Theories of Democratic Change Phase III: Transitions from Conflict

DRG Center Working Paper

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Research and Innovation Grants Working Paper Series

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MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

The Center of Excellence on Democracy, Human Rights and Governance (the DRG Center) is pleased to share "Theories of Democratic Change—Phase III: Transitions from Conflict." This publication was produced by USAID in partnership with the Institute of International Education as part of the Research and Innovation Grants Working Papers Series.

The Strategy on Democracy, Human Rights and Governance reaffirms USAID's commitment to "generate, analyze, and disseminate rigorous, systematic, and publicly accessible evidence in all aspects of democracy, human rights, and governance (DRG) policy, strategy, and program development, implementation, and evaluation." The Research and Innovation Grants Working Papers Series continues to support this commitment through the various papers produced by research teams from US colleges and universities.

This paper is part of USAID's Theories of Democratic Change, a multi-phase research initiative to improve USAID's understanding of the conditions and processes driving democratic change. Each phase of the initiative explores a specific trend in democratization and produces a white paper and theory matrix. Both serve as a guide for practitioners to explore the research and evidence. Through these efforts, this initiative has improved the recommendations developed in DRG country assessments while empowering USAID's DRG Officers to develop sound country strategies and programming recommendations.

This publication organizes and evaluates the body of current academic theory in the fields of political science, economics, peace studies, anthropology, sociology, and psychology that connects democratic practice and violent conflict. The authors examine the relationship between the two forces to answer the following questions: How do democratic practices exacerbate violent conflict? How does violent conflict undermine democratic practices? How can external interventions mitigate risks and capitalize on opportunities during transitions to democracy and peace? The publication was produced by a research team from George Mason University and Georgetown University, and was informed by and vetted in a peer review workshop by a group of democratization scholars from Brown University, Columbia University, George Mason University, Gettysburg College, University of California – Berkeley, University of Maryland, University of Texas, and Texas A&M University.

The DRG Center will continue to bring forward the latest in relevant social science research to important constituencies for our work, particularly our DRG cadre and implementing partners. I invite you to stay involved as this enriching, timely, and important work proceeds.

Tim Meisburger, Director
Center of Excellence on Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance
U.S. Agency for International Development

ACRONYM LIST

DCHA	USAID Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance
DRG Center	USAID's Center of Excellence on Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance
EMB	Electoral Management Body
FARC	Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia
FMLN	Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front
GNC	General National Congress
HoR	House of Representatives
IIE	Institute of International Education
LPA	Libya Political Agreement
NELDA	National Elections across Democracy and Autocracy
NTC	National Transitional Council
PR	Proportional Representation
PTSD	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
RA	Research Assistant
RCD	Democratic Constitutional Rally
RoW	Regimes of the World
TOCM	Theories of Change Matrix
UCDP	Uppsala Conflict Data Program
UN	United Nations
UNPKO	United Nations Peacekeeping Operations
UNSMIL	United Nations Support Mission in Libya
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
V-Dem	Varieties of Democracy

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The notion that robust democracy and violent conflict are linked is commonplace. Many observers of international politics attribute violent conflict in contexts as diverse as Myanmar and Syria to failures of democracy. Conversely, most agree that continuing political violence undermines any effort to build strong democratic institutions in Libya or South Sudan. As a matter of policy, democratization has often been promoted not only as an end in itself but as a means toward building peace in societies scarred by violence. Development professionals tackle these challenges daily, confronting vicious cycles of political violence and weak democratic institutions. At the same time, scholars have dedicated intense scrutiny to these questions, often finding that the interrelationships between conflict and democracy belie easy categorization.

This report, the third in a series on democratic theories of change, critically engages with this literature to ask three questions:

1. Under what circumstances do democratic practice or movement toward democracy quell (or exacerbate) the risk of different kinds of violent conflict?

2. Under what circumstances do the risk and experience of violent conflict undermine democratic practice?

3. How can external interventions mitigate risks and capitalize on opportunities inherent in transitions to democracy and peace?

