can agree and be happy with the government and those that oppose the government should negotiate with them, find the reason and solve the problem.”³¹⁶ This suggests two elements of stabilisation address the paradox above: stability comes from amongst the people but, more importantly, the way to bring over the opposition was to talk to them, reminiscent of the way in which the Taliban approached Village A in the 1990s; and only to force a fraction of the leadership to leave rather than pursue lower leaders as the current administration has done.

A second important conception of stability was that many of the Afghan respondents did not believe that ISAF was actually interested in stability. The respondents made a substantive differentiation between the two competing Afghan actors: the Taliban and GIRoA which they understood and engaged with (though not necessarily like or agree with) and the incomprehensible foreigners who were attempting to promote an undefined outcome (stability). This is important to recognise because all of the interventions described in this chapter were coloured in this manner, which substantially weakened the ability of the international actors to promote stability because ISAF believed a) they are working in support of GIRoA which was contrary to the perception of the Afghan actors and b) that the international actors were able to engage with a broad cross-section of the significant political groups within the district. The data suggests that both of these assumptions are in doubt.

At its heart the failure of stabilisation in Village A is the direct result of a lack of political legitimacy at both local and national levels. The significance of national level stability to Helmand lies in the failure of the Bonn Agreement in 2001 and the practice of the Karzai administration to allow the persecution of political rivals at a local level. This critically undermined support for the Karzai administration which until 2004/5 had been relatively strong in Helmand. The President’s unwillingness to reign in malign actors within his own administration and address the weakness of the nationally designed political systems for elections that entrenched Helmandi political leaders who were perceived to be illegitimate gave oxygen to the nascent insurgency. This was made even worse by the manifest corruption of the 2009 and 2010 Presidential and Parliamentary elections which sapped the legitimacy of the state.

As a result of this national weakness, and the abusive nature of the initial GIRoA administration in Helmand under Governor Akhunzada, which failed to co-opt former governance systems in an inclusive manner, much of the work *de facto* fell to the international community. The response to which was not to allow a predatory government and governance system to fail, but to support it, reform it and promote it

³¹⁶ EA-2-5 6th December 2010, Gereshk.

often through Provincial Governor Mangal. That decision contributed to the entrenched resistance amongst the broader population and the conflation of ISAF and the international community with supporting an abusive regime. The incoherent and unsalvageable national political dynamic where Senator Akhunzada would undermine Governor Mangal critically undermined progress until the weight of the full military surge was felt on the ground. However the underlying political environment has not changed and remains the chief threat to stability in Helmand in the medium to long-term.

In summary, this section has argued that the political environment at both national and local levels relating to Helmand and Village A specifically trumped any attempts at exogenous stabilisation, in large part because of a complete lack of political interest in promoting stability by the host nation, which has effectively allowed the exogenous actor (ISAF) to prosecute a complex stabilisation operation in a manner which has had some local gains but is ultimately unlikely to be sustainable and has not delivered stability in Village A.

Theoretical analysis

This section will test the analysis from the field site against the theories identified in Chapter 3. The evidence from Village A indicates that the statebuilding, COIN and development theories have some significant limitations in explaining processes of stabilisation. The statebuilding theory³¹⁷ suggests that military force can be employed to promote political and economic reform to stabilise the state; however, the lack of political backing from both Kabul and Helmand's political elite suggests that they were not interested in the kinds of reform envisaged by the external interveners. Instead, Afghan political elites have focused on a narrow set of interests, which included prosecuting their previous political conflicts using the state apparatus and security forces, and maintaining control of the opium economy. In this context, with a host nation system that is so disinterested in building the kind of Western state promoted through exogenous technical reforms, it is unclear what benefit exogenous statebuilding efforts would have on Helmand's stability.

Equally, the failure of COIN³¹⁸ in Helmand lies in precisely the same political problems, because COIN theory correctly identifies that the conflict was political in nature. If the host nation is not politically supportive of a military campaign, gains that can be made at extensive cost to the military are lost because they will not be capitalised upon by the state. All other activities undertaken to support COIN are therefore largely irrelevant despite the fact that, at a local level, they may be technically appropriate. The one area of practice which was critically weak in the field site was the way in

³¹⁷ See Dobbins et al, 2007, p. 1 quoted on p. 47.

³¹⁸ See JP3-24, 2009, p. 12 quoted on p. 53.

which the PB in Village A was opened, then closed, then scheduled to be re-opened again. This more than likely contributed to individuals who supported ISAF being killed and undermined long-term support for the state.

Finally, development³¹⁹ activities to support stabilisation seemed to be largely irrelevant to processes of stability and stabilisation in Nahr-i Sarraj. Previous experiences of stability during the Taliban period occurred with little or no development activity and it has primarily been through the significant expansion of the opium economy that living standards increased in the region. This situation however has not supported stability because it has become a political prize over which most of the conflict in Helmand was fought. The development activities that were implemented were far too small to be of significance against the scale of the opium economy, and in any case much of the development infrastructure built in the early period from 2001-5 was damaged by the conflict.

In summary, the field site in Nahr-i Sarraj provides a significant critique of the application of statebuilding and COIN when they are unable to elicit sufficient political backing from the host nations' elite in the capital or area of operations. This critically undermined much of the intervention and divorces the actions that were undertaken from the theoretical base that had supported them. Without achieving political backing it was clear that the stabilisation of the area was impossible and yet the external interveners continued to expend effort to make up for the political shortfall. In this context the idea that development supported stability was largely negated by the irrelevant position development actions found themselves in: social and economic development was not tied to state formation because the major driver of the economy, opium, could not be sanctioned by the state.

Conclusion

Nahr-i Sarraj has been a site of political and military contest for much of the last generation. The long-term impact of the HAVA coupled with the burgeoning opium economy has given Helmand an economic significance unparalleled in Afghanistan. Stabilisation efforts since 2001 have ranged from light-touch development and military actions prior to 2006 to expansive COIN operations in a complex multi-national intervention. Neither of the approaches has succeeded in securing stability in Village A. The stabilisation approach was one of choosing approaches and activities that the interveners liked, and the ones they saw as important, rather than the ones that would be effective. As one respondent described it "we misunderstand the

³¹⁹ See USIP, 2009, p. 2.9 quoted on p. 55.

drivers of conflict and we deliberately choose some of the others because of our own bias.”³²⁰

Not forgetting the reality that respondents in the district for the most part did not view ISAF and GIROA as actually working together (with the possible exception of government officials) it is not surprising that exogenous stabilisation was ineffective. Political flexibility which could have supported stability was denied at the sub-national level because the strategic framework (such as the ISAF concept of COIN) and national processes (such as the elections) were fixed and presented certain rigid limits on engagement. The changing and evolving situation of Nahr-i Sarraj and Village A suggested that greater flexibility was required in order to address issues of representation and political legitimacy if exogenous stabilisation were able to support a local political settlement.

The respondents from Nahr-i Sarraj were on the whole quite negative about the overall impact of international actors’ efforts to create stability, if to them this meant peace and security. Exogenous stabilisation was constrained by three factors in this case study: 1) the lack of inclination amongst the national government and governance actors to support stability over time; 2) the reality that in all three areas – politics, security and development – the external actors drove the agenda; and 3) that during the period of 2001-2006 the small international presence was seen to be supporting an illegitimate local administration which persecuted political rivals. The international approach to intervention did not evolve when it expanded in 2006 to suit this dawning reality – the configuration of the Afghan state was seen as illegitimate and by supporting it the international community was also illegitimate. The recourse should have been to alter the configuration of the Afghan state, which was unachievable in the constraints of the Afghan constitution and ISAF mandate.

³²⁰ IN-2-2 7th December 2010, Kabul.

Chapter 6 – Insurgent Stabilisation

Gajul VDC, Rolpa district, Nepal

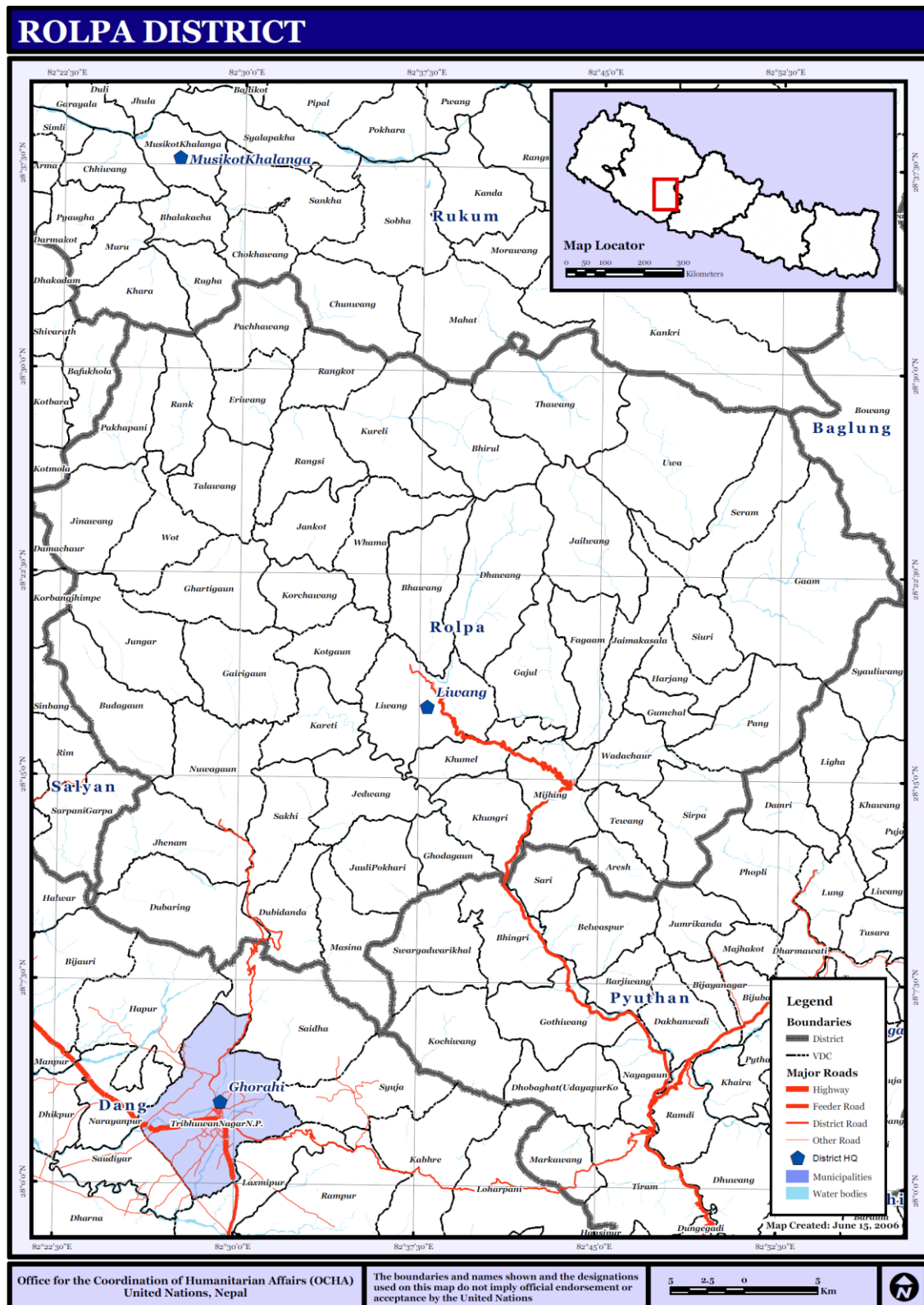


Figure 7 Map of Rolpa district, Nepal OCHA

Prelude

“Gajul VDC was at the forefront in terms of development in Rolpa district. The primary school was built in 1951. In Kathmandu, the school was first established in 1947. Khadananda Subedi ... had played an important role in establishing the school in the village. He was elected as an MP in the 1958 election. He was an intellectual person. Afterwards he published several books. Because of his political power the establishment of the school in Gajul was possible.

The majority of the population of Gajul are Chettris followed by the Magar community. Brahmins are very few there, but they are educated ... at some point there were eight people who had completed a Bachelors degree from Rolpa, out of which six were from Gajul. Now, the situation has considerably changed, people have become more aware. The power balance has also changed. Youth are increasingly migrating to the Middle East and India in search of jobs. In Gajul, most people are employed in government services ... because of education.

The geography of Gajul is unique. The top of the hill is comprised of a forest area and water sources. The bottom of the hill is agriculture fields. In between the area of Gajul is a human settlement. The agricultural lands in Gajul are irrigable during winter season because of the water sources in the top of the hill ... and the people of Gajul are able to grow food the whole year ... which you do not find in other places in Rolpa.”³²¹

Rolpa and insurgent stabilisation

Rolpa district lies in the mid-western hills of Nepal and is credited with incubating the Maoist insurgency and providing the main ‘base area’ for Maoist forces during their 10 year struggle against the Nepali state (Sharma, 2004, pp. 42-3). Resistance against the state has a rich history in the area and in many respects the insurgency, which was officially launched by the Maoists with attacks on police posts in February 1996, was the continuation of a struggle that had been simmering for at least sixteen years.³²² The long gestation of Maoist influence, both in terms of ideology but also opportunities for cadres to form long-lasting and strong relationships, provided the Maoist movement, and in particular Maoists cadres from Rolpa, with a particularly strong sense of devotion to their cause. In many respects this set the precedent for the long-term mobilisation of forces and resources by Maoists cadres.³²³ However, it masks two vital elements which become clear at the village level: firstly, that the competition over local leadership which emerged first with the Panchayat elections in

³²¹ NL-3-3 25th October 2011, Kathmandu.

³²² NL-3-1 26th July 2011, Kathmandu.

³²³ This has been noted by Sneiderman & Turin (2004, pp. 86-100) who discuss Maoist engagement with a village in Dolakha district, and Ogura (2007, pp. 476-8) who discusses Rolpa district. It was also noted in the Bara case study in Chapter 7.

1979 and continued through to the Democracy movement of 1990/91 and the launch of the Maoist insurgency in the mid-1990s was very localised. In the case of Gajul VDC the insurgency was so localised that all of the major leaders across the political parties were in fact related.³²⁴

The social revolution of the Maoists in Gajul was in many respects nothing more than an internecine fight between leaders who were related. Whilst combatants and some Maoist sympathisers supported the Maoist cause a significant proportion of the population had little interest in the conflict and made significant attempts to avoid being drawn into it. The second key element to the village level dynamics was the extensive activities carried out by Maoist cadres to bolster their position in the community and broader district. This was in pursuit of the creation of the Magarant Autonomous State. The activities that were undertaken were strikingly similar to stabilisation activities that would be promoted by external (international) interveners and included substantial social mobilisation, development projects, justice delivery and governance reform. Ultimately the Maoists were successful in the conflict, but a number of their activities were less than successful in bolstering their support base, indicating that limitations on the success of stabilisation are not confined to external actors and but also affect indigenous insurgent groups.

A total of thirty-four interviews were carried out with thirty-five respondents between July and November 2011. In addition to interviews conducted in Gajul VDC and Liwang district headquarters they were also carried out with respondents displaced from Gajul in Dang district, with former government officials in Nawalparasi district and with political leaders in Kathmandu. Within Gajul respondents included landowners, small business owners, as well as farmers and landless semi-skilled labourers, and included representatives of Brahmin, Chettri, Magar, Thapa and Dalit groups. Interviews in Liwang focused on district level political leaders across the political spectrum, government officials and NGOs.

Conflict History

This section provides a detailed introduction to Rolpa and Gajul and the socio-cultural context through which the area was governed since the 16th Century. The section describes the key cleavages that emerged during the conflict and the ways in which the various parties attempted to exert control and stabilise Gajul and Rolpa more broadly. These elements are expanded in the following sections focusing on stabilisation activities in terms of politics, security and development.

Rolpa district lies in the mid-western hills and it is only since the CPA in 2006 that the district has been accessible by road all year round. Rolpa was created out of Pyuthan

³²⁴ This group is referred to as the Subedi-Thapa network.

district during the governance reforms of King Mahendra in 1962 and lies to the north of Dang district, an area of plains defined as the 'Inner Terai'.³²⁵ The area now known as Rolpa was governed by two kingdoms from the 16th Century, which were formed as the population in the plains pushed into the hill regions. The Sen dynasty in Gajul lasted from the mid-15th to mid-18th centuries when it was defeated by the King of Gorkha, Prithvi Narayan Shah, who unified Nepal in 1770. The Kingdom had been established after Thapa migrants, who had settled in the region, petitioned the King of Jajarkot to send one of his sons to become King of Gajul.³²⁶ The Kingdom was small, covering an area which is now split into about 5 VDCs but which includes several watersheds. The Sen dynasty was not simply extractive and also invested in some road construction (using local 'voluntary labour') and a canal to irrigate a part of the VDC.³²⁷

The King's Durbar, on a bluff overlooking most of the VDC, which can only be approached from one direction, was destroyed by Naryan Shah's forces in 1770; however, a shrine has been re-built where it stood and the VDC office and post office have been established there, along with the police post that was established at the beginning of the insurgency in 1997.³²⁸ Since the conflict, which saw the police post abandoned and the VDC removed by Maoist forces, the de-facto centre of the VDC has shifted to a chautari³²⁹ in Ward-1, which is also the location of the health post and the only higher secondary school. The chautari now also has the Sunil Marg road passing by it and fifteen shops have been established in the last couple of years. Prior to that there were only three shops in Ward-1.

Gajul itself is relatively heterogeneous in comparison to other VDCs in Rolpa which are largely dominated by Magars.³³⁰ Whilst not a focus of this case study the original areas of resistance to the government came from Magar dominated VDCs, in particular Thawang VDC to the north of Gajul. Because of the strength of Maoist influence in those VDCs it is exceptionally difficult to identify individuals who would be willing to

³²⁵ LL-3-7 15th October 2011, Gajul, the reforms increased the number of districts from 32 to 75.

³²⁶ Jajarkot district also lies in the mid-western hill region and lies to the north-west of Rukum. British accounts indicate that there was a link between the Jajarkot and Gajul kingdoms, possibly as part of a confederation of Rajas, though the locations, names and nature of relationship differ in the various accounts in Hamilton, 1819, pp. 237-286; Shaha, 2003, pp. 49-50; Magar, Undated, p. 11.

³²⁷ EA-3-12 15th October 2011, Gajul.

³²⁸ EA-3-12 15th October 2011, Gajul.

³²⁹ A traditional meeting place often constructed of stone underneath a tree.

³³⁰ Pradhan (1991, pp. 35-9) gives a useful background to the structure of Magar society and how they emerged as a people group in the region referred to as the Magarant.

talk about the nature of the conflict except when it glorifies the UCPN(M) or the People's Liberation Army (PLA). Therefore, one of the selection criteria used in identifying Gajul was that it should have a mixed political body, which in the case of Gajul also includes a range of castes. Gajul itself is primarily Chettri (Thapa)³³¹ though there are sub-divisions which are mostly Magar (Wards-7, 8 and 9) and Dalit (Ward-5). Brahmins (Subedi) make up the smallest group³³² and there are also members of the Mahara group. As is common in other parts of Nepal Chettris and Brahmins hold most of the positions of power which were maintained during and after the conflict (Social Inclusion Research Fund, 2007, pp. 17-9). The population is almost entirely Hindu with no Buddhist adherents present, although there may be a few Christians in the VDC.³³³

The Sen dynasty itself is currently not significant in the leadership of the VDC,³³⁴ which is split between one extended Brahmin/Chettri family. Most of the relations in the Subedi–Thapa network are supported by marriage, though one important relationship relied on an informal ceremony, called *mit*, between two female members of leading families. Importantly members of the Subedi-Thapa network have become significant, at times leading, members of different political parties including the Nepali Congress and the UCPN(M).³³⁵ Traditionally the area, as with most of Nepal, was administered by local landowning families, referred to as Mukhiya, who would in effect be given licence to administer the VDC on behalf of the administration sitting in the district capital (Chauhan, 1989, pp. 125-7).

Gajul VDC lies one and a half hour's drive in a good vehicle from Liwang, Rolpa's district headquarters. It is possible to walk from Liwang to the main centre of Gajul VDC (Ward-1) in three to five hours. Some parts of Gajul, notably Ward-7, are closer to Liwang and can be reached in about an hour and a half by foot. The VDC itself is centred on the Gajul Khola (or Gajul river), which is formed at the confluence of two small mountain streams at the northern end of the valley and then flows southwards to the Rapti River. The valley is very steep and ranges from approximately 1,000m at the bottom to around 2,300m to the tops of the ridges surrounding the valley. The area below 1,800m is used for agriculture. Above this the mountains are mostly too steep for agriculture or grazing animals. Habitations are strung out in the middle of the hills across the watershed and whilst there are some 4,610 inhabitants of Gajul

³³¹ Subedi is normally used by Brahmin families, however in Gajul Chettri families also use the name. Author observation.

³³² 1% according to one Brahmin respondent: NL-3-3 25th October 2011, Kathmandu.

³³³ EA-3-12 15th October 2011, Gajul.

³³⁴ There are some in the VDC who feel that the Sen family members still act as if they are Kings of the VDC. LL-3-9 18th October 2011, Liwang.

³³⁵ LL-3-7 15th October 2011, Gajul.

VDC³³⁶ they are spread out over a substantial area which can take several hours to walk across.

The VDC is overwhelmingly agricultural and traditionally land owning, and was dominated by a few families, who had extended relationships throughout the VDC and across ethnic groups. One family was identified as having owned about 100 Rupani.³³⁷ Currently the largest remaining landowner is believed to have some fifty-five Rupani of land, and was the only respondent to count their land in area size rather than the number of months' food his land provides. Most respondents could only produce enough food for three to six months of the year, despite some parts of the VDC being able to double crop because of irrigated water supply, though it is not generally available to the Magar and Dalit populations. The agricultural year runs from May to October and November to April with a rice crop during the summer monsoon and a wheat crop during the winter.

The population supplement their income in three ways: non-cash barter of surplus production that cannot be sold, by taking on daily labour work, and finally substantial labour movement out of the VDC, mainly to India.³³⁸ Many poorer households also form informal cooperatives which allow them access to iron work and water mills for processing agricultural products either for free or barter. There are few commercial enterprises in the VDC and some parts of the community have little engagement with the cash economy, relying on barter to sustain their families. The private sector activities that exist include at least five small saw mills which use locally cut trees, up to twenty grocery shops (each the size of a small cabin) which sell knick knacks and provisions. There is one restaurant which opened five months before the research was carried out. Several of the commercial enterprises had only recently been started.³³⁹

³³⁶ This is based on an extrapolation from the Gajul VDC data from Census 2001 and the Rolpa district data from the Census 2011 (district level data has not yet been released for Census 2011). In 2001 4,263 individuals were identified in 778 Households (average household size was 5.4, slightly higher than the 5.12 listed in the 2011 Census for Rolpa). By 2011 the Rolpa's overall district population growth was 8.13% giving an estimated population of Gajul of 4,610 (Government of Nepal, Undated; Government of Nepal, 2011).

³³⁷ This is approximately 5 hectares, the important issue is that not only is this far larger than one family would need to support itself, it is many times greater than the average land holding.

³³⁸ Remittances and income from extended family members form a key part of the livelihood strategies. The Nepal Living Standards Survey III states that remittances account for 25-30% of Nepal's GDP (World Bank, 2012).

³³⁹ Author's observations.

Since the unification of Nepal, Gajul has in effect been governed in-absentia by a state that was neither particularly interested in, nor had the capability to, engage with the region. The Rana system had supported elites ruling the countryside (which meant the Sen family in Gajul) who had a strong role in conflict resolution and, when available, the distribution of the scant development resources.³⁴⁰ When the Rana regime was removed in favour of the democratic experiment of the 1950s a leader from Gajul, Khadananda Subedi, won a seat in the new Parliament in 1958 before it was dissolved in 1960.³⁴¹ Previously he had established a school in Gajul as early as 1951, which was a change that would be transformative for the village and district as a whole;³⁴² however, it was the sons (and a few daughters) of the elites that primarily benefitted; indeed, some respondents noted that the introduction of education had been one of the main catalysts of the conflict.³⁴³

The Panchayat era that followed from 1960 to 1990 removed the Mukhiya and Jimwal representatives which meant in Gajul that the Sen family were displaced by a series of leaders from amongst the same social network.³⁴⁴ Former MP Subedi was returned as the Panchayat leader followed by other relatives including Rekh Bahadur Subedi, Kim Bahadur Thapa, Gunj Bahadur Thapa and Obhi Lal Subedi.³⁴⁵ This interrelated group formed the basis of the Subedi-Thapa network (i.e. a Brahmin-Chettri network).³⁴⁶ Whilst the position was supposed to be selected by the government, its capture by one network meant that the position of Panchayat leader essentially became

³⁴⁰ For further discussion on the Rana reforms with regard to justice see Höfer ,2005, pp. 177-81.

³⁴¹ LL-3-7 15th October 2011, Gajul, NL-3-3 25th October 2011, Kathmandu.

³⁴² NL-3-3 25th October 2011, Kathmandu.

³⁴³ EA-3-2 10th October 2011, Gorahi: also Ogura (2007, pp. 490-1) suggested that teachers in Rolpa and Rukum were pivotal in the spread of communist ideology. Other authors have suggested that programmes such as the Rapti Zone Rural Area Development Project, a \$50m USAID funded 15 year programme, which was implemented in the lower Rapti watershed that is fed by the Gajul Khola, was partly responsible for causing the insurgency (Mainali, 2003, pp. 125-8).

³⁴⁴ These are generic names and not specific to Rolpa and denote individuals, normally land-owners, who were charged with representing the state and collecting taxes at a village level (Joshi & Mason, 2009, p. 10).

³⁴⁵ It is significant that many respondents continued to refer to the Panchayat leaders as Mukhiya denoting that the new Panchayat leadership effectively continued to be drawn from amongst the landlords.

³⁴⁶ The selection for the position was not based on caste, though residents could not remember any Dalit Mukhiya in Rolpa; rather it depended on who were the most powerful groups in that VDC. Magar dominated VDCs would have a Magar Mukhiya; in Gajul they came from the same Subedi-Thapa (Brahmin-Chettri) network. EA-3-2 10th October 2011, Gorahi and NL-3-3 25th October 2011, Kathmandu.

hereditary and, according to some residents, this fostered poor governance and corruption.³⁴⁷ Gajul's importance in Rolpa was confirmed in 1981 when Rekh Bahadur Subedi, was selected as Minister for Land Reform, a post which he held for one year becoming the second leader from Gajul to achieve national office. Traditional roles in conflict resolution and tax collection continued in the hands of the Panchayat though they were at times resisted by other groups who felt decision making was biased.³⁴⁸

Given the Nepali states' low level of resources development spending was correspondingly low,³⁴⁹ and the Panchayat system often used 'voluntary labour' to deliver development inputs, which often involved the seasonal clearing of landslides from roads or the creation of new roads and bridges, including the road connection from Liwang to Bhaluwang in Dang district.³⁵⁰ While currently unmaintained, some of the foot-bridges built during this period are still in use.³⁵¹ However the unpaid labour was significantly resented by the population, though this form of labour mobilisation would return during the Maoist insurgency.³⁵²

After the first school was built in Ward-1 it was followed by the establishment of other schools,³⁵³ a police post, the VDC office, a health post and in 1981 UNICEF was able to implement a drinking water project.³⁵⁴ The schools flourished and the population of Gajul benefited from greater literacy; however, in the context where there were few opportunities to exercise their new found knowledge, the emerging leaders in the village began to resist the Panchayat system.³⁵⁵ All of the current Constituent Assembly (CA) members and several other leading Maoists from Gajul studied in the

³⁴⁷ EA-3-2 10th October 2011, Gorahi.

³⁴⁸ Criminal cases (including rape and murder) were referred to formal justice structures in Liwang; civil issues (minor infractions or violence, divorce or issues around water for example) were settled within the communities. LL-3-1 12th October 2011, Liwang, LL-3-3 13th October 2011, Gajul, LL-3-4 14th October 2011, Gajul, EA-3-3 11th and 19th October 2011, Gorahi.

³⁴⁹ The VDC budget reportedly ranged from 15,000 to 50,000 NRS.

³⁵⁰ NL-3-2 14th October 2011, Gajul.

³⁵¹ Author's observations; at least three foot bridges in use in the VDC were built during this period.

³⁵² LL-3-3 13th October 2011, Gajul.

³⁵³ EA-3-9 14th October 2011, Gajul, the primary school in Ward-9 was established in 1974; the school in Ward-1 is now a higher secondary school.

³⁵⁴ The system was refurbished through an ADB funded project in 1995-6. EA-3-2 10th October 2011, Gorahi, LL-3-3 13th October 2011, Gajul and EA-3-10 15th October 2011, Gajul.

³⁵⁵ EA-3-2 10th October 2011, Gorahi.

schools in Gajul during the Panchayat period under the tutelage and leadership of the Subedi-Thapa network.³⁵⁶

There had been long-term and ongoing tensions between the population and the state's local representatives across Rolpa since at least the 1970s.³⁵⁷ Leaders from Rolpa and Gajul specifically were involved in non-violent protests against the state. The political resistance attracted supporters across caste lines, and though there was clearly competition between the underground pro-democracy parties, they were unified in their resistance against the Panchayat system.³⁵⁸ This was to change significantly with the elections in 1991 when the Nepali Congress won the national vote. However, in Rolpa the Nepali Congress lost out to the People's Front, and in Gajul the People's Front³⁵⁹ leader Jakkhu Prasad Subedi won.³⁶⁰ As a result the divide entrenched competition between national Nepali Congress leaders who were increasingly identified (rightly or wrongly) as continuing the abusive practices of the Panchayat regime.³⁶¹

The order of what happened next is disputed by respondents, but the incomplete democratic reforms of the 1990s³⁶² and the splitting of the Subedi-Thapa network into different parties effectively set the conditions for the conflict echoing 'the logic' of civil war relating to violence, denunciation and control (Kalyvas, 2006, pp. 328-9). As a result, in the eyes of some respondents, democracy itself was the cause of the conflict.³⁶³ What started the cycle of claim and counter-claim has been forgotten and is confused with both local and national political shifts in the immediate aftermath of

³⁵⁶ EA-3-2 10th October 2011, Gorahi.

³⁵⁷ NL-3-1 26th July 2011, Kathmandu.

³⁵⁸ This was not restricted to Gajul or Rolpa but was a fault-line running up to national level politics in Kathmandu (Nickson, 2003, pp. 8-20).

³⁵⁹ Note the People's Front refers to the United People's Front of Nepal which later formed the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) by the start of open conflict in February 1996. CPN(M) was renamed United-CPN(M) in 2009. For clarity, People's Front is used to refer to Maoist activity prior to the conflict in 1996 and UCPN(M) refers to the Maoists after that point. For more detailed discussion see Mitra, 2004, pp. 306-9.

³⁶⁰ Jhaku Prasad Subedi is now an elected member of the CA who stood against former Prime Minister M.K. Nepal in a Kathmandu constituency. NL-3-3 25th and 30th October 2011, Kathmandu and EA-3-3 11th October 2011, Gorahi; also see Whelpton, 2005, pp. 120-1.

³⁶¹ EA-3-2 10th October 2011, Gorahi, EA-3-6 12th October 2011, Liwang.

³⁶² LL-3-8 17th October 2011, Liwang.

³⁶³ LL-3-7 15th October 2011, Gajul.

the election;³⁶⁴ however, it is clear that the People's Front cadres started targeting National Congress leaders in Rolpa and National Congress Leaders filed cases against People's Front cadres in the courts. The People's Front admitted to killing several NC cadres and alleged many of their members were injured or killed as well.³⁶⁵ The cases lodged against the People's Front were referred to as 'false cases' as the NC claims rarely identified the perpetrators, because People's Front cadres would, in echoes of tactics during the insurgency, disguise their identities and use out of area cadres to administer punishments.³⁶⁶ The incidents, accusations and recriminations eventually led to the state initiating Operation Romeo in November 1995, a police operation to capture or kill People's Front leaders, carried out in Rolpa and several other districts. The mishandling of the operation and related civilian casualties proved to be a boon for the People's Front who rapidly garnered support as a result.³⁶⁷

Whatever the reality, it confirmed in the eyes of the People's Front that the state, particularly the police and the head of the executive branch, the Chief District Officers (CDOs),³⁶⁸ were being used by their political opponents to crush them. The dynamics of the state being used by the political elite to undermine opponents was not dissimilar to the approaches used by the Rana and Panchayat leaders before the emergence of multi-party democracy in other areas of Rolpa, for example Thawang VDC had seen violent suppression of dissent as early as 1980.³⁶⁹ The People's Front, who had nine MPs in Parliament, decided that they had to violently resist the state in order to achieve their aims rather than hope to achieve them through non-violent participation in the political mainstream. Of particular concern to the Maoists was the fact that despite contesting and winning seats (both nationally and locally) in Rolpa their planned development activities (which were nominated through the VDC system) were being undermined by what they interpreted as an NC conspiracy in

³⁶⁴ LL-3-4 14th October 2011, Gajul. One account describes the conflict between the People's Front and Nepali Congress as being a replaying of conflicts between former Panchas and their political opponents (Ogura, 2007, pp. 491-6).

³⁶⁵ The exact number is disputed. Some Maoists claim they had killed nine NC cadres before the conflict, other non-aligned respondents suggested the People's Front killed four people and that the Nepal Police had killed three People's Front cadres. LL-3-4 14th October 2011, Gajul and LL-3-8 17th October 2011, Liwang.

³⁶⁶ NL-3-1 26th July 2011, Kathmandu.

³⁶⁷ LL-3-8 17th October 2011, Liwang and Hachhethu, 2004, pp. 61-2.

³⁶⁸ LL-3-3 13th October 2011, Gajul, this dynamic was probably further heightened by the fact that one CDO who was particularly strong in pursuing the false cases, Abdul Raheez Khan, was a Muslim and not only a representative of a distant and oppressive state but also a member of a social group with no standing in Rolpa.

³⁶⁹ NL-3-1 26th July 2011, Kathmandu also Chauhan, 1989, p. 143 and Ogura, 2007, p. 478.

central government. For the Maoists this contributed to the existential threat they faced by an antagonistic central government which undermined one of their key objectives, that development should be extended to the population.³⁷⁰

In response the Maoist strategy was to establish the 'People's government',³⁷¹ which was locally called the Magarant Autonomous State,³⁷² encompassing much of Rolpa and neighbouring Rukum. Gajul itself was designated by the central leadership as a conflict area in Rolpa, which was essentially a band of VDCs surrounding the district headquarters, Liwang, though this designation was disputed by some Maoist cadres.³⁷³ The formation of the state took substantial time and initially the focus was on removing the Village Development Committee (VDC) offices and police posts. In Gajul a police post was established including about sixty officers in 1997. The policy of the Nepal Police (NP) that officers should not serve in their home areas meant that the forces deployed there had no ties to the local community and leaders of all sides and some former police officers complained of their abusive behaviour towards the population.³⁷⁴ The police were regularly ambushed and bombs were planted by Maoists in Gajul VDC, though these seem to have been relatively ineffective in dislodging the police post. The turning point came 5 years into the conflict in 2001 when Maoist forces attacked Holleri kidnapping dozens of police officers (Holleri was one of the sites attacked on the first day of the insurgency) an incident which sparked the retrenchment of all police posts in Rolpa back to Liwang and from this point onwards the Royal Nepal Army (now Nepal Army) took the lead in the fight against the insurgents.³⁷⁵

Irregular patrolling of the VDC from the army base on a nearby pass continued until the end of the conflict. Patrolling was more regular in the parts of Gajul closer to the base,³⁷⁶ and the army effectively ceased patrolling some parts of the VDC after a civilian casualty incident where the Nepal Army killed eight or nine civilians during a

³⁷⁰ LL-3-8 17th October 2011, Liwang, NL-3-3 25th October 2011, Kathmandu and NL-3-1 26th July 2011, Kathmandu.

³⁷¹ As described later it would be several years before the Nepal government could be said to have a strategy to address this threat.

³⁷² NL-3-1 26th July 2011, Kathmandu: during the conflict the size of the Magarant Autonomous State was not fully defined; it seemed to focus on Rolpa and Rukum; however other Magar groups like the Magarant Liberation Front articulated a vision of the Magarant including 12 of Nepal's districts (Lecomte-Tilouine, 2004, pp. 118-127).

³⁷³ NL-3-1 26th July 2011, Kathmandu and LL-3-8 17th October 2011, Liwang.

³⁷⁴ EA-3-1 18th August 2011, Nawalparasi, LL-3-7 15th October 2011, Gajul and LL-3-8 17th October 2011, Liwang.

³⁷⁵ LL-3-3 13th October 2011, Gajul and Sharma, 2004, p. 44.

³⁷⁶ LL-3-4 14th October 2011, Gajul and EA-3-10 15th October 2011, Gajul.

contact with Maoist insurgents in Ward-9 on the northern edge of Gajul VDC.³⁷⁷ During the conflict residents claimed that government security forces killed twenty people from Gajul; the number killed by the Maoists is unclear though it includes at least three security officers from Gajul killed in action in other parts of Nepal.³⁷⁸ After 2002 the Government of Nepal effectively ceded control of Gajul, along with the vast majority of Rolpa, to the Maoists. The Maoists deepened and expanded their activities and continued to carry out a number of 'stabilisation' activities from this point until 2006 and the signing of the CPA. These activities, along with the attempted counter-stabilisation activities of the Nepali government are discussed in the following sections.

Stabilisation interventions

The following sections discuss the stabilisation activities undertaken by Maoists and Nepali government forces in the period from 1996-2006. Unlike the other case studies, the focus here is primarily on the insurgent's stabilisation strategy, activities and approaches because they were significantly more important in explaining the dynamics of stability in Gajul. In this context the attempts by the Nepali government are discussed in the way that they unsuccessfully attempted to stabilise the environment in their favour. The subsequent analysis draws together the issues highlighted across the political, security and development sections and presents the argument for insurgent stabilisation.

Political interventions to support stabilisation

The creation of a functioning governance system was the key component of the Maoist success in Rolpa more generally as well as in Gajul. Maoist approaches to the establishment of their governance systems were codified by a consistent command and control mechanism which incorporated both the political and military wings, the party UCPN(M), and the PLA. Both arms worked in concert, with strong political direction given to the PLA by the party, though in terms of actual implementation of the will of the party the PLA was often at the forefront of both civilian as well as military activities. Individuals could transfer between the wings, but were generally identified as being with one or the other rather than holding positions in both parts of the Maoist machinery at the same time.³⁷⁹

³⁷⁷ LL-3-3 13th October 2011, Gajul and EA-3-9 14th October 2011, Gajul.

³⁷⁸ LL-3-4 14th October 2011, Gajul.

³⁷⁹ The exception to that rule were the Political Commissars. As one report noted "the leadership of every fighting unit from company to division level is shared between a military commander and a political commissar, which the Maoists claim ensures political control over the army. The commissar ranks higher and is in charge of the party committee formed within each military unit" (ICG, 2005, p. 9). In Gajul the

The Maoist approach to governance was clearly inspired by their Communist ideology and, in Gajul this included indoctrination programmes (locally called cultural programmes), the imposition of price controls, the use of forced labour, the provision of justice and external development projects.³⁸⁰ These were impressive achievements, and in the context of a rural economy in mountainous terrain were all the more remarkable for the fact that local residents of all political affiliations attested to the strength of Maoist governance control.³⁸¹ This subsection focuses on *how* they governed and delivered justice, rather than what they did in terms of security and development which is covered below.

The Maoists established a number of People's Governments during the conflict, of which the Magarant Autonomous State was the first.³⁸² The first President of the region, Santosh Bura Magar, governed the region, including Gajul, during the conflict.³⁸³ There were also district and VDC level representatives³⁸⁴ though they were not always present in the region they governed because, despite their governance achievements, the Maoists did not have complete security control of the region (discussed below). These representatives administered the areas under Maoist control, which at times also included confiscating development funding from government officials who attempted to execute VDC level budgets and land from wealthy residents.³⁸⁵

The primary function of the state was to represent the Maoist party and PLA and to collect taxes from the population. The level of taxation was set by the central Politburo, which would assign amounts required from the district representative. The district representative then had to instruct VDC level officials and PLA cadres to raise the income required. From the taxation raised in Rolpa 60% of revenue was given to the central party for the prosecution of the conflict, and 40% remained with the

highest ranking official in this role was K.B. 'Sunil' Thapa, the Political Commissar of the PLA's 5th Division; K.B. Thapa was killed late in the conflict. To underscore the close relationships of political leaders in Gajul, 'Sunil' Thapa was the cousin of the political opponent of a Maoist CA member from Gajul Jhakku Prasad Subedi. LL-3-8 17th October 2011, Liwang and NL-3-3 25th October 2011, Kathmandu.

³⁸⁰ In other areas the Maoists were also running 'People's Schools' and at least one 'People's Hospital' which apparently had some non-Nepali staff working in it. LL-3-8 17th October 2011, Liwang.

³⁸¹ LL-3-3 13th October 2011, Gajul, LL-3-8 17th October 2011, Liwang, LL-3-7 15th October 2011, Gajul, EA-3-10 15th October 2011, Gajul.

³⁸² NL-3-1 26th July 2011, Kathmandu.

³⁸³ NL-3-1 26th July 2011, Kathmandu.

³⁸⁴ LL-3-8 17th October 2011, Liwang.

³⁸⁵ LL-3-7 15th October 2011, Gajul, NL-3-2 14th October 2011, Gajul, EA-3-2 10th October 2011, Gorahi.

district administration.³⁸⁶ Taxation was raised from a number of sources and included income generated from 'donations' from government officials which formed an important part of the Maoist war economy in Gajul. Civil servants working in the health and education sectors provided anything between one day's salary to 10% of their monthly salary each month to the insurgents (some sixty to seventy residents of Gajul are teachers).³⁸⁷

A second stream of income came from abductions and intimidation of relatives of security officials and current and former local political opposition leaders. In fact almost all political leaders in Gajul who were not Maoist were abducted at some point during the conflict.³⁸⁸ The curious fact, in Gajul at least, was that almost all of the abductions ended with the individual returning to their family and staying in the village.³⁸⁹ The Maoists took a different tone with relatives of security officials who were almost all forced to leave Gajul, though even when the security officials and their families had moved they were not necessarily free from danger.³⁹⁰

As well as an extractive tax system the Maoists also established a functioning, hierarchical and swift court system.³⁹¹ This was not simply a displacement of the formal state system at the district level, by forcibly removing the former Mukhiyas and political opposition who had continued to be involved in informal justice provision, it was also the revocation of elements of the informal system. The new Maoist system was seen to be responsive and the Maoists won local support partially through the extension of justice systems that were seen to undo some of the unjust decision making that had occurred under the Panchayat and multi-party systems.³⁹² In Gajul itself it was not necessary to have a fully functioning 'People's Court',³⁹³ instead there were advocates (who were local residents) who could adjudicate on cases, effectively

³⁸⁶ LL-3-3 13th October 2011, Gajul and LL-3-8 17th October 2011, Liwang.

³⁸⁷ LL-3-7 15th October 2011, Gajul, EA-3-9 14th October 2011, Gajul and EA-3-10 15th October 2011, Gajul.