To answer these questions, a research team at George Mason University and Georgetown University spent eight months compiling, organizing, and evaluating the academic literature connecting democratic practice and violent conflict, which spans the fields of political science, economics, peace studies, anthropology, sociology, and psychology. This work was funded by the USAID's Center of Excellence on Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance (the DRG Center) through the Institute of International Education's (IIE's) Democracy Fellow Grant Program. Beginning in May 2018, the authors organized a team of three research assistants, who read and summarized more than 600 journal articles, books, reports, and newspaper articles. The resulting White Paper was the subject of an August 2018 workshop with representatives from USAID and an interdisciplinary group of eight scholars with expertise in conflict and democracy. Based on their feedback, the authors developed a new Theories of Change Matrix and White Paper in October 2018. This draft received further written feedback from USAID and another three scholars. The core team then revised the report again to produce this final draft.

This report's approach to the literature differs from past phases of the Theories of Democratic Change project. While past reports detailed the hypothesized causes of democratic backsliding (Phase I) and democratic transitions (Phase II), this report focuses on the *reciprocal* relationship between democratic practice and conflict. The report therefore organizes hypotheses into two questions and then sub-categories within each question.

- **Question 1**, "Democracy Amidst Conflict," asks how conflict affects democratic practice along five dimensions defined by the DRG Center's Strategic Framework:
    - Consensus
    - Inclusion
    - Competition and political accountability
    - Rule of law and human rights
    - Government responsiveness and effectiveness

- **Question 2**, "Conflict Risks in Democratizing Countries," asks how democratic practice affects the incidence and shape of violent conflict, concentrating on three main types:
  - Civil conflict
  - Election violence
  - Violent extremism

This approach yields 35 hypotheses identified in the scholarly literature in a Theories of Change Matrix that links to a fuller evaluation of the literature. This organization allows practitioners to:

- Read a brief, accessible synopsis of each hypothesis in the Theories of Change Matrix and then investigate their areas of interest more deeply through links to the White Paper, which provides detailed analyses of each hypothesis.
- Understand the main relationships scholars have identified linking practices of democracy and violent conflict.
- Assess the relative strength of the evidence behind these relationships, including areas where scholars are more uncertain.
- Review how these hypotheses are reflected in cases where conflict and democratization coincided in important ways: El Salvador since the conclusion of its civil war and Tunisia and Libya since the Arab Spring.
- Explore the implications of this literature on the practice of peacebuilding and democracy promotion, both at the hypothesis-level and more holistically.

The report is divided into six sections:

1. **Introduction.** A discussion of the main questions inspiring the report.
2. **Background.** A detailed definition of key terms and a description of major trends in democracy and violent conflict since the end of the Cold War.
3. **Approach and Outline.** A summary of the conceptual approach to the literature and the procedure that produced the final report.
4. **Theories of Change Matrix.** Brief synopses of the 35 hypotheses, divided into questions and sub-categories.
5. **Evaluation of the Literature.** In-depth descriptions and critical evaluations of the main logical and empirical support for each hypothesis, paired with an analysis of how each hypothesis might inform practitioners' perspectives.
6. **General Lessons.** A presentation of three main cross-cutting themes from Sections 4 and 5 and how these might inform the practice of democracy promotion and peacebuilding.

The report emphasizes a number of cross-cutting lessons of special interest to practitioners. The practice of democracy has receded from its post-Cold War high and civil conflict has staged a resurgence. Despite impressive advances in the last two decades of research, many complex questions still have only partial answers at best. Still, several themes emerge. Scholarship stresses the "hard choices" facing external interveners: promoting democracy might often risk violent conflict, and elections present particularly fraught moments in such contexts. Conflict might engender social, economic, and political changes that plague democracy for years. Yet optimism remains, since support for institution building can strengthen democratic practice and work to prevent conflict.

1. INTRODUCTION

The proposition that divisive politics can lead to violent conflict – and that this risk can be reduced by building robust and inclusive political institutions – is a cornerstone of Western thinking and policy. In this understanding, reforming political institutions is integral to building not only a negative peace (*i.e.*, the absence of direct violence) but a positive peace (*i.e.*, the presence of social and political justice) (Galtung, 1996). Peace and democracy might exist in happy equilibrium, therefore, as citizens choose between partisan alternatives without fear of recourse to violence by the losing side (Przeworski, 2008; Fearon, 2011). This canonical description of a virtuous circle connecting democratic practice to peace can be found in the writings of Immanuel Kant (1983), in the post-World War I vision of President Woodrow Wilson, and in the speeches of more recent political leaders such as Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, and Tony Blair.