³⁸⁸ LL-3-5 15th October 2011, Gajul, LL-3-7 15th October 2011, Gajul, NL-3-2 14th October 2011, Gajul.

³⁸⁹ There was one exception to this: NL-3-2 14th October 2011, Gajul.

³⁹⁰ EA-3-2 10th October 2011, Gorahi.

³⁹¹ The formal designations were: 'People's Court' in the VDCs; 'District People's Court' for the District and 'State People's Court' for cases heard by the court of the Magarant Autonomous State. NL-3-1 26th July 2011, Kathmandu.

³⁹² LL-3-3 13th October 2011, Gajul and EA-3-3 11th October 2011, Gorahi: some of the cases addressed had apparently been unresolved for more than twenty years.

³⁹³ Some respondents said that the court in Gajul was mobile and seemed to be staffed by a few local people in ad-hoc locations; others said there was a court but that they had not seen it personally, suggesting it was located in a more inaccessible part of the VDC. LL-3-3 13th October 2011, Gajul and LL-3-7 15th October 2011, Gajul.

taking the place of the Mukhiyas.³⁹⁴ If a case required a more senior official to pass judgement it could be referred to Maoist courts functioning in more secure areas, for example Thawang and Nuwagaon VDCs.³⁹⁵ In these locations the Maoists felt secure enough to run prisons and detain guilty defendants or to use hard labour as punishment.³⁹⁶ Despite their success and degree of control the Maoist approach did not insist that all conflicts had to go through the court, instead the local population, either out of fear or simply habit, continued to address some conflicts within their communities with no reference to the Maoists, meaning some vestiges of former Mukhiya influence did remain and they returned after the conflict.³⁹⁷

The Maoist approach contrasts with the capabilities (both legal and physical) of the Nepal Police (NP) to prosecute Maoist cadres for counter-insurgent activities. There were a number of instances where Maoist cadres were rounded up and, according to government officials and local opposition leaders, were simply shot because of lack of evidence, whereas others were released after a mandatory six month period and immediately re-arrested.³⁹⁸ These grievances were the latest in a line of alleged abuses by the government against the Maoists and continued to bolster both their support base as well as undermine the broader population's trust in the security services.³⁹⁹ It was not until the appointment of Rajendra Singh Bhandari as Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) for Rolpa that the approach shifted to a community policing, or population centric, model, though this was only instituted in 2002 by which time the police had largely pulled back and were no longer in the communities to police them and the army had initiated a COIN campaign.⁴⁰⁰

³⁹⁴ The identity of who the advocates were is still protected by Maoist members and local respondents were unwilling to identify them. LL-3-3 13th October 2011, Gajul.

³⁹⁵ Gajul itself lay just outside the 'base area' for the Maoists. Some have suggested this is because the Northern belt of Rolpa is predominately Magar (as in Magarant) whilst those to the south are more mixed. NL-3-3 25th and 30th October 2011, Kathmandu and IN-3-3 23rd October 2011, Kathmandu.

³⁹⁶ Interestingly the 'People's Court' did not allow capital punishment. Forced labour included "working in building roads and bridges, carrying goods, caring for the sick and injured people and cooking food." NL-3-1 26th July 2011, Kathmandu, EA-3-5 12th October 2011, Liwang and EA-3-10 15th October 2011, Gajul.

³⁹⁷ EA-3-10 15th October 2011, Gajul, EA-3-11 15th October 2011, Gajul and EA-3-12 15th October 2011, Gajul.

³⁹⁸ EA-3-1 18th August 2011, Nawalparasi and LL-3-7 15th October 2011, Gajul.

³⁹⁹ A point made to senior political leaders by residents from Gajul. LL-3-7 15th October 2011, Gajul.

⁴⁰⁰ EA-3-1 18th August 2011, Nawalparasi: this also involved the distribution of materials such as volleyballs and footballs in schools aimed at boosting support for the

However it should not be assumed that the rhetoric of the Maoist party had broad engagement with all social groups. The Maoists were selective and specifically targeted and undermined potential threats, such as the local religious leaders, whilst they ignored groups without political power, such as the Dalits. In Gajul the temple's priest was seen as a threat because of his potential as a Nepali Congress supporter as well as his religious identity.⁴⁰¹ The inward looking nature of his religious activities (running the puja and carrying out other basic religious rites) were not transformed through the conflict into any outward activities to mobilise adherents against the Maoists.⁴⁰² However the Maoist focus on stopping or undermining social practices which were deemed to maintain the class and caste division seems to have been carried out to undermine potential sources of resistance.

Other groups, such as the sizeable Dalit community living in Gajul Ward-5, were of minor significance to Gajul's political dynamic and were largely ignored throughout the conflict. It is interesting to note that 63% (twelve households) of those displaced from Gajul were Brahmins/Chettris who were primarily associated with the state or political opposition; 26% (five households) were Janjaati (likely to be Magars or Mahara) and only 5% (or two households) of the displaced were Dalits.⁴⁰³ The Dalits were not relevant to political competition because they are so poorly represented

police, a classic hearts and mind approach, and one which is being emulated by the Nepal Army in the post conflict context. Also IN-3-2 18th October 2011, Liwang.

⁴⁰¹ LL-3-6 15th October 2011, Gajul: the temple had received a small stipend of 3-4,000 NPR from the Nepali state which was arranged by Rekh Bahadur Subedi through the Nepal Guthi Corporation. Upon becoming Prime Minister, Prachanda stopped all payments by the Corporation to temples.

⁴⁰² LL-3-6 15th October 2011, Gajul, LL-3-5 15th October 2011, Gajul, LL-3-3 13th October 2011, Gajul and LL-3-7 15th October 2011, Gajul; a similar dynamic was observed in Bara.

⁴⁰³ A total of 139 individuals from nineteen households were displaced from Gajul, representing some 3.2% of the population. INSEC data held by author and (Government of Nepal, Undated). In terms of other VDCs in Rolpa Gajul is ranked 5th by displacement of individuals and 8th by displacement of households (out of fifty-two VDCs). Whilst the absolute numbers may seem small, for the Nepali civil war they were significant and don't include the number of individuals who simply left the area to avoid the conflict. EA-3-2 10th October 2011, Gorahi, LL-3-7 15th October 2011, Gajul and Analysis of INSEC List of Internally Displaced Person during Insurgency, original data in Nepali, held by author. One set of activities that may have promoted stability in other VDCs was the Local Peace Committees (LPC) which supported displaced families to move back to their land; most of those displaced from Gajul have not returned and while there may be support for the LPC initiative at a district and national level it was not clear what impact it had at a VDC level. LL-3-2 12th October 2011, Liwang and IN-3-5 10th November 2011, Kathmandu.

amongst Nepal's state, political party structures and the local Subedi-Thapa network.⁴⁰⁴ Even at the time of this research (2011) there was little engagement by the political parties to mobilise support amongst the main Dalit community in Ward-5, which suggests their continuing marginalisation.⁴⁰⁵

In the early phase of the conflict the government attempted to shore up its presence by expanding the police detachment and attempted to spend state development funding on projects. Both streams of activity ultimately failed, but are discussed below. However attempts at stabilisation in governance were heavy handed and, not simply a complete failure, but were probably counter-productive. At one point the police illegally detained a local political leader from the Nepali Congress in order to pressure him to stand for the local elections in 1998 because the seat was likely to be uncontested without his participation. This approach was orchestrated by the police's higher command when the regional police commander came up from Nepalgunj to argue for the leader to stand in the election. The leader refused and was subsequently abducted by the Maoists (not for the first time) to pressure him not to stand for an election he already didn't want to stand in.⁴⁰⁶

The failure to put in play a governance challenge to the Maoist insurgency was the result of central level indecision about how to counter the insurgency.⁴⁰⁷ Whilst Rolpa was visited by high level government delegations, including Prime Minister G.P. Koirala during which respondents directly suggested practical ways in which to undermine the insurgency, the government failed to articulate, let alone act on, a coherent vision of governance stabilisation and consolidation.⁴⁰⁸ The lack of coherent vision also contributed to the muted political backing that the Government of Nepal received from India, the US and UK. Though they all feared Nepal might become a "failed" state they focused their support in the security and development spheres in a manner which was not sufficient enough for the state to respond robustly to the Maoist insurgency (Dahal, 2005, p. 16). In many respects the low degree of violence in the Nepali civil war was as much about the relative absence of arms and capital as it was the inability for elites to fathom a way to convincingly counter the Maoist message that the state was not interested in the needs of the population.

The message of state neglect and the related class struggle between the rich and poor underscores Maoist conceptions of the conflict.⁴⁰⁹ However these messages did not,

⁴⁰⁴ This is a historic legacy of the Rana regime's policies (Chauhan, 1989, pp. 125-6).

⁴⁰⁵ EA-3-14 16th October 2011, Gajul.

⁴⁰⁶ LL-3-5 15th October 2011, Gajul.

⁴⁰⁷ For example see Hachhethu (2004, pp. 59-66) for further discussion.

⁴⁰⁸ LL-3-7 15th October 2011, Gajul.

⁴⁰⁹ LL-3-3 13th October 2011, Gajul and LL-3-8 17th October 2011, Liwang.

and have not, led to a substantive change in the way Nepal actually functions.⁴¹⁰ One external intervener noted that despite all the various attempts at social control and governance many of the practices that the Maoists had banned have now returned in Gajul and Rolpa.⁴¹¹ More broadly, other interveners were simply sceptical that the conflict had done anything to change things for the poor in whose name the conflict was waged.⁴¹² And as one local resident noted: *"I faced all the regimes ... I saw the Rana period, the Panchayat era, multiparty democracy, Maoist insurgency and the Republican era in the country. What I experience is that there are no benefits to the people! Every time the leaders have benefitted. There are no major changes for the people."*⁴¹³

The story of political stabilisation in Gajul is the collapse of one imposed state and the creation, and imposition, of another. Both attempted to utilise approaches identified as stabilisation and yet only one was successful, the Maoists. The instructive lessons for stabilisation approaches from Gajul indicate that it is in fact not necessary to gain the consent or engagement of all parts of the community to enforce control – and indeed it is control which is the critical element of stability – a factor which is further demonstrated in the following sections.

Security interventions to support stabilisation

Security control was contested for the majority of the conflict in Gajul. Gajul lay just outside the 'base area' of the Maoist's Magarant Autonomous State and whilst all the trappings of Maoist governance and development were present, security control remained elusive for the PLA. This is in part because of Gajul's proximity to Liwang, which it borders,⁴¹⁴ and its proximity to a Nepal Army base on the highest pass on the road from Dang to Liwang. This, together with an army detachment in Liwang itself meant patrolling by security forces was frequent.⁴¹⁵

With a few exceptions, the overall approach of the PLA seems to have been to avoid direct contact with security forces which confirmed that they did not feel they had sufficient control of the region to move to their third phase (as outlined in fact by Mao and also used by Prachanda) and confront the Nepal Army.⁴¹⁶ Prior to the army's

⁴¹⁰ There is a useful discussion about this in ICG, 2010, pp. 45-6, also see Lecomte-Tilouine, 2004, p. 123.

⁴¹¹ IN-3-3 23rd October 2011, Kathmandu.

⁴¹² EA-3-11 15th October 2011, Gajul.

⁴¹³ EA-3-3 11th October 2011, Gorahi.

⁴¹⁴ Though the border is defined by a ridge rising above 2000m which ensures it is only accessible by foot.

⁴¹⁵ EA-3-10 15th October 2011, Gajul.

⁴¹⁶ For further detail about the strategic stages and Maoist plans see Sharma, 2004, pp. 51-4 and Ogura, 2008, pp. 13-21. In fact one Maoist leader suggested that there were

engagement in the conflict PLA engagements with the NP were primarily in the form of bombings and ambushes.⁴¹⁷ This was not continued against the better armed and larger patrols of the army except in one instance (discussed below). In which case it is valid to question whether the Maoists did in fact attempt to stabilise the security situation in their favour or simply recognised the weakness of their position. Even if this is accurate the PLA continued to carry out at least weekly patrols and demonstrated to the population that Gajul was “fully controlled” by the Maoists except when the Nepal Army was patrolling.⁴¹⁸

This sense of control was also evident in the battle for mobilisation which was clearly won by the Maoists. The PLA extensively recruited in Gajul, and attempted to enlist one fighting aged person from each household in Gajul.⁴¹⁹ However, this led to large numbers of men leaving Gajul during the conflict simply to avoid mobilisation.⁴²⁰ State forces on the other hand could count on only 3 police officers from Gajul (who were posted to other areas of Nepal) and a handful of military personnel. Almost all of their families were forced to flee Gajul during the conflict,⁴²¹ effectively cleansing the VDC of support for state security actors and making the deployments of non-local Nepalis seem all the more foreign.

Another aspect of the conflict which indicates that the Maoists settled in to a secure governance mode with a rather more fluid approach to security was their use of violence. Despite the fact that the PLA members who were fighting in Gajul were not from the area they were highly restrained in their treatment of the population, including Maoist opponents who they kidnapped.⁴²² They seem to have been instructed by senior political leaders, including several from Gajul, not to harm other political opponents in Gajul.⁴²³ This apparent restraint is attributed by some of the

frequent contacts between the intelligence agents on both sides regarding patrolling, the inference being that both sides made substantial efforts to reduce the level of violence. LL-3-8 17th October 2011, Liwang.

⁴¹⁷ This is the overriding impression from civilians as well as combatants in Gajul.

However, secondary sources also suggest that the PLA did attack the police post in Gajul on April 30th 2000. Dataset of security incidents in Nepal held by author.

⁴¹⁸ EA-3-7 13th October 2011, Gajul.

⁴¹⁹ LL-3-7 15th October 2011, Gajul.

⁴²⁰ EA-3-13 16th October 2011, Gajul.

⁴²¹ EA-3-2 10th October 2011, Gorahi.

⁴²² LL-3-7 16th October 2011, Gajul

⁴²³ There is the possibility that K.B. Thapa, a senior PLA commander (the Political Commissar of Division 5 which afforded him both political and military legitimacy) from Gajul, who was killed late in the conflict, also acted in a restraining manner on local cadres; however, the argument still holds as K.B. Thapa himself came from the Subedi-Thapa network that produced all the political leaders in Gajul, it is simply that

abductors and abductees to the fact that they were in fact all from the Subedi-Thapa network and they were aware of other social and local political ramifications if the Maoists had started to kill political opponents.⁴²⁴ This did not stop the Maoist cadres extorting money from the abductees, who because of their leadership status, were often required to pay substantial sums of money.⁴²⁵

More than anything done by the Maoists, what seems to have shifted the initiative in terms of security towards the PLA were the missteps of the Nepali security forces.⁴²⁶ There had been high hopes, for some, that the establishment of the police post in Gajul VDC at the beginning of the insurgency would bring security, but instead it did the opposite.⁴²⁷ This was not just because the Maoists were bombing and occasionally ambushing patrols, but because of the abusive nature of the police, including the summary executions in Liwang⁴²⁸ and other forms of ill-treatment meted out by the police in Gajul.⁴²⁹ This catalysed those sitting on the fence to either support the Maoists or simply withdraw their support from the government.⁴³⁰ In many respects this is a replay of the effects of Operation Romeo in November 1995 which also bolstered Maoist support.

Until 1998 police patrols consisted of ten to twelve officers, but when the post was strengthened patrols would consist of more than fifty personnel. However in 2001 the abduction of dozens of NP officers in Holleri VDC in Rolpa led to the withdrawal of all VDC level police posts in Rolpa which were folded back in to Liwang.⁴³¹ Allegedly the PLA's next targets included the Gajul police post but it was withdrawn before the

he ended up in the PLA rather than the party structure. Other researchers have also been told of violence being used to settle personal enmities under the guise of the Maoist insurgency in Rolpa (Ogura, 2007, p. 486).

⁴²⁴ LL-3-7 15th October 2011, Gajul.

⁴²⁵ Figures from local leaders who were threatened or abducted indicated they were forced to pay sums from 10,000 to 2.5 lakh NRS a substantial figure. LL-3-5 15th October 2011, Gajul, EA-3-12 15th October 2011, Gajul and LL-3-7 15th October 2011, Gajul. By way of comparison, one of the families who was forced to leave the area because of Maoist intimidation sold all their land holdings for between 2-3 lakhs. EA-3-2 10th October 2011, Gorahi.

⁴²⁶ In fact looking back over the conflict the perceived and actual abuses by state security forces helped recruitment to the Maoists even before the conflict and date from at least the Operation Romeo. LL-3-8 17th October 2011, Liwang.

⁴²⁷ EA-3-2 10th October 2011, Gorahi.

⁴²⁸ EA-3-1 18th August 2011, Nawalparasi.

⁴²⁹ This included detaining and beating an alleged weapons maker. EA-3-14 16th October 2011, Gajul, LL-3-7 15th October 2011, Gajul and EA-3-11 15th October 2011, Gajul.

⁴³⁰ EA-3-12 15th October 2011, Gajul.

⁴³¹ LL-3-8 17th October 2011, Liwang.

attack could be launched.⁴³² The police post in Gajul had been placed in the same location as the VDC office on the promontory which was also the site of the Gajul Kingdom's Durbar.⁴³³ The VDC building was razed to the ground along with the security post once it was vacated by the NP.⁴³⁴

Once the police post was withdrawn the army took over responsibility for operations under a unified command implementing a COIN campaign. The army's approach to COIN was directly influenced by the foreign training that senior military officers had received from the US and UK with regard to COIN.⁴³⁵ The senior military command provided direction to the Nepalese Army's campaign, however on the ground they seemed to be limited in their scope or ambition. In Gajul the army would patrol with well over a hundred personnel though it did not establish any combat or patrol posts meaning that they were not present at all times re-assuring the population of their security.⁴³⁶ An additional odd feature of the army patrolling was that some respondents alleged that the army used to make local residents carry baggage for them. A similar complaint was made about the PLA and partly as a result of the treatment of the population by *both* the Nepali and the Maoist security forces the two parties lost credibility and support.⁴³⁷ The army was also, allegedly, not above taking resources from the population in a similar manner to the police (and Maoists), which again did not endear them to the population.⁴³⁸

The increasing size of the patrols meant there was an increasing likelihood that there would be violent confrontation and, inevitably, that there would be casualties. There were several incidents in Gajul but one was a defining moment in the contest for security control. The incident on March 25th 2002 resulted in the deaths of eight to

⁴³² LL-3-3 13th October 2011, Gajul.

⁴³³ EA-3-12 15th October 2011, Gajul.

⁴³⁴ LL-3-6 15th October 2011, Gajul.

⁴³⁵ IN-5-0 8th August 2011, Kathmandu: also see Nepalese Army (Undated). External support was not limited to the education of the Army General Staff, but included "the British government ... provided two MI-17 helicopters and \$20m military and development aid to Nepal. It has also agreed to supply the RNA [Royal Nepal Army] with two spy aircraft and the Eye-lander. The Indian government has offered two night vision helicopters ... America has put Nepal on the list of "US foreign policy challenges," provided \$17m military and \$40m development aid and 8,000 new M-16 assault rifles. The media have reported that more than 50 soldiers of the US Pacific Command are involved in "Joint Combined Operations" with the RNA soldiers. Nepal and the US also signed an Anti-Terrorism Assistance (ATA) under which the latter assists in training, consultation and equipment" (Dahal, 2005, p. 16).

⁴³⁶ EA-3-12 15th October 2011, Gajul and LL-3-4 14th October 2011, Gajul.

⁴³⁷ EA-3-12 15th October 2011, Gajul.

⁴³⁸ EA-3-5 12th October 2011, Liwang.

nine Nepali civilians, several of whom were not only not Maoist, but pro-Nepali Congress, and this was a turning point, not just for the army but also for the Maoists. The Maoists opened fire from a position near the top of a hill on the Nepal Army forces below them in Ward-9 and during the ensuing cross-fire the civilians were killed, all of whom were allegedly shot by the Nepal Army.⁴³⁹ The army ceased patrolling in that area of Gajul after the incident but because the residents blamed the PLA for initiating the contact the PLA were also effectively stopped from entering the area.

It was not until late on in the conflict that the police and army attempted to rectify their behaviour and to build support amongst the population. DSP Bhandari promoted the idea of 'community policing' which was subsumed as part of the COIN strategy from 2002 and supported initiatives to distribute footballs and volleyballs to villages.⁴⁴⁰ Though no evidence was found in Gajul, in other areas the army was beginning to support governance outreach (a governance caravan),⁴⁴¹ and they were also being trained in human rights and international humanitarian law, though the degree to which this training, which was applied late in the conflict, had on the prosecution of the campaign was doubted by some (Dixit, 2003, pp. 306-7).⁴⁴² The other major innovation by the central government was the unified command which gave the army control of NP and Armed Police Force (APF) assets,⁴⁴³ though the degree to which this helped the army in the deployments in Gajul is unclear.

Furthermore, the central government announced the Integrated Security and Development (ISDP) programme in 1999 to bring together security and development initiatives.⁴⁴⁴ In Liwang the ISDP was greeted by local leaders as having the potential to harness some new found political will from the centre to address the conflict, however, fundamental problems with implementing it outside of Liwang district headquarters and the precarious security situation even inside the town meant that the budget, some four to five crore NRS, was spent almost entirely on security, rather than the intended plan to have security and development spending support one

⁴³⁹ EA-3-9 14th October 2011, Gajul.

⁴⁴⁰ EA-3-1 18th August 2011, Nawalparasi.

⁴⁴¹ IN-5-11 26th October 2011, Kathmandu.

⁴⁴² IN-3-2 18th October 2011, Liwang.

⁴⁴³ The APF was formed in January 2001 as a paramilitary force (Dixit, 2003, p. 301).

⁴⁴⁴ This is sometimes referred to as the Integrated Internal Security and Development Programme (IISDP) (Sharma, 2004, pp. 44-5) and grew out of a programme originally initiated in 1999 (Hachhethu, 2004, p. 69). The Government of Nepal attempted to gain international funding for the programme, but the primary pilot area in Gorkha was seen as a failure to the donor community, though the programme continued under the sole funding of the government (Seddon & Hussein, 2002, pp. 32-3).

another. So for example the flag-ship project in Rolpa was to build a barbed wire fence around Liwang, in effect to garrison it and close the town every night.⁴⁴⁵

The project was seen to be very effective according to its backers, because there was only one fatality inside Liwang (related to the conflict) after the wire fence had been installed.⁴⁴⁶ Another way to look at this was that the Maoists had little or no intention of taking Liwang which also served as a rest and recuperation site for Maoist cadres who were able to infiltrate the town.⁴⁴⁷ Other projects included upgrading the district police station and building a large municipal building that is now partially rented out to shops. Predictably, with large amounts of money spent in ways not envisioned by the programmes' designers and restricted by the security environment there were also allegations that substantial amounts of the funds were lost in corruption.⁴⁴⁸

In summary, security provision in Gajul during the conflict was effectively left to the PLA through a mixture of the neglect, abuse, incompetence and unwillingness of the state security providers to enforce the unclear political direction given from Kathmandu. However, despite significant governance control, the Maoists failed to provide security stability and the Maoists never sought to fully entrench themselves and defend the ground of Gajul which acted as a fluid border zone between the state forces and the Maoist 'base area'. Security in Liwang was maintained, not through the application of COIN, but rather by dint of the fact it was an administrative centre that the government could control and the Maoists chose not to make a serious attempt to take it.

Development interventions to support stabilisation

Maoist engagement in development activities was patchy throughout the conflict and only later became a clearly articulated set of activities. Initially the Maoists were pre-occupied with securing control of the region and what infrastructure they built was small scale and used to promote the manoeuvrability of their forces rather than for development. For example wooden bridges were constructed in several areas, though many of these have been washed away, and chautaris (public meeting places) were built to facilitate Maoist cultural programmes.⁴⁴⁹ As the Maoist development programme evolved it became clear that they sought to promote their class revolution in the social arena through a three pronged approach; firstly, addressing practices they saw as being socially discriminatory or harmful (child marriage and drinking alcohol); secondly, price control and the establishment of communes to support

⁴⁴⁵ EA-3-6 12th October 2011, Liwang and IN-3-3 23rd October 2011, Kathmandu.

⁴⁴⁶ EA-3-6 12th October 2011, Liwang.

⁴⁴⁷ LL-3-9 18th October 2011, Liwang.

⁴⁴⁸ EA-3-6 12th October 2011, Liwang.

⁴⁴⁹ NL-3-1 19th September 2011, Kathmandu.

production; and thirdly, the construction of roads in a deliberate move to promote economic development.⁴⁵⁰

The first element of social revolution in Maoist terms was social mobilisation, which had been used by Maoist cadres in Rolpa for some time prior to the conflict to mobilise communities and leaders to indoctrinate them into communist, and specifically the Nepali Maoist, ideology. This included substantial focus on social equality, for example addressing discrimination based on ethnicity or gender which is not dissimilar to the ideas espoused by some members of the NGO community in Nepal.⁴⁵¹ Of particular focus in Gajul was the drinking of alcohol that was traded along the main highway to Liwang about one hour's walk from Gajul-1, which was effectively banned by the Maoists during the conflict.⁴⁵² Since the end of the conflict there have been concerns that the social revolution espoused by the Maoists has in fact been lost. The early gains against alcoholism, child marriage and discrimination seemed to have been lost and these practices continue in parts of Gajul and Rolpa more generally. Rather than been transformed by the conflict they simply faded in to the background to re-emerge later much as, for example, the role of the former Mukhiyas in justice provision shrank during the conflict but was later revived.⁴⁵³

The second element of development activities were the attempts at price control and the establishment of communes.⁴⁵⁴ The price control was at least popular for those buying services,⁴⁵⁵ but it helped to bleed the area of liquidity as investment ceased

⁴⁵⁰ The fact they allowed education and health services to continue are largely discounted as being driven by the Maoists. These services were paid for by the Nepal central government in Kathmandu and in the case of health services the primary reason they wanted to maintain access to clinics and health professionals was to treat their own cadres. EA-3-6 12th October 2011, Liwang and NL-3-3 30th October 2011, Kathmandu.

⁴⁵¹ IN-5-7 27th September 2011, Kathmandu; it is also interesting to note that the Maoists were reportedly very sensitive to GTZ's practice of social mobilisation, which had to be scaled back because the Maoists did not want a competitor in social mobilisation. IN-3-5 10th November 2011, Kathmandu. GTZ is Germany's development agency and has changed its name to the Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), but was referred to by respondents by its former abbreviation.

⁴⁵² IN-3-3 23rd October 2011, Kathmandu.

⁴⁵³ IN-3-3 23rd October 2011, Kathmandu and EA-3-3 11th October 2011, Gorahi.

⁴⁵⁴ The communes were established outside Gajul and are not a primary focus of the study, though most have failed, in part because the Maoists did not really put their "gut" into making them work. LL-3-8 17th October 2011, Liwang and IN-3-5 10th November 2011, Kathmandu.

⁴⁵⁵ However those living in Liwang suffered supply problems and a blockade at one point caused rampant localised inflation and Liwang did not benefit from the price

and the VDC and wider region were left with few financial incentives to invest the capital they had preserved during the conflict.⁴⁵⁶ Furthermore the aggressive recruitment into the PLA had led a significant proportion of the economically active male population to migrate, primarily to India, to avoid the conflict altogether. The reduction in liquidity almost certainly pushed more elements of Gajul out of the cash economy to a greater reliance on non-cash systems of exchange and was anti-developmental. While part of the drop in economic growth can be attributed to elements of the population leaving the region or simply holding on to capital, another element of economic pressure was that of the Maoists themselves and the way they prosecuted the conflict. The Maoists were known for forcing families to provide food and shelter to cadres whilst they were on patrol.⁴⁵⁷ This inevitably put stress on household food production which in Gajul was already insufficient to feed most families for an entire year and was an important grievance mentioned by respondents. The combination of these policies led to the abject failure of the Maoists' economic model which is only fully visible now where the stability currently enjoyed in Gajul has encouraged a number of entrepreneurs to build small-scale timber yards and expand market shops.⁴⁵⁸

The third element of the Maoists development approach was the use of forced labour to build roads in Rolpa.⁴⁵⁹ These had a dual purpose; to support military action, but also had clear economic development impacts for the communities living on the road. The intriguing element of the Maoist mobilisation of labour from 2002 is that they felt secure enough to mobilise labour in Gajul and demand the workers supply their own food to sustain them whilst building a road which manifestly was not going to benefit Gajul; the road runs through VDCs in western Rolpa up to a day's walk away.⁴⁶⁰

controls. IN-3-5 10th November 2011, Kathmandu. Price control was abandoned by the Maoists shortly after the end of the conflict.

⁴⁵⁶ IN-3-5 10th November 2011, Kathmandu.

⁴⁵⁷ EA-3-13 16th October 2011, Gajul.

⁴⁵⁸ Author's observations, though not all interviewed for the research it was clear from conversations with shop keepers and small business owners that economic investment by the local population had only occurred in recent years, i.e. at least two years after the end of the conflict.

⁴⁵⁹ It should be noted that 'voluntary labour' has been used in development since the Sen Kingdom was established, and was certainly used during both the Rana and Panchayat periods to construct roads in to Rolpa. LL-3-5 15th October 2011, Gajul EA-3-10 15th October 2011, Gajul, EA-3-13 16th October 2011, Gajul. The Maoists publicly announced the road as a development project (Samacharpatra, 2004).

⁴⁶⁰ EA-3-10 15th October 2011, Gajul and LL-3-5 15th October 2011, Gajul. The VDCs Gajul workers went to Irigaon, Jungaar, Teela and Gharti Gaon VDCs. Another way of viewing this choice was that, at a pragmatic level, the PLA and Maoists cadres could

Despite this, the scale of mobilisation was exceptionally high. During one period Gajul supplied 200 of the 500 workers on the project, an astonishing burden for a VDC consisting of some 800 households when a large number of working aged males had left the area.⁴⁶¹

Indeed the excessive and repeated use of 'voluntary labour,' which no one could refuse and resulted in a number of injuries and fatalities amongst workers,⁴⁶² led the leaders of Gajul, both pro and anti-Maoist, to refuse to participate for a third year in the road construction unless the road was going to pass through Gajul itself.⁴⁶³ The road in Gajul that was eventually worked on is now called the Sunil Marg, or Sunil's road, in memory of K.B. 'Sunil' Thapa, the son of Gajul who rose to be Commissar of the PLA's 5th Division. This appears to be one of the first examples where the Maoist leadership responded to the demands of the local population to provide a service, but it did not occur until 2005.

The long-term failure of the social change and economic reform agenda was coupled with resentment amongst communities that they were being forced to provide voluntary labour in a replay of methods dating back to the Sen dynasty. These failures, however, had not stopped the Maoists from preaching the good news of development which would result from the struggle.⁴⁶⁴ In addition to their own failure to generate development the Maoists also resisted attempts of most NGOs,⁴⁶⁵ bi-lateral donors and even the Nepal chapter of the Federation of the Red Cross, to operate outside of Liwang.⁴⁶⁶ Indeed in Gajul these agencies were not present at all from 2000 to at least 2004.⁴⁶⁷ The self-generated pressure to deliver some development benefits and the failure of their own social development model (the communes, price fixing and road construction) has been interpreted as the Maoists' primary motivation to allow

not be openly active in Gajul for too long because of the frequent patrolling by the police and army, so they focused on development implementation in areas where they felt more secure. NL-3-1 19th September 2011, Kathmandu.

⁴⁶¹ LL-3-6 15th October 2011, Gajul.

⁴⁶² IN-3-5 10th November 2011, Kathmandu.

⁴⁶³ EA-3-10 15th October 2011, Gajul and LL-3-6 15th October 2011, Gajul.

⁴⁶⁴ IN-3-5 10th November 2011, Kathmandu.

⁴⁶⁵ The only exception to this was the Nepali NGO, INSEC, which was involved in monitoring human rights abuses. The Maoists had a vested interest in ensuring that INSEC had reasonable access because it could use an independent source to verify its claims of state security force brutality.

⁴⁶⁶ The latter may be because of the connection between local opposition political leaders and the Red Cross Federation. LL-3-7 15th October 2011, Gajul.

⁴⁶⁷ This was partially because they alleged NGOs were part of US plots to undermine them after the US publicly supported the monarchy against the Maoists. NL-3-3 30th October 2011, Kathmandu.

development agencies, initially GTZ, to operate outside of Liwang after 2004.⁴⁶⁸ This is also supported by residents who viewed the Maoists use of development activities as a “technique to rule over the people.”⁴⁶⁹

As the conflict began to wind down a few externally funded projects began to be implemented in Gajul, these included projects supported by the Asia Foundation on conflict resolution and GTZ on agricultural activities. GTZ also refurbished all of the schools in Gajul after the conflict.⁴⁷⁰ However, the degree to which the projects supported stability in the last phase of the conflict and the post-conflict period is contested by the residents. Those on the victor’s side see them as the just rewards for a conflict well fought and won;⁴⁷¹ for those who sought to avoid the conflict or who opposed the insurgency the fact that the projects have returned is simply a resumption of the gradual development Gajul was benefitting from previously and thought they had little or no link to stability.⁴⁷²

Finally, state sponsored development effectively stopped during the conflict after there had been a gradual expansion of services, including drinking water, irrigation, schools and clinics since the 1950s. Before the implementation of projects stopped during the insurgency the money was either taken by officials, VDC representatives or Maoist cadres.⁴⁷³ Attempts were made by some teachers to use education funding to provide basic school materials, though these were often unsuccessful.⁴⁷⁴ Allegations of corruption suggested that the expenditure of development budgets was corrupt even prior to the conflict and that the conflict simply presented new opportunities for greater corruption.⁴⁷⁵ This is not to say that the government did not attempt new initiatives to spend development funding, and indeed it initiated the ISDP. However the ‘basket fund’ as it was locally known was spent almost entirely on security expenditures, as discussed above.⁴⁷⁶

The development stabilisation activities, by both the Maoists and government, manifestly failed to promote stability in Gajul, despite, at times, massive mobilisation of labour and continued access to basic services. Importantly, with the exception of

⁴⁶⁸ IN-3-5 10th November 2011, Kathmandu.

⁴⁶⁹ LL-3-7 15th October 2011, Gajul.

⁴⁷⁰ EA-3-9 14th October 2011, Gajul and LL-3-7 15th October 2011, Gajul.

⁴⁷¹ LL-3-3 13th October 2011, Gajul and LL-3-8 17th October 2011, Liwang.

⁴⁷² NL-3-2 14th October 2011, Gajul and LL-3-7 15th October 2011, Gajul.

⁴⁷³ There were various allegations of corruption of development spending during the conflict, but what all sides seem to agree on is that very little state sponsored development was carried out in Gajul during the conflict.

⁴⁷⁴ EA-3-10 15th October 2011, Gajul.

⁴⁷⁵ EA-3-5 12th October 2011, Liwang.

⁴⁷⁶ EA-3-6 12th October 2011, Liwang.

the Maoist leaders,⁴⁷⁷ local residents and opposition political leaders do not think the development projects actually supported stability.⁴⁷⁸ Furthermore the long-term sustainment of the social and economic changes espoused by the Maoists' creation of the Magarant Autonomous State have largely been washed away in the post-conflict era.⁴⁷⁹ This insight is vitally important to understanding what was considered to bring stability to the VDC before, during and after the conflict – it is clear that it was not because of development.

In summary, the case of Gajul and Rolpa suggests that insurgent stabilisation faces many of the same challenges presented to exogenous and indigenous state actors in promoting stability. Chief amongst them is the requirement to provide enough security for a state to be nurtured and to grow, which the Maoists achieved in Gajul. However, the broader social and developmental revolution that the Maoists promoted was not well supported by their developmental interventions and they failed to find purchase in local society except by use of force, and have subsequently been reversed.

Thematic Analysis – Rolpa

This section provides an analysis of Gajul's experience of stability and stabilisation through the five analytical themes 1) periods of stability; 2) culture and context; 3) mode of intervention; 4) political legitimacy and; 5) conceptions of stability. It then concludes by testing this analysis against the three theories outlined in Chapter 2, which articulate the theories of statebuilding, COIN and development.

Gajul had experienced several hundred years of stability prior to the emergence of the conflict in the 1980s, though this was largely as a result of benign neglect by the central state that devolved authority to local landlords with occasional enforcement. The democratic experiments allowed tensions that had built up over generations to be expressed, but as the reforms did not promote the legitimacy of the state, violent resistance was orchestrated by the Maoists. Looking back over Gajul's history what is striking is that the earlier rule of the landed class has not been replaced by democratic governance but rather the appearance of new Maoist 'lords' who enforced stability during the conflict. If previous periods of stability indicate anything it is that stability was largely derived from the ability of the state to enforce their will sporadically and to control the population, but this does not necessarily allow the state to evolve.

Maoist attempts to stabilise the area were numerous and carried out over a significant period and in many senses pre-date the conflict. Local governance was

⁴⁷⁷ LL-3-8 17th October 2011, Liwang.

⁴⁷⁸ LL-3-7 15th October 2011, Gajul.

⁴⁷⁹ IN-3-3 23rd October 2011, Kathmandu.

secured after long processes of mobilisation and the ability to rely on an effective state - the Magarant Autonomous State. Their political, judicial and military structures maintained a coherent message to the population – even if large parts of the population simply went along with it to protect their lives. This political stability was, however, primarily ensured through the extensive use of violence, threats and intimidation leading some to conclude that the stability enforced during the conflict was a kind of dead stability.⁴⁸⁰ However the Maoists chose not to attempt complete security dominance and maintained an asymmetric posture throughout the conflict allowing short breaks in the Maoists' imposed stability during which the patrols by Nepali state forces occurred.

These were both successful strategies, but the Maoists were significantly less successful in using development as a stabilising tool. Whilst Maoist leaders clung to the idea that the insurgency was about the class revolution and that development projects supported stability,⁴⁸¹ the development activities in Gajul and Rolpa more generally had little relevance to stability because the period as a whole was one of un-development,⁴⁸² and many beneficiaries of the development projects, both past and present, did not associate the projects with stability.⁴⁸³ Rather they point to the much more direct impact of politics – both local and national which were the real drivers of stability.⁴⁸⁴ While the processes of insurgent stabilisation and anaemic state attempts to retake lost territory indicate that the processes that form local stability were not significantly connected to development, the rhetoric of development may have been helpful as a consent winning activity.

The insurgency exposed the reality that the Nepali state, despite its professed evolution to democracy, remained distant from the population and served the interests of the ruling elites. The underlying lack of legitimacy and the inability of the central state polity to comprehend a counterrevolution to the threat posed by the Maoists meant that for the most part support for the Nepali state simply vanished in the face of a low technology and low intensity insurgency. However it is unfair to characterise the Maoists as representing all groups within Rolpa or Gajul, indeed the localised nature of the conflict at the village level seems on closer inspection to be a vehicle for specific networks, in this case the Subedi-Thapas, to continue their internal

⁴⁸⁰ LL-3-7 15th October 2011, Gajul, also referred to the Panchayat era as a kind of dead peace; Maoists referred to the Panchayat era as one of dead peace. NL-3-1 26th July 2011, Kathmandu.

⁴⁸¹ LL-3-8 17th October 2011, Liwang, NL-3-3 30th October 2011, Kathmandu went as far to say that “stability means development.”

⁴⁸² IN-3-5 10th November 2011, Kathmandu.

⁴⁸³ EA-3-5 12th October 2011, Liwang.

⁴⁸⁴ EA-3-6 12th October 2011, Liwang, LL-3-2 12th October 2011, Liwang.

power struggles under the guise of a higher level conflict over the nature of the state. While the lack of national political legitimacy may have given succour to the insurgency it was the unresolved local political contest which gave direction to the Maoists in Gajul.

This dynamic in the conflict whereby national politics was a structuring element of local conflict is reinforced by local conceptions of stability. As noted above, for the political leadership contesting control of the area stability was a significant aim, and various tools were employed to achieve it – most successfully the political innovations of the Maoists. As one Maoist leader noted: *“politics is the ox of the ox cart. The ox will drive the cart. If the ox finds the right way, the cart will follow. If the ox goes the wrong way, then the cart will go the wrong way. Until and unless there is political stability in the country, every other thing will be unstable. The important thing is politics which will drive the whole system.”*⁴⁸⁵ However, amongst other respondents stability was not necessarily of great concern, much as the wider conflict was not of concern because they had little stake in it. As a result significant sections of the community were trying to avoid the conflict because they were focused on protecting and feeding their families and made choices as required to ensure those aims.⁴⁸⁶ Stability for these respondents was almost irrelevant, indicating that actions to address the stability of a whole population to resolve political conflicts may also be largely irrelevant. If this is correct, development cannot be a tool for stability for either insurgents or the state.⁴⁸⁷

Finally, respondents of all stripes indicated that there is now stability, or at least peace, but it relies on the same processes that brought peace prior to the conflict i.e. a dysfunctional central state with the imposition of authority which in the current period contains the remnants of the Maoist parallel governance structure and patronage and is therefore not necessarily stable. At the time of this research there was no VDC office or police station in Gajul and it had returned in some respects to a pre-Panchayat system of control by local lords – instead now they were not feudal lords but Maoist lords who had broken from the feudal system to back a change in government precisely because they had been marginalised in the conflict between the local political leaders of the Subedi-Thapa network. This is not to say that the conflict had simply returned Gajul to its ante-conflict state as some respondents have suggested;⁴⁸⁸ there had been some changes. In particular, the social impacts of the conflict changed gender roles because of the migration of groups out of Gajul

⁴⁸⁵ NL-3-3 30th October 2011, Kathmandu.

⁴⁸⁶ EA-3-2 10th October 2011, Gorahi.

⁴⁸⁷ Or lead to political consensus as one respondent noted. EA-3-12 15th October 2011, Gajul.

⁴⁸⁸ EA-3-11 15th October 2011, Gajul.

empowered women to take on more prominent roles.⁴⁸⁹ Within the current situation however the seeds of a renewed conflict exist, though it is possible that the seeming 'dysfunction' of the state and the parties is simply a rite of passage that Nepal must go through. Whilst there are threats by some Maoists to resume violence⁴⁹⁰ it is legitimate to ask whether a degree of instability is required in the context of Nepal.⁴⁹¹

In summary, while Gajul exhibited stability for a substantial period prior to the conflict, the local political leadership was unable to accommodate political competition because of a failure of the national democratic reforms in the 1990s. This cleavage was supported by robust mobilisation and preparation for the insurgency in the area which meant that the establishment of the Magarant Autonomous State and extensive, but selective, use of violence and coercion gave the Maoists governance control in the area. Their attempts at social and developmental revolution were less successful and had little connection to local conceptions of stability and, when viewed over the long term, development may in fact be understood to be a destabilising intervention because education establishments fostered the new generation of leaders who prosecuted the conflict.

Theoretical analysis

This sub-section analyses the theoretical implications of insurgent stabilisation for the theories of statebuilding, COIN and Development. In common with exogenous governance reform processes, the technocratic approach to statebuilding⁴⁹² to address instability and the insurgency by the Nepali state failed. However it seems unlikely that greater technical capability would have made the state a more attractive proposition for the bulk of the population which attempted to avoid the conflict. This is primarily because the statebuilding agenda espoused by the Nepalese political elite, in particular the monarchy, did nothing to present a counterrevolution, and collapsed because it was irrelevant. This suggests that had more exogenous support been provided by force, as the statebuilding theory suggests, it would have failed.