The elegance of this vision is muddled by reality, however, as years of scholarship have shown. Democratization, particularly since the end of the Cold War, has occurred in societies deeply scarred by political violence, with troubling implications for future democratic practice (Flores and Nooruddin, 2009a, 2012, 2016). Libya's experience in attempting to create a capable, democratic government after the fall of Muammar al-Qaddafi is notable in this regard. Moreover, fiercely contested elections have often ended in violence in the streets, most notably in Kenya in 2007-8. These experiences suggest the possibility of a vicious cycle in which continued weak democratization and violent conflict reinforce each other.

How can societies break this vicious cycle? And how can development practitioners assist them in doing so? The answers to these questions are not always obvious. The international community has seen intense efforts to assist new democratic governments in war-torn countries fail, as these regimes backslide into authoritarianism or conflict. Again, Libya is instructive in this regard, but so are Afghanistan, Iraq, and Somalia. Even mostly successful cases of peacebuilding can face severe challenges years later, as in post-war Central America's struggles with crime, Cambodia's slide toward dictatorship, or Uganda's continuing struggle to consolidate democratic practice and stem violence. And these major victories for peacebuilding can be fragile: in Colombia in 2016, for example, citizens voting in a free and fair referendum rejected a peace agreement with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), endangering a painstaking peace process.

These difficult realities suggest a principal challenge of assessing the relationship between democracy and democratization on one hand and conflict on the other: the causal arrow goes in both directions. The practice of democracy (*e.g.*, elections) likely shapes opportunities and motivations for violent conflict. Yet it is also true that conflict and its aftermath shift pathways toward democracy. For researchers, this challenge complicates efforts to understand the dynamics connecting democracy and political violence. Development practitioners and democracy promoters live this difficult reality daily, as they design policy interventions in fragile societies at high risk of violence and democratic backsliding. In such contexts, understanding the intricate relationship between democracy and conflict is fundamental to success.

In contrast with Phases I and II of IIE/USAID's Theories of Democratic Change project, then, Phase III focuses on the relationship between *two* forces – conflict and democracy/democratization. This requires a more complex framing of the literature. This White Paper and Theories of Change Matrix reflects our current state of knowledge about three questions:

1. Under what circumstances do democratic practice or movement toward democracy quell (or exacerbate) the risk of different kinds of violent conflict?

2. Under what circumstances do the risk and experience of violent conflict undermine democratic practice?

3. How can external interventions mitigate risks and capitalize on opportunities inherent in transitions to democracy and peace?

Our report aims to provide a comprehensive examination of the current state of the literature from the social sciences, including political science, economics, sociology, anthropology, and psychology. In Section 2, we provide background on these questions by defining key terms and reviewing recent global trends in democracy and political violence. Section 3 describes our approach by introducing the main questions, detailing our method for classifying the literature, and describing the structure of the Theories of Change Matrix (TOCM). Section 4 contains the Theories of Change Matrix. Each hypothesis in the TOCM links to a fuller summary and evaluation in Section 5. Finally, Section 6 details several important cross-cutting themes meant to inform the work of USAID and its practitioners.

2. BACKGROUND

Democracy and conflict are encompassing concepts that include a broad array of practices, behavior, norms, and institutions. Each can be conflated with its effects, as well: conflict, for example, is usually associated with civilian suffering, but misery during conflict can vary greatly both across and within conflicts. There remains scholarly and practical disagreement about how to define these terms. We define our key terms here to sharpen the scholarly review and to motivate the key questions covered in the TOCM in Section 4. Those definitions allow us to offer empirical definitions and highlight major global trends in democracy and conflict since 1990.

Key Definitions

Definitions of foundational concepts assist in focusing the scholarly review and previewing the sub-questions we introduce below. We therefore offer precise definitions of democracy, democratization, conflict, and peace here, and attend to questions of measurement where they are relevant.

Democracy and Democratization

The final report of Phase II of the Theories of Democratic Change project defines **democracy** as "the ability of citizens to choose their government freely in an environment marked by open, fair competition between aspirants for public office" (Conroy-Krutz and Frantz, 2017, p. 4). Such a definition of democracy emphasizes the *practice* of democratic government.