The poor execution of COIN⁴⁹³ activities, whether through the ISDP or unified command of the security forces, was the direct result of poor political direction from the centre in Kathmandu. It is not clear if this is a refutation of COIN theory or simply the inability of the Nepali political elite to conceive of a counterrevolution to the threat posed by the Maoist insurgency, thereby preventing the Nepal security forces

⁴⁸⁹ EA-3-5 12th October 2011, Liwang.

⁴⁹⁰ EA-3-6 12th October 2011, Liwang and LL-3-9 18th October 2011, Liwang.

⁴⁹¹ Also noted by ICG, 2010, pp. 40-1.

⁴⁹² See Dobbins et al, 2007, p. 1 quoted on p. 47.

⁴⁹³ See JP3-24, 2009, p. 12 quoted on p. 53.

from pursuing COIN effectively. The case study does however confirm the threat posed by a well-orchestrated politically energised insurgency to the state.

Finally, this case study directly challenges the hypothesis that social development⁴⁹⁴ can be stabilising over the long term. The early introduction of education in the area was critical to the evolution of political disputes within the Subedi-Thapa network who were the primary belligerents in the conflict in Gajul. Further the clumsy use of development by both the government and the insurgents indicates that the limitations on development to support stabilisation are not limited to exogenous actors but also affect the potential impact of development activities implemented by indigenous actors.

In summary Gajul provides a challenge to the theories of statebuilding, COIN and development. The technical processes of statebuilding and COIN were attempted but failed largely because of incoherent political direction from the centre to present government action as a form of counterrevolution to Maoist ideology. Most critically it suggests that the link between development and stability may be overstated and that in the long-term development can be destabilising.

Conclusion

Gajul has dealt with multiple destabilising processes in the last sixty years, which included increased development and political awareness of elite networks as well as the evolution of the democratic system which governed Nepal. These pressures created fissures which allowed local level conflicts to claim the mantle of national level conflicts as elements of the Subedi-Thapa network split across Nepal's political parties. While the creation of the Magarant Autonomous State and the pushing back of the Nepali state from the region was successful it was deeply destabilising for the population and economic production dropped, segments of the population either voluntarily left or were forced out, development initiatives ceased and political pluralism was stopped. Security control was not assured by either side, though this imbalance was deliberately maintained by the asymmetrical manner in which the Maoists attempted to enforce control.

However the story of Gajul is not one of destabilisation, but one of insurgent stabilisation through which the Maoists attempted to promote stability by employing the same activities that are used by intervening and host nation states in other contexts. The insurgents faced many of the same problems associated with stability that plague exogenous interventions and therefore it highlights the inability of any group to promote stability in the context of a contested political and security space. Gajul also suggests that there may be a hierarchy of issues that support stability with

⁴⁹⁴ See USIP, 2009, p. 2.9 quoted on p. 55.

politics, governance and security being distinct and more significant than development. Development may in fact may be destabilising in the long-term. It also confirms that ultimately violence in civil wars is highly localised and in the case of Gajul was structured by the relationships of one extended family network; this challenges conceptions of population-centric conceptions of stability when the locus of the conflict was contained within a relatively small group of individuals.

Finally, this chapter challenges the theories of statebuilding, COIN and development which provide incomplete explanations for why the Maoists were able to enforce a dead stability in the face of a poorly executed comprehensive campaign by the government. Ultimately the failure of the state in Gajul had less to do with the actions of the executive (though their abuses were notable) but rather the inability of national level political leaders to articulate a counterrevolution to the insurgent threat.

Chapter 7 – Failed Self-Stabilisation

Haraiya VDC, Bara District, Nepal

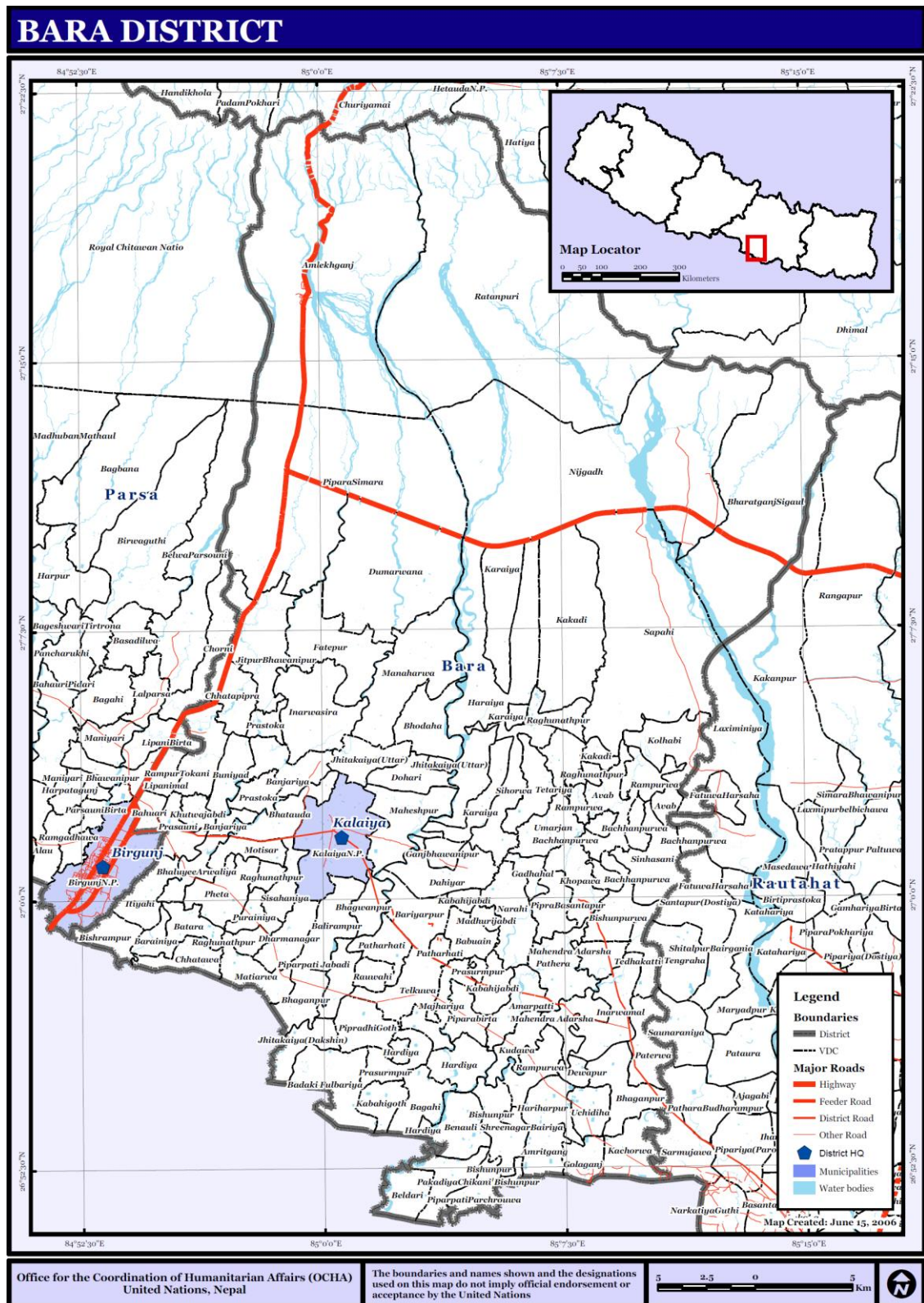


Figure 8 Map of Bara district, Nepal OCHA

Prelude

“There are 601 members in the Constitution Assembly. They are either elected directly or elected proportionately. During the election, they had a mandate for concluding the peace process and promulgating the constitution within two years...[but]...leeches are always seeking animals or people when they are hungry. Once a leech has found a human being, it will [continue] suck[ing until it has] a full stomach. Afterwards, it will fall down and cannot move anywhere. Neither will it seek the human being anymore. It will be like a dead thing. These 601 Constitution Assembly members are also like leeches. They were living and eating with people until they got elected. They assured [everyone] that they would do this or that for the votes. People voted [for] them to resolve the problems of the people and country. The Constitution Assembly members had the responsibility to conclude the peace process and promulgate the constitution within 2 years. At the moment, they are like fallen leeches. They are extensively enjoying the state apparatus like huge earnings and riding in high-tech vehicles. They are putting a deaf ear to the peace process and constitution making. They are fighting for the chairs [in Cabinet]. They are never willing to go back to the villages and meet the people...they [have] forgot[ten] their assurances to people.” LL-4-1 26th August 2011, Haraiya.

Bara and failed self stabilisation

This chapter focuses on processes of self-stabilisation that occurred in Haraiya VDC in Bara district, Nepal, during and after the Maoist insurgency. The chapter suggests that the greatest determinants of local stability lie in the relationship and relative stability of local and national political settlements rather than security or development interventions. The Maoist insurgency arrived in Bara in 2000 and the PLA and People’s Government attempted to assert authority in the district and Haraiya VDC, though ultimately only succeeded in pushing the government back rather than establishing coherent Maoist governance, security and development activities on the model of the Magarant Autonomous State.

As a result villages were left open to the predation of criminal gangs who often used the Indian border as an escape route as well as Maoist, police and army operations, as the belligerents fought for control of the region. Throughout this period there were attempts at stabilisation by Maoist forces and the Government of Nepal in Haraiya, which all failed to bring stability. In the case of Haraiya VDC this led to a spontaneous attempt to self-stabilise the area which had a limited impact in the main market area of the VDC, but the majority of Haraiya’s population was left in a power vacuum.

The conflict did not stop with the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). The Madeshi Andolan in 2007 and killings of Maoist cadres in the wider Terai region brought a new wave of instability. This case study suggests that none of the

political, security or development interventions provide explanatory evidence for the limited stabilisation that was achieved in the VDC; instead the data suggests that processes beyond the control of Haraiya dictated the extent of stability that was experienced by the population. This example of failed self-stabilisation in Haraiya offers some important lessons about stability, and challenges the assumption that development can in some way prevent de-stabilisation.

The chapter particularly explores the relevance of development projects to stability during the period from 2000-2009 as well as the actions of a community self-defence group whose interests in stability transcended the interests of the conflicting parties and had strong linkages to illicit timber trade. This is significant because the Maoists not only failed to deliver security but subsequently failed to maintain control over their erstwhile Madeshi allies who they had attempted to co-opt into the insurgency.⁴⁹⁵ The conflict then became a low-level, multi-faceted campaign of terror from a plethora of armed groups that attempted to exploit the political and security vacuum.

Interviews for this chapter were carried out in Haraiya VDC, Kalaiya – the headquarters of Bara district, and in Kathmandu. In total thirty-four interviews were carried out with thirty-six participants between August and October 2011 in English, Nepali and Bhojpori, a dialect of Nepali spoken in Haraiya. Respondents came from a range of ethnic backgrounds including Dalit, Pahadi, Madeshi, Muslim and Tharu communities in the VDC. The respondents included political leaders, government officials, NGO staff, local farmers and daily wage labourers.

Conflict history

This section provides an introduction to Bara and Haraiya VDC, looking at the social, cultural and governance systems present in the region. It goes on to provide an outline of the conflict dynamics and history of the region since the 1990s, which highlight the key themes explored in the stabilisation sections later in the chapter.

Bara district lies in the Central Terai and is bordered by India to the south. Parsa district with the large border city of Birgunj is approximately a forty-five minute drive west from Kalaiya the district headquarters. To the east lies Rautahat district, the birth place of former Prime Minister M.K. Nepal, and to the north lie the foothills of Makwanpur district, which mark the beginning of Nepal's hill territory. Kalaiya is a small town and not on the main highways that run through Bara. Trade in the district is centred at Simara to the west, which has a small airport and lies at the junction of the Tribhuvan Rajpath from Birgunj to Kathmandu and the Mahendra highway, the

⁴⁹⁵ In Madeshi eyes because the Maoists were not willing to give the Madeshi the power they had been promised.

main east-west link across Nepal. The Mahendra highway cuts across the northern third of Bara; there are higher concentrations of Pahadi settlers in the northern third of the district and progressively more Madeshi and Tharu communities in the centre and south towards the Indian border. At the eastern side of the district another medium sized municipality, Colbi, lies on the highway. Kalaiya is therefore economically and physically isolated and provides weak authority for the ninety-eight VDCs in Bara.

Haraiya VDC lies one hour and forty-five minutes by car from Kalaiya, but is also accessible by foot in two hours or by bicycle in one hour on routes that run through fields. The VDC is approximately ten kilometres in length and about two to three kilometres wide, though on maps it is shown in the shape of an 'H'; as with other VDCs in Nepal it consists of nine wards. The centre of the VDC lies ten kilometres to the south of the main highway, though the road to the highway is only seasonally passable by motor vehicles and runs through Sal forest, which provides a significant extractable natural resource. Most local production in the VDC is agriculture; mainly rice, millet and maize. There is some local light industry in the form of brick kilns. To the south of Haraiya lies Bariyarpur VDC and immediately surrounding Haraiya is Karaiya VDC, which lies to the south, north and east in separate blocs around Haraiya. Across the highway to the north lies Nijgadh VDC.

Over recent centuries Bara's population has migrated in waves to the district to take advantage of the availability of land as the forests have been cleared.⁴⁹⁶ Bara's population has grown from 559,135 in 2001 to 701,037 in 2011, an annual increase of 2.26% or 25.38% over the decade; (Government of Nepal, 2011) extrapolating for Haraiya VDC this would mean the population of the VDC in 2011 was approximately 5,346.⁴⁹⁷ While Haraiya's population cannot be reduced to simple ethnic and caste identities it is instructive to describe the main ethnic features of the population. The Tharu communities, along with the Madeshi and Dalits, are the original inhabitants of the area, and all three communities share housing styles.⁴⁹⁸ Most Tharu interviewed were linked to NC, but other respondents noted splits in the Tharu vote between the Communist Party of Nepal – United Marxist Leninist (CPN-UML), NC and UCPN-M.

⁴⁹⁶ LL-4-5 25th August 2011, Haraiya.

⁴⁹⁷ Extrapolated by adding Bara's decadal population growth (25.38%) to the number of people who were recorded in Haraiya in the 2001 census – 4,264 individuals in 800 households – this gives an average household size of 5.33, lower than the average noted for Bara overall in 2011 or 6.11 (Government of Nepal, Undated; Government of Nepal, 2011).

⁴⁹⁸ Muslim community members modify some of their buildings, for instance removing all references to the local Naga cult in keeping with their religious beliefs.

Many of the Tharu leaders were also involved in the Panchayat era of political leadership at a VDC level and in many respects are the traditional leaders of the VDC.

The Madeshi are caste Hindus from the plains with strong cultural and social ties to India. In Haraiya the Madeshi live across the central and southern wards and often own larger plots of land.⁴⁹⁹ They migrated to the area after the Tharu, but they have been living in the VDC for several generations. In Haraiya VDC the Madeshi communities are economically stratified and have benefitted from both licit and illicit border trade in the region; several land-owning Madeshi were also leaders in the Panchayat system. As a group they are economically significant and control a significant proportion of the market trade in Madhuwan, which is the central village within Haraiya VDC.⁵⁰⁰ In Haraiya many of the senior Madeshi leaders are linked to CPN-UML but clearly have strong relationships with UCPN-M (including its Pahadi leaders) and NC. They have been the main political leaders of the VDC since the start of multi-party democracy.

The Muslim community also live the central and southern wards, and though they arrived after the Tharu, Madeshi and Dalits, many have been living in Haraiya VDC for 2-3 generations. They have some land but many provide skilled labour in the local market, such as tailoring, and they are an integral part of the local economy though they are not necessarily the wealthiest members. The community has at least one mosque and one madrassa, and is not politically significant. In terms of Nepal's caste hierarchy the Madeshi, Tharu and Muslims have all been excluded from positions of power and authority and have long standing grievances regarding their exclusion from state power (Guneratne, 2002, p. 75).

The Pahadi are the most recent immigrants to the area, and are the most socially and economically distinct; most Pahadi settlers live in the Naya Basti (New Town) area,⁵⁰¹ which lies in the northern part of the VDC in the forest hinterland. They have brought with them and still maintain their traditional housing styles and cultivation of maize. The Naya Basti ward is two kilometres north of the central ward, Madhuwan, where the main VDC office is situated. The Pahadi were given plots of land that they often cleared themselves in the 1970s during the Panchayat period as part of government

⁴⁹⁹ Some respondents identified the Madeshi as the main landlords in Haraiya, though land holdings were of a modest size of two to three bigha (one bigha is equivalent to approximately five hectares); large landlords do still exist and reportedly one landlord in Bara owns some 3,000 bigha. IN-4-7 21st October 2011, Kathmandu and EA-4-2 23rd August 2011, Haraiya.

⁵⁰⁰ Madhuwan is also known as Ward-4 or Haraiya-4.

⁵⁰¹ Also known as Ward-6 or Haraiya-6.

resettlement activities to encourage settlement in the forest regions.⁵⁰² The plots of land were roughly half the size of the Madeshi and Tharu respondents, meaning there are significant concerns about inequality between the groups. However there may be as much inequality within the Madeshi and Pahadi social groups.⁵⁰³

Overall the Tharu, Madeshi, Pahadi and Muslim communities, whilst they are internally stratified, have reasonably high levels of economic wealth in terms of land and livestock ownership. The relatively strong economic position of these groups does not apply to the Dalits (referred to as Madeshi Dalits locally as opposed to Pahadi, or Hill, Dalits), who own no land, and when they had access to land it was without secure tenure. Dalit girls in particular were noted for having lower attendance rates in local schools both historically and currently.⁵⁰⁴ Dalits were working primarily as waged or bonded labour on local fields for the land owning families within the other communities. The political representation of the Dalits was split between the Maoists, NC and UML despite strong attempts by the Maoists to gain their support during the insurgency.

As a result, class rather than ethnicity has dominated patterns of governance where local leaders have largely been drawn from the elites within each ethnic group, i.e. Tharu, Madeshi, Pahadi and Muslim respondents had all been members of the Panchayat at some point; wards with greater numbers of one particular group tended to have Panchayat leaders from that community.⁵⁰⁵ Some Panchayat leaders went into electoral politics, but the lapsing of the elected officials' mandates after the 1999 electoral terms finished meant that some former (non-elected) Panchayat leaders reassumed roles of authority in the VDC from 2003.⁵⁰⁶ Until the Madeshi Andolan (discussed below) respondents were clear that there was little or no tension between

⁵⁰² The 'Sal' forests of the Terai were instrumental in bankrolling the Panchayat's plebiscite on the continuation of the regime in 1979. The timber was sold to India for the construction of the railways, a process which dates back originally to the 1920s. The resettlement programme was funded by international donors according to local respondents but they did not know who had provided the funding. LL-4-5 25th August 2011, Haraiya, LL-4-7 26th August 2011, Haraiya and Dev, Karna, Adhikari, & Springate-Baginski, 2006, pp. 12, 44.

⁵⁰³ There are both very wealthy and very poor landless Madeshi and Pahadis. The overriding features of socio-economic power are connected to the amount of land that they can buy (or be given) and how long they have been in the region.

⁵⁰⁴ EA-4-1 23rd August 2011, Haraiya and LL-4-2 24th August 2011, Haraiya.

⁵⁰⁵ LL-4-2 24th August 2011, Haraiya: interestingly in 2011 analysts believe that caste and ethnicity were becoming greater determinants of political power and voting patterns as a result of the ethnicity based politics associated with the Madeshi Andolan. IN-4-7 21st October 2011, Kathmandu.

⁵⁰⁶ LL-4-5 25th August 2011, Haraiya.

the social groups. As a result the Maoists did not attempt broad mobilisation along ethnic lines, however several respondents clearly thought the Maoists were a Pahadi phenomenon.⁵⁰⁷ Instead they attempted to marginalise and target the wealthier individuals in the Madeshi and Tharu social groups and mobilise poorer individuals within those groups as well as a broad attempt to mobilise the Dalit community.

Haraiya VDC has had substantial input from international development agencies in addition to development spending through government budgets and the local VDC office. Schools were first established in the VDC approximately 40 years ago and there are now eleven primary schools and two secondary schools, there is also a central health post and several sub-posts throughout the VDC.⁵⁰⁸ The development agencies have also dug a large number of potable water wells though there is only limited availability of pumps and wells for irrigation, which is still largely reliant on the monsoon rains for the summer crop, and melt-water for the autumn-winter crop.

Development activities in Haraiya first started to accelerate at the beginning of multi-party democracy in the 1990s when the UML central government allocated every VDC three lakhs NRS for development under the 'Building Your Village Yourself' scheme.⁵⁰⁹ In Haraiya the decade to 2000 was spent building infrastructure such as bridges and roads which spurred local employment in the construction sector.⁵¹⁰ In addition other agencies, most notably Plan International, their local partner organisation, and also the Nepal Federation of the Red Cross, continued to implement community development projects throughout the VDC. Their projects covered a wide range of activities including education, health, drinking water supply and provision of saplings. Development projects through Plan and the Red Cross continued throughout the conflict, but were badly affected by intimidation and demands for donations by the Maoists. Despite being affected by the conflict the projects continued and Plan in particular managed to negotiate space to operate until 2011 when they phased out activities because of insecurity associated with the armed groups that sprang up after the CPA and Madeshi Andolan.

There is one semi-gravelled road running the length of the VDC, there are no major bridges, but the Maoists claimed they had built a footbridge over a small river about

⁵⁰⁷ EA-4-1 23rd August 2011, Haraiya and EA-4-11 28th August 2011, Kalaiya.

⁵⁰⁸ EA-4-1 23rd August 2011, Haraiya and LL-4-2 24th August 2011, Haraiya.

⁵⁰⁹ LL-4-1 23rd August 2011, Haraiya: in current prices three lakhs NRS is approx. \$3,400; it was this programme which initiated the concept of the 'all-party mechanism' to monitor development spending that has proved to be controversial when it was revived after the end of the insurgency (Whelpton, 2005, p. 193).

⁵¹⁰ LL-4-1 23rd August 2011, Haraiya.

half a kilometre to the east of the highway near the forest.⁵¹¹ The Sal forest is Haraiya's most lucrative resource. In the mid-1990s Sal in Nepal's Terai districts was estimated to be worth some \$6bn, and has been exploited by both the state and illegal loggers (Paudel, Keeling, & Khanal, 2006, p. 2). The Sal forest in the Terai, including to the north of Haraiya VDC, was extensively cleared during the 1970s as part of a resettlement programme and to provide hard currency for the Panchayat regime to pay for a plebiscite regarding the future of the regime (Whelpton, 2005, p. 144). The illegal timber trade is controlled by local networks with links to district and regional supply chains in other parts of Nepal and India.⁵¹² There are also three brick kilns in the VDC which provide employment to approximately 900 people, though this includes migrant labour from India and other VDCs in Bara. Local engagement in production was estimated to be around 300 people.⁵¹³ There is a twice weekly market in the village, selling mainly locally produced crops, fish from rivers or local fish farms, and some local pottery. There are also permanent shops and butchers as well as local tailors and basic electrical supply shops.

There are government offices of the agriculture, forestry and health departments, though these are spread out, the forestry office is in Naya Basti closest to the forest, the agriculture office is in one of the southern wards, and health centre is in Madhuwan, or central Haraiya. The VDC office and police post are also in Madhuwan. The police post was established in 1971 upon the request of the population because of continued robberies by what local residents referred to as dacoits.⁵¹⁴ The VDC office and police post were previously co-located but since the re-establishment of the post in the run-up to the Constituent Assembly (CA) elections in 2008 they are now in different locations.

Maoist mobilisation in Bara started in 1995 with members of CPN-Masal and former members of CPN-UML forming the nucleus of leadership within Bara as well as Haraiya.⁵¹⁵ Though the number of individuals involved was very small, initially less than ten people, the group had high hopes of capitalising on the disenfranchisement of the Madeshi, Tharu and Dalit groups, despite the fact that all of the significant leaders of the newly formed Maoists in Bara were Pahadi. Whilst there were Maoist leaders from non-Pahadi backgrounds the association of the Maoists with the Pahadi in Haraiya in their core area of Naya Basti dogged their attempts at mobilising support

⁵¹¹ NL-4-3 16th August 2011, Kathmandu and LL-4-5 25th August 2011, Haraiya.

⁵¹² There are allegations that senior political figures from Bara, including CA member Shiva Chandra Prasad Kushwaha, were linked to timber smuggling.

⁵¹³ Author estimate based on respondents suggesting each kiln had about 300 workers with a third of those were drawn from Haraiya EA-4-3 24th August 2011, Haraiya.

⁵¹⁴ EA-4-1 23rd August 2011, Haraiya.

⁵¹⁵ LL-4-1 23rd August 2011, Haraiya and LL-4-5 25th August 2011, Haraiya.

amongst other groups.⁵¹⁶ For the Maoists in Bara, Haraiya was considered strategic territory because the forest allowed them a terrain they could operate in with greater safety and freedom of movement; the location of Naya Basti being predominately Pahadi and right next to the edge of the forest meant there was a synergy between their successful attempts at mobilisation amongst the Pahadi and the terrain required to sustain the insurgency.⁵¹⁷

In preparation for and during their campaign the Maoists sustained themselves through taxation of wealthy local individuals, the shopkeepers in the bazaar, government officials and NGOs who were all paying money in response to threats from the Maoist cadres.⁵¹⁸ The effectiveness of the mobilisation and skill with which the Maoists were using weapons led many to suggest that the Maoists in Haraiya (and Bara more generally) had simply co-opted criminal gangs to do their dirty work; this afforded the criminals support and an organisation they were able to turn to and the Maoists gained the skills of experts in violence.⁵¹⁹ However the link to criminality was only partial and the continued patrolling by both Maoist and Nepali government forces threatened a much more substantial commercial network involved in logging and the illegal smuggling of timber.⁵²⁰ This network also had patronage from political groups, namely UML, whose local leaders were concerned Maoist action would threaten their income. UML had, and continues to have, a strong support base within the VDC, having won the 1991 and 1994 local elections;⁵²¹ the 1999 and 2008 elections were won by Nepal Congress, the other major political bloc in the VDC.⁵²²

Violent action by the Maoists did not begin in the area until 2000 as the Maoists and Nepali government security forces (including the Police, Armed Police Force and

⁵¹⁶ EA-4-1 23rd August 2011, Haraiya.

⁵¹⁷ The Maoists blamed their lack of penetration in Bara's southern VDCs on three factors: the lack of suitable terrain, the presence of big landlords and the actions of the Indian border security forces. Curiously they did not factor in the Nepali state or security forces into this analysis, suggesting they did not see the Nepali state as their most limiting factor. NL-4-3 16th August 2011, Kathmandu.

⁵¹⁸ EA-4-1 23rd August 2011, Haraiya and LL-4-1 24th August 2011, Haraiya.

⁵¹⁹ LL-4-1 24th August 2011, Haraiya.

⁵²⁰ EA-4-11 28th August 2011, Kalaiya.

⁵²¹ LL-4-1 23rd August 2011, Haraiya & EA-4-1 23rd August 2011, Haraiya: at the time of this research the CPN-UML leaders were also the President and Vice-President of the VDC. EA-4-2 23rd August 2011, Haraiya.

⁵²² Haraiya itself lies in the 5th Constituent Assembly electoral ward in Bara. Whilst the VDC is split between UML and NC, NC control the Constituent Assembly seat. UML's support in the district has been put under significant pressure after five of the directly elected seats in Bara went to Madeshi parties (3) or the Maoists (2). (OCHA Nepal, 2008) LL-4-7 26th August 2011, Haraiya.

Army) vied for control of Haraiya VDC.⁵²³ The Maoist's expansion of the insurgency into the Terai was based on coalition building (or in some cases the forming of new sister organisations) with primarily ethnically based political groups. In the Terai this was centred on the Madheshi Rastriya Mukhti Morcha (Madeshi National Liberation Front or MNLF) who later split from the Maoists and now advocate the creation of a Madeshi homeland and condone the targeting of Pahadi settlers. These ethnic demands by the Madeshis expressed through the Madeshi Andolan in 2007, and subsequent acceptance of some of their demands by the Nepali government, increased the spectre of further ethnically based violence as the Tharu political leaders in the Terai reject the Madeshi identity they were ascribed by the government in 2009 (Mathema, 2011, pp. 62-9, 72-8).

Despite this long-term failure the immediate advantage of the MNLF to the Maoists in the Terai was their ability to co-opt a number of groups under their umbrella to prosecute the conflict against the state.⁵²⁴ The Maoists were able to push the police out of Haraiya and they bombed the VDC office twice.⁵²⁵ Despite the fact that the head of the VDC was relocated to Kalaiya the VDC Office Secretary, who is from Haraiya, remained in post working from his house throughout the insurgency. Coupled with the functioning health and education posts the Nepali government managed to maintain a toe-hold in Haraiya throughout the conflict. This also extended to attempts at spending government funding, despite the threats and Maoist bombings.⁵²⁶

The inconclusive contest left a vacuum where neither state forces nor Maoists could exercise full control. The vacuum was exploited by criminal groups but this instability threatened the interests of local leaders who wanted to sustain both their licit and illicit livelihoods. In response the community itself organised a self-defence group to maintain security. This is discussed in detail below, but the group maintained physical security from and between both the Maoist and government forces for a period of about two years when the insurgency was at its height in the early 2000s which formed a critical element of the conflict story in Haraiya VDC.⁵²⁷

In the period after the CPA, when Nepal was avowedly in a 'post-conflict' phase, Bara was rocked by the actions of a number of armed groups, several of whom had splintered from the fragile alliance of groups supporting the Maoists in the Terai

⁵²³ LL-4-2 24th August 2011, Haraiya.

⁵²⁴ However, even before the conflict ended some groups, such as the Terai Liberation Front had already split from the Maoists (ICG, 2005, p. 5).

⁵²⁵ The second of the bombings was as late as February 2004.

⁵²⁶ EA-4-2 23rd August 2011, Haraiya.

⁵²⁷ LL-4-1 24th August 2011, Haraiya, EA-4-4 24th August 2011, Haraiya and LL-4-2 24th August 2011, Haraiya.

(Mathema, 2011, pp. 62-7). Bara was badly affected by the Madeshi Andolan, which saw dozens of people killed in the district in 2007.⁵²⁸ The peace dividend had failed to head off the new conflict and as discussed below was blamed, in part, for sparking the renewed conflict. The Madeshi Andolan was ended relatively quickly; however, the splintering of armed groups continued and led to significant use of threats, intimidation, beatings and bombings targeted against local leaders and government officials.⁵²⁹ The security situation deteriorated to the point where Bara was included as one of eight districts of concern to the central government and the Special Security Plan was launched in 2009 to address these groups and expand security provision (Kafle, 2010, p. 10). Over time this did improve stability, despite the fact that members of the armed groups, often collectively referred to as *Janatantrik*,⁵³⁰ remained active in both rural and urban areas, including Haraiya.⁵³¹ The groups also utilised the porous border with India for protection, and respondents mentioned several times that the main security threat comes from groups operating across the border or from the south of the district towards the border.⁵³²

Despite this new conflict the self-defence group did not reform; instead the community lobbied for the Nepal Police post to be re-established in the run up to the 2008 CA elections indicating a change in state-community relations which provides insights into stabilisation. The marginalised Maoist presence remained in its originally weak position and political power was shifted back to former Panchayat leaders while Party competition resumed between CPN-UML and NC. However, governance systems have been compromised by the substantial increase in development spending which has, in the eyes of respondents, contributed to the 'leech' like behaviour of the

⁵²⁸ IN-4-7 21st October 2011, Kathmandu and Mathema, 2011, pp. 25-31.

⁵²⁹ LL-4-2 24th August 2011, Haraiya and IN-4-5 29th August 2011, Kalaiya.

⁵³⁰ There are several armed groups that use the word *Janatantrik* as part of their name, but the most well know is *Janatantrik Terai Mukti Morcha (JTMM)*, led by Jaya Krishna Goit, a former leader of the MNLF (Mathema, 2011, pp. 66-7). JTMM-Goit was active in Bara and may have been behind an attack on a respondent (LL-4-10 28th August 2011, Kalaiya). However there are several other armed groups functioning in Bara, and those with a political agenda (as opposed to purely criminal) include: *Akhil Terai Mukti Morcha*, *Kirant Janbadi Workers Party* and *Tharuhat Swayatta Rajya Parishad* (Kafle, 2010, p. 9).

⁵³¹ LL-4-2 24th August 2011, Haraiya and LL-4-13.

⁵³² EA-4-13 29th August 2011, Kalaiya: the significance of the Indian border is not simply that it provides protection for criminal groups; India remains dominant in the region in many cultural, economic and social senses meaning the Terai is more connected to the India of the Gangetic plain than it is to Kathmandu; as an illustration of this, until the 1960s the India Rupee was the primary currency in the Terai. For discussion see Gaige, 2009, pp. 43-4.

political class in Kathmandu, which is having secondary effects in Bara and Haraiya and threatening the stability that has emerged, discussed below.

Stabilisation activities

This section will describe how the different actors – Maoist, government, the self-defence group and development agencies – have all sought stability through their actions. There is a particular focus on the period from 2000 to 2009 which marks the beginning of Maoist operations in Haraiya and ends with the implementation of the Special Security Plan to address the armed groups that had sprung up in the power vacuum in the Terai after the CPA and Madeshi Andolan.

Political interventions to support stabilisation

This subsection describes the political interventions to support stability by describing the governance and justice systems that the Maoists and the government supported during the insurgency. As neither side could ultimately secure their political vision former systems of governance including the Panchayat leaders, the very systems the Maoists were meant to be overthrowing, re-established themselves to provide basic governance. Governance in Haraiya remained unstable in the post-insurgency conflict as the mechanisms were ‘reformed’ and additional funding was pushed through the bureaucratic and electoral systems which contributed to an increasing separation between the population and the state.

The commencement of Maoist operations in Haraiya in 2000 led to the withdrawal of a senior VDC government official in the same year. Despite the risks a key VDC official, the office secretary, stayed at his post because he was a resident of Haraiya and, after the VDC was bombed for a second time in 2004, he operated the VDC from his home until 2010.⁵³³ The Maoists had threatened him, but because they never exerted security control (see below) they were not able to stop the VDC functioning. Instead the VDC attempted to muddle along, gaining approvals and funding for projects throughout the conflict. This failure of security control would critically undermine the Maoists’ claims that they controlled the region and undermined the administration of their own People’s Government.

The Maoists established the Madeshi Autonomous Region in which Bara was the first district in the Terai to announce the establishment of the People’s Government (Basu, 2004, p. 30). This included establishing the other major component of their governance system, the People’s Court. The court was active locally, and in at least one instance convened a session at a chautari built by the Maoists in the Naya Basti area of Haraiya.⁵³⁴ The People’s Court was appreciated by some members of the

⁵³³ EA-4-1 23rd August 2011, Haraiya.

⁵³⁴ LL-4-1 24th August 2011, Haraiya.

community because it was able to resolve several cases that had been festering for twenty to thirty years which had not been addressed by either the previous Panchayat or elected representatives.⁵³⁵ However, the court was either not present very often in Haraiya or what people were referring to as the People's Court in Haraiya (i.e. at VDC level) was in fact a visit from the district level People's Court.⁵³⁶

The failure of the Maoist government was all the more surprising given the years of mobilisation that had gone before the commencement of violence and the extensive attempts at revenue collection from a range of sources.⁵³⁷ The lack of traction amongst the key target groups in the population, the Dalits and lower classes of the other ethnic groups, meant that the Maoists in Bara were labelled as being a Pahadi phenomenon. This was not helped by the fact that their base area was the Pahadi dominated Naya Basti. Despite this the Maoists struggled on, safe in the knowledge at least that they had denied the area coherent government control even if they could not govern it effectively themselves.

As governance systems, including local decision making, budget execution, tax collection and justice provision, degraded a combination of elected officials (from the 1999 election), former elected officials and Panchayat era leaders re-asserted control in most of the wards in Haraiya. This meant that the VDC Office Secretary, for example, was able to engage with the wards to keep some funding flowing and maintain a link to the District Headquarters.⁵³⁸ The re-emergence of Panchayat leaders and other elites,⁵³⁹ particularly after the electoral mandates of those who won seats from the 1999 election expired, meant that leaders that had significant

⁵³⁵ LL-4-1 24th August 2011, Haraiya.

⁵³⁶ EA-4-6 25th August 2011, Haraiya and LL-4-5 25th August 2011, Haraiya.

⁵³⁷ As discussed below the Maoists had mobilised approximately thirty individuals from Haraiya to join the PLA; however, within Haraiya itself active Maoist cadres rarely reached more than twenty to thirty people and they would normally operate in groups of five to seven. LL-4-1 24th August 2011, Haraiya and LL-4-3 24th August 2011, Haraiya.

⁵³⁸ This low level presence was not often noticed by political leaders working from the district headquarters in Kalaiya, who noted that there was no state presence in the VDCs (LL-4-9 28th August 2011, Kalaiya) and that the activities of first the Maoists then the Madeshi Andolan had destroyed other parties support bases. LL-4-10 28th August 2011, Kalaiya.

⁵³⁹ Part of the expansion of informal justice decision makers may have occurred because of the large number of social groups requiring their own leaders. Further, it should be noted that conflicts which occurred within the Muslim community applied a form of Sharia law; cases involving more than one social group would use an unnamed but consensual understanding of local justice to reach decisions. LL-4-3 24th August 2011, Haraiya.

experience in informal justice were returned (at times reluctantly) to active duty.⁵⁴⁰ This meant for example that the Maoists had to engage with local community leaders on a more even footing than they would have done in areas where they had greater control with a more robust People's Government and People's Court system.⁵⁴¹ However they still had coercive ability, as this example, described by a Panchayat leader shows:

R: "It was rice seedling planting season. The water was not sufficient at that time. Every villager wanted to irrigate their paddy field first. In one instance, two villagers were fighting for the proper distribution of the water on their land. The Maoists came with weapons and intervened in the fighting between them. They held one of the villagers and took him away with them. The next day early in the morning we held a Panchayati [meeting] with the Maoist. The man who was arrested was released with the decision of the Panchayati ... [but] the decision went in favour of the Maoists because they had weapons."

The locally generated efforts at informal justice mechanisms maintained themselves quite robustly and shaped the penetration of the People's Court; indeed, they have continued past the end of the conflict where there were still no locally elected representatives.⁵⁴² The formal governance system in Kalaiya, where there is a court house and judges, declined in importance during the conflict because of Maoist pressure on the population not to engage the formal courts system; in all likelihood at an aggregate level across Bara this led to more people using the informal systems, as in Haraiya, rather than using the Maoist People's Court exclusively. After the insurgency ended the number of cases in the courts increased substantially as cases that were not resolved or registered during the insurgency emerged.⁵⁴³

The fact that there were three competing systems: the informal Panchayati system, the formal courts and the People's Court, meant that plaintiffs could shop around for the outcome they wanted.⁵⁴⁴ In the context where one of the systems was armed, conflicts also escalated into violence, though in Haraiya no one was killed as a result of this kind of confrontation.⁵⁴⁵ The accepted role of the Panchayats in expanding their

⁵⁴⁰ LL-4-2 24th August 2011, Haraiya, LL-4-3 24th August 2011, Haraiya: in common with many rural areas the main focus of the informal structures were to address land and water issues, in particular water distribution during April and May. Another respondent noted that the Panchayats also dealt with some social issues like alcohol consumption. LL-4-7 26th August 2011, Haraiya.

⁵⁴¹ This was denied by some Maoist leaders. LL-4-5 25th August 2011, Haraiya.

⁵⁴² EA-4-4 24th August 2011, Haraiya.

⁵⁴³ EA-4-12 28th August 2011, Kalaiya.

⁵⁴⁴ EA-4-12 28th August 2011, Kalaiya and LL-4-3 24th August 2011, Haraiya.

⁵⁴⁵ LL-4-3 24th August 2011, Haraiya.

activities to the acquiescence of the elected political leaders is also remarkable because some of the Panchayat leaders are alleged to have attempted to shut down the growing democracy movement in Haraiya in the 1980s.⁵⁴⁶ This meant that prior to the conflict the Panchayat leaders and some of the elected politicians, particularly from UML, previously had difficult relationships.

After the CA election in 2008, governance had still not stabilised despite the apparently reduced threat from armed groups. The VDC building started operating again in 2010 (though it had not been refurbished since the bombings), the staff were present and VDC meetings were held. There was a broad engagement with the main decision makers representing all the wards, ethnic groups and political parties;⁵⁴⁷ however, many respondents described the current governance system as unstable and the worst they had seen pointing at two causes: the 'all-party system' for decision making and the massive expansion in government development spending.⁵⁴⁸

The all-party system, initially established in the 1990s, but revived after the end of the insurgency, was meant to ensure that all parties had a stake in decision making at district and VDC levels in the absence of local elections whilst the new Constitution was agreed in Kathmandu. Related to that international donors and the Nepali government had substantially increased direct spending by local government at both the district and VDC level to affect a peace dividend. This resulted in a situation where instead of one elected representative being accountable to their electorate,⁵⁴⁹ there is now an amorphous bloc of leaders (at district level in Bara there are twenty-two parties in the all-party mechanism) who were given the opportunity to spend a substantial amount of money. The system resulted in a massive increase in corruption with some projects reporting that 40% or more of funds were being lost,⁵⁵⁰ and a sharp fall in support for governance by the Nepali state.⁵⁵¹ The increased corruption

⁵⁴⁶ LL-4-1 23rd August 2011, Haraiya and LL-4-3 24th August 2011, Haraiya.

⁵⁴⁷ Minutes of Haraiya VDC meeting held on December 30th 2010, held by author.

⁵⁴⁸ IN-4-7 21st October 2011, Kathmandu.

⁵⁴⁹ This was the experience in Haraiya, whose previous elected VDC Presidents were highly praised. EA-4-1 23rd August 2011, Haraiya.

⁵⁵⁰ IN-4-3 28th August 2011, Kalaiya: this refers specifically to the Local Government and Community Development Programme (LGCDP) Local; other respondents with knowledge of local development budgets suggested losses were in the region of 25-60% either through cash being stolen or overcharging of materials. EA-4-2 23rd August 2011, Haraiya.

⁵⁵¹ EA-4-4 24th August 2011, Haraiya noted that corruption starts at the top and that those who had been fighting against the state had moved to Kathmandu to join the government for their own benefit, which also contributed to the rapid collapse of the People's Government in Bara. A similar sentiment was expressed by LL-4-1 26th August 2011, Haraiya, quoted in full at the beginning of the chapter and LL-4-5 25th

has not simply affected spending in terms of development projects, but may also be undermining the informal Panchayat justice system and corrupting decision making. The continued degradation in the trust in local institutions could have long-term consequences;⁵⁵² however, it cannot simply be inferred from this that elections are the answer – the CA elections themselves were noted for being destabilising. Indeed it was fear of violence during the CA election that led the community to ask for the re-establishment of the police post in 2008.⁵⁵³

The governance story in Haraiya over the last decade suggests that without substantial numbers of Maoist cadres to enforce their will, the Maoists had to limit their ambitions for the People's Government in Haraiya and their influence in Bara more generally. The local responses to the limited Maoist attempts at gaining influence suggest there were bigger, more substantial, networks that had little ideological interest in the conflict and simply wanted to maintain governance in their own interests, primarily the provision of local justice. This meant that the community effectively sidestepped an element of the conflict and allowed the Nepali government presence to shrivel, though they did not allow it to die off completely. This may have been effective for the local population, but not necessarily for the state.

Security interventions to support stabilisation

This subsection looks at the ways in which security, provided by the Maoists, the government or the local self-defence group, affected stability within Haraiya VDC. It suggests that the initial security gains made by the Maoists could not be sustained or consolidated once the police were re-deployed to Kalaiya; instead the state security forces were able to mount operations in the local area which led to the killing or capturing of Maoist cadres. Despite this the government did not feel strong enough to re-establish the post until the community asked for the re-instatement of the police post at the time of the CA elections in 2008. Instead a security vacuum was created whereby neither side had full control. Local leaders with business interests organised their own self-defence group to provide protection from the state, the PLA and from criminal groups in the area of Madhuwan's market, the main hub of Haraiya VDC. Other wards in the VDC were less fortunate, were left to the predations of criminal gangs, and had to provide food and shelter to the Maoists.

The absolute numbers of mobilised Maoist fighters from Bara are difficult to verify but responses indicate that Haraiya probably provided a substantial proportion of the cadres from Bara district; estimates suggest that there were between fifty to one

August 2011, Haraiya, LL-4-7 26th August 2011, Haraiya, IN-4-5 29th August 2011, Kalaiya, EA-4-6 25th August 2011, Haraiya.

⁵⁵² EA-4-12 28th August 2011, Kalaiya.

⁵⁵³ EA-4-2 23rd August 2011, Haraiya and EA-4-8 25th August 2011, Haraiya.

hundred Maoist combatants from Bara,⁵⁵⁴ of which somewhere around thirty came from Haraiya though only five were in the cantonments at the time of the field research.⁵⁵⁵ However, because of the 'east-west' policy of the Maoists, most fighters from Haraiya did not fight within the VDC.⁵⁵⁶ Maoist forces in the field during the conflict probably did not consist of more than twenty to thirty individuals working in teams of five to seven.⁵⁵⁷ The low numbers of active Maoist combatants and political leaders led to a greater overlap between military (PLA) and civilian (People's Government) roles, and also helped explain why the relatively few casualties which resulted from security operations had a disproportionate impact on the long-term viability of the Maoists in Haraiya.⁵⁵⁸ Weapons systems were modest and included Nalkatuwa pistols, air rifles, muzzle loading riffles and some .303 Enfield rifles.⁵⁵⁹

In 2002, the Maoists attacked the police post, and on the day of the attack forewarned traders in the market.⁵⁶⁰ During the attack, which involved at least one bomb, two policemen were killed. Subsequently the police were withdrawn from the post and re-deployed in Kalaiya.⁵⁶¹ The response of the Nepali government to Maoist activity was to launch national operations against the Maoists including both Kilo Sierra 2 and 3;⁵⁶² whilst these were national operations elements of them were carried out in Bara leading to the capture and killing of three Maoists from Haraiya.⁵⁶³ It is notable that the deaths of so few Maoists had a substantial impact on the long-term position of the Maoists in Haraiya, who can now count on very few supporters within Haraiya.⁵⁶⁴

The type of violence applied by the Maoists was quite specific, and consisted of the discreet targeting of government institutions such as the police and VDC, but they refused to attack other political parties in Bara at the VDC level.⁵⁶⁵ At a district level

⁵⁵⁴ NL-4-3 16th August 2011, Kathmandu.

⁵⁵⁵ EA-4-1 23rd August 2011, Haraiya.

⁵⁵⁶ NL-4-3 16th August 2011, Kathmandu.

⁵⁵⁷ LL-4-1 24th August 2011, Haraiya and LL-4-3 24th August 2011, Haraiya.

⁵⁵⁸ Four Maoists from Haraiya were killed during the conflict. NL-4-3 16th August 2011, Kathmandu.

⁵⁵⁹ EA-4-1 23rd August 2011, Haraiya.

⁵⁶⁰ LL-4-7 26th August 2011, Haraiya.

⁵⁶¹ This had the knock on effect that Kalaiya became heavily policed. EA-4-10 28th August 2011, Kalaiya.

⁵⁶² EA-4-1 23rd August 2011, Haraiya.

⁵⁶³ NL-4-3 16th August 2011, Kathmandu.

⁵⁶⁴ LL-4-1 23rd August 2011, Haraiya; one other significant Maoist leader who participated in the PLA has since gone underground himself, hiding from the Maoists, and is reportedly in Kathmandu.

⁵⁶⁵ NL-4-3 16th August 2011, Kathmandu.

the PLA were willing to threaten NC leaders who now remain under threat of assassination from armed groups rather than the Maoists.⁵⁶⁶ The Maoists took a pragmatic view of other parties, including those emerging in the Madeshi polity, because their aims, namely the removal of the monarchy and institution of a republic, converged with those of the Maoists, particularly after King Gyanendra had abolished Parliament in 2002 and seized state power in 2005.⁵⁶⁷ The Maoists' willingness to forge alliances in the Terai was founded on their professed support for the Madeshi cause. Some groups such as JTMM-Goit spun off from the Maoists because they felt that they had reneged on their support of for the Madeshi and helps to explain why, when the Maoists have been in power, they have been unable to fully curtail the armed groups (Mathema, 2011, pp. 28-30).

In order to generate revenue the Maoists regularly extorted money. Respondents in Haraiya were clear they did not often engage the police to deal with these issues.⁵⁶⁸ This was only partially explained by threats made by the Maoists that there would be retaliations against anyone who went to the police. Instead respondents preferred to address the threats within the community, which suggested that they were in many respects already separated from the police and state, who they thought would not be interested or able to address the threats, or in the worst case, would leak the names of those who had informed the police of Maoist activity.⁵⁶⁹

Government operations to try and capture Maoists often involved searches of houses and on more than one occasion the police used mass-arrests to round up suspected Maoist supporters. The nature of the conflict, where the Maoists would co-opt labour to support their military activities,⁵⁷⁰ and stay in houses across the communities, naturally attracted the attention of the security forces that would often search houses repeatedly.⁵⁷¹ The fact that these operations would alienate parts of the population did not seem to have been of great concern to the security forces, even if it pushed more people towards the Maoists or reduced the level of support from other leaders when, for example, they would accidentally detain Nepali Congress leaders.⁵⁷²

⁵⁶⁶ LL-4-7 26th August 2011, Haraiya and LL-4-10 28th August 2011, Kalaiya.

⁵⁶⁷ LL-4-7 26th August 2011, Haraiya and LL-4-9 28th August 2011, Kalaiya.

⁵⁶⁸ EA-4-1 23rd August 2011, Haraiya.

⁵⁶⁹ EA-4-3 24th August 2011, Haraiya and EA-4-1 23rd August 2011, Haraiya: another respondent suggested that they had reported threats to the police in Kalaiya but the police had not investigated it, and if they had they would have been able to address the insurgency much more effectively. EA-4-13 29th August 2011, Kalaiya.

⁵⁷⁰ EA-4-4 24th August 2011, Haraiya.

⁵⁷¹ LL-4-4 24th August 2011, Haraiya and EA-4-6 25th August 2011, Haraiya.

⁵⁷² EA-4-7 25th August 2011, Haraiya, LL-4-5 25th August 2011, Haraiya and EA-4-6 25th August 2011, Haraiya.

In response to the security vacuum the local population formed a self-defence group in 2003 which actively ran until 2004, under the ostensible leadership of a local political leader who also had business interests.⁵⁷³ There are a range of views about why the group was established, which are worth discussing in detail. For the local leaders and market traders the self-defence group provided a way to protect themselves against the Maoists who had either looted a number of shops themselves or paid criminal gangs to do it for them.⁵⁷⁴ For these sections of the community the self-defence group provided just enough security to allow trading to continue and physically protected the market area and timber interests of some of the leaders in Haraiya.⁵⁷⁵ This is not a small feat in the midst of an armed insurgency, especially when, by common agreement, they were only armed with khukris and sticks.⁵⁷⁶

For others, most notably civilians living in other wards in Haraiya that did not have a self-defence group, they looked upon the group as being relatively benign, though ineffective in protecting others from Maoist threats and criminal groups.⁵⁷⁷ For observers in Kalaiya the group was purely a reflection of the business interests of the leaders and a way for them to protect their timber activities.⁵⁷⁸ External actors viewed this as one of several examples of the state sponsoring armed groups against the insurgency.⁵⁷⁹ For their part the Maoists switched between denying the group's existence to dismissing it as being in league with the police informing on Maoist activities. In any case they claimed it never involved more than five to six people.⁵⁸⁰

⁵⁷³ LL-4-1 24th August 2011, Haraiya: there was a central government policy of supporting militias which had been fielded by 2003, the Haraiya VDC self-defence group was not formally part of the initiative though it had tacit approval from the state. For further discussion on the government's programme see ICG, 2004, pp. 1-3.

⁵⁷⁴ LL-4-1 24th August 2011, Haraiya and EA-4-9 25th August 2011, Haraiya: the distinctions between the Maoists who apparently used criminals as part of their forces and the self-defence group whose members were also involved in criminal smuggling of timber indicates that the face value of actions in the conflict were not as they first seemed.

⁵⁷⁵ There is also the suggestion that the self-defence group reacted against Maoist attempts to curtail alcohol consumption (EA-4-6 25th August 2011, Haraiya) and other members of the self-defence group were keen to emphasise that they did not necessarily disagree with the ideology of the Maoists, just the armed resistance to the state. EA-4-9 25th August 2011, Haraiya.

⁵⁷⁶ LL-4-1 24th August 2011, Haraiya.

⁵⁷⁷ EA-4-9 25th August 2011, Haraiya.

⁵⁷⁸ EA-4-11 28th August 2011, Kalaiya.

⁵⁷⁹ IN-4-7 21st October 2011, Kathmandu.

⁵⁸⁰ NL-4-3 16th August 2011, Kathmandu.

Irrespective of this contested narrative the group established contact with *both* the PLA and the police in Kalaiya to inform them that the group would be operating,⁵⁸¹ clearly demonstrating the lack of control that either group had. This allowed the two warring parties to continue their conflict outside the zone of control established by the self-defence group. The Maoists were banned from operating in Madhuwan (though they were allowed access if they were unarmed) and the police were told that the group would provide information on the Maoists.⁵⁸² Despite this collusion the Maoists did not blame the self-defence group for the killings of their cadres in police operations, indicating the information the group gave to the police may have been of poor quality.⁵⁸³ At a practical level local leaders suggested there were up to eighty-one members split into groups of nine. One of the reasons they claimed they were not afraid of the Maoists is that whilst the Maoists were armed with guns, the less well armed self-defence group would be able to engage the Maoists at close range because of the antiquated weapons used by the PLA, which included muzzle loading rifles.⁵⁸⁴ Maoist leaders, not surprisingly, downplayed the significance of the self-defence group, claiming that it did not affect their operations.⁵⁸⁵

The effectiveness of the group in maintaining some form of local cohesion and physical security helps explain why there was relatively little displacement from the village during the conflict. Some families had migrated from Haraiya to Kalaiya prior to the violence starting due to growing Maoist activities,⁵⁸⁶ but only five to seven people were believed to have fled during the conflict because of Maoist threats and pressure and the vast majority of the former political leadership stayed in the VDC throughout the conflict.⁵⁸⁷ However, two police officers who were from Haraiya were killed in the VDC whilst they were on leave at home.⁵⁸⁸ Despite these incidents outwards migration did not increase substantially during the conflict, indicating a reasonable level of stability. As a result a picture emerges where the population effectively stood aside and refused to choose sides; neither supporting the state nor the Maoists as long as

⁵⁸¹ LL-4-1 23rd, 24th and 26th August 2011, Haraiya and EA-4-6 25th August 2011, Haraiya.

⁵⁸² EA-4-9 25th August 2011, Haraiya and LL-4-1 24th August 2011, Haraiya.

⁵⁸³ NL-4-3 16th August 2011, Kathmandu and LL-4-5 25th August 2011, Haraiya.

⁵⁸⁴ LL-4-1 24th August 2011, Haraiya and EA-4-9 25th August 2011, Haraiya.

⁵⁸⁵ LL-4-5 25th August 2011, Haraiya.

⁵⁸⁶ EA-4-10 28th August 2011, Kalaiya.

⁵⁸⁷ LL-4-1 24th August 2011, Haraiya.

⁵⁸⁸ LL-4-1 24th August 2011, Haraiya.

their livelihoods were not threatened and therefore the self-defence group was simply an expression of limited self-preservation.⁵⁸⁹

During the more recent conflict against the less politically orientated armed groups the police have begun to take a different stance. The community demand for the re-establishment of the police post in 2008 and the launching of the Special Security Plan in 2009 led to additional police resources being deployed in Bara generally and Haraiya specifically. The Maoist insurgency had also transformed the police who began to rectify the mistakes of their heavy handed policing approach, which has led to greater support from the population. For example, a kiln owner in Haraiya utilised both informal Panchayat leaders coupled with police pressure to regain access to his kiln after a neighbour blocked the access road.⁵⁹⁰ Other respondents, including the police themselves, pointed to changes in the way the police operate now which was more responsive to the local community.⁵⁹¹ However, there were clearly limits to this.

During the field research '*Janatantrik*'⁵⁹² placed IEDs outside a primary school and a chautari to the north and east of Madhuwan respectively. These IEDs had no fuses but were clearly live (one of them was moved and exploded). They were intended to intimidate people to pay donations to the group; as one respondent put it the armed groups: "*plant the bomb and start calling*".⁵⁹³ The police investigation of the bombings was scant and they believed there was nothing that could be done to stop the bombings.⁵⁹⁴ The group had also threatened other local leaders but some of the residents had contacted leaders of '*Janatantrik*' from Haraiya to apply pressure to stop the threats, demonstrating a strong will to resist the current armed groups which was not present when the Maoists were the ones threatening the population.⁵⁹⁵ More broadly in Bara armed groups were blamed for the deaths of fourteen to fifteen people in 2010, and a further four to five people were killed in the first eight months

⁵⁸⁹ The lack of support for the state may stem from a historical grievance amongst the population that the Nepali state was in effect a colonialist state vis-à-vis the people of the Terai because so few of the local population achieved positions of power within the executive or political leadership. See for example Social Inclusion Research Fund, 2007, pp. 17-29; Gaige, 2009, pp. 197-205.

⁵⁹⁰ EA-4-3 24th August 2011, Haraiya.

⁵⁹¹ EA-4-12 28th August 2011, Kalaiya.

⁵⁹² Respondents referred to the groups as *Janatantrik*, though this is part of the name of the most well-known armed group, *Janatantrik Mukhti Morcha (JTMM)* Goit faction; the respondents were unclear if they believed that the armed group was in fact linked to JTMM. For a more detailed discussion on JTMM's factions and background see Mathema, 2011, pp. 62-8.

⁵⁹³ EA-4-11 28th August 2011, Kalaiya.

⁵⁹⁴ IN-4-1 26th August 2011, Haraiya.

⁵⁹⁵ LL-4-2 24th August 2011, Haraiya.

of 2011.⁵⁹⁶ There remains the risk that the improvements in more proactive policing may be lost and the communities return to relying on informal mechanisms to address local threats. This may not be negative for the local population if they believe they can face the threats themselves; it does however weaken the state and mean that if the armed groups improved their techniques or modified their messages to become more politicised and anti-state the population may decide again to step aside and not support the state.⁵⁹⁷

If there is a stabilisation outcome in security for Haraiya from the last decade it is that no single entity, Maoist, government or local force, had sufficient control of the environment to provide stability for the broader population. Some groups were privileged and able to access protection from either the Maoists in Naya Basti or the self-defence group in Madhuwan, but the punitive searches and operations by the state during the conflict attest to the ongoing contestation of security control. Other activities, development and governance by both the state and Maoists were stymied because neither side had overall control and therefore the outcome was one of security instability.

Development interventions to support stabilisation

This subsection assesses the impact of development projects on the stability of Haraiya over the period of the conflict and concludes that development does not present strong explanatory evidence to suggest why one group (the Pahadi) were more easily mobilised in the conflict than the more disadvantaged groups (the Madeshi Dalits). Nor does development seem to have been factored into local decision making to establish the self-defence group, nor the expansion of informal governance systems as described in the previous section. Instead development seems to have been something of a passive bystander during much of the conflict.

Prior to the conflict, Haraiya was noted as being one of the more developed rural VDCs in Bara.⁵⁹⁸ In theory, at least, the development spending released in the 1990s should have targeted the most disenfranchised, the Dalits. However it is clear that the Dalits continued to have low levels of school participation and access to clean drinking water, and that many continued to work as daily labourers on the fields of the wealthier classes of the other ethnic groups in Haraiya.⁵⁹⁹ Their relatively

⁵⁹⁶ EA-4-11 28th August 2011, Kalaiya.

⁵⁹⁷ A security specialist argued that the current technical capability of the armed group's IEDs were akin to the first generation of Maoist capability at the beginning of the insurgency. IN-4-4 28th August 2011, Kalaiya.

⁵⁹⁸ EA-4-1 23rd August 2011, Haraiya.

⁵⁹⁹ EA-4-4 24th August 2011, Haraiya, EA-4-1 23rd August 2011, Haraiya and LL-4-2 24th August 2011, Haraiya.

disadvantaged position should have made them ripe for mobilisation to the class-based ideology of the Maoists, but instead the Maoists only found significant support from the relatively affluent Pahadi settlers.

Once the violent conflict started in Haraiya the Maoists had a highly evolved sense of which activities were considered to be developmental and those that were considered to be oppressive. They took great pains to close down the executive branches of the Nepali state, and those collecting revenues (such as the forestry office) which they achieved with relative ease. However, they did not target schools or clinics, in part because these services were integral to the Maoists' ideology but also because they were widely used and appreciated by the population. Shutting down the schools or clinics would have been counter-productive to the Maoist cause, and even now armed groups that threaten these services are contacted through proxies by local leaders to inform them that those services are important to the population and should be left alone.⁶⁰⁰ This of course didn't stop the Maoists from collecting revenues from teachers' salaries,⁶⁰¹ and they attempted to exert authority over the schools by daubing them in pro-Maoist slogans, but they were careful not to interrupt the functioning of the schools themselves.⁶⁰²

There was one non-government actor that the Maoists specifically sought to shut down, a micro-credit bank called Nirdhan. They targeted the bank because of its alleged practice of charging usurious interest which was considered to be one of the mechanisms through which the poor masses were suppressed by the rich landlords. Despite the shutdown, the missed credit opportunities that could have been provided through the bank do not feature amongst the respondents' concerns about the impact of the Maoists in Haraiya.⁶⁰³ Other actors in the development sector included Plan International and the Nepal Federation of the Red Cross who had been engaged in Haraiya for some time before the conflict. These agencies worked across a broad swath of development sectors including water and sanitation, education, health and agriculture, or by providing improved seedlings.⁶⁰⁴ They also pushed for development projects to be targeted at disadvantaged groups including girls, female headed

⁶⁰⁰ LL-4-2 24th August 2011, Haraiya.

⁶⁰¹ LL-4-9 28th August 2011, Kalaiya.

⁶⁰² LL-4-2 24th August 2011, Haraiya.

⁶⁰³ EA-4-11 28th August 2011, Kalaiya: Nirdhan Bank has been operating since 1998, and one of the reasons that its removal may have had little impact was that it had not been active for a significant time before it was removed. Nirdhan's operation in Bara is its largest in Nepal and it currently has eight branches in the district (Poudel, 2010, pp. 12-13; Nirdhan Utthan Bank Limited, Undated).

⁶⁰⁴ LL-4-4 24th August 2011, Haraiya, EA-4-6 25th August 2011, Haraiya.

households and the Dalit community.⁶⁰⁵ Whilst the Maoists allowed these projects to go ahead they also saw the development agencies as a source of income,⁶⁰⁶ with some paying several thousand Nepali rupees in donations.⁶⁰⁷ Over time Plan gradually reduced its activities during the conflict, an unintended consequence of Maoist action which also lost them support in Haraiya.⁶⁰⁸ Plan eventually phased out of Haraiya in 2011 because of renewed threats from armed groups asking for donations.⁶⁰⁹

One development subsector that highlights the conflicting relevance of development to stability is in the provision of wells to improve access to a potable water supply. In Haraiya public wells have been provided by Plan, the Red Cross and the Ministry of Water Resources and a number of wells have also been built using private investment.⁶¹⁰ Those built with private money can only be built by wealthier families and disadvantaged groups mainly access public wells provided in a targeted fashion by the development agencies. However, to assume that the provision of potable water makes the area more stable seems to stretch the impact of the development intervention beyond its original intention (to provide clean drinking water). Several of the pumps have fallen into disrepair because they were not maintained and local respondents were not particularly concerned about trying to get them repaired. They were nice to have but not essential in their eyes, and if someone wanted to build them a well they would not stand in their way – it is after all something for nothing.⁶¹¹ The stabilising effect of the wells was not apparent to the beneficiaries, who saw the overriding impact of Maoist initiated instability as negating any potential positive impact of the wells. Though it is possible that by having access to basic services (such

⁶⁰⁵ EA-4-1 23rd August 2011, Haraiya.

⁶⁰⁶ Maoist attempts to collect donations from NGOs were widespread during the conflict and led donors, UN and bi-lateral development agencies to sign up to the Basic Operating Guidelines (BOGs) in an attempt to assert their independence from the conflict and refuse to pay donations. The guidelines were “adopted in 2003, the BOGs are the main mechanism the UN, donors and I/NGOs have for protecting operating space. They are based on established and accepted humanitarian principles and international legal standards. They protect the interest of the conflict-affected population and the safety and security of UN, Donor and INGO staff” (United Nations, 2011).

⁶⁰⁷ EA-4-6 25th August 2011, Haraiya, EA-4-1 23rd August 2011, Haraiya and LL-4-5 25th August 2011, Haraiya: it is not fully clear whether the donations that were paid were taken from project budgets or whether staff decided to give part of their salaries.

⁶⁰⁸ EA-4-6 25th August 2011, Haraiya.

⁶⁰⁹ IN-5-7 27th September 2011, Kathmandu.

⁶¹⁰ EA-4-8 25th August 2011, Haraiya.

⁶¹¹ EA-4-7 25th August 2011, Haraiya and EA-4-8 25th August 2011, Haraiya.

as water, education and health) population movement during the conflict may have been kept low.⁶¹²

The difficulties in spending development funding through the VDC mechanism meant that government-led development during the conflict was carried out at a very low level.⁶¹³ This however meant there was a surplus of funding in the district, particularly as security forces folded back into the district headquarters, boosting the security presence there. The District Development Council (DDC) was able to function in Kalaiya and deliver development projects including the gravelling of roads.⁶¹⁴ This meant there was a highly securitised form of development around the district headquarters, though the ongoing attacks by the Maoists including a bombing campaign, suggested that neither the increased security deployment nor the development projects mitigated the violence substantially.⁶¹⁵

The Maoists themselves had a weak record on development in Haraiya. The Maoists claimed to have carried out projects in thirty of Bara's VDCs during the ceasefires between the Maoists and the Nepal government in 2003 and 2005/6.⁶¹⁶ The projects were very small scale (i.e. small wooden bridges) reflecting the relatively poor fiscal position that the Madeshi Autonomous Region People's Government faced in Bara, and in some cases the population in Haraiya refused to recognise that 'Maoist projects' had actually been implemented by the Maoists themselves.⁶¹⁷ Additionally the projects were often related to the freedom of movement, such as bridges, which served the dual purpose of being useful for the PLA as well as being of incidental benefit to the population, so they cannot be understood solely as development projects.

The most well-known Maoist project in Haraiya was the building of a chautari, or resting place, on the northern edge of Naya Basti as the forest begins to thicken.⁶¹⁸ In many respects the choice of the chautari is illustrative of the weak position of the

⁶¹² LL-4-4 24th August 2011, Haraiya.

⁶¹³ EA-4-1 23rd August 2011, Haraiya.

⁶¹⁴ LL-4-9 28th August 2011, Kalaiya.

⁶¹⁵ EA-4-11 28th August 2011, Kalaiya.

⁶¹⁶ NL-4-3 16th August 2011, Kathmandu.

⁶¹⁷ NL-4-3 16th August 2011, Kathmandu & LL-4-5 25th August 2011, Haraiya: the main example disputed in Haraiya was a small wooden bridge not far from the chautari that was built by the Maoists. One respondent claimed that the money for the bridge came from donations from the local population and was not organised by the Maoists. EA-4-6 25th August 2011, Haraiya.

⁶¹⁸ LL-4-1 24th August 2011, Haraiya.

Maoists in Haraiya;⁶¹⁹ it is a small wooden structure seating about 10 people, providing shelter from the rain or sun. It functioned as a resting and meeting place for the Maoists themselves, and at times their 'court'.⁶²⁰ Even during the conflict senior government officials (such as the Superintendent of Police) felt comfortable travelling at least as far as the chautari, demonstrating a lack of Maoist control.⁶²¹ Other than the chautari the Maoists struggled to mobilise labour for their cause, and what labour was co-opted focused on providing military support, for example asking villagers to plant bombs on behalf of the Maoists.⁶²²

Questions remain whether the Maoist attempts to side-line government-led development and promote their own actually changed the conflict. The Maoists were convinced that the projects influenced some people to join them, though this was not found to be the case in Haraiya.⁶²³ There was in fact frustration with the Maoists for interrupting development activities, both state and non-governmental, which would have harmed their support amongst the population.⁶²⁴ There was also no evidence that the development projects, which were implemented during the conflict, stopped the local population from joining the Maoists. Finally, lack of development did not seem to promote mobilisation amongst the Dalits, the most disadvantaged social group, who were and remain sceptical of the Maoist party, and the Maoists could not exert governance control.

Since the end of the Maoist insurgency the VDC budget was increased from an average of three lakhs to sixteen lakhs per year.⁶²⁵ Despite the large increase in spending respondents vociferously complained about corruption and the ineffectiveness of projects when compared to those implemented prior to the insurgency.⁶²⁶ Accounting for inflation and the population increase over the last decade an increase in spending between 1999 and 2010 from three lakhs to sixteen lakhs NPR implies a real increase of two-thirds;⁶²⁷ however, with large proportions of

⁶¹⁹ EA-4-6 25th August 2011, Haraiya also suggested that the Maoists had intended to build a road in Haraiya but that they "did not have the power (government) and the budget" to do so.

⁶²⁰ LL-4-1 23rd, 24th and 26th August 2011, Haraiya.

⁶²¹ EA-4-6 25th August 2011, Haraiya.

⁶²² EA-4-4 24th August 2011, Haraiya.

⁶²³ NL-4-3 16th August 2011, Kathmandu.

⁶²⁴ EA-4-1 23rd August 2011, Haraiya.

⁶²⁵ EA-4-1 23rd August 2011, Haraiya and Minutes of Haraiya VDC meeting held on December 30th 2010, held by author.

⁶²⁶ EA-4-2 23rd August 2011, Haraiya, EA-4-1 23rd August 2011, Haraiya.

⁶²⁷ Author estimates based on inflation in Nepal averaging 10% between 1999-2010; with inflation only the budget should have increased to 7.8 lakhs NRS, allowing for an

funding being lost through corruption the real impact of the increased spending has, according to respondents at several levels (including those implementing the projects), been negligible.⁶²⁸

Aside from development spending it is instructive to repeat the significance of the major element of Haraiya's economy, the timber trade. There was tension between the self-defence group and the local and district level Maoist leadership over control of the timber trade, competition which had not stopped at the time of research and which had led to the death of at least one Nepali journalist during the conflict who was investigating Maoist links to the smuggling trade.⁶²⁹ In terms of economic value, relevance to the main political actors and significance to local livelihoods and wealth creation, the timber trade, both licit and illicit, provides a much stronger economic incentive for the most powerful groups in Haraiya to engage one another than the development projects, which were of comparatively modest scale and impact.

During the conflict the business networks that sustained Madhuwan's market and the illicit timber smuggling activities in the forest in the north of the VDC were instrumental in forming the self-defence group discussed above. However, it is striking that their interests were largely related to livelihoods, commercial enterprise and security, rather than the pursuit of an ideological position. As described in the governance section the community in Haraiya effectively refused to support either the Maoists or the state in their struggle for dominance. All sides utilised Maoist and state institutions when physically safe to do so and when in their interests (for example ensuring some development spending got through or by using the People's Court to address unresolved conflicts). Once physical security had been assured, it was the market that asserted itself, in many respects the most free of 'free markets' one in which there were almost no boundaries except in the selective use of violence, though that is not to say it was stable. After the conflict the community leaders who backed the self-defence group managed to protect their economic interests in the market in Madhuwan as well as their logging activities even though the government's forestry office returned to the area.⁶³⁰

More recently local businessmen have also started to invest their capital in the local economy. The establishment of three kilns in Haraiya since 2008, i.e. after the

increase in spending to keep pace with the population increase (of 25% over 10 years) development spending should have reached 9.75 lakhs NRS.

⁶²⁸ IN-4-3 28th August 2011, Kalaiya, EA-4-1 23rd August 2011, Haraiya.

⁶²⁹ EA-4-12 28th August 2011, Kalaiya (IANS, 2007; Kathmandu Post, 2012; Bhandari, 2011).

⁶³⁰ EA-4-11 28th August 2011, Kalaiya, NL-4-3 16th August and 19th September 2011, Kathmandu and author observations.

insurgency and Madeshi Andolan, has meant that there is sufficient security for businesses to take risks by investing in new enterprises. These have little to do with the development projects that have been carried out in Haraiya in the last generation, except for the building of the road (which was carried out by the government in the 1990s and is necessary for vehicles to access the kilns).⁶³¹ The kilns are now the largest employers of local labour in Haraiya, but are fuelled primarily by demand outside the district (though some sales are made to both Kalaiya and Haraiya).⁶³²

Notwithstanding the health and education impacts of development projects,⁶³³ whilst development spending by both the government and international agencies has been substantial, it did not have a significant impact on improving stability though it most likely helped maintain the population in Haraiya. With the exception of the road built before the conflict development has not provided significant new opportunities for the local population (who are now engaged in low-skilled labour) and the abuses of the development spending may be contributing to disenfranchisement with the Nepali state. Instead it is the private sector, now investing because the environment is safer, which has emerged as the chief way of maintaining stability locally.⁶³⁴

In summary, stabilisation interventions in Bara demonstrate that there are significant limitations in localised self-stabilisation if it is not backed by broader support from both political leaders and the executive. Equally, the Maoists suffered from a lack of security support which undermined their attempts at imposing the People's Government and both sides failed to provide security or political leadership in the region. Therefore the field site of Haraiya presents a useful way of understanding the significant limitations of development in supporting stability when it is implemented by exogenous actors.

Thematic Analysis – Bara

This section provides an analysis of the activities undertaken in Bara and Haraiya VDC to achieve stability and stabilisation through the five analytical themes outlined in Chapter 3 and connected to the independent and dependent variables; 1) periods of stability; 2) culture and context; 3) mode of intervention; 4) political legitimacy and; 5) conceptions of stability. The section concludes by testing this analysis against the intervention theories discussed in Chapter 2 which articulate the theories of statebuilding, COIN and development.

⁶³¹ The road improvements were linked by some respondents to stability; this is discussed further in Chapter 8. EA-4-1 23rd August 2011, Haraiya and EA-4-2 23rd August 2011, Haraiya.

⁶³² EA-4-3 24th August 2011, Haraiya.

⁶³³ NL-4-3 16th August 2011, Kathmandu.

⁶³⁴ EA-4-10 28th August 2011, Kalaiya.

Political interventions by both sides failed to dominate the region and both the Nepali state and People's Government existed side by side in an uneasy and violent co-existence. In many respects over the last generation Haraiya experienced weak stability, not because of the insurgency per se, but because of the repeated waves of migration, clearing of the Sal forest and burgeoning criminal groups in the Terai, who used the ungoverned space between India and Nepal to their advantage. Bara was never politically important enough for the state to robustly protect, nor was Bara well represented amongst the national governments of the last generation and had few patrons to call on to ensure that the government paid it any significant attention. Despite this uneasy stability there was ongoing development, services were expanded and NGOs were able to operate, though this was largely disconnected from the primary economic driver in the area, which lay in the licit and illicit timber trade.

The Maoists were ultimately unable to challenge the dominant underlying social structures prevalent in Bara and Haraiya VDC. Whilst the Maoists did try to administer the area, they failed, and neither side dominated Haraiya during the conflict meaning it was left to traditional systems, in this case the Panchayat leaders, to reform and provide basic governance to the population. This had significant implications for the post-conflict period because not only could the Maoists not challenge traditional systems they proved unable to control the Madeshi parties and groups they co-opted into their struggle against the Nepali state. The Maoist insurgency led to an increase in ethnicisation of politics in the Terai as Madeshi parties pursued their political aspirations for federal autonomy that had not been prevalent before or during the conflict, presenting the Nepali state with a new range of destabilising factors.

The fluid security situation had previously been backed by a relatively rigid political system under the Panchayat regime, which ensured stability, and the primary threat had come from criminal groups. After the conflict the dynamic shifted whereby a fluid and unstable political dynamic was supported by a more robust security presence but this was manifestly less stable and secure for the population who were threatened by resurgent armed groups. This indicates that political systems which are not representative but confer some level of legitimacy on the central state are more stable than a weak democratic system supported by a robust security deployment.

The structures of the state were maintained at great risk to the VDC staff but were insufficient to provide state authority despite the supporting presence of the schools and health clinics. The Maoists similarly, were never able to access the means necessary to enforce their will on the population and secure the governance of the People's Government and the People's Court, despite drawing on the leading role

Maoists from Haraiya played in the party at a district level and in the PLA.⁶³⁵ This uneasy balance allows the case study to shed light on the potential impacts of development interventions to support stabilisation.

The development interventions of the state and NGOs prior to the conflict were not able to prevent substantial attempts by the Maoists to mobilise support, however their primary limitation in Haraiya was their association with the Pahadi settlers rather than poverty and exclusion. However, development spending by the state did not encourage the residents of Haraiya to support the state despite the fact they resented the fact that the Maoists had stopped the VDC from functioning properly. The exogenous NGO activities were appreciated but were not linked by respondents to stability. While Haraiya may be one of the more developed VDCs in Bara this did not stop it from being one of VDCs most affected by the conflict, nor has this necessarily aided its recovery after the insurgency; the main economic driver in Haraiya is the timber trade as well as the locally driven direct investment in brick kilns driven by the construction boom in the urban centres.

Ultimately the development interventions failed to promote stability because there was insufficient security provided by either the Nepali state or the PLA. Instead a local self-defence group stepped in and provided limited security to central Haraiya VDC. This case confirms that the essentially political nature of insurgencies necessitated significant security provision for the population but this challenges the thesis that development, before, during or after a conflict, has a significant stabilising impact, particularly when it is implemented by non-state actors.

The implication that stabilisation is chiefly determined by political actions is reinforced by the evidence that it was a lack of political stability in the centre that contributed to local instability. Within Bara the mainstream NC and CPN-UML political leaders were increasingly sidelined as the Maoists, with Madeshi support, attempted to re-shape the political landscape. As mentioned above it was the Maoists' lack of control of their Madeshi allies that led to the Madeshi Andolan.⁶³⁶ The second element of national stabilisation occurred after the Madeshi Andolan when the state chose, through the Special Security Plan, to enforce the rule of law (to a degree) which addressed the threat posed by the armed groups that flourished after 2008. This resolve was backed by a more robust (though incomplete) political settlement meaning the executive has

⁶³⁵ NL-4-3 16th August and 19th September 2011, Kathmandu and LL-4-5 25th August 2011, Haraiya.

⁶³⁶ Some analysts note that the Maoists in some respects may have regretted promoting the federalist agenda which triggered the violent reaction of the Madeshi parties to the post-insurgency political agreements, in particular the interim Constitution. IN-4-7 21st October 2011, Kathmandu.

been able to exercise its authority – at times brutally – to re-establish state control.⁶³⁷ This was complemented at a local level in Haraiya VDC where the community reached out to the state to provide security.⁶³⁸

The symbiotic relationship between national and local political stability is reinforced by the fears voiced by respondents about future instability stemming from political indecision in Kathmandu rather than locally. Referring back to the prelude at the beginning of the chapter, respondents viewed their political leaders in Kathmandu as leeches because of the fragmenting nature of the political parties (particularly the Madeshi parties) and the inability to conclude the peace process as the main risk to stability.⁶³⁹

In summary, the field site in Bara presented a number of analytical challenges regarding stability. Having been an area prone to instability for much of the 20th Century the area was able to enjoy substantial developmental investments. These investments, by the state and NGOs, seem to provide little explanation for the nature and form of the insurgency and the relative failure of both the state and the Maoists to provide coherent political leadership and local security. Instead the instability experienced during and after the insurgency stemmed from a lack of political will to enforce the rule of law. This was clearly seen as a critical need of the population but localised self-stabilisation was unable to transcend the course of the conflict caused by a crisis of political legitimacy.

Theoretical analysis

This subsection provides an analysis of the statebuilding, COIN and development theories that are being tested through this thesis. The statebuilding⁶⁴⁰ agenda provides only a partial explanation for the failure of the state in Haraiya. The state was not technically very capable prior to the conflict but had clearly been able to operate, deliver programmes and engage with the local political leadership; however, the state chose not to robustly defend the area despite the fact that the localised threat by the Maoists was relatively weak and not widely supported by the population. Rather than

⁶³⁷ It is instructive that all of the district and national political leaders across the parties were now, at least verbally, backing the state to provide security (NL-4-1 9th August 2011, Kathmandu, NL-4-3 16th August and 19th September 2011, Kathmandu, LL-4-10 28th August 2011, Kalaiya), further bolstered by stronger Indian security forces on the border which reduced scope for armed groups to use the border as a means of escape from Nepali security forces. IN-4-7 21st October 2011, Kathmandu.

⁶³⁸ IN-4-1 26th August 2011, Haraiya.

⁶³⁹ LL-4-10 28th August 2011, Kalaiya; NL-4-1 9th August 2011, Kathmandu; NL-4-3 16th August 2011, Kathmandu; IN-4-2, IN-4-3, IN-4-4 28th August 2011, Kalaiya and IN-4-5 29th August 2011, Kalaiya

⁶⁴⁰ See Dobbins et al, 2007, p. 1 quoted on p. 47.

a technocratic failure, it would seem that the collapse of the state in Haraiya during the insurgency came about due to an unwillingness to reach a central political consensus to provide robust, well-protected, governance. In the post-conflict period the dynamic has shifted with the Maoists in government concerned with protecting the state from armed groups; they have sought to strengthen local governance through a focus on security.⁶⁴¹

Whilst COIN⁶⁴² correctly identifies the significance of the political dynamic of insurgencies it does not provide a viable way forward when the state is unable to provide an alternative political narrative to that of the insurgents. In a vacuum of political leadership the use of irregular forces, a common element of COIN, was not helpful for the state. The self-defence group was tacitly approved by the government as a policy to bolster security, but was ineffective in providing robust intelligence or security beyond the small market hub of Haraiya VDC and did not prevent Maoist activities. Without political control and direction the experience of the self-defence group challenges the idea that locally constituted forces can focus on anything other than their own narrow self-interest.

Finally, whilst the statebuilding and COIN theories are challenged by the lack of coherent political will demonstrated by the Nepali state in this case study (evidenced by the fact they abandoned the villages despite the weak challenge of the Maoists); the most significant critique of theories of intervention is focused on the development⁶⁴³ thesis which seems to provide little explanatory evidence for the lack of stability in Haraiya. The continued provision of health and education services throughout the conflict may have supported the population in deciding not to leave, but this could equally be explained by the selective use of violence by the Maoists which meant that much of the population did not feel directly threatened because they were in part protected by the self-defence group. Post-conflict development spending may be increasing instability rather than providing a peace dividend as the respondents have become disenfranchised with a manifestly corrupt 'all-party' mechanism suggesting that mismanagement of development could be detrimental to the state.

In summary, the nature of self-stabilisation in Haraiya was insufficient to promote stability in the absence of a coherent political message from the central government undermining the application of statebuilding and COIN theory. This fatally weakened the state in Haraiya, which retained a presence only because of the efforts of a handful of individuals, and their efforts were stymied because of the poor security

⁶⁴¹ LL-4-9 28th August 2011, Kalaiya.

⁶⁴² See JP3-24, 2009, p. 12 quoted on p. 53.

⁶⁴³ See USIP, 2009, p. 2.9 quoted on p. 55.

environment. In particular, development has provided little evidence to support processes of stabilisation and de-stabilisation in Haraiya in the last decade which have been dominated by the political contest and fallout from the Maoist insurgency.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Haraiya VDC and Bara district more broadly provides a number of challenges to conceptions about how states and other exogenous actors can promote stability. The security vacuum during the conflict led local leaders to form a self-defence group that provided basic security for the market area of Madhuwan but left much of the VDC caught between Maoist activities, security force operations and the predations of criminal groups. Equally the Maoists failed to mobilise groups who should have been predisposed to their message of class struggle and were effectively confined to a Pahadi enclave to the north of Haraiya. Despite the relatively low threat from the Maoists in the area the state effectively failed to respond with a coherent political response, relying instead on punitive patrolling and raids by security forces.

Development activities were extensive, prior, during and after the conflict but did not explain the low levels of Maoist mobilisation amongst disadvantaged groups and did not seem to stop the conflict from escalating. Maoist attempts at using development to expand their appeal were small scale and marginal to the conflict. The exogenous nature of the majority of development implementation during the conflict was divorced from local conceptions of stability and whilst there may have been developmental benefits they were incidental to the political and security contest between the state and Maoists. Over the medium term it seems that it has been the timber trade, both licit and illicit, and the new investment in the brick kilns that has sustained a modicum of stability in the VDC.

Stability has remained largely elusive since the Maoist insurgency affected the area in 2000. The violence during the conflict, the incomplete national peace process resulting from the CPA, the Madeshi Andolan and subsequent fragmenting security environment have inhibited the basic attainment of physical security. The case of Haraiya challenges technocratic and development conceptions of stability formation and roots stability in the nature of the national and local political settlements, which have a stronger influence on local stability than any of the actions of the belligerents, the failed self-stabilisation by the community or the development actors. Ultimately stability won't be achieved until higher level political agreement, which allows the state and the community to collectively address the threats to stability in a more comprehensive manner, is achieved.

Chapter 8 – The stability paradigm

Introduction

Having outlined the processes of stability and stabilisation in the four field sites, this chapter seeks to provide a comparative analysis of the field sites to interrogate the research questions: ‘what is stability?’ and ‘what activities support stability?’ which were outlined in Chapter 3 and which underpin the hypothesis: “stability is driven by local political settlements and produced by local political legitimacy formation which can be supported by interventions.” As well as using the field site data this chapter also uses data from interviews with national and international interveners carried out in Kabul and Kathmandu. The analysis demonstrates that the narrow prisms underpinning the intervention logic in politics, security and development do not necessarily address stability. The chapter concludes that the stability paradigm is distinct and presents a conception of stability that challenges the research hypothesis, which is revised and then tested in Chapter 9 against theories of statebuilding, COIN and development.