This definition leaves room for a broad view of practice and we stress two important aspects of this definition. First*, the practice of democracy is multi-dimensional and mutually reinforcing.* The "ability of citizens to choose their government," almost always through elections, is at the center of democratic practice, but several other dimensions of democratic practice support that ability. Citizens' exercise of the right to protest is itself an important dimension of practice, inhering different practices including assembly, free speech, and protest. This dimension of practice, however, also supports the holding of free and fair elections, while in turn being supported by the institutionalized practice of checking the executive's power, for example through an independent judiciary. This vision of democratic practice categorizes specific practices (*e.g.*, freedom of the press) into broader *dimensions* of practice (*e.g.*, transparency). Improving one dimension of practice reinforces other dimensions of practice since each depends on the others.

Second, *dimensions of democratic practice vary in degree.* Thinking of democratic practice in this way allows scholars, at least in principle, to rank political systems' democratic practices along a continuum and compare them. More inclusive political systems, for example, better guarantee democratic practice by allowing more competition for office, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, religion, region of origin, or class. Political systems vary in their inclusiveness, and each time a political system reduces constraints on participation, it becomes slightly more democratic, all else equal (Dahl, 1971, p. 4-5). As importantly, democratic practices can vary in their level of consolidation, defined by Linz and Stepan (1996, p. 5) as the extent to which democratic rules are the "only game in town." When the rules of democratic practice remain uncertain and/or relatively new, that practice remains unconsolidated. To take another example, if the judiciary constitutionally has the right to rule executive decisions unconstitutional but that right is often disregarded by the executive, that practice remains unconsolidated in comparison to a system with the same *de jure* rule that all political elites respect. Therefore, consolidation of some individual practice reinforces the dimension of which it is a part.

A focus on democratic practice sees democracy as an interlocking system of practices that reinforce each other and can vary in degree, rather than just in kind. Such a definition clarifies several important issues of both scholarly and practical importance. First, it suggests a clear conceptualization of **democratization** as the adoption of globally recognized forms of democratic practice. Rather than a dramatic phase-shift from non-democracy to democracy, a focus on practice defines democratization as the movement away from non-democratic practices (*e.g.*, restrictions on political competition, the absence of constraints on the executive) and toward a new status quo in which democratic practice is the norm. These changes may be small, gradual, and halting. Even if initial reforms are dramatic, the acceptance of these new practices as normal takes longer. The process can also be uncertain, leading to democratic backsliding.[2] Indeed, as the authors of Phase I of the Theories of Democratic Change project make clear, successful (*i.e.*, irreversible) transitions to consolidation are historical anomalies – most countries experience stops and starts on their paths to democracy, and the unfortunate ones revert to undemocratic equilibria (Lust & Waldner, 2015).

Second, a focus on democratic practice acknowledges that not all systems that appear to adopt democratic practices will pursue or achieve the same ends. As Conroy-Krutz and Frantz note, the normative desirability of democracy on the world's stage has led many authoritarians to ape the outward appearance of democracy while undermining its substance (see also Hyde, 2011). Such regimes may feature regular elections, a legislature, and courts, as in Russia or Turkey. Yet if elections are accompanied by severe constraints on political parties and the legislature acts as a rubber stamp on the executive, the practice of democracy is rather weak. Similarly, democratic countries may adopt very different policies matters of economic governance or foreign policy. Focusing on democratic practice avoids the conflation of means and ends.

Over the last several decades, scholars have developed myriad schema to code and compare democracy across countries and time. These approaches have not always coded specific aspects of democratic practice, though most attempt to measure at the dimensional level. A complete review of all such measurement strategies is beyond the scope of this report, but we compare two well-known approaches here: Polity IV and the Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem).

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[2] This problem is exacerbated by a lack of scholarly consensus over the time period over which democratization should be studied, leading to varying results depending on whether the success of reforms is evaluated 1, 2, 5, 10, or more years after they were enacted.

The Polity IV Project is perhaps the best-known and most-used data collection effort on democracy, coding the democratic and autocratic attributes of sovereign states between 1800 and 2016 (Marshall 2017). Polity IV does not specifically think of itself as coding forms of democratic practice, but instead what it refers to as "authority characteristics" of the state, by which it means how the state exerts its authority over the populace. These can be more autocratic or more democratic. Importantly for this report, Polity IV attempts to decipher these patterns of authority independently of armed challenges to the state (Marshall, 2017, p. 2). Due to this focus, Polity IV does not code specific democratic practices, but it does code what it calls "components of authority," which are comparable to dimensions of democratic practice. These include how executives are chosen, how they are constrained, and how non-elites participate in politics. We summarize these components in Box 1.