The analysis is presented according to the five themes outlined in Chapter 3 and used in each of the case study chapters to structure the thematic analysis: the themes are 1) periods of stability; 2) culture and context; 3) mode of intervention; 4) political legitimacy and; 5) conceptions of stability. The selection of these themes is important and requires some introduction; in doing so it is useful to repeat the figure of variables on p.66, to which the themes are linked:

Independent variables		
Insurgency	Local political economy	Stabilisation intervention
Dependent variables		
Legitimacy	Stability	
Time periods		
Pre-conflict	During-conflict	Current period

Figure 9 Independent and dependent variables in the research design

The first theme, periods of stability, examines why certain periods were identified as stable by respondents to see how stability has been formed or undermined before and during conflicts as well as in the current period, allowing for the identification of factors which made the field sites stable. The second theme, culture and context, focuses on two of the independent variables: insurgency and local political economy. This section considers the relevance of ideology to insurgencies, the nature of state formation, the dependent nature of the case studies, and whether the field sites or broader case studies have characteristics which limit the extrapolation of data to other areas. The third theme, the mode of intervention, focuses on the different types of interventions in the field sites, following the same outline as the preceding four

chapters, and looks at political, security and development interventions in an attempt to identify shared patterns of impact on stability and legitimacy; this is the stabilisation intervention independent variable. The final two themes address the dependent variables of legitimacy and stability. The fourth theme, political legitimacy, connects the field sites to their broader case studies in order to interrogate the data in terms of where stability and political legitimacy are formed and which external factors account for localised stability, and this explores how the various layers of power and influence demonstrated in the field sites shape both stability and legitimacy. The final theme, conceptions of stability, presents a comparison of data from local respondents and interveners (both national and foreign) about how they consider stability is formed. This discussion situates the analysis in the preceding themes to answer the two research questions: 'what is stability?' and 'what activities support stability?' In providing answers to these questions at the end of the chapter the analysis is then used to test and refine the research hypothesis.

Periods of stability

This section addresses previous periods of stability experienced by the respondents and the factors they ascribed to maintaining that stability. What this section will not do is address the concepts of 'pre-conflict' or 'post-conflict', in part because these categories have little meaning in the field sites. Whilst both Kalakan and Rolpa are currently seen as stable, respondents in both sites highlighted their very significant concerns about future instability and conflict looming on the horizon.⁶⁴⁴ Haraiya is meant to be enjoying a peace dividend after the signing of the CPA but Bara was one of eight districts identified as being highly insecure by the Nepali state (Kafle, 2010, p. 9) and Village A in Afghanistan is still the subject of ongoing operations and violence. In many respects this confirms that the concepts of conflict and peace are arbitrary and in fact the lived experience of most people is a moveable continuum in which conflicts increase or decrease in intensity but never go away (Sambanis, 2004, p. 819). In the same way past periods of stability should not be viewed in isolation but rather as periods that transition between more or less unstable periods, raising the questions of whether stability is unachievable and whether, at a strategic level, stability should be abandoned as an objective.

This is significant because one of the striking critiques of any intervention in Helmand is that they are subject to ongoing and long-term processes of social and political change, and stabilisation is a modifier to those processes rather than a determinant of them – so for example long term trends in politics (i.e. the exclusionary approach supported by former Governor Sher Mohammad Akhunzada), in development (i.e.

⁶⁴⁴ NL-3-3 30th October 2011, Kathmandu; LL-3-8 17th October 2011, Liwang; NL-1-1 19th November 2010, Kalakan.

that services are contracted out to NGOs and funded by foreigners and don't promote a social contract) and security (that violent retribution will go unpunished) are important features of the landscape which shape what can be effective as part of stabilisation. A further issue is that the early years of the intervention from 2001-2006 pre-determined the later potential activities and overall outcome of the following years. For example, the years of government neglect and abuse, corruption in development and ceding of territory to the insurgency altered the landscape in such a way that any intervention was likely to be distrusted. Local conflict history matters.

Accepting that all the field sites exist in fluid environments and that prior interventions constrain later action it is instructive to reflect on what periods the respondents identified as being stable and what factors they ascribed to that stability. It may be simplistic to say that the periods prior to the conflict were more stable, but there was a general consensus across the field sites that pre-1978 (in Afghanistan) and pre-1996 (in Nepal) were stable times.⁶⁴⁵ Whilst there may be a tendency to view the past through rose-tinted glasses the level of nuance and commonality across the four field sites regarding the nature of past stability is important in understanding it.

The first common element was the link between stability and security. Though respondents gave varied responses in identifying when the conflicts started, and when instability started to increase, there was a clear connection between violent conflict and instability, which does not mean that the experience of violence excludes stability, because on closer inspection there were periods of stability identified during the conflicts as well as before them. Residents in Village A identified Taliban rule as being stable⁶⁴⁶ and a localised stability was maintained, for some, in Madhuwan village within Haraiya VDC, by the self-defence group.⁶⁴⁷ Again in both of these cases it was the enforced restitution of security that led to increased perceptions of local stability. This leads to the simple conclusion that the central factor in local stability is security, and indeed in several interviews in both Nepal and Afghanistan the conception of tight control or close security was employed by respondents to demonstrate what they saw as the most fundamental component of stability. As one respondent stated: *"Stability means living in tight security, without fear, [so that] kids can go to school, those who have jobs can do their jobs with no problems and the*

⁶⁴⁵ EA-4-1 23rd August 2011, Haraiya, EA-3-2 10th October 2011, Gorahi, LL-3-2 12th October 2011, Liwang.

⁶⁴⁶ LL-2-1 15th November 2010, Kabul; LL-2-5 13th December 2010, Nahr-i Sarraj and NL-2-1 11th December 2010, Kabul; who represent a range of 'pro' and 'anti' Taliban groups.

⁶⁴⁷ LL-4-7 26th August 2011, Haraiya.

people are mentally relaxed. This is stability.”⁶⁴⁸ For some respondents in Nepal stability meant the absence of violence: “there [are] no threats, fear and casualties, so, there is stability here.”⁶⁴⁹

However, security alone appears to be insufficient because the enforcement of security requires a system to apply it; as other respondents in Bara noted the stability experienced before the Maoists was rooted in the fact that, “government rules and regulations were strict at that time. Also, rule of law was much stronger.”⁶⁵⁰ And in Afghanistan respondents pointed to the broader fact that, “after the Russian (sic) invasion the social order was annihilated,” implying that stability is the culmination of the rules being observed and occasionally enforced by security forces.⁶⁵¹

A second key factor, therefore, is an entity to enforce a set of rules. The respondent in Nahr-i Sarraj quoted above also linked stability to *nazm*, (order) which adds the idea of order to the quotes above; stabilisation is about bringing order out of disorder,⁶⁵² bringing coherence out of the chaos. As discussed below the approach of the Taliban and the Maoists was essentially to enforce control. However, unrecognised by insurgents, too much security can lead to a dead peace, as experienced by some in Gajul living under the People’s Government.⁶⁵³ This is an important point to highlight because whilst there was a strong link to security, and its enforcement, there was within those discussions negative connotations with stability, which leads to a third factor: that control by an organised group is not always accepted by the entire population. For example respondents in Bara considered the Panchayat period to be one where, “there was peace in the society despite widespread fear among the people.”⁶⁵⁴ Other respondents were also critical of the idea that stability was anything more than enforcement of the status quo, which in itself may not be of value.⁶⁵⁵ This was also recognised by Taliban respondents in the current conflict who argued that there is no difference between stability and security, who thought that stability is a

⁶⁴⁸ LL-2-6 13th December 2010, Lashkar Gah: in Nepal a similar opinion was voiced by IN-4-4 28th August 2011, Kalaiya.

⁶⁴⁹ LL-4-3 24th August 2011, Haraiya.

⁶⁵⁰ EA-4-1 23rd August 2011, Haraiya, EA-4-3 24th August 2011, Haraiya: Police administration was “not strict” during the insurgency.

⁶⁵¹ LL-1-6 18th October 2010, Kalakan.

⁶⁵² LL-2-6 13th December 2010, Lashkar Gah.

⁶⁵³ LL-3-7 15th October 2011, Gajul.

⁶⁵⁴ LL-4-1 23rd August 2011, Haraiya; NL-3-1 26th July 2011, Kathmandu noted the same from the perspective of Rolpa.

⁶⁵⁵ EA-4-10 28th August 2011, Kalaiya.

second-rate goal, which is not the same as peace, implying peace may be the ultimate source of stability.⁶⁵⁶

Peace is more encompassing, more durable and more desirable for many than stability. While they were linked by most respondents they were not the same thing; however, the implication is that were peace to be secured then stability would be a foregone conclusion. This is not the same as saying that the signing of the peace agreement, the CPA, in Nepal ensured stability – it manifestly did not,⁶⁵⁷ for the very clear reason that the political designers of that deal did not deliver on the promises they made, a theme which is developed further below. This is where the connection is made between local stability and the broader conflicts. It is possible to enforce local stability, as has been demonstrated in Gajul, Village A and in Haraiya, but it is not possible to insulate those areas from national level political instability.

In summary, stability can be both a positive and a negative state, but a key side-effect of stability is a reduced level of violence, which provides some form of order. However stability will only ever be localised when there is a broader political environment in which local stability can be fostered. Past experiences of stability point to a complex eco-system whereby it may be possible to insulate specific areas from instability, but it will be impossible to protect them from all threats, or maintain that stability in the long-term without higher level political processes. These political processes do not have to be inclusive; past stability experiences indicate that a combination of closed elite systems employing, at times, brutal force can be effective in promoting stability. This was the ante-conflict environment of all four field sites discussed. The conflicts and associated exogenous interventions have, however, transformed and shaped the dynamics of the sites so that stability has become fluid. This does not mean stability should be abandoned as an objective, but situates it as a second rate outcome where peace is yet to be achieved. This analysis provides a platform to interrogate the independent variables (the insurgencies, local political economy and stabilisation interventions) and dependent variables (legitimacy and stability) through culture and context, the modes of intervention, political legitimacy and conceptions of stability.

Culture and context

This subsection addresses two of the independent variables: the political economy of the field sites and broader case studies and the nature of the threat, i.e. the insurgencies, that affected all of the sites. This discussion builds on the analysis in the

⁶⁵⁶ LL-2-5 13th December 2010, Nahr-i Sarraj.

⁶⁵⁷ And in fact Nepali respondents were vehemently critical of the lack of progress regarding the CPA; see NL-3-3 30th October 2011, Kathmandu and LL-4-1 26th August 2011, Haraiya (the prelude at the beginning of Chapter 7) amongst many other respondents.

preceding section that looked at historical experiences of stability by arguing that local political economy shapes what forms of intervention are feasible and which are not; it also provides an understanding of the importance of ideology to the political struggle of the insurgencies, the nature of state formation, and the dependency of these states upon the international system based upon their historical position as peripheral states in the narrative of South Asia and provides some limits on how the data can be extrapolated to other areas.

Ideology and insurgencies

In all four sites the last generation has seen a series of changes in the nature of political power, influence and control at a local level, driven in part by central level processes of reform which were often avowedly democratic. In Kalakan and Nahr-i Sarraj there was a shift of power from the traditional landed elites to commander networks during the 1980s and 1990s, which were displaced by the strengthening of the religious leadership's position under the Taliban government. The post-2001 dynamic has largely re-instated the Jihadi commanders in positions of power at the expense of the religious elite and the continued marginalisation of the landed elite. This helps explain the significance of religious belief and identity to the conflict in Afghanistan which is largely absent from the Nepal case study.⁶⁵⁸ However, if the Taliban's position is viewed as being ideological rather than simply religious, then the Maoist's ideology can be considered on a par with the Taliban's religious fervour.⁶⁵⁹

In Nepal the role of religious actors in the conflict was negligible despite religious institutions being the subject of Maoist attention, not least because of the unique place that Nepal's monarchs occupied in reigning over the world's only Hindu state. The Maoists were particularly incensed at the way in which religious actors at times used religious doctrine to maintain social and cultural orthodoxies that the Maoists saw as exploitative (Lecomte-Tilouine, 2004, p. 123). Though in both cases what may be seen as an obvious general analysis of the social context of the conflict it belies a degree of complexity which renders simplistic assumptions about whether the

⁶⁵⁸ Indeed religious actors have played a key role in mobilisation for conflicts in Afghanistan dating back at least to the Anglo-Afghan wars (Robson, 1986, p. 170; Edwards D. B., 1996, pp. 191-2). In addition the Jihadi period was dominated by religious rhetoric which was used to justify and structure resistance, and this was largely corrupted by the degeneration into civil war in the 1990s. For more detailed descriptions of the way in which Islam was traditionally used in conflict mobilisation and has changed over the past generation see Rubin, 2002, pp. 38-40; Edwards D. B., 2002, pp. 195, 295-8; Linschoten & Kuehn, 2012, pp. 130-3.

⁶⁵⁹ For more general discussion on the connections between religious ideology and its impact on politics see Grzymala-Busse, 2012, pp. 426-33.

presence of a strong ideological belief may increase or decrease stability (Shah, 2004, p. 192; Roy, 1985, p. 33).

In the context of Afghanistan much of the violence has been construed in Islamic terms, and the use of videos and SMS messages and the overriding Islamic nature of leadership can lead to an assumption that all components of the conflict are in some way religiously motivated.⁶⁶⁰ Whilst it is correct that in both Kalakan and Village A religious leaders amongst the Taliban were at the forefront of local leadership, this did not last and in the case of Kalakan was certainly not accepted,⁶⁶¹ and whilst it may have led to local leadership changes in Village A,⁶⁶² more broadly in Helmand, the Taliban re-enforced the latent stability that had emerged in the early 1990s under local commanders (Martin, 2011, pp. 44-5). For Nepal the lack of engagement by religious elites and leaders in the conflict is as much a sign of how they were marginalised during the conflict,⁶⁶³ as it is the extent to which the Maoists attempted to displace religious ideology with their own orthodoxy, or the displacement of 'Hinduisation' with 'Maoisation' (Lecomte-Tilouine, 2004, p. 123). It has been noted that the Maoists at times portrayed themselves to be the natural successors to the Gorkha Shah dynasty that ruled the Hindu kingdom, and which may have had Magar origins (Lecomte-Tilouine, 2009, pp. 218-9). This appropriation of Hindu dynastic imagery from the hills also helps explain why the Maoists encountered difficulties in mobilising non-Pahadi groups in Bara.

As a result the presence of a religious belief having a particular impact on stability should be ruled out, however it does seem accurate to assert that the mobilising nature of ideologies, both religious and secular, are important elements of both conflicts and connect well with the political nature of insurgencies as understood in COIN theory, with the ideology being a key part of the motivational logic for combatants and leaders. In the ongoing conflict in Afghanistan, concepts of Jihad are important in developing the overarching conflict narrative, but seem to be only one factor amongst several that contribute to the mobilisation of combatants and the endemic instability witnessed in the last generation. In both the Kalakan and Nahr-i Sarraj case studies religious motivations for conflicts may have been viable for creating violent resistance movements, but they were unable to reduce or curtail those same groups when the focus of the resistance (the Soviets in this example) was removed (See pp. 107, 137). Similarly in Nepal, Maoist ideology asserted a violent revolutionary reaction to perceived and actual transgressions against individuals and

⁶⁶⁰ Linschoten & Kuehn, 2012, pp. 16-26, has a useful discussion on the role of Islam within the Taliban.

⁶⁶¹ IN-1-4 17th October 2010, Aqa Sarai.

⁶⁶² LL-2-1 15th November 2010, Kabul.

⁶⁶³ EA-3-12 15th October 2011, Gajul and LL-4-8 26th August 2011, Haraiya.

communities. At a local level this does not necessarily explain the use of violence in either the Rolpa or Bara field sites, and in the case of Bara does not seem to have promoted the cohesion of the Maoist movement and allied groups since the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA).

In summary, these ideologies structure the use of violence, the nature of the insurgent organisations, and the strength and resonance of the ideologies, which seems to have been critically misunderstood by the states in their attempts (or lack thereof) to provide a coherent counterrevolution. This is as relevant for the failure of the PDPA in Afghanistan in the 1980s as it is for the Karzai administration today or the governments in Nepal during the Maoist insurgency. Importantly these ideologies are a reflection of the political milieu within these states and cannot be seen as separate from the varying experiences of state formation that have occurred within them and their deep connections to their societies is in marked contrast to the narrow support base that the democratic and autocratic systems had in Afghanistan and Nepal.

Nature of state formation

The nature of state formation forms a second critical component of the context of these case studies, which both exhibit strong local traditional governance systems. In neither space has state formation been completed in the Westphalian sense, with control over all of their territory, a monopoly on the use of violence and the ability to administer the region through broad taxation. This does not mean that the people are ungoverned and the fact that they have not experienced Westphalian forms of statehood does not preclude stability in earlier periods. Stability is not dependent on the Westphalian state model.

The nature of state formation has been different in each field site which reflects the heterogeneous nature of the state and their specific dynamics. In Kalakan, state formation since 2001 has been predicated on overlapping political agreements between local leaders and regional political actors. However, as Chapter 4 argued, this was augmented not by exogenous governance support but rather through the presence of significant numbers of residents in the security forces of the newly formed ANA and ANP, as the DDR programme removed the primary security organisation in the area, Firqa 8, in 2005. These connections to formal systems were also affected by the influence of commander networks which maintain both local level cohesion as well as linkages to the central administration.

A similar dynamic can be seen in Gajul where the state, or at least a state, has been present for several hundred years because of the Sen Dynasty. Whilst the state administered Gajul during the 20th Century through local landlords it was able to position itself as a leading centre in Rolpa district. Through the extension of development, primarily education, the state became the single largest employer in the

VDC and generated a significant number of senior political figures. The individual teachers were not displaced during the conflict but the former landed lords of Gajul were replaced by new Maoist 'lords' who enforced stability during the conflict. In effect the state continued to devolve local decision-making through the all-party mechanism and the strength of Maoist parallel structures formed the Maoist leaders into a semi-feudal group whose main aim in the conflict was the rebalancing of power within the Subedi-Thapa network.

A different dynamic can be seen in the other field sites, where state formation has been much weaker. In Nahr-i Sarraj the last form of successful state formation did not, in fact could not, rely on widespread employment of the population by the state, because the Taliban administration was relatively poor.⁶⁶⁴ Instead state formation in Helmand was shaped by the competition between the landed elite (or khans), religious elite and Jihadi commanders over the last generation, which in turn have been driven by two other elements: the expansion of viable irrigated land from the 1950s and the associated resettlement of tribal and nomadic groups, and the massive expansion of the native opium economy by the belligerents as they vied for power and influence from the 1980s.

In Village A, and Nahr-i Sarraj more generally, the state has not been a significant patron because the nature of funding from the HAVA meant foreign influence stretched local political will and capacity, and the opium economy allowed local actors to act independently of supposedly superior authorities (whether that was the state or a *tanzim*). The state in this context has simply been a bystander as the population used traditional governance systems which came under the sway of various local patrons, be they khans, Jihadi commanders or the Taliban. The shifts in power and authority, and the previous experiences of conflict, still structure the context in Helmand; commanders who resisted the Taliban in the 1990s re-captured the state and used it to continue their civil war by other means, which precipitated the virulent insurgency experienced since 2006.

The experience of Bara was much closer to that of Nahr-i Sarraj in Afghanistan than Gajul in Nepal. The state largely ignored the region and exercised little if any authority until the 1970s, and even then it was patchy and not necessarily supported broadly by the population. The democratic revolution and the Maoist insurgency have not significantly changed the dynamic of the area which now has just enough state presence to ensure that the rents from the timber trade are not completely lost to local smuggling networks. Bara generally and Haraiya specifically were never politically important enough for the state to robustly protect, nor well represented enough

⁶⁶⁴ One of the respondents in fact left the Taliban administration because of lack of pay. LL-2-7 14th December 2010, Gereshk.

amongst the national governments of the last generation to ensure that the government paid it any significant attention. In this context the expansion of development actors has not contributed to statebuilding, because they act outside the remit of the state. This analysis would seem to question the logic of any development activities being associated with statebuilding in either Bara or Helmand given the fact it has not done so in the past. It also highlights the final critical element of the political economy of the field sites and case studies, which is that they are in fact dependencies, not on their own state, but on neighbouring states and the broader international system.

Dependent states

The previous subsections have highlighted the significance of ideology to politically orientated insurgencies and the differing nature of state formation within and between the field sites which was evident through the data presented in the preceding chapters. This third subsection will discuss the way in which, at both local and national levels, the field sites and case studies (Afghanistan and Nepal) are rentier communities at the periphery of global and regional South Asian state formation and stability, a fact that can only be fully appreciated when making comparisons across all the sites.

At a state level Afghanistan and Nepal are both fiscally dependent on large external flows of investment and finance simply to keep the current attempt at the Westphalian state functioning. They have been rentier states since the encroachment of the British Empire and codification of the international state system in the 19th Century, which established their modern day territorial boundaries and initiated the process of patronage and dependency that has flourished to this day. British rule in the subcontinent was belligerent with regard to the territories of Nepal and Afghanistan. The East India Company successfully fought a war against Nepal in 1814-1815 annexing a third of Nepal's territory, including Sikkim, Darjeeling, Sirumur and Garhwal, and, as part of the negotiations, the British offered to recruit 'Gorkhas' to the British army, a tradition which continues to this day.⁶⁶⁵

Between 1838 and 1919 Britain managed to fight three wars with Afghanistan, decisively losing two and the third can barely said to have been a victory.⁶⁶⁶ This did not prevent the use of subsidies and political pressure throughout the 19th Century, which culminated in the Durrand Line, demarcating the current boundaries between Afghanistan and British India (modern day Pakistan) in 1893 (Ganguly & Howenstein,

⁶⁶⁵ Some commentators have noted that the victory was pyrrhic due to the excessive cost and significant tactical defeats the British forces faced (Banskota, 1994, pp. 20-3).

⁶⁶⁶ There are many histories of the Afghan wars. One of the earliest consolidated English accounts to cover all three conflicts is Dupree, 1973, pp. 369-401; 403-15.

2009, p. 127; Dupree, 1973, pp. 425-7). In both states Britain attempted to control territory and banish potential destabilising forces to the hills beyond. Despite the British army often fairing badly (at least in Afghanistan) they had at least contained the perceived threats from the Afghan and Nepali territories (ibid., 1973, p. 425; Banskota, 1994, p. 22).

In the 20th Century both states sought to remain independent of regional neighbours, for Afghanistan, Russia and Pakistan; and for Nepal, India and China. They did so by playing their neighbours off against one another when the opportunities arose (or when they were forced to). There are many examples of this phenomenon but to name just two: the closure of the Afghan border by Pakistan on imports and exports from 1961-1963 pushed Afghanistan towards a closer relationship with the USSR (Omrani, 2009, pp. 189-90; Misdaq, 2006, pp. 298-9); secondly, Indian attempts to leverage influence with Nepal's political class through supporting development projects (Whelpton, 2005, pp. 130-3). Since 2003 India has sponsored some 450 small and large scale projects often focused on education, health and roads, as part of its economic cooperation with Nepal, though concerns have been raised about how the aid has been targeted and whether it has been used to further India's political interests (Pande, 2011; Embassy of India, Kathmandu, 2012; Kshetry, 2012). Current overtures being made by the Nepali government to China should be seen in the context of a need to rebalance the overbearing nature of Indian influence.⁶⁶⁷ These interventions by (il-)Liberal states are instructive and suggest that realpolitik trumps some of the idealism associated with the Liberal tradition in ways which can undermine some aspirations.

Along with the direct influence of neighbours both states have become dependent on the international system, often at the same time as becoming dependencies on their regional neighbours. In the case of Afghanistan this is primarily in terms of bi-lateral aid. Between 1958-1968 and in the 1970s 40% of state expenditure was financed by other states, though this was focused on development spending, by the end of the 1980s the Soviet Union's foreign aid exceeded government development expenditure by 60%, meaning they were financing the basic functioning of the state (Rubin, 2002, pp. 65, 161-3). Since 2001 foreign aid has at times dwarfed Afghanistan's entire GDP, although not all of it is spent in-country. External aid is financing a substantive proportion of the Afghan government including the recurrent costs of the ANSF and the rentier nature of the Afghan state is likely to continue in to the 2020s (World Bank, 2012, pp. iv-vi, x-xii).

⁶⁶⁷ The example of the \$3bn Chinese investment in Lumbini, the reputed birthplace of Buddha, is a case in point (The Economist, 2011).

Similarly in Nepal bi-lateral aid often provided over half of all government development spending from the 1950s (though not recurrent expenditure) and in the late 1980s peaked at 80% of development spending or 40% of the government's entire budget (Whelpton, 2005, p. 128). While bi-lateral aid is significant in Nepal a second form of dependency is the vast scale of remittances from Nepalis working overseas, which was equivalent to 23% of GDP in 2009, effectively only supporting consumption (World Bank, 2010, p. 12; Central Bureau of Statistics, 2011). Understanding the degree of influence of other states is complicated by the fact that some states provide both significant bi-lateral aid as well as remittances. For example, while Britain is officially the largest bi-lateral aid donor⁶⁶⁸ to Nepal this is dwarfed by spending on its Gurkha pensions (which form part of Nepal's remittances) meaning the UK provides 8% of Nepal's entire GDP.⁶⁶⁹ As a result in a very practical sense the modern states of Afghanistan and Nepal are fictions of the international system rather than independent sovereign states.

While there is clearly a significant amount of international engagement at a state level, the field sites also demonstrate significant direct engagement between the communities and neighbouring states. Indeed this engagement with other states is in many ways more common than engagement with their own state. For example, large numbers of Gajul's residents moved to India to avoid conscription⁶⁷⁰ and at varying times significant numbers of Aqa Sara's and Village A's residents have lived and worked in Pakistan as refugees.⁶⁷¹ Haraiya continues to be plagued by 'armed groups' that use the border as a form of shelter.⁶⁷² As well as the impact on the nature of the state there are also long-term, ongoing and overlapping social, cultural and economic relations between Nepalis living in the Terai with their brethren in Northern India (Gaige, 2009); and Afghanistan has provided rulers in India even prior to the Mughal empire (Bellaw, 1891, pp. 197-204) and the Pashtuns remain the world's largest tribal group, split by the Durrand Line (Spain, 1962, pp. 21-7).

The logical progression of this argument is that the limited degree to which either state can be said to be independent means that they cannot be stable in their own right; in addition they do not have the freedom of action which European states had in their own state formation processes, reinforcing the discussion in Chapter 2 that the

⁶⁶⁸ Respondents believed that India is in fact that largest donor but it is not clear if the reporting on their expenditure is transparent. IN-5-8 23rd October 2011, Kathmandu & IN-5-4 15th August 2011, Kathmandu.

⁶⁶⁹ IN-5-4 15th August 2011, Kathmandu: UK estimates were based on direct spending by of £86.5m by UK agencies, plus remittances from serving Gurkha soldiers.

⁶⁷⁰ EA-3-13 16th October 2011, Gajul.

⁶⁷¹ LL-1-2 10th October 2010, Aqa Sarai & LL-2-1 15th November 2010, Kabul.

⁶⁷² IN-4-1 26th August 2011, Haraiya.

nature and potential of statebuilding, or consolidation, must be markedly different than that experienced during the period of European state formation in order to be effective.

This subsection also allows the research to assert the ways in which the findings can be extrapolated to some other contexts. Whilst the historical dynamic of conquest, subjugation and state formation in South Asia is obviously unique, the experiences of Afghanistan and Nepal represent varied examples of Islamic, Hindu and Maoist state formation and building and have employed governance systems ranging from monarchies to theocracies to republics in the context of robust and heterogeneous informal governance systems. Here is the nub of this element of the discussion: the overriding conclusion is not one where these conflicts are simply part of the South Asian narrative of state formation. Instead, they represent the story of small nations being supported and interfered with by a combination of regional neighbours and the international community. This is a situation which could apply to a number of states in various parts of Africa, the Middle East and South-East Asia, as well as these South-Asian examples. A number of states could fall into this group,⁶⁷³ which is returned to in the conclusion.

However, there are also limitations and it is important to re-state the significant characteristics of the four field sites that were chosen after a thorough investigation of a number of variables, because the selection limits the scope of extrapolating the data in important ways: firstly, all the field sites are primarily rural with economic bases dominated by agriculture; secondly, none of the field sites has an extensive range of government or private sector services. Haraiya is the most well-connected field site with several government offices being present, followed by Kalakan, which retains services plus a police post. Gajul only has service sectors present (health and education) and Village A has no government engagement at all (and experienced very little in the past). All the communities are of mixed ethnic and social groups. Though Kalakan has a preponderance of Tajiks there are still Pashtun communities present, and the other three field sites are a mix of ethnic, caste or tribal groups. Finally, they all have been subject to insurgent violence and successful and failed attempts by insurgents, governments and international actors to attain control.

The data collected allows extrapolation to other heterogeneous rural agricultural economies which have low levels of government services that are at risk of being

⁶⁷³ Including many of the “fragile and conflict-affected” states that have endorsed the recently proposed New Deal on Statebuilding including; Afghanistan, Burundi, Central African Republic, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, Guinea Bissau, Guinea, Haiti, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Sudan, Timor-Leste, Togo. See HLF-4, 2012b.

affected by insurgencies; this is important to re-state because it clarifies the kinds of instability that the data can be used to discuss; namely contests between politically orientated resistance groups and their states and the roles that international actors could take in those conflicts. This means that the data cannot be used to discuss urban stability, or recovery from the destabilising impact of other non-political factors, such as natural disasters.

This section has argued that the nature of the ideologies underpinning recent insurgencies in Afghanistan and Nepal have presented narratives to which the states have been unable to respond. In a large part this is because of the historical nature of state formation at both the national and local levels, which means that the pursuit of the Westphalian state is illusory. Importantly, the Westphalian state in these contexts has not necessarily failed because of internal inadequacy or lack of effort; there have been significant transfers of wealth and programming to attempt these reforms, which have failed primarily because the states are dependent on regional structures and the international system, and subsequently have been robbed of their sovereignty. This also allows the research to assert that these dynamics are common to a number of states and territories, strengthening the extrapolation of the findings beyond the case study areas.

Mode of intervention

The following section summarises the impact of interventions across the field sites in the three modes described in the preceding chapters. This builds on the conclusion to the previous section whereby previous experiences of stability were associated with politically restrictive but effectively secured environments to ones where both the conflicts and interventions have attempted to re-shape and re-form the societies and states. The interventions are connected with competing theories of state formation, those of the Maoists, Islamists and those supporting Liberal peacebuilding, which are discussed again in the following chapter.

Political interventions to support stabilisation

Of the three modes of intervention, political interventions appear to be the most nebulous, largely because they are carried out in forms recognised as 'governance', a catch-all term often used by interveners; but also because the breadth and depth of local informal politics and governance systems must be understood if the impact of interventions is to be understood. The four field sites present significant variation in local systems of governance as well as the experience of political interventions, and therefore it is helpful to briefly re-state the salient elements in the stories of each site.

Kalakan, the example of indigenous stabilisation, was largely allowed to govern itself forming part of a political bloc that supported the new Afghan government post-2001 as traditional and commander networks re-asserted themselves after the collapse of

the Taliban. It has had little significant or intrusive political intervention except for the structuring of the broader national governance system and provision of infrastructure, which has supported governance effectiveness, but which had done little to support local governance legitimacy in the eyes of respondents in Aqa Sarai village. At the other end of the spectrum Nahr-i Sarraj demonstrated the inability of exogenous technical interventions in forging or coordinating a local political support base in which governance could thrive; instead violent competition took over while the Afghan state refused to expend political capital on extending governance to the parts of the district which included Village A.

Rolpa exhibited insurgent stabilisation, which highlighted both the weaknesses of the state's attempts at political stabilisation in the absence of the capability or will to deliver results in Liwang, the district headquarters, as well as the inability of the Maoist state to develop legitimacy and long-term stability in Gajul VDC without enforcing it, despite it lying within the zone of control of the insurgency. Bara also exhibited the first trait identified in Rolpa regarding the formal state, but in the context where the Maoists were unable to enforce their will, which therefore highlighted the limitations of self-stabilisation where a local self-defence group protected one small sub-village in Haraiya while traditional governance systems were reactivated. Events in Bara also suggest that badly designed political interventions, including the all-party mechanism, may be destabilising.

Whether or not a governance intervention succeeded in promoting stability is connected to the degree to which it was supported by the rules of the game within which the political leaders and wider society were supposed to act. This foregrounds one of the points made in the preceding section whereby stability is a function of an actor's ability to enforce the rules. Therefore the examples which have promoted stability through political intervention are those where the rules can, to an extent, be enforced. This includes the period of Maoist control of Gajul in Rolpa (2000-2006), Taliban control of Helmand (1995-2001) and the experience of governance restoration in Kalakan (2001-2010).⁶⁷⁴ It is important to note that these experiences highlight that there is more than one path to stability, and that stability was often imposed rather than fostered, again resonating with earlier 20th Century experiences of stability in both Afghanistan and Nepal.

On the other hand the examples amongst the field sites of the failure of political interventions point to the conclusion that the inability to successfully enforce the rules undermines technical governance intervention. This would include Maoist and Nepali government competition in Bara (1996-2006) as well as the inability to

⁶⁷⁴ The period of Taliban control of Kalakan is excluded here because whilst it was stable, it also led to the removal of 95% of the population.

implement the CPA effectively (2006-2011); the ISAF intervention in Nahr-i Sarraj connected to Village A (2006-12) as well as earlier examples from Kalakan of the infighting amongst the Jihadist parties in the 1980s and 1990s. The conclusion from political interventions and attempts at stabilisation would indicate that a co-requisite in applying the rules of the game is the monopoly of the use of force, which is a fundamental building bloc of state formation, but insufficient on its own to attain long term legitimacy and stability (see below).

Security interventions to support stabilisation

Looking across the field sites in terms of security interventions there are two salient points about the way in which security interventions supported stability: the first is that it was possible to simply enforce stability through security; and the second was that the application of force required significant political will. The most extreme example is the scorched earth tactic of the Taliban in Kalakan in the 1990s, which enforced a dead stability because the vast majority of the population left; however, in the field sites this was not a frequent occurrence; instead there has more often been a contest of wills to enforce security control.

At one end of the spectrum of political will lies the case of Gajul in Rolpa where the Maoists had a greater political will to enforce security in order to exercise their form of governance, though this was not as secure as some other areas of Rolpa due to the proximity of a large Nepal Army base. The *de facto* security control of the Maoists ensured that they imposed stability, and this was manifested in a full range of political, economic, developmental and social changes, which the Maoists attempted to impart in Gajul during the conflict. For their part the Nepal security forces did not have the capability to withstand the complex Maoist approach, but more importantly they did not have the political backing to use force or other governance and development actions to take the Maoists on in a sustained engagement.

This feature of the relationship between force and will is even more apparent in Bara, where the minimal size of the Maoist forces and the lack of support they had amongst large segments of the population should have made it relatively easy for the Nepali state to resist robustly; instead the state continued to lack the political will to sustain security forces and defeat the Maoists in a meaningful manner at the same time as the Maoists lacked both the security capability and political will to impose themselves on Bara. It was left to the community to fend for itself with only limited success through the self-defence group.

At the other end of the spectrum, the weakness of security stabilisation without political will is again clearly visible in the case of Village A in Nahr-i Sarraj, where an external force provided some of the most sophisticated military capabilities on the planet, but was still unable to provide stability. This is primarily because ISAF acted in

the security sphere far beyond the interests and will of the Afghan state, and applied itself across security (as the primary activity), political and development lines in Village A, an approach mirrored by the Maoists in Gajul, which should have made it successful; however, where the Maoists and ISAF differed is that the actions of the PLA and the People's Government were synchronised and those of ISAF and the Afghan government were not. With hindsight it is possible that had the Afghan government wanted to engage Village A in a political settlement the actions of ISAF may have paid off, but they didn't have the political backing of the Afghan government and expended blood and treasure in a fruitless search for stability in the Upper Gereshk Valley. These three examples highlight the absolute limits of security in providing stability without the political will to sustain engagement.

However this is an unsatisfactory conclusion and it is only when considering Kalakan since 2001 that a third component of security stabilisation becomes apparent. As discussed in Chapter 4 it is the combination of local and national political interests and the restitution of the communities through humanitarian aid that can ensure stability. The security component of stabilisation was then purely the technical and national processes of DDR and the formation of the ANP which now provides security in the district. As noted the deployment was small and poorly equipped and, as Afghan security forces have found elsewhere in the country, would be likely to struggle if a serious threat became apparent. So, whilst security may be necessary to attain stability it is clear that it is insufficient to maintain it unless the Maoist model of enforced stability is followed. In fact it seems that security should take an increasingly small role in stability as other spheres, notably political accommodation, governance and development (in that order) increase and become the dominant re-producers of stability.

Development interventions to support stabilisation

If the political and security modes of intervention present relatively clear impacts from interventions on stability, the development mode presents a much more opaque and mixed picture. The opacity lies in the varying motivations and methods of delivering 'development' and indeed what constitutes a development intervention itself. The research has considered all non-governance, non-security funded activities undertaken in the field sites but must make clear the difference between the range of actions in order to facilitate comparison; this is broken down into humanitarian, social development, economic development, and 'hot stabilisation' interventions that were outlined in Chapter 2. The development sphere has the most misunderstood and misconstrued notions of what promotes stability.

Humanitarian⁶⁷⁵ activities have been attempted or undertaken in Kalakan, Nahr-i Sarraj and Rolpa in the course of their conflicts. Those in Kalakan were the most extensive and were implemented by CARE International, Malteser and ACTED after 2001 and ending in the mid-2000s. In Nahr-i Sarraj the experience was during the mid to late 1990s when aid agencies in Pakistan facilitated the return of refugees to Afghanistan. Both of these examples were related to refugee returns and the provision of a bare minimum of assistance, which often involved a small cash payment and some basic forms of shelter and food and were considered to be significant in the stabilisation of their communities. Rolpa's experience is slightly different in that it was the only location where a humanitarian actor, the Federation of the Red Cross Society,⁶⁷⁶ was deliberately stopped from operating in Gajul during the conflict, although there was support to IDP returnees by the Local Peace Committees after the conflict.⁶⁷⁷

These case studies suggest two conclusions: firstly, that humanitarian action can have a significant impact on stability, in particular when focusing on returning communities to the ante-conflict condition, i.e. that the population returns to their land and property and are given just enough to help them re-establish their livelihoods; secondly, all three occurred during periods of emerging political interventions – in Kalakan after 2001, in Nahr-i Sarraj in the 1990s and in Gajul after 2006 – signalling that stabilisation can be achieved at multiple simultaneous levels and is not operationally linear. These were not necessarily the end-points of the conflict (which as noted above may, in fact, not be ending at all but evolving), but they were windows of opportunity where there was enough stability for returns to be facilitated.

⁶⁷⁵ The critical component of humanitarian principles is “the right to receive humanitarian assistance, and to offer it, is a fundamental humanitarian principle which should be enjoyed by all citizens of all countries ...the prime motivation of our response to disaster is to alleviate human suffering amongst those least able to withstand the stress caused by disaster. When we give humanitarian aid it is not a partisan or political act and should not be viewed as such” (IFRC & ICRC, 1994). Amongst the organisations active in the field sites CARE International, Malteser and the IFRC all supported this code of conduct (CARE International, Undated; Malteser International, Undated). ACTED and the UN agencies support a related code overseen by OCHA (OCHA, 2010, p. 1; ACTED, 2010).

⁶⁷⁶ The author recognises that the Federation of the Red Cross/Crescent Societies are a “humanitarian and development network,” however the activities attempted in Gajul were humanitarian (regarding the protection of civilians, conflict monitoring and attempted supply of humanitarian supplies – i.e. basic food packages), which is distinct from the development activities implemented by the same organisation in Haraiya, including the provision of potable drinking water for disadvantaged groups. For more information see IFRC, Undated.

⁶⁷⁷ LL-3-2 12th October 2011, Liwang.

In the same spaces, though not necessarily at the same time, 'social development' and 'economic development'⁶⁷⁸ actors were operating in all four of the case studies.⁶⁷⁹

There have been government development programmes, the National Solidarity Programme (NSP) in Afghanistan, and long-term spending through VDCs in Nepal which have built development infrastructure and, with the exception of Village A, all the sites have had access to health and education services. In addition non-governmental agencies have also implemented programmes, including CARE, JCCP, CPAU and the WFP in Kalakan, UNICEF and the ADB in Gajul and Plan International with the Federation of the Red Cross in Haraiya. These are not insubstantial interventions both by the state, multi-lateral agencies, and non-government organisations, and the range of programmes has been broad covering rural livelihoods, water and sanitation, irrigation, education, health, conflict resolution, infrastructure (bridges and roads) as well as cash and food for work.

When considering the impact of all this activity on stability, it is important to critically evaluate the impact of projects on the stability of an area and be open about the way in which development changes communities. This is particularly important when considering the long-term changes that development can bring, and in the case of Gajul and Village A, development seems to have been a key foundation upon which the political-military struggle for Rolpa and Nahr-i Sarraj was executed. The fact that Gajul was amongst the first VDCs in Rolpa to develop school services has allowed it to attain a dominant position in political life in the district.⁶⁸⁰ So whilst education may be a social good, it also allowed opportunities that have challenged the status quo, and challenged stability, because it was the long-term processes of education that fostered political leaders who aspired to change and to re-mould society. That aspiration then became violent when the political system in Nepal would not accept the changes the Maoists desired. In Helmand the long-term impact of the HAVA irrigation and resettlement programme was to provide the opportunity for commanders to expand indigenous production of opium in order to prosecute their conflict, which has irrevocably altered political and economic environment.

Whilst on the one hand certain sectors of development may be destabilising in the long-term, on the other hand some local respondents were dismissive of most development programming in terms of its impact on stability. Not only were most respondents sceptical of development interventions aimed at affecting stability they were also critical of their impact on development, not least because there were

⁶⁷⁸ See USIP, 2009, p. 2.9 quoted on p.55.

⁶⁷⁹ Note social and economic development are considered separate subsectors because of their differing impacts, though they are discussed together because many of the implementing agencies were active in both spheres.

⁶⁸⁰ Which may only be challenged by Thawang the epicentre of the Maoist movement.

examples of broken development infrastructure in both Aqa Sarai (Kalakan) and Haraiya (Bara). Whilst development activity was generally appreciated by the local respondents it was seen as ‘something for nothing’, to paraphrase one of the respondents from Haraiya; *if foreigners want to come and build things for free, then why not?*⁶⁸¹ More importantly the development interventions, with the exception of road building, were also insignificant in comparison to the privately generated investment in light industry (brick kilns in both Kalakan and Haraiya) which provided employment, liquidity and long-term opportunities. Similarly the economic growth witnessed in Gajul was linked only to the road construction and not to the other development projects that were implemented in the village. Finally, economic livelihoods in Village A and Haraiya do not rely on state or development agency input, but rather on the burgeoning illicit economic activity centred on opium and timber respectively.⁶⁸²

These examples allow for several observations: firstly, social development was an agent of change and therefore *a priori* a destabilising factor – projects may provide social goods, but ultimately they change social relations and capital, which will inevitably create instability. Secondly, ascribing impacts on stability through development projects seems to overstate the effects of development programming. For the most part they were one-off interventions, too broad and too diffuse to have an aggregate positive impact on stability if the notions of stability identified in the data are correct. In this regard the data is supported by Zoe Marriage who identified that development actors are adept at reinforcing their own narratives of the impact of their activities (see Marriage, 2006). The only exception to these observations would be the construction of roads, not as an end in themselves but because of the possibilities they create for economic development; however, this is nonetheless likely to be destabilising for some.

Thirdly, the nature of development delivery, often by non-state or international military actors disconnects the intervention from one of the aims of stabilisation activities which is to support the legitimacy of the state, thereby precluding their impact on long-term stability. Finally, development is dwarfed in importance by long-term transformative changes that were brought about through investment, capital formation, employment and illicit extractive industries which can, if sustained, provide long-term livelihood stability to the field sites.

⁶⁸¹ EA-4-6 25th August 2011, Haraiya and EA-4-7 25th August 2011, Haraiya.

⁶⁸² There was sufficient work near Village A for one opium producer to attract 100 labourers from Khogiayani in Nangarhar province, Eastern Afghanistan EA-2-1 3rd December 2010, Kabul and IN-2-4 20th July 2011, Copenhagen.

The final area of development has been called ‘hot stabilisation’ a term adopted from the Stabilisation Unit in the UK, applied here both to attempts by ISAF to use development to promote stability in Village A and the Maoists’ pursuit of development in Gajul, and Bara to a lesser extent, during the insurgencies. In this sub-component of development the picture of utilising development type activities for the pursuit of stability seems particularly tenuous. In Village A, development activities were carried out (alongside governance and security interventions) far beyond the writ or will of the Afghan state by international actors. Aside from the restitution of damaged infrastructure,⁶⁸³ which would come closer to the humanitarian concept of returning a community to a ante-conflict state, the development actions were not just irrelevant to the community and stability but probably caused the deaths of local nationals seen to be cooperating with international forces who were acting far outside the ability of the Afghan government to provide the governance structure and the monopoly of violence necessary to sustain development.

Limitations on the impact of development were not limited to exogenous or state actors. In Gajul the Maoists failed to utilise development to bolster stability and indeed may have sparked a backlash against their own imposition of ‘voluntary labour’ upon the local population. The focus on roads as a means to development may be valid, but this was only achieved through the use of forced labour in a manner reminiscent of the abusive practices of former Nepali governance systems. The Maoists then re-enforced resentment against their cause. This did not matter whilst they maintained a degree of violent control (enforced stability) over the population but meant their long-term support in Gajul was damaged. There has also been some hope that contracted out development services can support stability (see footnote 300 on p.156) but the example of Bara indicates that *a political* development activities which retained a separation between the implementing agencies and the belligerents in the conflict do not promote stability or reduce conflict.

The overriding conclusion from the different forms of ‘development’ employed across the field sites in the last generation is that it provides limited explanatory value as to why the field sites were stable or unstable at various points. *A political* social and economic development as practiced in Bara was continued throughout the conflict but failed to have any connection to or restraint on it; more overtly political development interventions in both Nahr-i Sarraj and Rolpa (ISAF and the Maoists) and ‘hot stabilisation’, failed not only to achieve the development outcomes, but failed to deliver stability and may have backfired on both implementers. Instead, where

⁶⁸³ Which for the military implementers would be considered a ‘hearts and minds’ or Quick Impact Project (QIP) activity rather than a stabilisation activity.

development does seem to have had an impact it is through humanitarian aid which has returned the communities to an ante-conflict condition.

In summary the independent variables which includes the local political economy, the insurgencies and the stabilisation interventions suggest a number of significant issues for exogenous action. Firstly, that the nature of the context clearly structures and limits what is feasible and what actions can have an impact, meaning that stabilisation approaches cannot be applied in a rigid manner. Secondly, that the political nature of insurgencies (the particular threat to stability discussed in this thesis) must invoke a political response from the host nation. Furthermore, across the lines of operation, it is clear that there are definite hierarchies of importance. Security comes first, and facilitates political intervention which in turn legitimises security and returns the discussion to the concept that stability in the past was about the enforcement of the rules of the game.

However, stability can be both positive and negative, and security should play a decreasingly significant role if sustained stabilisation is to be achieved. Development, in its various guises, provides little support to stability, *except where it returns a community to a condition that existed ante-conflict*. Development itself is a change process and should more accurately be considered a *source of destabilisation* rather than one of stabilisation. However important each component is in relative terms they are only successfully carried out through the application of political will, which dictates the sustainability and effectiveness of interventions regardless of the actual capability of the institutions involved, and it is this central insight which is discussed in more detail in the following section.

Political legitimacy

The formation and maintenance of political legitimacy is critical to the experience of stability at a local level, which this section will discuss in three ways: firstly, the way in which political legitimacy is affected by national politics and allows stability to be fostered or not; secondly, the influence of neighbouring states; and thirdly, the connections between local areas and national power. All of these affect and shape the will to act identified in the previous section as the critical component which allows any intervention to be carried out effectively.

The national systems of the case studies have changed significantly in recent history. Afghanistan and Nepal began the 20th Century as absolute monarchies governed through locally appointed autocratic rulers, Khans in Afghanistan and the Mukhiya, Jimwal and Zamindars in Nepal. Both states attempted various approaches to reform and suffered various forms of intervention by other states during the 20th Century. In brief, Afghanistan's reforms started in the 1920s under Amanullah Khan, and continued throughout the 20th Century as first the monarchy, then a republic and

then an Islamic government attempted to govern the country. Since 2001 the country has been an Islamic Republic. Nepal's reforms began in earnest during the 1950s under Tribhuvan Shah, and continued to shift between the control of the monarchy and hybrid constitutional-monarchy systems in the 1950s and 1990s before becoming a republic in 2008. In both cases the processes of changing systems has been highly disruptive and destabilising, largely because these moments of change represent periods when the rules of the game can be altered. These moments cannot ensure that all local pressures are absorbed into the new system, as the examples from the field sites below indicate, but they do allow for the system to be re-organised and for new modes of national and local control and stability to emerge.

The conflicts in both Afghanistan and Nepal presented the political elites with significant challenges which they were often unwilling to address. In the context of Gajul, during the Maoist insurgency local leaders were unable to convince the Prime Minister, G.P. Koirala, to address some of the key grievances highlighted by the Maoists.⁶⁸⁴ In Bara, despite evident support for the state in Haraiya, the community could not influence the Nepal Police to stay in their post once central decisions had been taken to re-trench forces to the district headquarters in Kalaiya, precipitating the local community to organise its self-defence group.⁶⁸⁵ Nahr-i Sarraj only achieved stability in the 1990s after its leaders subordinated their position within the Taliban hierarchy,⁶⁸⁶ which eventually led to a number of Helmandis rising through the ranks of the Taliban leadership, but not in sufficiently significant numbers to stop local uprisings after the recruitment of young Helmandis to fight the Taliban's war in the north (Martin, 2011, pp. 44-5). In these examples national political hierarchies shaped local decision making, and in the case of Nepal a lack of state support led local leaders to remove their support for the state.

These changes were not only defined by indigenous processes of change or reform but were at times inspired or directed by external actors, who also affected local stability and the rules of the game. The border closures enforced by Pakistan on Afghanistan in 1961-1963, and India on Nepal in 1989 are clear examples; both events led to a change in government in the smaller neighbour.⁶⁸⁷ Within the field sites this is

⁶⁸⁴ LL-3-7 15th October 2011, Gajul.

⁶⁸⁵ LL-4-1 24th August 2011, Haraiya and EA-4-9 25th August 2011, Haraiya.

⁶⁸⁶ LL-2-1 17th November 2010, Kabul.

⁶⁸⁷ The closure of the Afghan border by Pakistan from 1961-1963 on imports and exports affected Afghan foreign earnings, jeopardised US development programmes, threatened state revenues and pushed Afghanistan towards a closer relationship with the USSR (Omrani, 2009, pp. 189-90; US DoS, Undated; Misdaq, 2006, pp. 298-9). The Indian closure of the Nepali border precipitated the collapse of the Panchayat regime and the incomplete democratic revolution of 1990 (Whelpton, 2005, pp. 113, 153).

visible through the way external military support from Pakistan was a critical factor in the prosecution of the Jihad in the 1980s⁶⁸⁸ as well as the Taliban's success, including their battles in Nahr-i Sarraj and fighting in the Shomali plain, against what became the Northern Alliance (Martin, 2011, p. 44).⁶⁸⁹

Elements within India are alleged to have supported or turned a blind eye to the Maoist cause in Nepal.⁶⁹⁰ The relevance of India is also critical to the provision of security, evident in the current period when significant efforts by the Indian government to increase their own control of the border in conjunction with the Special Security Plan in Nepal *and* political engagement at the top of government, has undermined one of the greatest risks to stability in Bara – the proliferation of armed groups.⁶⁹¹ However the effects of exogenous activities were not only evident in the security arena. In both Afghanistan and Nepal there have been governance related changes to improve development delivery at a local level which in some regards have backfired.

In both Gajul and Bara the creation of the all-party mechanism for approving development spending has contributed to a massive increase in corruption and a concomitant increase in anger and frustration with the state amongst local respondents (see citations above). In Nepal, governance was further undermined by the influence of India on Constituent Assembly members through the use of extensive direct development spending.⁶⁹² In Afghanistan the levels of international spending have replicated the dynamic of a *rentier* state at both macro and micro levels, whereby the international community has become a substantial patron.⁶⁹³ This

⁶⁸⁸ One of the respondents noted that not all Afghan commanders viewed Pakistani support as beneficial, with one from Kalakan allegedly claiming in the 1980s that taking support from Pakistan would ruin the country. LL-1-8 19th October 2010, Kabul. Mullah Nasim, the uncle of former provincial Governor She Mohammad Akhunzada, deliberately utilised opium earnings to avoid reliance on external funding (Martin, 2011, pp. 34-5; Peters, 2009, p. 7).

⁶⁸⁹ Not forgetting that the other regional power, India, was supplying arms to the leading figures in the Northern Alliance to resist the Taliban (Ganguly & Howenstein, 2009, p. 127).

⁶⁹⁰ IN-5-2 11th August 2011, Kathmandu and IN-5-8 23rd October 2011, Kathmandu.

⁶⁹¹ NL-4-3 16th August 2011, Kathmandu highlighted the capability of the Indian security forces during the insurgency against the backdrop of low levels of Nepalese government intervention and IN-4-7 21st October 2011, Kathmandu.

⁶⁹² LL-4-9 28th August 2011, Kalaiya.

⁶⁹³ This phenomenon is not new to Afghanistan, where foreign aid created a rentier state as far back as the 19th century, with British payments to Afghan kings, US and Soviet aid projects in the 1960s and 70s, Soviet support for the PDPA and most

delegitimises state institutions but is further complicated by the strength of influence that other states have at a local level, where they have attempted to stabilise the field sites. For example the CIMIC activities carried out by Multi-National Brigade Kabul in Kalakan, or the 'hot stabilisation' activities by the MSST and civil affairs deployments in Village A, and GTZs developmental projects in Gajul.⁶⁹⁴

Another important dynamic is that between local and national leaders and how precarious local stability is with regard to changes in national stability. While on the one hand the local areas are part of the political milieu, through which their community and the broader country are governed, their position is at the bottom of the hierarchy, meaning they often have little or no control over how higher levels of political authority are structured. Unless they themselves are able to secure representation in a national body they do not know how to act. To illustrate this it is worth reflecting on the backgrounds of the 'national leader' respondents and their roles in stability. The field sites with strong national representation include Kalakan, which is represented by Daoud Kalakani MP, one of four MPs representing seven small districts north of Kabul; and Gajul, which has three representatives in the Constituent Assembly.⁶⁹⁵ In both sites their heritage in national leadership is significant: Kalakan produced the only non-Pashtun King of Afghanistan (Habibullah Khan), and the leader of an anti-monarchy and later anti-Soviet group, Sazman Azad-i Bakhsh-i Mardom-i Afghanistan (SAMA) which was subsequently wiped out during the conflict. Gajul was the site of an ancient kingdom and in the 20th Century a native of Gajul was elected to Nepal's first parliament in the 1950s. A local Panchayat leader became a Minister in the 1980s.

In contrast Bara and Village A have no such pretensions to illustrious leadership. Though both have produced leaders in the conflict most of them have been killed and they were only locally significant. Instead the national leaders who have responsibility for those areas come from other areas of the district, which have at times been in competition with the field sites: for example Muallem Mir Wali MP, a Barakzai leader whose engagement in the Upper Gereshk Valley has been chequered over the last twenty years, and CA member for Bara, Shiva Chandra Prasad Kushwaha,⁶⁹⁶ whose connections to Haraiya are coloured by his business interests. However having

recently Western support for the Karzai administration (Rubin, 2002, pp. 47, 62-73; Suhrke, 2006, pp. 6-9).

⁶⁹⁴ Note these examples specifically exclude exogenous funding for NGOs, which have attempted to maintain neutrality.

⁶⁹⁵ Jhaku Subedi was elected through standing against former Prime Minister M.K. Nepal in a Kathmandu constituency; J.B. Mahara and Khoma Subedi were elected through the Proportional Representation allocation for Rolpa district.

⁶⁹⁶ Elected through the First Past the Post (FPTP) allocation for Bara district.

national level representation does not make an area more or less stable, in fact it may predispose an area to instability.⁶⁹⁷ What it does allow for is the forging of political will and the redirection of resources to that area, which has been critical to the stabilisation of Kalakan and Gajul since 2001 and 2006 respectively, but they succeeded in those examples primarily because it was combined with local political support.

As noted above in the modes of intervention, resources and capability do not facilitate stability alone; they are only a function of the degree of political will and capital that is expended to achieve stability. Having national level representation allows the confluence of political will and allocation of resources to achieve stability; again, this is insufficient on its own: political leaders are not necessarily re-distributive, as noted in the prelude for Bara which describes national political leaders as leeches. They are also not necessarily going to engage all segments of the population and may attempt to achieve stability simply through force as in Nahr-i Sarraj. While there will be resources that national leaders can direct to their home constituencies the national leaders are themselves not free agents and are constrained in their actions by other leaders. What's more the resources they can appropriate are not limitless as evidenced by the vagaries of the all-party mechanism in Nepal.

In summary local political legitimacy is insufficient without the ability to draw down on national political will and resources; together they can provide resources to stabilise an area, but the absence of local or national political legitimacy will mean no resources can flow to the area and it will either be a dead stability imposed by force (as in Bara before the 1990s) or highly unstable as in Nahr-i Sarraj since 2001. Having identified the political leadership as being the critical conduit for stability activities it is necessary to compare between the interveners and the local respondents to answer the question, '*what is stability*' and '*what interventions support stability*'?

Conceptions of stability

This section focuses on the dependent variable of stability and provides the final analytical theme for the stability paradigm by comparing the interveners' conceptions of what forms and maintains stability (i.e. what activities are stabilising) against the lived experience of the local respondents. It concludes that the different lenses of stabilisation which were identified in Chapter 2 as contributing to a confused discourse regarding stability are in fact present in the countries where activities are undertaken to stabilise the environment. Interveners' conceptions are driven by their professional background and interest rather than through an interrogation of what is

⁶⁹⁷ The MP from Gajul in the 1950s encouraged the proliferation of schools, which have contributed to Gajul being part of the vanguard of political conflict in Rolpa and hence its destabilisation as argued in the previous section.

or what is not stabilising. At the same time, local respondents give confused and mixed messages about interventions and stability, in part because of expectations that they may materially benefit from interventions; however, behind their interests lies an understanding of stability that binds together the analysis in the preceding four sections.

Interveners and stability

The national and international interveners who participated in the research ranged from Generals to low level police officers and some were local nationals who were officials in state institutions.⁶⁹⁸ A range of foreigners were also involved in official, advisory and programmatic roles across military, governmental and non-governmental organisations.⁶⁹⁹ Interveners had a tendency to argue that their activity had an impact on stability irrespective of whether they had any evidence. So for example, interveners would claim that projects supported stability *irrespective of the sector they were working on or at what level they were working*.⁷⁰⁰ The important point from the respondents who followed this line of argument is that they included two NGO representatives from both local and national organisations, one official from a UN agency, three respondents from bi-lateral donors and two from a private development agency. They worked in the field and in the capitals in a civilian environment. Also, not all of them were foreigners; two local nationals shared this view.

It is striking that the conflation of action and stability appeared in such varied contexts and conflicts. There were dissenting voices amongst the NGO community but these generally came from the humanitarian side of the development spectrum or from elements within the UN system who challenged the concepts of stability and stabilisation entirely.⁷⁰¹ This nuance is important and ironic because it is the humanitarian component of 'development' interventions that had the most significant impact on stability in the field sites.

⁶⁹⁸ As noted in Chapter 7, some respondents in Nepal saw the state as being a colonial enterprise and are considered as interveners.

⁶⁹⁹ It is important to make clear this does not include the national leaders, who were all political figures, and whose views on stability and stabilisation were quite distinct from the range of views amongst the interveners.

⁷⁰⁰ IN-2-1 5th December 2010, Kandahar, IN-0-5 28th November 2010, Kabul, IN-3-5 10th November 2011, Kathmandu and EA-4-1 23rd August 2011, Haraiya; IN-0-1 7th October 2010, IN-5-6 27th September 2011, Kathmandu. (Zoe Marriage noted a similar issue within the aid community, Marriage, 2006)

⁷⁰¹ IN-0-8 2nd December 2010, Kabul, IN-2-10 4th December 2010, Kabul, IN-5-3 12th August 2011, Kathmandu and IN-2-2 7th December 2010, Kabul.

Other subgroups of interveners also identified their actions with stability over and above those of other sectors or lines of operation, so those working on governance fore-grounded the importance of their work; or civilians working on 'hot stabilisation' in a military environment asserted the role their activities played in stabilisation.⁷⁰² However, these assertions were less clear amongst military respondents. Whilst one senior officer in Afghanistan and one in Nepal saw the security line as being pre-eminent,⁷⁰³ others were hesitant to ascribe sole responsibility to military action and instead they broadened responsibility for stability to a very wide range of actors and sectors.⁷⁰⁴ These respondents, ranking from Captains to Generals who served in both Nepal and Afghanistan, linked stability to governance, poverty, rule of law, the attitudes of neighbouring states – many of the issues outlined above. As one respondent in Afghanistan put it in Afghanistan, *"the sort of general vague, slightly woolly notions of stabilisation and the sort of components of stabilisation I think are not new."*⁷⁰⁵ It is then legitimate to ask, as mentioned in the literature review, whether stabilisation is just a re-labelling of existing modes of intervention? (Barakat, Deely, & Zyck, 2010, pp. S298-9).

However this seems unlikely given what the military respondents did not admit. They all refused to acknowledge the role of political primacy in the establishment of stability because they thought stability was a technical process. For the interveners, both military and civilian, and whether focused on security, technical governance or development approaches, stability is the result of a technical process to achieve a particular environment. In part this may be derived from the misconception that long lasting stability can be imposed in the current era, something that ISAF, the Taliban and the Maoists all failed to achieve as they struggled to stabilise territory under their influence. This conclusion suggests there is a deep division between the way in which interveners conceive of their ability to promote stability and the experiences of stabilisation in the four field sites, and the way local respondents in those sites conceived of stability themselves.

Local national respondents and stability

This subsection describes how local respondents viewed stability in each of the field sites and argues that stability formation and maintenance is structured according to a threefold process which includes the provision of physical security (either through

⁷⁰² IN-0-4 28th November 2010, Kabul, IN-2-9 3rd December 2010, Washington and IN-2-4 20th July 2011, Copenhagen.

⁷⁰³ IN-0-1 7th October 2010, Kabul and IN-5-0 8th August 2011, Kathmandu.

⁷⁰⁴ IN-0-7 29th November 2010, Kabul, IN-0-1 7th October 2010, Kabul, IN-4-4 28th August 2011, Kalaiya, IN-3-2 18th October 2011, Liwang, IN-5-8 23rd October 2011, Kathmandu.

⁷⁰⁵ IN-0-7 29th November 2010, Kabul.

humanitarian or military action) and some form of change in the political dynamics; these must be supported by long-term economic improvement.

For the inhabitants of Village A and Nahr-i Sarraj more broadly there was an immediate need to stop the violence and reinforce the connection between security and stability. In effect this was a definition of stability as freedom from violence. The respondents were clear this would involve substantial changes to the nature of the conflict, including the removal of ISAF forces.⁷⁰⁶ In common across the conceptions of what would bring stability were the ideas that the population must be able to engage the government on an equal footing and that there must be a political resolution; as one respondent described it, *“stability can be brought when the people can agree and be happy with the government and those who oppose the government should negotiate with them, find the reason and solve the problem and increase the reconciliation process to reduce fighting.”*⁷⁰⁷

It is striking to compare this local perception to those of the interveners connected with the Nahr-i Sarraj, where stabilisation priorities lay in promoting *“security and justice”* by supporting the Afghan Local Police,⁷⁰⁸ or supporting governance or development projects.⁷⁰⁹ There were dissenting voices amongst the interveners who could see that any stabilisation approach that did not address the political context in which the conflict was prosecuted would fail. However an abundance of effort leading to tactical success could be achieved but this would not lead to strategic victory.⁷¹⁰ Stability was a three stage phenomenon and in the long-term the respondents were looking to economic growth and opportunity to sustain stability, not development projects.

In Rolpa a similar discussion can be seen: first, the association of violence and instability was powerful and personal safety and security were deemed requirements for stability.⁷¹¹ The interveners saw their actions as stabilising, and whilst they did not necessarily ascribe all stability to their activities they were confident beneficiaries were telling them that their projects were having an impact. However, there were few who linked instability to poverty,⁷¹² and, for the most part, respondents who had been

⁷⁰⁶ EA-2-4 5th December 2010, Nad-i Ali: or the pagans as some referred to foreign forces, LL-2-5 13th December 2010, Nahr-i Sarraj

⁷⁰⁷ EA-2-5 6th December 2010, Gereshk.

⁷⁰⁸ IN-2-3 9th December 2010, Kabul.

⁷⁰⁹ IN-2-1 5th December 2010, Kandahar and IN-2-9 3rd December 2010, Washington.

⁷¹⁰ IN-2-2 7th December 2010, Kabul and IN-2-9 3rd December 2010, Washington.

⁷¹¹ EA-3-6 12th October 2011, Liwang, EA-3-8 14th October 2011, Gajul, LL-3-4 14th October 2011, Gajul, EA-3-14 16th October 2011, Gajul, NL-3-1 16th July and 19th September 2011, Kathmandu.

⁷¹² EA-3-10 15th October 2011, Gajul, LL-3-8 17th October 2011, Liwang.

beneficiaries of those same projects in the post-2006 environment did not connect the development projects to stability; instead, they reached directly for the second element, namely politics as being the source of stability,⁷¹³ the actions of the communities themselves⁷¹⁴ and the necessity for all groups to work in a system.⁷¹⁵ If development was considered a source of stability in the eyes of some, there was agreement that development could only progress *with political consensus* reinforcing the idea that it is politics which drives stability.⁷¹⁶ Furthermore, local conceptions of development and economic growth were conflated. Behind the use of the word development was the requirement for economic growth, the third step to stability.⁷¹⁷ In fact whilst the current stability of Gajul was disputed for those that did feel there was stability currently it was because of political consensus, both national and local.⁷¹⁸

For respondents in Kalakan, there were even stronger associations between stability and violence, and political decision making representing parts one and two of stabilisation. Clearly the destabilising effects of the conflict, the internecine killings during the 1980s and early 1990s, and the subsequent removal of the population by the Taliban thereafter, left a powerful mark on the respondents. Stability “*belongs to the people*,”⁷¹⁹ for respondents in Kalakan the strength of feeling on this component was stronger than in other areas because of the communities’ decision to address long-standing grievances associated with the killings during the conflict.⁷²⁰ But despite these brutalising experiences the respondents again came back to the concept that stability is formed by central level political decision making⁷²¹ in conjunction with local leadership.⁷²² Despite long-standing and largely positive experiences of development projects the respondents did not link them to stability;⁷²³ however they did identify future threats to stability in the third stage of stabilisation, where the potential for economic collapse and unemployment connected with the imminent departure of

⁷¹³ EA-3-5 12th October 2011, Liwang, EA-3-6 12th October 2011, Liwang, LL-3-2 12th October 2011, Liwang.

⁷¹⁴ EA-3-3 11th October 2011, Gorahi, LL-3-8 17th October 2011, Liwang.

⁷¹⁵ NL-3-1 16th July and 19th September 2011, Kathmandu, LL-3-9 18th October 2011, Liwang.

⁷¹⁶ EA-3-12 15th October 2011, Gajul and LL-3-6 15th October 2011, Gajul.

⁷¹⁷ LL-3-8 17th October 2011, Liwang.

⁷¹⁸ LL-3-7 15th October 2011, Gajul, EA-3-13 16th October 2011, Gajul.

⁷¹⁹ IN-1-11 25th October 2010, Kalakan.

⁷²⁰ LL-1-14 13th November 2010, Mushwani.

⁷²¹ LL-1-2 10th October 2010, Aqa Sarai, LL-1-3 14th October 2010, Aqa Sarai.

⁷²² IN-1-11 25th October 2010, Kalakan.

⁷²³ IN-1-4 17th October 2010, Aqa Sarai.

ISAF again re-connected the maintenance of stability to economic growth⁷²⁴ as well as political instability.⁷²⁵

In Bara the same story was repeated: the link between insecurity and stability is identified,⁷²⁶ in particular for those who participated and benefited from the self-defence group that provided short-term security.⁷²⁷ There were those amongst the interveners who again promoted development as being a component of stability⁷²⁸ and a few residents thought the projects were helpful but could not provide concrete ways in which they affected stability. Instead they linked stability to economic growth.⁷²⁹ But the long-term restoration of stability lay not in the enforcement of security by the Maoists, the government or the self-defence group, but in political progress and the signing of the CPA.⁷³⁰ These gains were in jeopardy because although the immediate threats to stability, the armed groups, were being addressed by active government initiatives such as the Special Security Plan,⁷³¹ even those charged with implementing the plan saw the real driver of stability being politics, both national and local.⁷³²

The fundamental cause of instability across all the case studies is political groups, both local and national, which either promote consensus or violent resistance. Stability can be provided primarily as a function of simultaneous local and national political processes supported or undermined by actions in security, and can be restored or maintained (but not provided by) indigenous economic development activity. In this conception stabilisation intervention should first aim to support the political process over and above security assistance and development programming; in short it should support the expansion of both local and national political legitimacy formation.

⁷²⁴ NL-1-1 19th October 2010, Kabul and LL-1-10 20th and 21st October 2010, Mushwani.

⁷²⁵ LL-1-6 18th October 2010, Kalakan and LL-1-8 19th October 2010, Kabul.

⁷²⁶ NL-4-1 9th August 2011, Kathmandu, EA-4-1 23rd August 2011, Haraiya, EA-4-2 23rd August 2011, Haraiya, EA-4-3 24th August 2011, Haraiya, EA-4-4 24th August 2011, Haraiya, EA-4-6 25th August 2011, Haraiya, EA-4-7 25th August 2011, Haraiya.

⁷²⁷ EA-4-9 25th August 2011, Haraiya, LL-4-1 24th August 2011, Haraiya.

⁷²⁸ EA-4-1 23rd August 2011, Haraiya, EA-4-2 23rd August 2011, Haraiya, LL-4-4 24th August 2011, Haraiya.

⁷²⁹ LL-4-4 24th August 2011, Haraiya, EA-4-7 25th August 2011, Haraiya.

⁷³⁰ NL-4-1 9th August 2011, Kathmandu.

⁷³¹ NL-4-3 16th August 2011, Kathmandu; IN-4-7 21st October 2011, Kathmandu, EA-4-12 28th August 2011, Kalaiya, IN-4-2 28th August 2011, Kalaiya, IN-4-4 28th August 2011, Kalaiya.

⁷³² EA-4-4 24th August 2011, Haraiya, LL-4-1 24th August 2011, Haraiya, LL-4-2 24th August 2011, Haraiya, IN-4-1 26th August 2011, Haraiya, LL-4-7 26th August 2011, Haraiya, EA-4-11 28th August 2011, Kalaiya, IN-4-5 29th August 2011, Kalaiya.

The stability paradigm

Thus far this chapter has presented a comparative analysis across the field sites looking at 1) periods of stability; 2) culture and context; 3) modes of intervention; 4) political legitimacy and; 5) conceptions of stability, which challenges the hypothesis presented at the beginning of this thesis which was: *'that stability is driven by local political settlements and produced by local political legitimacy formation which can be supported by interventions.'*

It would seem that only part of this hypothesis is correct: local political settlements and processes are vital but they are insufficient without a permissive higher level of national political context in which the local political actors can situate themselves. Importantly, democratic governance does not seem to matter more than non-democratic systems of governance in supporting stability. Furthermore, the hypothesis is also only partially correct in regard to general interventions supporting stability; three specific forms of interventions would seem to support stability: the first is humanitarian activity which provides the opportunity for the population to return to their ante-conflict condition, the second is security support to enforce stability, and the third is long-term economic growth to sustain stability. Security interventions were only successful if the direction of the political settlement at a national level was positive (Nepal) and were unsuccessful if the political direction was negative (Afghanistan). Economic growth was necessary to maintain stability, which means that the broad conception of social and economic development should be discarded as a useful concept in stability; instead it should be replaced by tightly defined notions of humanitarian action and a secondary component of economic growth.

This would then re-formulate the hypothesis as follows:

Stability is driven by both local and national political settlements which are produced through processes of political legitimacy formation which can be democratic or otherwise; these processes can be supported by limited humanitarian and security interventions and maintained by economic growth.

If this hypothesis is accurate then the new stability paradigm would present a challenge to current orthodoxies about the potential impact of interventions on stability and will be tested in the following chapter against the theories of statebuilding, COIN and development.

Conclusion

In conclusion this chapter has analysed the data from the field sites according to the five themes linked to the dependent and independent variables of the local political

economy, the insurgencies, stabilisation interventions, political legitimacy and conceptions of stability.

The analysis has suggested that there have been significant periods of stability in the four field sites which present certain factors about the nature of stability, including the connection to security, the need to enforce the rules of the game and the fact that stability can be imposed, which affirmed a historical link between stability and the promotion of social order and that these components can be maintained locally through the use of force. The chapter also outlined issues with the political economy of the field sites, case studies and the nature of their insurgencies. The ideological battlegrounds underpinning the insurgencies are significant and are a reflection of the failed attempts at state formation. The attempts at state formation led to significant distortions in the states and the field sites, leading them to be dependent on the international system with a weak sense of sovereignty. The research asserts that these dynamics and concerns about stability are common to a number of states and territories, strengthening the extrapolation of the findings beyond the case study areas.

The chapter then suggested that there was a strong relationship between security and stability, indicating that not all interventions are equal in their potential impact on stability. Security was found to be significant but insufficient because of the requirement for political leadership and will at the local and national levels to allocate resources and maintain social structures. Both governance and development interventions, when focused on technical processes seem to be weakly associated with stability across the field sites, except where governance allows new political settlements and where development is focused on humanitarian action which can return a population to an ante-conflict state. However, any local intervention is superseded by the requirement for national political stability or, at the very least, the existence of a positive process in political agreements between conflicting parties. The capability or level of resources available to impose stability are irrelevant if there is no political backing to transform physical safety into longer-term stability. A significant tension arises however from national leaders being unable or unwilling to allocate political will and resources to ensure stability in all areas, meaning exogenous support for stability is a function of host nation politics rather than capability.

This led to the considerations of the conceptions of stability amongst the respondents, which reinforced the view developed through assessing processes of stability and stabilisation above; namely that whilst there is a strong security component to stability it is over-ridden by the necessity for political consensus at both the local and national level. There was also significant scepticism amongst respondents about the impact of development activities on stability except amongst the interveners

themselves. Collectively this analysis challenges the use of stabilisation as a policy tool and has led to a reformulation of the stability paradigm which will now be used to test the theories of intervention, statebuilding, COIN and development, which underpin Liberal interventions that purport to support stability.

Chapter 9 – On Stability

Introduction

This chapter will examine the revised hypothesis against the theories discussed in the literature review in Chapter 2. The revised stability hypothesis argues that *'stability is driven by both local and national political settlements which are produced through processes of political legitimacy formation which can be democratic or otherwise; these processes can be supported by limited humanitarian and security interventions and maintained by economic growth.'* This conception of stability will be used to interrogate whether current theories on of statebuilding, COIN and development meet the requirements of creating stability through the lens of the hypothesis which was developed from the field research. The three theories represent the vanguard of the way in which policy and practice has outstripped academic discourse with regard to stabilisation methods and articulate the conceptions of interventionism which are rooted in Liberal philosophy discussed in Chapter 2.

The chapter concludes that all three operational areas: statebuilding (political), COIN (security) and development can provide elements of stability in different ways. However, they are either insufficient in and of themselves, or carried out in such a way that they can contribute to *instability* rather than stability. The chapter also concludes that the overall paradigm of the state system, the Westphalian state and the current orthodoxy of Liberal interventionism is challenged by the stability paradigm. The tools that have been developed (statebuilding, COIN and development) to address instability constitute an insufficient corporate body of theory because they are mutually incompatible when implemented simultaneously.

As a result, the chapter posits that other conceptions of fragility, risk and 'stable-ness' are required in order to conceive of interventions that can foster long-term stability in the interests of the population, the current and emerging political elites, and the international system. This 'stability theory' leads to a final discussion presenting a hierarchy of activities which can promote stability.

Testing theories against the hypothesis

In this section the revised hypothesis will be tested against modern statebuilding, COIN and development theories before being tested against the concepts contained within the Liberal peacebuilding agenda. This builds upon the literature review (Chapter 2) which highlighted the gaps inherent in these theories when applied to intra-state conflicts with significant intervention, including: a poor understanding of what local stability is and how it is formed, and the extent to which exogenous actions can support stability. Through this process the specific characteristics of stability and

subsequent relevance of stabilisation activities will emerge and this leads to a discussion about stability's relevance to international order.

Statebuilding

As discussed in Chapter 2 there are many schools of thought on statebuilding, and indeed the nature of state formation; however, for the testing of this hypothesis it was necessary to interrogate one theory that has been applied in governance interventions in the case study contexts. The author recognises that the theories have not been evenly applied in part because of the time periods involved, instead the analysis is looking for explanatory relevance of the theories in contemporaneous conflicts. The statebuilding theory articulated through the RAND Corporation, as discussed in Chapter 2, was chosen because whilst it was published after the Nepal conflict ended and late in the prosecution of the current Afghan conflict, it drew on social and political theory from the previous decade and discusses both case studies as part of its argumentation. It states that nation-building (the US term for statebuilding) *“involves the use of armed force as part of a broader effort to promote political and economic reforms with the objective of transforming a society emerging from conflict into one at peace with itself and its neighbors”* (Dobbins et al, 2007, p. 1). The selection of a US-centric model of statebuilding was deliberate as it is the mode under which Liberal statebuilding is likely to be attempted by external interveners.

To re-state the revised stability hypothesis from Chapter 8:

‘Stability is driven by both local and national political settlements which are produced through processes of political legitimacy formation which can be democratic or otherwise; these processes can be supported by limited humanitarian and security interventions and maintained by economic growth.’

The following issues appear to be relevant to a discussion on statebuilding and stability: transformation and evolution, political and economic life, the regional environment and the use of force.

The formation of states has rarely been achieved non-violently, because it is a process rooted in the necessity to dominate the use of force in a given territory which means other pretenders must either acquiesce or contest it, which is likely to lead to bloodshed (Tilly, 1990, pp. 68-72). This is a foundational element of state formation and despite significant efforts to reduce the levels of conflict through international mechanisms (namely the United Nations) the resort to violence to build a state has not been removed. What is new in current conceptions of statebuilding is the requirement to transform societies in the process. As a result it is not simply necessary

to dominate the use of force, the state must also be accountable, responsive and transparent in its actions.⁷³³

While it could be argued that statebuilding is transformative, the notion that societies should pursue political, economic and social transformations *at the same time* would seem to be problematic. In the context of stability this would seem to be a foolhardy approach rather than a well-considered one. This is because of the hierarchical nature of requirements for stability outlined in the field data: the provision of personal security and safety, a broad political consensus, and humanitarian action to maintain the population. A statebuilding or state transformation agenda will be equally problematic because transformation necessitates instability, and stability in the conception of respondents would only allow for gradual and evolutionary change. The provision of security and political consensus does not require full state structures and does not necessitate democratic governance which, as described in Chapter 2, are foundational elements of current statebuilding theory. A stability focus would emphasize evolution rather than transformation, calling in to question some of the expansive claims about the needs and requirements for statebuilding outlined in Dobbins' conception.

In short the agenda within statebuilding is the export of democracy for the twin reasons that democratic states are less likely to go to war with each other and less likely to prosecute genocide against their own populations (See p. 41). This is undermined by the fact that *"newly emerging democracies ... are often prone to external aggression and internal conflict"* (Dobbins et al, 2007, p. 190). Given that democratisation is the assumed model of political governance in statebuilding it is surprising that the statebuilding theory also admits that new democracies are in fact violent and therefore destabilising. The same statebuilding approach calls for the wholesale revision of the rules of the game which are the central component of stability.⁷³⁴ The theory argues that statebuilding should include organising elections, fostering civil society and a free press and to do so simultaneously. (Dobbins et al, 2007, pp. 191-2).

This modern view of statebuilding does not fit with the stability paradigm, which would require a fundamental revisiting of statebuilding principles. A revised approach to statebuilding that takes stability as its cornerstone would turn it into a more historically valid process of gradual and piecemeal change with occasional bouts of instability and violence supporting the notion that stability and instability are not binary but environments on a continuum. This does not suggest that were democracy

⁷³³ McGee & Gaventa, 2010, pp. 4-6; World Bank, 2012, pp. 20-21.

⁷³⁴ Which would allow for a broad discussion on the function and role of the state (C/f Day, 2002, pp. 205-7)

to be a guiding principle or demand of the population, as in Nepal, that it should be ignored, but that the prevailing political direction of the population should be taken into account because systems imposed from outside are less likely to be stable in the absence of a strong internal will to adapt the rules of the game.

Unlike other theories, statebuilding makes specific reference to the regional context of the state in particular, that the state that is built should be at peace with its neighbours. In line with the political transformation envisaged through statebuilding this is rooted in the democratic peace argument, which has been found to be weakly associated with stability (for more detail see Chapter 2). Democracy promotion does however feature within the US national security paradigm of supporting friendly democratic states in regions which are not necessarily democratic nor pro-US, such as East Asia or the Middle East. However, the stability paradigm would suggest that the export of democratic norms in a manner which over-extends the political environment of the region may invite destabilisation, challenging a fundamental precept of US (and UK) strategy (The White House, 2010, pp. 37-8; HMG, 2011, pp. 11-12).

In addition to the nature of the political system, the broader regional context of a state is vital and, as argued during the case study chapters, the level of influence of neighbouring states has been a significant factor in terms of national stability; including the blockades of both Afghanistan and Nepal, which led to changes in government, and the ongoing influence that both Pakistan and India retain over elected and executive officials in Afghanistan and Nepal respectively (see p. 241). However it is unclear from the stability paradigm whether greater stability can be achieved when there are doubts about the democratic peace argument, and where the establishment of pro-Western democratic regimes may invite the malign influence of neighbouring states, who may simply have been satisfied with an outcome which resumed or returned the *ante-conflict* situation.

Implementing a statebuilding transformation may invite destabilising interventions by neighbouring states and, as discussed in Chapter 8, given that both Afghanistan and Nepal's sovereignty is limited by their degree of dependence on regional neighbours and the international system, the necessity or even possibility of strong statebuilding would seem to be in doubt. Finally, the modern conception of statebuilding is that it requires the application of force. This, unlike the democratic peace argument, seems to be a robust component of statebuilding theory and confirms some of the internal inconsistency in statebuilding itself. As discussed in Chapter 2, state formation in most contexts has been violent (see Moore (1966), Claessen and Skalnik (1978) and Tilly (1990) in footnote 18 and pp. 23 and 24) which challenges whether the stability paradigm can in fact be used to build states because violence is destabilising. There is however one critical component which may have been overlooked: state formation,

i.e. the creation of new states, has since the end of World War II largely ceased. Both the processes of decolonisation and the collapse of the Soviet Union allowed a number of states to re-emerge but they often did so from a pre-existing entity and since 1991 it can be argued that only two new states have been formed.⁷³⁵

Therefore processes of state formation, while historically important and potentially instructive, may not provide a sufficient basis upon which to design interventions that support statebuilding in the context of a fully formed international state system. Where states are not being built they are being transformed by intervention, it is possible to question the principles of state formation. The state in the modern conception of statebuilding is expansive, delivering or fostering economic growth, basic services, social development and political emancipation as well as maintaining peace and security in the region and for its population. This is a particularly Western and 21st Century notion of the state. Its sheer expansiveness may be the element which invites violent resistance and therefore it requires the use of force to impose it, which would then return the stability debate to questions of political priorities and setting the (limited) rules of the game before considering how to build a state, which may be feasible with less violence.

In summary, the theory of statebuilding has become divorced from its foundations in state formation and replaced significant elements with philosophical concepts of what is considered right and good for a state to do in modern Western society. These ideas are then carried out through an expansive approach to reform which imposes democracy, specific notions of the rule of law, social relations and the necessity for international peace. The stability paradigm does not challenge the necessity for a state, nor does it preclude that statebuilding is likely to be, if not must be, violent; instead it challenges the extent of the statebuilding transformation, and suggests that an evolutionary approach would be more stable, which could involve accepting non-democratic governance traditions. It also suggests greater emphasis is required in

⁷³⁵ Slovakia and the Czech Republic formed out of Czechoslovakia in 1993; Eritrea seceded from Ethiopia in 1993, Palau achieved independence from the United States in 1994; East Timor achieved independence from Indonesia in 2002, Montenegro and Kosovo split from Serbia in 2006 and 2008 respectively; and the creation of South Sudan from Sudan in 2011. Various sources. Of these seven state formation events, the European states that were formed were the latest chapter in the dissolution of the Soviet and Communist systems after 1991 and East Timor had been seeking independence as part of the decolonisation movements in the 20th century a category which would also include Palau. Outside of the processes of decolonisation and the collapse of the communist bloc, state formation can only be said to be occurring in Eritrea and South Sudan.

promoting state sovereignty given the dependency of some states on regional neighbours and the international system.

Counterinsurgency

As identified in the literature review, counterinsurgency doctrine has evolved significantly over the last decade, but has been built upon post-colonial counterinsurgency doctrine (see p. 46). In analysing the new conflicts both the US and UK COIN doctrines (JP3-24, 2009, pp. 1-2-6; MoD, 2009a, pp. 1-7) promote population-centric COIN in part supported by thinking about changes in the nature of conflict since the end of the Cold War, notably Mary Kaldor's "New Wars" and Rupert Smith's "War amongst the People" (Smith, R., 2005, p. 23; Kaldor, 2006, pp. 27-32). This section will test whether population-centric COIN is theoretically capable of achieving stability according to the revised stability hypothesis. In order to do this it takes the definition of COIN contained in the US Counterinsurgency Doctrine JP 3-24:⁷³⁶

"COIN is comprehensive civilian and military efforts taken to defeat an insurgency and to address any core grievances. COIN is primarily political and incorporates a wide range of activities, of which security is only one. Unified action is required to successfully conduct COIN operations and should include all HN, US, and multinational agencies or actors. Civilian agencies should lead US efforts. When operational conditions do not permit a civilian agency to lead COIN within a specific area, the joint force commander (JFC) must be cognizant of the unified action required for effective COIN. Ideally, all COIN efforts protect the population, defeat the insurgents, reinforce the HN's legitimacy, and build HN capabilities. COIN efforts include, but are not limited to, political, diplomatic, economic, health, financial, intelligence, law enforcement, legal, informational, military, paramilitary, psychological, and civic actions. As capable insurgents evolve and adapt, counterinsurgents must evolve and adapt" (JP3-24, 2009, p. 12)

To re-state the revised stability hypothesis;

⁷³⁶ Whilst a number of issues were highlighted in the literature review (see p. 44) it can be taken as the leading conception of COIN in the early 21st century and influenced the prosecution of *both* the Afghan and Nepali COIN efforts. While there may be differences of opinion about the weight of importance of the various elements within COIN the overarching theme across the military commands (US and Nepali in this case) is in agreement. This analysis does not attempt to identify whether COIN Operations in either Afghanistan or Nepal were successful or not, it is aimed at understanding whether COIN theory would lead an operation to achieve stability as understood through the research data.

'Stability is driven by both local and national political settlements which are produced through processes of political legitimacy formation which can be democratic or otherwise; these processes can be supported by limited humanitarian and security interventions and maintained by economic growth.'

Several areas of dissonance seem to be evident from these definitions, including the balance between civilian and military action, the implication of the broad scope of activities that can be carried out as part of a counterrevolution in COIN and the position of the civilian population.

One of the areas of striking convergence between COIN and stability is the foregrounding of political leadership and engagement. Whilst both COIN and stability identify politics as the fundamental organising concept of their interventions, which might imply that there is synergy, even synonymity, between the two paradigms, this early convergence is tested in other areas. In this regard modern COIN doctrine draws heavily on 20th Century conceptions of COIN which understood the nature of insurgent violence as being primarily political.⁷³⁷ However, modern military doctrine on COIN is remarkably silent on the political aspects of the conflict, which it states should be led by civilian actors (JP3-24, 2009, pp. I-2). This leaves COIN with an unarticulated political vision, noted below in the range of activities suggested, which present problems as the theory moves towards action because it absorbs the dogma inherent in other aspects of Liberal interventions, in particular statebuilding's predilection for promoting democratic governance as discussed above.

For the stability paradigm politics is of primary importance. Throughout the field studies the connection made between politics and stability was clear trumped all other forms or sources of instability. However, the nature of the impact of political decisions on stability is clearer in the stability paradigm than it is in COIN theory. This means that for stability to be attained both local and national level political agreement must be reached regarding the rules of the game, about the structure of power and the distribution of resources. This is a significant level of specification which still allows for alternative approaches to political settlements being attained, whilst COIN remains silent on these issues because it is subordinate to Liberal political philosophy now articulated by statebuilding. This dissonance is starkest when considering the implication of the concept of 'process' in stability and stabilisation which is largely absent in COIN theory because it does not address what political approaches could be used to form political consensus.

⁷³⁷ For example *"The beginning of wisdom is to grasp and hold on tightly to the idea that insurgency is a profoundly political problem"* (JP3-24, 2009, pp. II-1) citing Anthony James Joes' *Resisting Rebellion: The History and Politics of Counterinsurgency*, 2006, University Press of Kentucky.

A further conceptual dissonance between COIN and stability is that counterinsurgency and insurgency are understood to be two sides of the same conflict (JP3-24, 2009, pp. I-2);⁷³⁸ whereas it is not clear that stability and instability can be viewed as dichotomous. Instead, much as there is a continuum of violence, there would seem to be a continuum of stable-ness. There cannot be a continuum of (counter-)insurgency because COIN attempts to shift an environment to a very specific end-point with the community or area becoming (or remaining) broadly pro-government in their disposition and able or willing to resist overtures from insurgents which would make it 'anti-government'. This dichotomy is implicit in the structure of seminal works on counterinsurgency, including David Galula's work, which tasks counterinsurgency with tackling "*revolutionary war*" (Galula, 1964, p. 1), and John Nagl's analysis, which implies that counterinsurgency would revolutionise armies because they have to learn to fight a different kind of war (Nagl, 2002, pp. 192-205). David Kilcullen has also argued that modern insurgencies require significant adaptation by counter-insurgents (Kilcullen, 2006, pp. 121-4).

The revolutionary nature of counterinsurgency allows it to consider almost all aspects of social, economic and developmental life under its remit, meaning that processes of counterinsurgency must, by definition, be destabilising, *even in areas that are not directly affected by current insurgent activity*. This is why the application of statebuilding or COIN approaches in Kalakan seemed to have little connection to stability. If it is to be successful, the insurgents must lose the battle of wills for the direction of the nation, which can only be done through national political processes (confirming the political primacy of COIN as noted above). Whilst this does synchronise with the conception of stability being linked to central political authority, it differs in the role that the political elite should take to counter the threat. A stability model would suggest more gradual change closer to an *evolution* as discussed with regards to statebuilding, whereas a counter-insurgent approach requires *counterrevolution* to undermine the insurgency.

Connected to the revolutionary conception of COIN there is almost no limit on the range of activities that could be significant in achieving the aim of the counter-insurgent, from hard security to rule of law, development, economic, political and soft-power interventions such as psychological operations. Counterinsurgency is total war, not in the industrial sense (Smith, R., 2005, p. 105) but in the political, social and

⁷³⁸ Some authors agree with the dualistic nature of insurgency and COIN but also note that the nature of the conflict is always shifting and that the analogy of the coin is correct, though this should not imply that the nature of the conflict is static (Kilcullen, 2006, p. 112).

cultural spheres.⁷³⁹ This is in part why the definition of COIN suggests a wide range of actors should be engaged. Despite this mass of activity there is some hierarchy: in particular that COIN is considered “*primarily political*” (JP3-24, 2009, pp. 1-2) which facilitates other activities to be carried out; similarly the “*military forces are a delivery system for civilian activity*”⁷⁴⁰ confirming security is not necessarily the primary area of activity.⁷⁴¹

The conception of stability derived from the field data would suggest that it is no less political but is more proscribed in terms of its social and economic implications, meaning that whilst there is a similar hierarchy in the importance of political over security activities, stability can be achieved through a more limited range of activities. Therefore, whilst much has been made of the derivation of stabilisation, or stability operations, from COIN theory (FM3-07, 2008, pp. 2-1) stability operations may only have limited utility for COIN operations. Particular consideration needs to be given to the potential impact of non-military interventions in the different categories of development interventions. Humanitarian action can be stabilising and is also identified as part of the FM3-07; however, this does not link well to the expansive and revolutionary nature of COIN. Humanitarian action and short term stability operations in the development or economic spheres can, at best, only hope to return communities to an *ante-conflict* state. This may be positive for stability, but is less supportive of the aims of COIN.

A final area of discussion is how COIN and stability differ in the minds of the population. For modern COIN it is clear that the population is the prize; however, it is not clear that this is applicable to conceptions of stability in two ways. Firstly, by identifying the population as an objective robs them of the agency to affect change, despite the fact that they often have a pivotal role in deciding whether or not the insurgency will be allowed to thrive in their area as in Haraiya VDC (see p. 217). Whilst respondents across the field sites discussed the role of the people in ensuring stability this was discussed in the context of a local political construct. Periods of stability were identified when there was a local political settlement which the majority could at least go along with if not fully agree with, therefore the stability focus should be on a sub-group of local leaders and their connections to and acceptance of the national level

⁷³⁹ And possibly in moral, ethical and philosophical terms.

⁷⁴⁰ Counterinsurgency: A Guide for Policy-Makers United States Government, Interagency Counterinsurgency Initiative, May 2008 (JP3-24, 2009, pp. 1-1).

⁷⁴¹ One respondent during the interview went as far as to say that 80% of the COIN campaign in Afghanistan should be political, and 20% focused on security. However, it was necessary to enforce security in some locations to allow the political work to move ahead. IN-0-1 7th October 2010, Kabul. Whilst the sentiment may be accurate, practice would suggest the opposite.

political system and their downward connections to the population. Stability is produced in the relationships between leaders at different levels and whilst the population acts as a source of legitimacy and support for local leaders, they can also prevent local leaders acting beyond social norms.⁷⁴²

Secondly, the host-nation state is assumed to enact COIN as a form of counterrevolution to win the will of the population⁷⁴³ and the state should be working “*with its population and for economic revival and political reconciliation to occur*”.⁷⁴⁴ However, a stability paradigm would suggest that the population is not the primary goal. Further experiences of insurgency and counterinsurgency suggest that social revolution must, by definition, be destabilising for it to be effective, and by engaging the population in a revolution, the state must be an agent of *destabilisation*. Stabilisation should instead focus on the restoration of the *ante-conflict* situation in terms of social and economic well-being or in terms of an evolution of the political system.

Whilst there is some overlap between the stability paradigm and COIN theory, it is clear that there are a number of problematic areas if interveners are to assume their actions will be stabilising by applying a COIN framework. Further it is not clear that stability operations would support COIN causing dissonance between COIN and stabilisation operations and doctrine when implemented in the same battle space. Although there is some agreement on political primacy, there is less agreement about the nature of the political vision because of the philosophical divergence between stabilisation and statebuilding regarding political systems (discussed above), how much change (or revolution) is required for success, what the range and hierarchy of activities should be, and what the role of the population should be. This suggests that whilst there may be similar starting points for stability and COIN these conceptions should articulate a different range and form of intervention and achieve different outcomes.

Development

As noted in the literature review, and in the findings from the field studies, development is an exceptionally broad area, and throughout this thesis it has been used to explore interventions that effect economic and social development across a spectrum of activity running from humanitarian action to ‘hot stabilisation’. The

⁷⁴² This could return the focus of military activity to effects based operations, which one respondent noted had been abandoned in favour of population-centric COIN. IN-0-7 29th November 2010, Kabul.

⁷⁴³ Counterinsurgency: A Guide for Policy-Makers United States Government, Interagency Counterinsurgency Initiative, May 2008 (JP3-24, 2009, pp. I-1).

⁷⁴⁴ Ibid.

dominant weight of activity has been carried out by mainstream NGOs and the private sector. Underpinning both economic and social development, and all of the environments under which assistance is provided, is the conception that development presents a core component of societal progress. In theoretical terms this means conceptions of development are linked to the pursuit of freedom as identified by Hayek, and Smith before him with regard to economic development, and Amartya Sen with regard to interventionist social development (Sen, 1999, p. 35; Hayek, 1978, p. 268). This Liberal philosophical tradition can clearly be identified in the theories of development identified in Chapter 2 which are being tested as part of this thesis, which are:

“Sustainable Economy

The ability of the people to pursue opportunities for livelihoods within a system of economic governance bound by law.

Social Well-Being

The ability of the people to be free from want of basic needs and to coexist peacefully in communities with opportunities for advancement” (USIP, 2009, pp. 2-9).

To re-state the revised stability hypothesis;

‘stability is driven by both local and national political settlements which are produced through processes of political legitimacy formation which can be democratic or otherwise; these processes can be supported by limited humanitarian and security interventions and maintained by economic growth.’

A number of areas of contention seem be clear between these definitions, including the impact of ‘progress’ in society, the way that the provision of basic needs affects conflict and the manner through which aid or development interventions are delivered and finally whether the interventions actually have an impact on stability.

The concept of development as ‘progress’ runs deeply within the theories outlined above and can be traced back to the Liberal paradigm, to Adams and those that followed him, as the capitalist system was first expounded (see p. 22). Within this viewpoint economic growth and the protection of the system which fosters it is critical to the achievement of social wellbeing and allowing people to “*pursue opportunities for livelihoods*” (USIP, 2009, pp. 2-9); however, this is laden with presumptions about how an economy should be structured, hence the critique of processes associated with the modern Washington Consensus (see p. 54). In common with the theories of statebuilding, particularly COIN, development envisages significant social change, but over both the short and long term, as highlighted in the case studies, development

can be a driver of instability as much as it could be seen to be stabilising (for example the HAVA in Nahr-i Sarraj or education in Gajul).

The stability paradigm may in some respects be perceived to resist ideas of economic and social advancement because of its emphasis on political settlements and association with previous periods of oppression, the restriction of economic opportunities and political freedom; however, a closer reading of the stability paradigm situates economic growth and social development as components of a healthy environment capable of providing opportunities for younger generations – the primary question from a stability perspective would be how the political settlement fosters the breadth of engagement in economic opportunity and social betterment required to limit the destabilising processes which development engenders. In this regard the expansion of economic opportunity is a lower level priority for stability than creating a supportive political system though it may have a strong role in reinforcing stability over the medium to long-term once a political system has been established.

If the stability paradigm is accurate and economic and social development is as much a threat to stability as it is a potential supporter, it is possible to question other components of the developmental paradigm of intervention. In particular whether the provision of basic needs, can reduce instability by preventing conflict, a notion espoused as far back as the Truman doctrine in 1947 (see p. 29). The driving idea is that those who are free from want will not enter into violent conflict. However, the stability hypothesis asserts that the violence which underpins conflicts in insurgencies are inherently political, and evidence from the field sites does not support the notion that impoverished groups orchestrated violence. Instead, the social groups that led the resistance groups in both case studies were not manifestly poorer or more excluded than other local leaders.

In fact, the most disadvantaged groups have for the most part attempted to shelter from the conflict rather than participate in it (for example the Dalits in Gajul and Haraiya). The conflicts have been prosecuted by wealthier members of the communities often against other wealthy individuals. Though they have, at times, used the rhetoric of rural emancipation and poverty alleviation (see pp. 181 and 219) this is insufficient to explain the targeting and mobilisation during the conflicts in any of the four sites. Furthermore, the provision of basic services during the conflicts did not seem to be associated with increased or decreased mobilisation of combatants or experiences of violence. Not only have these interventions failed to promote stability, they were demonstrated to be irrelevant to local community stability, and were criticised for *contributing to the de-legitimisation of the state* through fostering

corruption, by displacing the state from its responsibilities, or causing retribution against individuals who supported the projects.

In these instances development does not seem to address the 'root causes' of a conflict in a way which can be anything other than destabilising. Furthermore, it is not clear that focusing on root causes is a useful way of understanding or addressing insurgencies and the stability paradigm would suggest that it is not possible to address economic inequality without addressing more important political conflicts. In both Afghanistan and Nepal the evidence that the insurgencies were driven by 'root cause' motivations seems weak, or at best mixed. Afghanistan's conflicts were driven by external military interventions and perceived threats to the interests of political groups e.g. land-owners and Islamists in the 1980s who supported the *Jihad* and most recently the Taliban. In Nepal the Maoists made significant use of the rhetoric of exclusion across economic, social and ethnic lines as being drivers of the resistance but they were not successful in mobilising disadvantaged groups and once in power were unable to rectify many of the grievances they had identified. They were also not able to prevent the ethnically structured armed groups associated with the Maoists from turning on them for not fulfilling perceived promises about changes in political structures.

It is not clear from the revised hypothesis that stability would be able to address economic inequality without addressing the political conflicts first. As the prelude in Chapter 7 illustrates with the metaphor of the bull and cart, it is clear that politics is the bull leading the cart with all of the social and economic issues that it contains. In the same way the stability paradigm sees economic issues as a secondary level concern important for the maintenance of stability but not the restoration or creation of stability. From this theoretical point it can be argued that high levels of inequitable growth may contribute to instability, but it would seem to be an insufficient condition because the prior examples of stable periods in both Afghanistan and Nepal suggest that unequal social, political and economic relations can allow for a stable environment to form. The only periods of reasonably equitable economic growth have been derived from internally driven investments, which have promoted long-term employment growth e.g. in Haraiya and Kalakan. These investments may be driven by increases in consumption, particularly in construction after conflict, which may imply a need for external investment.

These are substantive critiques of the broad processes of development but they do not exclude the potential significance of emergency humanitarian action to save life and repair property. However, these critiques present a more limited range of potential areas which may be stabilising and which exclude most of the social development agenda and exogenous activity in economic development because the

examples of economic development promoting stability were driven by national consumption or local capital investment. Conceptually, this is very significant because medium and long-term development processes must be destabilising if they are to have an impact, whereas humanitarian action can restore, to an extent, communities to their land with the services to which they were accustomed to relatively quickly and with limited expenditure.

The stability hypothesis confirms some of the critiques emerging in the literature regarding the limitations of development projects in winning hearts and minds or providing a consent winning outcome (see p. 56) and extends this critique to argue that development activities provide few short-term benefits in terms of stability and must be considered to be destabilising before they can be understood to be stabilising because of the philosophical orientation of both social and economic development interventions to promote change. A further challenge to the significance of development is the limited degree to which projects can promote the social contract, a cornerstone of Liberal philosophy regarding the state, which is a consequence largely of the way in which development projects are implemented through NGOs, private development companies or state bodies that are known to be funded by the international community in some form. The state in these relationships is simply one contracting body among many, not one which must respond to the demands of the population with the use of its own limited resources.

The field data does not seem to suggest that recipients were concerned about which agency delivered development, though there did seem to be a preference for consultative mechanisms, which would challenge the argument within the development community that they are inherently best suited to deliver development (see p. 52). Therefore the fact that military forces have delivered development seems largely irrelevant to respondents because they consider them to be one of several foreign sources of investment. Whilst this may provide succour to those who support the use of CERP as a model of delivering aid, it along with all other forms of externally funded development is simply irrelevant in comparison to the real economies of the field sites, whether licit or illicit. External funding is extremely volatile, prone to delays and a lack of long-term engagement, unlike the economic sectors which have provided the long term expansion of economic opportunity (i.e. economic stability) for the populations in Haraiya, Village A and Kalakan, which lie in timber, opium and construction. Unless exogenous development funding shifts to long-term economic investment, it will continue to provide limited, short-term incentives to the population and will therefore be inherently destabilising.

In summary, the stability paradigm applies significant critiques to the application of development as a tool for promoting stability except in a proscribed manner focused

on humanitarian action. However, it is clear that stability can be maintained (and to some extent mitigated) through the expansion of economic opportunity, which contributes to the critique that the misunderstanding about the link between progress, development and stability is dangerous and presents a paradigmatic challenge to how interveners should engage other states to promote stability.

In conclusion, through the application of all three theories in support of stability, it is evident that the stability hypothesis is supported by some but not all of the components of modern iterations of the theories of statebuilding, COIN and development. However, in each case they fail to fulfil all components of stability, meaning that stabilisation interventions can be confused as the bastard child of all or none. The discussion has therefore come full circle, and the derivations of these three areas from conceptions of the Westphalian state and Liberal peacebuilding must be re-examined.

Challenging the Westphalian and Liberal peacebuilding paradigm

The discussions preceding this section have highlighted how the stability hypothesis cannot be fulfilled by the sub-strands of the Liberal project (statebuilding, COIN and development) and therefore it is necessary in turn to interrogate whether stability is a usable concept within the Liberal agenda. This discussion draws on the conclusion of Chapter 2, which argued that the component parts add up to an incoherent mode of intervention which attempts to export Liberal concepts to the rest of the world in order to protect the interests of the intervening states. As Barnett and Zürcher have argued, statebuilding is an articulation of peacebuilding which should probably be more accurately referred to as the Liberal peacebuilding paradigm that is articulated through the promotion of a specific form of the Westphalian state model i.e. the market-orientated Liberal democracy (2009, pp. 26-8). On a spectrum of intervention COIN is simply the most robust of available approaches and development the least robust.

Whilst it has been useful to interrogate stability and its connections or dissonance with the three modes of intervention, it is at the ethical and philosophical levels where issues of stability can be most sharply examined. This section looks across the areas of activity derived from the theoretical discussions as well as innovations in philosophical concepts about the state, society and stability to establish whether stability is a viable organising principle for intervention within Liberalism. Through this examination it will become clear that stability is a distinct agenda and were it to be applied fully would alter the emphasis that interveners give to their actions in the pursuit of the maintenance of international order. It is also clear that stability is not a challenge to Westphalian conceptions of the state; indeed it reinforces the centrality of a polity with defined and proscribed roles as being a pre-requisite for international

and internal order; however, it challenges the way in which interveners apply modern innovations in their own states on others.

Stability: innovating ahead of its time?

As discussed in Chapter 2 notions of state formation and its ability to promote stability in the 21st Century are deeply aligned to Western conceptions of state formation and re-historicising of their experience and the exportation of these views to other states. Modern conceptions of the state and society have evolved significantly over the last 400 years, and as noted in Chapter 2, previous aspirations of liberty (Hayek), peace (Kant), social order (Hobbes), economics (Smith), and war (Clausewitz) have in some respects been both fulfilled and surpassed by technological advancement, social change and political processes in the Western states. These concepts have been refined, adapted and moulded into action, and while they may build upon one another, in significant ways they also play off one another as variations within the same Liberal Western paradigm. These variations can be seen clearly in debates about social order and peace (Kant vs. Hobbes) or how markets function (Keynes vs. Friedman).

In these examples, which have underpinned the development of theories of intervention, there is little questioning of the underlying philosophical assumptions of, for example, the relevance of credit in economic development. Instead the debates centre on mechanisms and sequencing; as a result, few fundamental questions are asked about the main thrust of Liberal Western *philosophy* which underpins intervention activities. This may be less of an issue when discussing these activities in areas which are the dominion of Western states (i.e. their own territories) because the vast majority of the polity and the systems which support them are philosophically attuned to them. This is another proposition altogether in territories or states which have significantly different philosophical, ethical and legal traditions as noted in the discussion in Chapter 8 on culture and context.

At this point it is important again to reflect on the histories of both Afghanistan and Nepal, who have repeatedly rejected external interference in their affairs and at various points have structured themselves in opposition to Western philosophy at some stage in their history. The interventions described in this thesis are not simply projects supporting road building or training an army, but the importation of a philosophical tradition which has little or no traction amongst the broad population of the host-nations. In many respects it is necessarily to reconcile the paradigm of the West with that of the rest.

It is then legitimate then to ask whether stability is an innovation or simply a re-iteration of pre-existing approaches in which the Western world attempts to manage problems emerging in the state system; Duffield thinks of this as the way in which the

capitalist, and now Liberal states, use the elites of the non-Western states to fight barbarians who threaten the 'perceived' security of international order (Duffield, 2005, pp. 148-51). Does stability present a new way of doing business on the ground, or, much like peacebuilding and statebuilding, will it be a catch-all phrase for a range of activities articulated from an ill-defined strategic desire? In many respects the catch-all nature of stability may explain some of the crossover between stability and elements of the theories discussed above. Fundamentally the proposition that the stability paradigm adds anything new to the management of the international system rests on whether stability is a concept that has relevance outside of Western processes of intervention as both India and China seek stability (see p. 3).

In this regard the lenses discussed in Chapter 1 become more significant because it is through the changing structure of the international system that stability *may* offer alternative approaches to intervention as they are currently practiced, and predominantly funded by the Western bloc. The Liberal system is not monolithic nor is it on an inexorable path to consolidated globalisation. Instead, several centres of power exist⁷⁴⁵ which are drawing closer together but continuing to exclude the south, contributing to the creation of political-security emergencies such as those affecting small states like Afghanistan and Nepal (Duffield, 2001, pp. 2-5). As the relative power of the Western states declines in comparison to emerging powers in the East the world is moving away from the uni-polar post-Cold War era to a much more complex environment.

The stability paradigm is therefore one that is currently unfulfilled; interventions, such as those undertaken since the research began, in Libya, Egypt and South Sudan have continued to follow the Liberal interventionist path. However this is changing as significant regional and global powers, namely Russia, China and India, vie to influence and shape interventions and apply their own lenses of stability. Stability may become more relevant as the bar of the lowest common denominator is promoted and some of the most idiosyncratic forms of Western intervention are stymied. Stability may yet come of age, but it may also present a moral and ethical challenge to the West.

Stability: bringing clarity or adding confusion?

Given its as yet unfulfilled potential to challenge Liberal political philosophy it is worth considering whether stability provides greater clarity through which interventions can be organised or not. In some respects it is obvious that there should be some tension between stability and other aspects of interventions, but if it is currently insufficient as a discrete concept does it add anything to the theories of intervention which have been discussed in this chapter.

⁷⁴⁵ Broadly speaking, Europe, North America and East Asia.

As demonstrated through the field studies, analysis and theory testing, it is clear that the range of activities undertaken by the international community are not necessarily compatible and, in the worst cases, can undermine one another. This is a point also made by Call (2008, pp. 2-3) who argued that there are tensions between statebuilding and peacebuilding; but he went on to argue that what fails to occur is some application of prioritisation rather than simply attempting everything at the same time. Having identified this problem, it is important to question whether stability provides a rationale for prioritisation and simplification across the range of interventions. Here the answer is more straightforward in the sense that the stability paradigm, if used appropriately, could be moulded to specific locations politically, with proscribed aims in terms of the protection of life and economic maintenance. That framework should allow interveners both the ability to constrain their actions by defining what is and is not essential (and what would be desirable); and what may be undesirable to do if there is insufficient host national political support at both national and local levels. This may be instructive, but it is unclear whether institutions would show the restraint required not to repeat the mistakes in both peacebuilding and statebuilding by claiming that all areas of activity deserve prioritisation.⁷⁴⁶

The stability paradigm may provide a challenge to modern Liberal interventionism, though it will only be relevant in the future when non-Western political blocs have the political will, financial clout and military capability to engage in a meaningful manner. Currently this agenda has only partially been fulfilled and may contribute to the confusion about whether the stability paradigm is extant. In all likelihood it could be, but it is not yet fully articulated. However, the stability paradigm could be used at a lower level to create prioritisation about core requirements for interventions. This would restrain some of the ideological components of Liberal interventionism and yet broaden international support and reduce resistance to interventions in host nations because the interventions would be more proscribed and culturally attuned to their environments. Building on this theoretical and philosophical critique it is important to consider how stability could be understood to promote a form of intervention distinct from statebuilding, COIN and development, simply because it looks across all aspects and types of intervention and allows prioritisation and harmonisation to be central components.

Towards a theory of stability and practice of stabilisation

Thus far the thesis has sought to identify the gaps in both the philosophical and theoretical conceptions of intervention and stability through the field sites in Afghanistan and Nepal. The stability paradigm appears to be a useful vehicle to

⁷⁴⁶ For a discussion on this relating to Afghanistan see Denny, 2011, pp. 10-12. For a more general critique of statebuilding and peacebuilding see Paris, 2009, pp. 54-8.

challenge the current conception of intervention, however the extent of its impact will be unclear without clear engagement by non-Western powers. Whilst that is a future consideration this closing section will suggest a theory of stability and a hierarchy of stabilisation activities that builds upon the stability paradigm.

Theory of stability

The stability paradigm is significant because it can present a potential end-state for an exogenous intervention when correctly articulated, primarily because a proscribed set of aims and objectives can be derived from it. Unlike the statebuilding and development theories which have been tested, interventions to support stability should not be restrained within a particular specialism because they can be applied to a broad range of risk areas and potential actions. Furthermore, the stability paradigm is able to assess the importance of the state as one of many potentially unstable components, which cannot be done through statebuilding and COIN as they are predicated on supporting the state. Theoretical innovation needs to incorporate the necessity to remain aware of almost all sectors and potential issues that could impact stability, within an understanding that there are likely to be only a few factors which will be of significance. To conceptualise this point it is important to move away from the state as the central point of analysis or indeed as the main component requiring stabilisation as understood in current Liberal interventionism.

The theory of stability can be used to focus on the key relationships which maintain stability, which include the political elite, the state and the population. Tensions in the relationships between these three components would undermine both local and national political legitimacy, thereby undermining stability as conceived of from the stability hypothesis. Interventions in security, development and the economic spheres play supporting or structuring roles but are subordinated to the political relationship between these groups at different levels; for example, whilst there may be economic inequality between a political elite and an ethnic community it will be the political way in which the groups address the inequality that would lead to instability, not the fact that the inequality exists.

In this theory stability lies in the **nature** and **form** of **connections** within and between social groups, political elites and the state. These relationships are governed by political structures which shape the **nature** and **form** of the connections. Changes to any one of those components can affect stability, however not all components have the same scale of impact, and understanding the relative weight or importance of one issue over another is critical in identifying prioritised engagement. The nature of these connections relate to geographic and physical conditions; for example, locations with sea ports have access to connections that land locked countries do not have. The nature of the physical environment also predicates some of the economic activities

which the population can engage in. The form of connections relates to the social structures, meaning the traditions and norms, within a society, that structure connections. Potential avenues for investigation include; who in the community has greatest access to which resources? Who are the decision makers and who are 'disconnected'?

However both the nature (location) and form (society) and their significance to social groups, political elites and the state are structured by the political space in which they exist. Most of these political spaces are states with their own pedigree partly shaped by the nature and form of the space and people they govern. The combination of these elements, and their **connections**, will dictate the nature of stability in a given area, simply put, the greater number of connections the more stable the environment. Equally, it would be possible to identify the quality of connections and in cases where one connection dominated others, for example the significance of an illicit trade or over-reliance on aid, the dynamic would be unstable, because the area would be over reliant on one component for stability. The same elements dictate what actions (both indigenous and exogenous) could be taken to promote or reduce stability, noting that previous interventions may preclude the use of certain interventions in the future.

The space for exogenous support is constrained by the boundaries of the political space in which the social groups, political elites and state find themselves. Acting beyond the political space will largely be irrelevant to the actors or could introduce destabilising dynamics by encouraging an indigenous actor to work outside their political environment. However, within that space the range of potential interventions could be broad, though as discussed below in the hierarchy of actions, they are in fact significantly proscribed if stability were to be the objective of the intervention.

Figure 10 attempts to capture the conception of stability and locates exogenous intervention as effective only if carried out within the confines of the political environment and the nature of local conceptions of security, development and the local economy. The connections described above are represented by the arrows which show the primacy of politics over other issues and the significance that the political environment has in structuring the relationships between the key actors that provide stability, the political elite, social groups and the state.

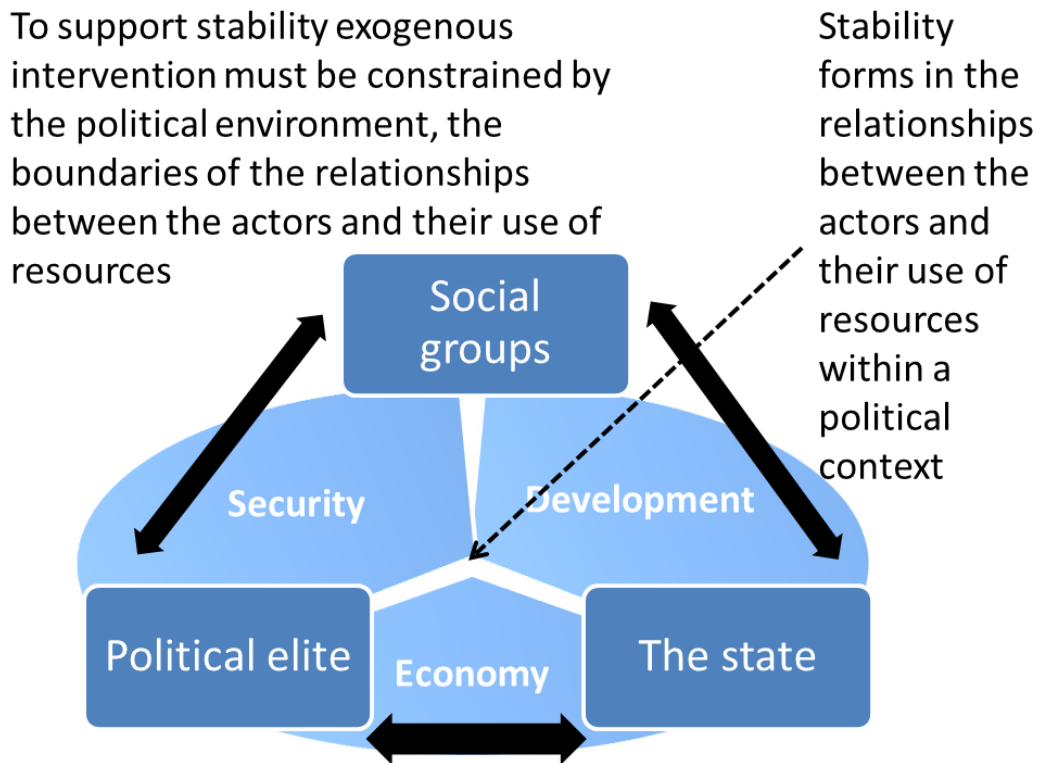


Figure 10 Theory of stability and exogenous intervention (Source: Author, 2012)

Hierarchy of stability

In addition to providing a way of conceptualising stability based on connectivity, the stability paradigm also offers a way of prioritising which activities are potentially stabilising, which are not, and which could be destabilising. This does not preclude interventions being implemented which may not directly support stability, but which support a later intervention which does support stability, but this ensures that the sequencing and prioritisation of interventions to support stability is more robust.

Figure 11 outlines an approach to stabilisation which foregrounds two elements: firstly, the nature of the local and national political environment and secondly, the personal safety and security of the local population. The political line of operation can be engaged with in a number of ways but the stability hypothesis would suggest that there are a limited viable means for exogenous states to engage with and encourage national leaders to form a political consensus. There are even fewer options at a local level because local agency will be constrained by the nature of the relationship between the local and national political spheres. This would mean adjusting 'governance' reforms away from technical processes, in particular ones which attempt to promote the delivery of substantial amounts of development funding because it is likely to be destabilising. Instead, work should focus on supporting political dialogue

and processes acknowledging the relatively weak position of exogenous actors in promoting political reconciliation.

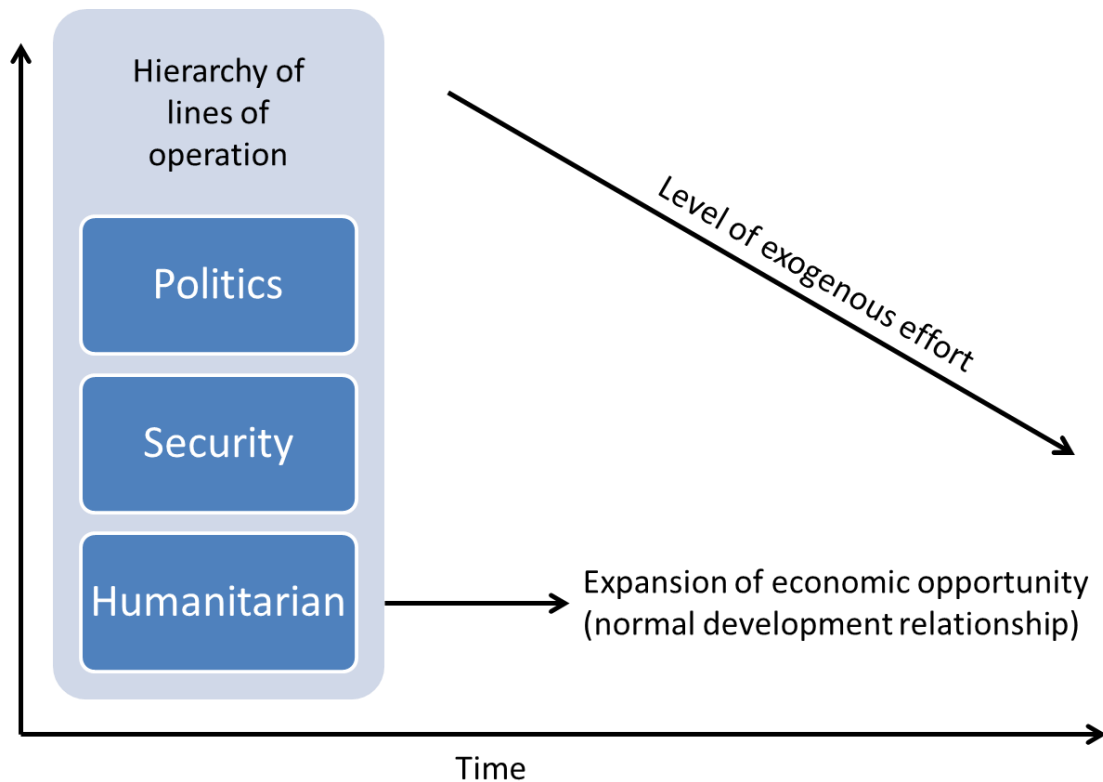


Figure 11 Hierarchy of activities for exogenous activity to support stability (Source: Author, 2012)

The sphere of personal safety and security is not simply about the provision of security by armed forces, whether indigenous or not, but also encompasses humanitarian aid, which would promote the safety of the population (i.e. provision of life-saving interventions in shelter, water and or food). Humanitarian action could be allowed to proceed irrespective of the context of the political sphere, because, in essence, it should only be about the restoration of a population to their community or holding groups in stasis; for example in refugee camps, whilst a political conflict is resolved. This is morally challenging but fulfils the humanitarian requirement of Liberalism without allowing the exportation of other components of Liberalism, which may promote instability.

However, the political sphere has direct implications for the nature of security engagement that exogenous actors would be able to carry out. It would, for example, not be possible to carry out a COIN campaign under a stabilisation mandate because, as discussed above, COIN necessitates a social, political and economic counterrevolution against the insurgency. Critically, unless there is complete political backing from the host nation the COIN effort will move beyond the will and capacity

of the state to sustain it in the long-term. The same logic would apply to other forms of exogenous support to the security sector such as SSR. As a result the political realm restricts security interventions to the protection of the population unless there is clear political backing for a more aggressive posture whose agency lies in the host-nation and not with the intervener.

If successful, these limited actions should support longer term stability, which can be maintained through the expansion of economic opportunity, meaning that as the threat reduces the level of effort in the political, security and humanitarian spheres should reduce. However, this should not imply that development as currently practiced will be able to support stability and further work is required to investigate the degree to which development activities may contribute to instability. This prioritisation would result in a curtailing of a number of activities currently called stabilisation and the focus would be shifted to security and humanitarian aid instead of justice, reconciliation, governance, economic development and infrastructure (FM3-07, 2008, pp. 2-5; Stabilisation Unit, 2008a).

The theoretical innovations implied by the stability hypothesis would allow a new analysis of unstable environments threatened by politically-orientated violence. This would mean not focusing on the state as a potential source of stability, but as one of several actors who could be both stabilising and destabilising in their actions, and in particular the degree to which national and local level political actors are able to work together in a mutually reinforcing system. This stability hypothesis allows for a radical prioritisation of the broad range of activities that exogenous Liberal states have undertaken to promote stability in other states. In particular, this focuses on non-technical forms of political engagement which allow locally adapted forms of governance to be fostered and a refocusing of security and development activities solely on the protection of civilians unless robust political backing can be identified at all levels of the host-nation. Finally, it suggests that economic development assistance should focus on broadening of economic opportunities through harnessing local capital investment rather than social development and foreign direct investment.

Conclusion

This chapter has argued that the theories of Liberal interventionism are not well-suited to promoting stability in large measure because of their insistence on the export of Western democratic governance which undermines both political and security interventions, in particular statebuilding and COIN. These theories correctly identify the political nature of the threat posed by insurgencies but can only respond to them through a process of transformation or counterrevolution. For these processes to be successful they must be destabilising and therefore they are unable to promote the stability of a region and are prone to failure because host nation states

may not be able or willing to perform the complex transformations required to respond to the insurgent threat.

The stability paradigm also radically undermines the concept that development can be seen as a stabilising process except when it is focused on the limited provision of humanitarian assistance. Development is a change process and, much like the transformations and counterrevolution supported by statebuilding and COIN, it necessitates instability. However, development actions are often divorced from the political nature of the threats and are often irrelevant as much as they are sources of instability.

This theoretical analysis means that stability could be a radically different approach to structuring international intervention. However, when pursuing this discussion across the precepts of Liberal philosophy it is not possible to identify a way in which stability could restrain the more idiosyncratic concepts that Liberal philosophy attempts to export. As the international balance of power shifts to a multi-polar world where other states, who also value stability, come to the fore and shoulder the costs of intervention it is likely that the Western Liberal tradition will be challenged, though this may take some time. That is not to say that stability is not a useful theoretical tool or a potential device for prioritisation, but simply that the higher applications of the stability paradigm are yet to be fulfilled. This chapter has posited one way of understanding stability based on the connections between political elites, social groups and the state, who operate within their political dynamic and how that is both structured by, and contains, the nature of security, economy or development within a country. This suggests that the nature and form of connections within and between these groups are key determinants in promoting stability and that the more connections groups have the more stable they are likely to be.

At an operational level the stability paradigm also allows for a refocusing of effort on a core set of areas in the political, security and humanitarian spheres to maintain stability. In terms of political interventions this would mean specifically moving away from technical governance approaches to more consensual, gradual and proscribed political support for dialogue between parties whose relationships are at the core of stability. Security and humanitarian activities would likewise be proscribed and focused on the immediate protection of the population, fulfilling humanitarian imperatives, whilst reducing the risk that interventions will pursue more invasive interventions beyond the political will and remit of the main stakeholders who provide stability, namely the political elites, the population and the state.

Chapter 10 – Conclusion

This final chapter provides a brief review of the thesis and a summary of the main findings of the research. The chapter will also discuss the implications from the findings in the context of the inevitable limitations of the research design. Some broad proposals for further research are suggested and potential policy implications from the findings before a post-script.

Chapter summary

The thesis started by questioning the logic of Liberal interventionism in promoting stability, which is identified as a central aim in the maintenance of the international system. It argued that the viral nature of threats in countries affected by conflict and state fragility predisposed the Liberal states to prosecute interventions as a comprehensive reinvention of those states through political, security and development support. Despite this bold assertion by the Liberal states the entire venture was opaque because of the varied lenses which states and intervening departments applied to the threats they were supposed to be addressing.

Chapter 2 argued that the logic of Liberal interventions was rooted in a specific interpretation of the European Westphalian state formation experience which had limited relevance to the 'fragile' territories whose philosophical, cultural, political and social contexts were markedly different. Furthermore, the propagation of modern interpretations of Liberal philosophy was not only *a historical*, but internally inconsistent because the main modes of intervention, diplomacy, defence and development had evolved distinct motivations and justifications for their interventions that created one of two distorting layers in the intervention logic. A second layer of distortion became apparent when this ideological form of intervention was applied in the context of non-Liberal, non-Westphalian states. These distortions and philosophical opacity have prevented fundamental questions about the logic of interventions aimed at stability and stabilisation from being asked and answered; these questions are: 'what is stability?' and 'what interventions support it?'

Chapter 3 introduced the stability hypothesis through which the research was carried out in order to understand local conceptions of stability in four communities in Afghanistan and Nepal, who had experienced significant conflict over the last generation alongside a range of interventions by exogenous actors, their own states and insurgents. By tracing the processes of intervention over the last generation and linking them to local conceptions of stability, the research was designed to interrogate both the proposed stability hypothesis and three theories critical to current Liberal interventions, namely: statebuilding, COIN and development. The research aimed to provide a critique of the theories as applied to stabilisation and to grapple with ways of conceiving and understanding stability that reflected the experiences and

perceptions of the four communities. This was conceived of by presenting the dependent and independent variables which were analysed through five themes in Chapters 4 to 8 which included: 1) periods of stability; 2) culture and context; 3) mode of intervention; 4) political legitimacy and; 5) conceptions of stability.

Chapters 4 to 7 discussed the field data at length presenting four stories of stability and stabilisation from the field sites. The processes of *Indigenous Stabilisation* were explored in Aqa Sarai village in Kalakan district in Afghanistan, as a way of explaining current experiences of stability after the conflicts of the last generation. It argued that stability in Kalakan and the wider Koh Daman region could only be adequately explained through the political agreements at both community and regional levels, which have allowed a number of extant local conflicts and non-violent competition between regional political leaders to be addressed. In the context of the political processes which wrought stability there were a number of other interventions by external actors in the political, security and development spheres.

The impacts of political action on stability by external actors was confined to structuring the political system, though the data suggests that a democratic system was not the only way in which political leaders would have been able to continue their competition non-violently, which questions the centrality of democratisation in promoting stability. The security interventions were largely welcomed by the population but were not identified as the drivers of stability, which was fundamentally influenced by Afghan politics. Though development interventions focused on social development were not associated with stability, the humanitarian support provided by NGOs from 2001 was vital in the restoration of the community and a fundamental component of stabilisation. Exogenous attempts at economic development were largely irrelevant and dwarfed by the scale of indigenous private sector investment, which has helped maintain stability in the medium term.

Chapter 5 discussed processes of *Exogenous Stabilisation* attempted in Village A, Nahr-i Sarraj district, Helmand province. It argued that the tactical success in stabilisation that was achieved by ISAF in the security sphere was beyond the writ of the host nation and was irrelevant in terms of stability, because it would not support strategic victory in a COIN campaign. This disconnect between the Afghan government's willingness and capability and that of ISAF to engage the Upper Gereshk Valley undermined all exogenous efforts at stabilisation in the area. Politics trumped all other factors in understanding past and present instability. Development was not simply irrelevant but in all likelihood attempts to engage the population in development activities led to displacement and the deaths of some participants. Importantly, recent development interventions had little understanding of the long-term impacts of development through the HAVA and whilst the idea of a social

contract being formed through development was advanced by interveners it had little local resonance. Local conceptions of stability were rooted in the need to assert order, or the rules of the game, so that the population and their political leaders could be held to account within a generally acceptable framework. Stability was also identified as a second rate goal, which was trumped by a desire for peace.

Chapter 6 presented an alternative perspective by interrogating processes of *Insurgent Stabilisation* in Gajul VDC, Rolpa district, Nepal. It argued that many of the limitations of the interventions in statebuilding, COIN and development to create stability applied to insurgent forces as well as host nation governments and by extrapolation to exogenous interveners. The Maoists were able to provide sufficient security and promote a functioning governance system, but this was largely by the application of substantial force. Development played an incidental role in the promotion of a dead stability, and the overzealous attempts at ideologically driven social and economic development by the Maoists have unravelled since the signing of the CPA. Over the long term, the promotion of education can be seen as a destabilising force because a significant proportion of senior Maoist leadership in the VDC and wider district emerged from the education system. The national conflict was appropriated by some members of the local leadership who used the conflict to their own ends and this challenges the idea that stability can be addressed through population-centric interventions; in Gajul it was found to be amongst the local leaders. The state in Liwang, the district headquarters, demonstrated that attempts to provide 'development' in areas of extreme flux are liable to corruption and misuse.

Chapter 7 explained how in Haraiya VDC, Bara district, Nepal, no overall control was secured by either side. The response of the community was to form a self-defence group which led to a process of *Failed Self-Stabilisation* as the group was unable to expand stability beyond a small area around the main market and the region was plagued by a number of criminal and politically-orientated armed groups during and after the conflict. The Nepali state ceded territory to the Maoists despite the weak challenge posed by the PLA in Bara district, in large part because a substantial proportion of the population simply removed their support for the state to avoid being drawn into the conflict. However, the Maoists lacked sufficient local support or personnel to provide robust governance, and leaders from the Panchayat era re-established themselves to provide a modicum of governance, which involved maintaining a basic link to the state bureaucracy to ensure health and education services continued to function. There was extensive development programming in the region which was not linked by respondents to stability formation. Additionally, the poor record of Maoist mobilisation amongst disadvantaged communities, was linked to their association with the Pahadi settlers rather than the attempts at development which targeted the Madeshi Dalit communities.

Chapter 8 presented an analysis across the field sites interrogating five themes,⁷⁴⁷ which had been introduced in Chapter 3 as a means of establishing the stability paradigm; these themes demonstrated that previous experiences of stability were not necessarily supported by democratic governance systems with capable bureaucracies and accountable security forces – core tenets of the Liberal paradigm of intervention. Instead, stability in the past had often been enforced through processes and systems which are locally acceptable for parts of the population. The challenge of supporting stability is that the exogenous interventions in the field sites have not been compatible with experiences of state formation and may have made instability chronic by ensuring that the states which are supported have become dependencies on the international system and regional neighbours. The chapter also argued that the findings from the research could be extrapolated to a number of other areas which demonstrated similar characteristics, including states which politically and fiscally depended on regional neighbours and the international system to maintain their sovereignty with significant rural populations reliant on agricultural production.

From amongst the interventions only a limited number of activities seem to be connected to stability formation and maintenance. First and foremost it is the combination of local and national politics that produces stability. However this cannot be achieved without the population being able to meet their most basic humanitarian needs and a modicum of personal security; this is a significant and reduced conception of intervention which would suggest expansive attempts at COIN, or development, may be unhelpful in promoting stability. Despite the primacy of politics, which was noted in the original stability hypothesis, the analysis argued that the formation of local political legitimacy is insufficient and cannot provide stability without national political stability: the two are symbiotic and one without the other will lead to the other being unstable. In the final theme the chapter argued that interveners often justify their actions as being stabilising but with little empirical evidence to support their claims. Nor do they identify an understanding of what local conceptions of stability actually are.

This disconnect means that exogenous support to stabilisation is likely to be misunderstood by local communities who in fact demonstrated a conception of stability that is both hierarchical and operationally limited, focusing on core political agreements at both national and local levels, the requirement for basic security and the meeting of fundamental needs through humanitarian support. It concluded that the original stability hypothesis proposed in Chapter 3 was insufficient and suggested a modified version of the stability hypothesis; *“Stability is driven by both local and*

⁷⁴⁷ 1) periods of stability; 2) culture and context; 3) mode of intervention; 4) political legitimacy and; 5) conceptions of stability.

national political settlements which are produced through processes of political legitimacy formation which can be democratic or otherwise; these processes can be supported by limited humanitarian and security interventions and maintained by economic growth.”

Chapter 9 built on the revised stability hypothesis to interrogate whether the primary modes of Liberal interventions – statebuilding, COIN and development – were able to provide stability. It concluded that none of the current theories are able to articulate interventions which would be stabilising; indeed, they are all theories of transformation and counterrevolution and are *a priori destabilising*. Despite this, both statebuilding and COIN correctly identify the primacy of politics though they are bound by their Liberal heritage to conceptions of democratic governance and they fail to overcome the limitations of exporting Liberal European philosophical traditions to territories in extreme flux. These limitations led to a proposed way of understanding instability through the stability hypothesis which could provide a theory of stability. In this theory stability is rooted in the connections within and between social groups, political leaders and the state, and their ability to access security, development and economic goods within the confines of their political and philosophical traditions. Exogenous support could then be understood to be stabilising only to the degree to which it strengthens existing relationships or promotes new ones.

Main findings

In conclusion, stability as an organising principle of intervention that Western states use to articulate their security interests is not fully compatible with traditional political, security and development activities usually mobilised to address problems arising from ‘fragile’ states. In particular the forms of intervention, most recently articulated through statebuilding, COIN and development, may not be stabilising and may undermine stability (and each other) in pursuit of a multi-track process of change embodied through modern Liberal interventionist approaches to managing the international system. Therefore the stability paradigm is only partially extant because, whilst it may be a stated desire of the guardians of international order, it does not appear to be supported by the interventions those guardians use to maintain order.

The case studies from Afghanistan and Nepal challenge the theoretical underpinnings of interventions in the international system, which have been articulated through statebuilding, COIN and development and whether they can support stability at all. These three approaches do not all lead to stability and may in fact undermine each other and therefore may, to some extent, be self-defeating. Whilst there are a range of tools and processes available to the international community, the interventions in both cases have been to support or attempt a simultaneous multi-track transformation of societies and political entities in the search for ‘stability’. In both

cases these have failed, in large part because the 'other' (the host nations), have been unwilling to follow the multifarious paths laid out before them, often with good reason. Instead, the political elites have prevaricated, resisted and shaped the political changes and conflicts of the last generation for their own, at times parochial, interests.

In the case studies stability is driven not through programmes but instead rests on a combination of political agreements at *both* the national and local levels and is supported by the structure of the economy and access to resources. Exogenous support to stability has been limited to structuring political environments and supporting the restitution of communities on their land through humanitarian action. This conception of a stability paradigm with a hierarchical approach to activities could be useful in exploring new ways of understanding fragile environments and the theory of stability posited at the end of the previous chapter acts as a challenge to further interrogate the relevance of stability and stabilisation to intervention, peace and conflict in the 21st Century.

Local respondents' conceptions of stability and their experiences of conflict and instability have forged an understanding and appreciation of stability which is quite distinct from the conceptions derived from Liberal interveners. Their priorities were more limited, less transformative, and more focused on the protection of life and the continuation of basic livelihoods in the context of exceptionally volatile *political* relationships both locally and nationally. External interventions were largely misunderstood and considered to be irrelevant even when they could be implemented effectively. Stability is not as robust as peace, but it is an environment in which the respondents were familiar and experienced many times over the years of conflict, and it was sufficient to allow them and their communities to remain where they were as they attempted to avoid, for the most part, being drawn in to the conflicts raging around them.

A significant proportion of activity funded and implemented by interveners including external actors, states and insurgents, bears little relation to stability. Statebuilding approaches transform the nature of the state and insist on technical reforms and democratic governance mechanisms which may or may not resonate with local decision making or historical experiences of state formation. COIN theory correctly identifies the primacy of politics in addressing insurgencies but advocates a destabilising form of comprehensive counterrevolution which may promote instability. Development theory bears little relationship to the drivers of conflict and insurgencies locally, and mechanisms to connect governance systems and development spending may undermine rather than support the state. Furthermore, the research has confirmed critiques of this comprehensive approach, highlighting

that elements within it are often working in contradiction (see p. 38; Patrick & Brown, 2007, pp. 6-8). This critique has been extended by linking the contradictions back to theoretical and philosophical tensions within Liberal interventionism.

The research findings challenge the paradigm of Liberal interventionism. Whilst stability provides a way of re-casting interventions, the interventionist tendencies inherent within Liberalism - which have affected both peacebuilding and statebuilding particularly - would not be addressed by asserting the value of stability within the national security priorities of the states who structure the international system. The lenses would remain dominant, until a point when the non-Western states were able and willing to resource interventions which would constrain some of the more ideological components of Liberal interventionism. These are significant issues because they build on nascent critiques of hearts and minds operations and consent-winning activities and interrogates the extent to which they affected stability.⁷⁴⁸ Furthermore, the research has extended the stability debate to the village level whereas before it had been focused at the national level or at the next level down in sub-national governance.⁷⁴⁹ The answers to the two research questions suggested that the interventions' connection to the political and security foundations of stability was limited. Finally, the analysis prompted many questions which are discussed below regarding further areas of research, and provided an initial starting point to re-dress some of the ideologically driven but unfounded assertions made about a range of activities that support stability which are termed 'stabilisation'.

Implications of findings

There are several implications from the findings, some of which require further research (discussed below) including: a potential way of recasting the debate and understanding of fragility and instability, a hierarchical prioritisation of stabilisation activities and, most significantly, the beginnings of a debate about what is the lowest common denominator of stability amongst the states in the international system.

Based on the stability hypothesis, the research has been able to outline a theory of stability which could provide a reinvigorated way of analysing contexts affected by political threats such as insurgencies. Focusing questions of stability around the number and nature of connections between social groups, political elites and the state, and situating those connections within both their political environment and the security, economic and development constraints they face, allows interveners to conceive of different and hopefully more effective interventions which would begin to address the interests of the international community, the needs of the population and

⁷⁴⁸ See for example Gordon, 2010; Fishstein & Wilder, 2012; Wilder A., 2010; Wilder A., 2010a; and discussed in Chapter 2 (p. 52)

⁷⁴⁹ For example Lawson et al, 2010, pp. xvii-xix.

the demands of current and emerging political elites. This would move the international community away from focusing on the state as a threat to international security and technical approaches to remedying its perceived deficiencies; instead, it would highlight the cultural and historical norms of statehood and stability within states and territories, allowing for a more nuanced way of understanding the threats to the international system. Accepting a degree of ambiguity, a degree of instability, and ceasing the search for an undefined end-point of 'stable-ness', would promote a less ideological, more rounded debate about the needs of states to provide certain goods within the international system and their populations.

For the interveners, at least, the stability hypothesis also provides a rationale for limiting and focusing interventions on a proscribed list of activities in place of the expansive, all-encompassing approaches advocated in recent years. This would involve limiting exogenous support within the political sphere of the host-nation, focusing less on technical governance innovations, and increasingly on political settlements and the basic protection of the population in terms of physical safety and security. This would still allow humanitarian action to fulfil the humanitarian imperative to protect life but would avoid interventions from attempting to revolutionise and transform societies that are under increasing stress from processes of globalisation and the demands of their own populations. Longer term support would then focus on economic growth, though the findings would suggest that this is most efficiently generated at a sub-national level through local level capital, rather than foreign, investment.

A final geo-strategic implication of the research is the way it highlights how the competing lenses of stability embodied in UN resolutions, and multi-lateral strategies and national security documents, allows a dysfunctional form of intervention to be carried out. By implication, extrapolating the stability hypothesis and theory to the international arena could allow states to identify their minimum requirements for stability in the international system. These are not insignificant implications and must be tempered with the limitations of the research and the requirement for further research to validate or confound the findings of this thesis.

Limitations of the research

Despite the breadth of theoretical discussion and the variation across the field sites there are several clear limitations on the findings. Some of these stem from the research methodology and were discussed in Chapter 3 (p. 100), which included the nature of case study research and the inevitable restrictions of attempting to understand complex and subjective terms such as peace and stability across several languages. These pre-identified limitations are primarily methodological and can be addressed in future studies as suggested in the following section, which would assist in moving the stability and stabilisation debates forward; however, limitations also

emerged during the research, analysis and discussion of the findings in Chapters 8 and 9, which deserve specific mention here. These issues include how the research findings can be extrapolated to other geographical areas as well as other threats to stability; the need for further theoretical interrogation; the incomplete form of the stability hypothesis and theory; and the relationship between the stability theory and Liberal philosophy.

As discussed in Chapter 8 the site selection means that caution needs to be applied in extrapolating the findings of the research. The field sites are primarily rural agricultural areas though often with a large urban centre within a few hours' travel. There is some light industry present but for the most part the areas are not industrialised and some elements of the communities are barely part of the cash economy though, where there is significant liquidity, it is often in the illicit economies. This rural focus was made primarily because of limitations on time and space, given that the inclusion of urban areas would have increased the number of case studies and variables that required investigation. All the sites have been affected by conflict and have had a number of interventions carried out within them, whether they were humanitarian, development, political or security related, and they do currently have some form of state presence either through the provision of services or security forces (excluding Village A).

Both Afghanistan and Nepal are poor states dependent on aid and are unwilling or unable to resist the interventions of powerful states including their neighbours. In both countries the political elites have struggled to address the conflicts that have raged in their territories for many years. While a number of other states fit many, if not all, of these criteria, care should be taken with simply extrapolating from the trends seen in the data. However, it is worth dwelling on the fact that, as identified in Chapter 8, there are a number of states which have largely agricultural economies, with fractured political elites and incomplete political transitions dependent on the international system and regional neighbours.⁷⁵⁰ This suggests that the implications of the research could be considered to be potentially relevant to a number of other locations.

Further, intra-state conflicts are in fact relatively common, and whilst the rate of intra-state conflict is not a focus of the study it is worth noting that the Uppsala University

⁷⁵⁰ Including many of the "fragile and conflict-affected" states that have endorsed the recently proposed New Deal on Statebuilding including; Afghanistan, Burundi, Central African Republic, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, Guinea Bissau, Guinea, Haiti, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Sudan, Timor-Leste, Togo. See HLF-4, 2012b.

Conflict Dataset counted twenty-nine states with intra-state conflict in 2011.⁷⁵¹ Though not all intra-state conflicts can be characterised as insurgencies (Sarkees, 2010, pp. 5-7), a number of those clearly are ongoing insurgencies which would allow the findings to be extrapolated to those areas, in particular when cross-referenced against the states identified by the Busan High Level Panel on Aid Effectiveness as “fragile and conflict affected” which are targets of statebuilding interventions.⁷⁵²

This does, however, point to a limitation that requires further exploration with regard to the nature of political conflicts and stability, which has been the focus of this study, and whether threats to stability which have less significant, or no political content, should be conceived of, analysed and responded to in a different manner. The introduction argued that the policy of stabilisation was meant to address threats to stability, which included states unable to control their territory, respond to climate change, eliminate criminal and terrorist networks and contain nuclear proliferation (p. 1). Evidently not all of the aforementioned threats are capitalised on by insurgencies, in particular climate change, and not all insurgencies are of significance to the international community. The findings on insurgencies suggest the overarching primacy of political action and the broad failure of both host nations and the international community to be able to provide the requisite political leadership and vision to address the threat posed by the insurgencies. This undoubtedly would be different when addressing threats which are primarily *a political* and further work would be required to consider the implications of stabilisation activities in those areas.

The second major set of limitations relate to the theories interrogated during the analysis: the proposal of the stability hypothesis and theory and the links this has to Liberal philosophy. As stressed previously (see p. 266), the selection of the three theories which have been tested during the thesis was somewhat arbitrary, because within statebuilding, COIN and development there are a number of competing theories and strands of argumentation amongst academics and practitioners. A selection of theories had to be made to provide a focus for the analysis and as argued

⁷⁵¹ The full list includes: Afghanistan, Algeria, Cambodia (Kampuchea), Thailand, Central African Republic, Colombia, Ethiopia, India, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Ivory Coast, Libya, Mauritania, Myanmar (Burma), Nigeria, Pakistan, Philippines, Russia (Soviet Union), Rwanda, Senegal, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, Tajikistan, Thailand, Turkey, Uganda, Yemen. In total there were thirty-seven conflict entries, states with more than one conflict were only counted once and one conflict involving the United States was excluded, UCDP, 2011.

⁷⁵² Using 2011 as the base year five states appear in both lists (Afghanistan, Central African Republic, Sudan/South Sudan, Somalia,). If the analysis was to include all states that had been affected by insurgencies and statebuilding interventions in the last decade it would include most of the states identified in Busan, see HLF-4, 2012b.

earlier this has been defended on the basis that the selection of the three theories has been relevant to both of the case studies.

This analysis can however only be limited because there has not been space to delve in to other variants of the schools of thought on how to conceive of a COIN campaign, how to structure statebuilding or how to develop poor rural communities. Whilst the theories chosen represent the mainstream it is feasible that a different combination of non-mainstream theories in each area may respond to the stability hypothesis in a different manner which would challenge the notion that the stability hypothesis lays a platform from which Liberal philosophy can be challenged.

Subsequently, the stability hypothesis developed in Chapter 8 and the outline of a theory of stability provided in Chapter 9 should be seen in the context of the practical limitations discussed above, and the limitations of the theoretical discussion. Further work is required to test the hypothesis, refine or challenge it in other contexts, and by applying other theoretical frameworks to it before the suggested hypothesis can be seen to be robust. Similarly, whilst the theory of stability may provide a framework to understand stability, it would need to be tested in order to understand whether it provides a coherent and useful approach to issues of stability. Both of these limitations suggest caution should be applied in using the current form of the stability hypothesis to challenge Liberal philosophy. The Liberal tradition is a significant corpus of work, and whilst the stability hypothesis can be used to challenge Liberal thinking, until it is demonstrated to be extant in more locations and conflicts it will be difficult to suggest that it has identified a weakness in the application of Liberal interventionism. Even when these conditions are fulfilled it must be recognised that it would require a significant philosophical debate and evolution to challenge the Liberal tradition in this regard.

Recommendations for future work

This final section suggests some of the initial steps that would be required to address the gaps and limitations discussed above. There are a number of research implications that need to be considered were the stability theory to be tested. If one were to test a theory of stability one would have to consider social, political and economic ties within and between groups, which would require advancing the 'audit' approach used in this thesis to move to a more systematic and comparable research tool which could consistently combine both qualitative and quantitative data. Furthermore, to fully understand the implications of time on stability, both in terms of the impact of interventions as well as the differences between chronic and acute instability, the research design would need to be carried out over a longitudinal time frame. It seems likely that, at a macro level (the nation state), some secondary data will already be available. More work is required at the micro level, particularly in testing the hierarchy

of components in the stability definition. It would also be instructive to utilise an alternative method of collecting and analysing data, moving away from semi-structured qualitative interviews to an approach which can be more easily replicated.

Two significant variables require further investigation: firstly, it would be instructive to test the stability theory on *a political* threats, such as natural disasters, to identify whether this would challenge either the hierarchy or theory of stability. In particular, do natural disasters change the connections within and between the key stakeholders in ways which are distinct from the changes made as a result of political threats. Secondly, the cases here focus on small states, without substantial economic or political importance in the international system in their own right, which are dependent on the international system. It would be instructive to understand whether the same dynamics apply in larger states (such as Pakistan) dependent on the international system which are facing insurgencies as well as large states who do not rely on the international system and apply very different approaches to dealing with insurgencies, such as India or Russia.

As well as the potential to test a monitoring system for stability, there are two areas of conceptual and philosophical work that would be useful in interrogating the stability theory. The stability theory's suggestion that reducing the level of international intervention may result in better, more stable, outcomes requires counter-factual testing. Astri Surhke has made a similar point specifically in regard to Nepal (Suhrike, 2009, pp. 44-6), though it would be instructive to test the validity of this argument in other contexts to provide a robust data set of what types of actions may be stabilising and what are not. The limitation is that for the most part interventions are often comprehensive and multi-faceted and identifying such examples is difficult. Finally, Liberal interventionism will continue to reinvent itself, as it has done over the last two decades, and a robust philosophical debate is required to identify the tensions between Liberalism as applied in Western states and Liberalism as applied in other contexts. Examining a further set of tensions between Liberal interventions and local political philosophies, as a way of exploring the significance of interventions on local culture, context and history, would also be useful.

Policy implications

During 2012 several initiatives have sought to understand the factors which have caused state fragility to persist in countries affected by conflict. This has included the Busan initiative, which agreed a New Deal on statebuilding and peacebuilding in February 2012, and the OECD's investigation into global factors which influence conflict and fragility (OECD, 2012, pp. 3-7). Emerging from these processes is an understanding that Liberalism and associated globalisation is as much a cause of instability as a potential avenue for addressing fragility. The policy discussions

emerging from these debates are currently incomplete but include promoting more accountability by donor states, understanding the dark side of globalisation, the stresses that Liberal trade and fiscal reforms place on fragile states, and the limited degree to which externally funded aid actually supports economic growth. It has taken nearly two decades for the Liberal interveners to comprehend the limitations and risks associated with exogenous action. As a result they may be moving towards interventions which focus on promoting legitimate politics, basic security and justice provision, employment and fiscal independence (4th High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, 2012, p. 2).

These are potentially significant changes, but the current direction of the debate is less radical than what is suggested by the data, which would entail a re-orientation of exogenous support to bolster locally acceptable and achievable political settlements. These actions would include:

- 1) Substantially reducing aid to dependent states over time as a means to increasing their own legitimacy and independent action
- 2) Slowing the pace of economic liberalisation in areas where regional economies are more significant than the wider global economic system, and focusing external support on integrating regional economies to promote growth
- 3) Bolstering mechanisms for support to civilian non-governmental and military capabilities in order to respond to humanitarian crises
- 4) Limiting the scope of UN Security Council resolutions on interventions in fragile states, in order to focus on maintaining fundamental services to fulfil humanitarian principles but resist expansive attempts at comprehensive transformations of other states until there is a coherent and stable political settlement with which the international community can engage.

تمام شد

Post-script

In spring 2012 I returned to Kabul, Helmand and Nahr-i Sarraj district in Afghanistan as part of a transition review on behalf of the Helmand PRT's Head of Mission. My remit, to identify priority areas for the PRT to support the stability of the Afghan state in Helmand before it closes down in 2014 was broad and in some senses provided the opportunity for a real life application of what I had learned from the research methodology applied in this thesis with the advantage of being able to work in a team who brought a range of skills and experience to the data collection and analysis. Throughout the Joint Transition Review civilian and military staff were concerned that the years of interventions and the rhetoric of progress did not match the reality of the exceptionally costly, hard fought and fragile gains which could be wiped away by a messy transition and an Afghan political elite whose support for the ISAF mission was incomplete.

Kalakan's leaders continue to watch events in Kabul and southern Afghanistan warily, positioning themselves for what many believe will be renewed conflict after 2014. In Aqa Sarai, the village leaders are grappling with how to deal with the environmental impact of the smoke from the brick kilns established in recent years. The leaders of Village A, in Helmand, are scattered and those living in Kabul remain in squalor, abandoned by patrons and shunned by the President and his aides, because the reality of Helmandi IDPs living in Kabul would undermine the narrative of progress towards the transition being promoted by ISAF and the Afghan government. The village itself remains outside of state or ISAF control.

Nepal too faces an uncertain future. Caught between the behemoths of India and China; its leaders have struggled for years to complete the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, and the appointment of Prime Minister Baburam Bhattarai in August 2011 presented what may be the last realistic hope of completing the CPA in its current form before the tensions under the surface of the Maoists' party and the pressures from armed groups becomes greater. Ultimately, despite the long-standing engagement of the international community and regional neighbours, Nepal faces an unstable future, as it struggles to address two critical strategic issues: how best to use its strategic water resources and how to control its porous borders.

Whilst the Maoists in Rolpa are calling for the People's War to be restarted, Gajul has remained peaceful and stable, with little opportunity available for political debate, allowing Gajul's leaders to concentrate on how best to use the development spending that has been flowing into the area for several years. Bara remains fragile with the population threatened by armed groups, whilst those in Haraiya VDC for the most part are simply seeking to avoid conflict and get on with their lives. The development gravy

train continues to be looted through the all-party mechanism and there are widespread complaints about the iniquity of the political settlement.

In all the field sites the arguments about the nature of the state and its relationship with the population are far from over and they remain significantly, and dangerously, reliant on the international system and regional powers. For the people living in the four villages there will be periods of instability in the future; whether external interveners can help stabilise them will depend on whether we can learn from the mistakes of the past.

Appendix A - Letter to respondents

Dear Sir / Madam,

Re: Request for interview

I am a PhD Researcher at Cranfield University in the UK where I am looking in to the impacts of external interventions, often called stabilisation, on stability and legitimacy in conflict situations. I would be very interested in interviewing you as part of my research as I believe that you will be able to provide unique and important insights which are relevant to my research area.

My PhD is called “Understanding interdependencies in Stabilisation in Afghanistan and Nepal”. I am carrying out interviews with over 100 respondents in 4 case studies in Afghanistan and Nepal. Some of my respondents will be from local communities, including local informal leaders and economic actors. I will also be interviewing relevant national leaders in Kabul and Kathmandu along with a selection of international actors from a range of NGOs, bi- and multi-lateral institutions and embassies.

I am based at the Centre for Security Sector Management (CSSM), at Cranfield University. My supervisor is Dr. Ann Fitz-Gerald. If you wish to contact my department details can be found on the Cranfield University website www.cranfield.ac.uk

If you agree to the interview I would like to ask your permission to be able to record the interview, if you wish I can send you an English transcript at a later date. If you prefer not to be recorded I will take notes during the interview. Unless you instruct me otherwise I will assume that you do not want to be identified in the writing up of the research and interviewees will be assigned separate alpha-numeric codes which will be used in any material produced from the research whether that is in verbal presentations or written text.

The range of issues I would like to discuss may take 2 hours to go through with you in the interview, though some interviews may be shorter. Most of the interview questions will be about specific interventions by external actors or the state in a specific location (from the 4 case studies). I may also ask you about your experiences of the state and a range of interveners over the last 20-30 years. Many of the questions will be about perceptions and your view with regard to the state, the community and/or the intervener. It is not necessary for you to have complete knowledge of the interventions we discuss as the perceptions of those processes are as important as what actually happened.

In a few cases additional interviews may be useful and I will endeavour to tell you as early as possible whether I think additional sessions may be helpful and to ask your

permission for each subsequent interview. During the interviews you may decide not to answer a question or to halt the interview at your discretion.

I look forward to hearing from you soon. Yours,

Christian Dennys

Appendix B – Interviewee List

S/n	Country Case Study	Interviewee Location	Date	Language
1	Afghanistan	Kabul	07/10/2010	English
2	Afghanistan	Aqa Sarai	10/10/2010	Dari
3	Afghanistan	Aqa Sarai	10/10/2010	Dari
4	Afghanistan	Aqa Sarai	12/10/2010	Dari
5	Afghanistan	Aqa Sarai	12/10/2010	Dari
6	Afghanistan	Kabul	13/10/2010	Dari
7	Afghanistan	Aqa Sarai	14/10/2010	Dari
8	Afghanistan	Aqa Sarai	14/10/2010	Dari
9	Afghanistan	Kabul	16/10/2010	English
10	Afghanistan	Aqa Sarai	17/10/2010	Dari
11	Afghanistan	Aqa Sarai	17/10/2010	Dari
12	Afghanistan	Aqa Sarai	17/10/2010	Dari
13	Afghanistan	Kalakan	18/10/2010	Dari
14	Afghanistan	Aqa Sarai	18/10/2010	Dari
15	Afghanistan	Kabul	19/10/2010	Dari
16	Afghanistan	Kabul	19/10/2010	English
17	Afghanistan	Kabul	19/10/2010	Dari
18	Afghanistan	Kalakan	20/10/2010	Dari
19	Afghanistan	Mushwani	20/10/2010	Dari
20	Afghanistan	Mushwani	21/10/2010	Dari
21	Afghanistan	Kalakan	25/10/2010	Dari
22	Afghanistan	Kalakan	25/10/2010	Dari
23	Afghanistan	Kalakan	10/11/2010	Dari
24	Afghanistan	Mushwani	13/11/2010	Dari
25	Afghanistan	Kalakan	13/11/2010	English
26	Afghanistan	Kalakan	13/11/2010	Dari
27	Afghanistan	Bagrami	14/11/2010	Pashto
28	Afghanistan	Bagrami	15/11/2010	Pashto
29	Afghanistan	Bagrami	17/11/2010	Pashto
30	Afghanistan	Bagrami	18/11/2010	Pashto
31	Afghanistan	Kalakan	19/11/2010	Dari
32	Afghanistan	Bagrami	21/11/2010	Pashto
33	Afghanistan	Kabul	27/11/2010	English
34	Afghanistan	Kabul	28/11/2010	English
35	Afghanistan	Kabul	28/11/2010	English

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36	Afghanistan	Kabul	29/11/2010	English
37	Afghanistan	Kabul	29/11/2010	English
38	Afghanistan	Kabul	12/02/2010	English
39	Afghanistan	Kabul	12/03/2010	English
40	Afghanistan	Washington	12/03/2010	English
41	Afghanistan	Gereshk	12/04/2010	Pashto
42	Afghanistan	Kabul	12/04/2010	English
43	Afghanistan	Gereshk	12/05/2010	Pashto
44	Afghanistan	Nad-I Ali	12/05/2010	Pashto
45	Afghanistan	Kandahar	12/05/2010	English
46	Afghanistan	Gershk	12/06/2010	Pashto
47	Afghanistan	Kabul	12/07/2010	English
48	Afghanistan	Gereshk	12/08/2010	Pashto
49	Afghanistan	Kabul	12/08/2010	Pashto
50	Afghanistan	Kabul	12/08/2010	English
51	Afghanistan	Kabul	12/09/2010	English
52	Afghanistan	Kabul	12/09/2010	English
53	Afghanistan	Kabul	12/11/2010	Pashto
54	Afghanistan	Kabul	12/12/2010	English
55	Afghanistan	Kabul	12/12/2010	English
56	Afghanistan	Nahr-i Sarraj	13/12/2010	Pashto
57	Afghanistan	Lashkar Gah	13/12/2010	Dari
58	Afghanistan	Gereshk	14/12/2010	Pashto
59	Afghanistan	Kabul	15/12/2010	Pashto
60	Afghanistan	Copenhagen	20/07/2011	English
61	Nepal	Kathmandu	26/07/2011	Nepali
62	Nepal	Kathmandu	09/08/2011	English
63	Nepal	Kathmandu	09/08/2011	Nepali
64	Nepal	Kathmandu	10/08/2011	Nepali
65	Nepal	Kathmandu	11/08/2011	English
66	Nepal	Kathmandu	12/08/2011	English
67	Nepal	Kathmandu	15/08/2011	English
68	Nepal	Kathmandu	16/08/2011	English
69	Nepal	Nawalparasi	18/08/2011	Nepali
70	Nepal	Haraiya	23/08/2011	Nepali
71	Nepal	Haraiya	23/08/2011	Nepali
72	Nepal	Haraiya	23/08/2011	Nepali
73	Nepal	Haraiya	24/08/2011	Bojpuri
74	Nepal	Haraiya	24/08/2011	Bojpuri
75	Nepal	Haraiya	24/08/2011	Bojpuri
76	Nepal	Haraiya	24/08/2011	Nepali
77	Nepal	Haraiya	24/08/2011	Bojpuri
78	Nepal	Haraiya	24/08/2011	Bojpuri

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79	Nepal	Haraiya	25/08/2011	Nepali
80	Nepal	Haraiya	25/08/2011	Nepali
81	Nepal	Haraiya	25/08/2011	Nepali
82	Nepal	Haraiya	25/08/2011	Nepali
83	Nepal	Haraiya	25/08/2011	Nepali
84	Nepal	Haraiya	26/08/2011	Nepali
85	Nepal	Haraiya	26/08/2011	Nepali
86	Nepal	Haraiya	26/08/2011	Nepali
87	Nepal	Haraiya	26/08/2011	Bojpuri
88	Nepal	Kalaiya	28/08/2011	Nepali
89	Nepal	Kalaiya	28/08/2011	Nepali
90	Nepal	Kalaiya	28/08/2011	Nepali
91	Nepal	Kalaiya	28/08/2011	English
92	Nepal	Kalaiya	28/08/2011	Nepali
93	Nepal	Kalaiya	28/08/2011	English
94	Nepal	Kalaiya	28/08/2011	Nepali
95	Nepal	Kalaiya	28/08/2011	Nepali
96	Nepal	Kalaiya	29/08/2011	English
97	Nepal	Kalaiya	29/08/2011	Nepali
98	Nepal	Kathmandu	19/09/2011	Nepali
99	Nepal	Kathmandu	19/09/2011	Nepali
100	Nepal	Kathmandu	19/09/2011	Nepali
101	Nepal	Kathmandu	19/09/2011	English
102	Nepal	Kathmandu	27/09/2011	English
103	Nepal	Kathmandu	27/09/2011	English
104	Nepal	Gorahi	10/10/2011	Nepali
105	Nepal	Gorahi	11/10/2011	Nepali
106	Nepal	Liwang	12/10/2011	Nepali
107	Nepal	Liwang	12/10/2011	Nepali
108	Nepal	Liwang	12/10/2011	Nepali
109	Nepal	Liwang	12/10/2011	Nepali
110	Nepal	Gajul	13/10/2011	Nepali
111	Nepal	Gajul	13/10/2011	Nepali
112	Nepal	Gajul	14/10/2011	Nepali
113	Nepal	Gajul	14/10/2011	Nepali
114	Nepal	Gajul	14/10/2011	Nepali
115	Nepal	Gajul	14/10/2011	Nepali
117	Nepal	Gajul	15/10/2011	Nepali
118	Nepal	Gajul	15/10/2011	Nepali
119	Nepal	Gajul	15/10/2011	Nepali
120	Nepal	Gajul	15/10/2011	Nepali
121	Nepal	Gajul	15/10/2011	Nepali
122	Nepal	Gajul	15/10/2011	Nepali

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123	Nepal	Gajul	16/10/2011	Nepali
124	Nepal	Gajul	16/10/2011	Nepali
125	Nepal	Gajul	16/10/2011	Nepali
126	Nepal	Liwang	17/10/2011	Nepali
127	Nepal	Liwang	18/10/2011	Nepali
128	Nepal	Liwang	18/10/2011	Nepali
129	Nepal	Gorahi	19/10/2011	Nepali
130	Nepal	Gorahi	19/10/2011	Nepali
131	Nepal	Kathmandu	08/08/2011	English
132	Nepal	Kathmandu	21/10/2011	English
133	Nepal	Kathmandu	23/10/2011	English
134	Nepal	Kathmandu	23/10/2011	English
135	Nepal	Kathmandu	24/10/2011	English
136	Nepal	Kathmandu	25/10/2011	English
137	Nepal	Kathmandu	25/10/2011	Nepali
138	Nepal	Kathmandu	26/10/2011	English
139	Nepal	Kathmandu	30/10/2011	Nepali
140	Nepal	Rolpa	31/10/2011	Nepali
141	Nepal	Kathmandu	10/11/2011	English

Appendix C - Field work timeline

No	Activity	Place	Jul-10	Aug-10	Sep-10	Oct-10	Nov-10	Dec-10	Jan-11	Feb-11	Mar-11	Apr-11	May-11	Jun-11	Jul-11	Aug-11	Sep-11	Oct-11	Nov-11	Dec-11	Jan-12	Feb-12	Mar-12	Apr-12	May-12	Jun-12	Jul-12	Aug-12	Sep-12
Year 1																													
1	Work on Literature Review	UK																											
2	Develop site selection (Afghanistan)	Kabul																											
3	Develop site selection (Nepal)	Nepal																											
4	Complete Literature Review and Methodology Chapters	UK																											
5	1st Year Review	UK																											
6	Revision and preparation	UK																											
Year 2																													
7	Field Work in Afghanistan	Afg																											
8	Questionnaire	UK/Afg																											

Appendix D - Risk Assessment

Note: 1 is low 5 is high

Risk	Further Description	Probability (1-5)	Impact (1-5)	Mitigation strategy	Probability (1-5)	Impact (1-5)
Methodological						
Deadlines are missed for the delivery of the Literature review and methodology chapter		3	5	An early start has already been made on a literature review with elements from the paper 'Contextualising Stabilisation' that can be recycled in to the new literature review.	2	5
Significant revisions are recommended by review panel		3	5	Two months of additional revision and preparation time have been included in the project plan	3	3
Site selection is affected by insecurity in Afghanistan		3	4	Two sites, Kunduz and Bamyan have been chosen in addition to sites near Kabul to ensure regular access to at least two field sites	2	3
Site selection is delayed Nepal	Delays to travel are unlikely, though it may take longer than expected to move forward with site selection on the ground because I have not been before	3	4	Booking flexible tickets to ensure I can stay longer if necessary	2	3
Physical						
Sickness	It is likely I will get sick at somepoint, though the most likely illnesses will probably not be debilitating	4	4	Travel insurance and ensuring I am generally in good health and take medical kit with me on all travel	2	3

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Security incident resulting in injury	Physical injury as a result of security incidents (IEDs, kidnapping), predominantly for Afghanistan	4	5	In particular for Afghanistan I will be hosted by CPAU a local organisation, who I have worked with many times over the last 3 years and will follow their security guidance.	2	5
Field researchers or assistants are unable to work, or affected by insecurity		3	5	Time will be spent on identifying suitable researchers and assistants including ensure their social and physical situation and to ensure that they also have adequate insurance should they require it	2	4
Fieldwork related						
Delays to field work occur	For example major natural or manmade disasters or political change in any of the 3 countries.	3	5	Whilst it will not be possible to limit the probability of these changes it will be possibly to alter the scheduling of the case studies quite significantly, and in the worst case scenarios alternative countries (including Kosovo and Yemen) are being considered as part of the research design.	3	3
Funding		4	5	For Afghanistan funding has been arranged to cover lodging, travel and a Interpreter. In Nepal some funding is still needed and applications will be made to meet the unfunded lines. Emergency funding is available if required.	2	3
Field Research in Afghanistan is cancelled because of insecurity	Sites cannot be accessed because of insecurity or	4	5	I will pre-identify secondary sites within Afghanistan and alternative countries if the situation deteriorates too far	4	3
Field research in Nepal is affected by political change and insecurity	Original sites are inaccessible or no longer relevant to research questions	3	5	I will pre-identify secondary sites within Nepal	2	3

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Analysis of data collected is not possible because of poor quality	This risk mainly relates to Afghanistan where I may not be able to reach field sites	3	5	Significant time will be spent on training researchers for Afghanistan	2	5
Ethics						
Risk to participants (Afghanistan)	Participants may be perceived to be supporting the ongoing intervention, the risk is highly physical	4	5	Research design will ensure that individuals are able to be interviewed in a secure environment which may also disguise the fact they are participating in a research project to outsiders (the participants themselves will be given full information regarding use of data and information). This may include for example, using the offices of a local NGO to invite participants to. The participants may be legitimately going to the office for other business rather than participating in a research interview.	2	5
Risk to participants (Nepal)	Participants may be perceived to be partisan, risk may be more social or political than physical	3	4	Participants will be interviewed in secure environments and the objectives of the research will be made clear to them.	2	3
Risk to participants (International)	Some of the findings may indicate failures in the part of some international actors (organisations or individuals) which may be negatively reported or received	2	3	Information for International respondents will most likely be anonymised, particularly for Afghanistan.	1	3
Confirmation of use of data from participants	It is important to feedback to participants how their	4	5	It is important to validate conclusions that the participants have the opportunity to feedback in to the	2	5

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and conclusions drawn from their input	information is being used and the analysis that has stemmed from their work (cf with APRO approaches to Ethnical Research)			final process. This will be factored in to research design and resources allocated to it.		
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Note: 1 is low 5 is high

Appendix E - Budget

Afghanistan					Funded
Flight to Afghanistan from UK Rtn	Flight	£900.00	1	£900.00	Y
Accommodation costs (Kabul)	Month	£100.00	3	£300.00	Y
Travel insurance	Insurance Policy	£500.00	1	£500.00	Y
Field researchers	Days	£30.00	50	£1,500.00	Y
Accommodation for Field Researchers	Nights	£15.00	50	£750.00	Y
Per Diem for Participants (travel costs)	Days	£5.00	100	£500.00	Y
Flights from Kabul to Kunduz (PhD Student, plus Researchers, twice)	Flight	£180.00	6	£1,080.00	Y
Incidental costs (pens/paper etc)	Lumpsum	£100.00	1	£100.00	Y
Sub-total Afghanistan				£5,630.00	
Nepal					
Flight to Nepal from UK Rtn	Flight	£900.00	2	£1,800.00	Y
Salary for Interpreter	Months	£500.00	6	£3,000.00	N
Local travel costs (car + driver)	Days	£30.00	100	£3,000.00	N
Sub-total Nepal				£7,800.00	
Total				£13,430.00	

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