Box 1. Polity IV Components

Executive recruitment	The degree to which the position of chief executive is chosen through a well-regulated process; is competitively selected through elections; and open to all citizens to run for the office. Can vary from "succession by birthright" to competitive elections (Marshall, 2017, p. 23).
Executive constraints	The ability of individuals and state organizations to constrain the actions of the executive. Can vary from absolute executive authority to parity with or subordination to other state structures (Marshall, 2017, p. 25).
Political participation	The ability of citizens to influence political elites. Political participation is more democratic when it is well-regulated through stable political groupings and competitive (Marshall, 2017, p. 28).

Based on these components (and their sub-components), Polity IV codes two eleven-point scales, one each for the institutionalized practice of autocracy and democracy. Most scholars combine these into a 21-point scale ranging from -10, which describes strongly autocratic rule, to 10, which describes strongly democratic rule.

V-Dem, in contrast, does capture specific practices of democracy, coding hundreds of specific indicators using expert surveys (Lührmann *et al.*, 2018a). For example, indicators include whether any political parties are banned, female suffrage is restricted, whether referendums and/or plebiscites are permitted, and the degree of judicial independence. These indicators then are combined to create lower-level democracy and governance indexes, which represent narrower areas of democratic practice. These include equality before the law, legislative constraints on the executive, and civil society participation (Coppedge *et al.*, 2018). In turn, these lower-level indices combine to create five higher-order indices of democracy, which match our definition of dimensions of practice above, and are summarized in Box 2. Thus, the V-Dem Project comes closest to an empirical definition of democracy based on concepts of democratic practice.

Box 2. V-Dem Dimensions of Democracy

Electoral	The ability of all citizens to elect their government freely, which includes their freedom to express themselves and associate.
Liberal	The ability of all citizens to exercise civil and political rights without interference from the government or the majority.
Participatory	The active involvement of citizens in all political processes, whether electoral or not, including through civil society and local and regional governments.
Deliberative	The quality of deliberation in the polity. This is better when decisions are reached through consensual discussion of the public good, rather than purely through narrower considerations.
Egalitarian	The ability of all citizens, regardless of social or identity group, to enjoy socioeconomic resources.

Finally, we consider different classifications of regimes. In most cases, regime classifications are largely divorced from individual democratic practices and by their nature lump together regimes that feature very different forms of practice. A systematic review is beyond the scope of this study, but we describe two in Box 3, again focusing on Polity IV and V-Dem.

Box 3. Polity IV v. V-Dem Regime Classifications

Polity IV	**Regimes of the World (from V-Dem)**
Democratic: sufficiently consolidated competition, constraints on the executive, and executive recruitment.	**Liberal-democratic:** elections divide both *de jure* and *de facto* power and guarantee liberal principles.
Mixed/anocratic: regimes combining elements of both autocratic and democratic rule.	**Electoral-democratic:** elections divide both *de jure* and *de facto* power but liberal principles are not well protected.
Autocratic: very low competition, narrow executive recruitment, and weak constraints on the executive.	**Electoral-autocratic:** elections are held, but do not distribute *de facto* political power.
	Closed-autocratic: elections are not held; all power rests in a single ruler or ruling clique.

The Polity IV project describes three types of regimes: democracies, autocracies, and mixed or anocratic regimes. The Regimes of the World (RoW) is a newer classification system depending on V-Dem data to divide regimes into four types, as described in Lührmann et al (2018b). Both types of democracies hold elections that divide both *de facto* and *de jure* power: *liberal democracies* also guarantee liberal principles, while *electoral democracies* do not. Both types of autocracies do not hold elections that divide *de facto* power: *electoral autocracies* hold elections to assign *de jure* power, while *closed autocracies* do not.

Violent Conflict and Peace

We follow past scholars in defining **violent conflict** as *contestation using armed force between organized groups over political goals.* This definition follows that of the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) (Gleditsch *et al.*, 2002). We define **peace** consistent with Galtung's (1996) conceptualization of "negative peace"—namely, as the absence of conflict (or "direct violence") as defined above. Galtung defined "positive peace" as the elimination of "structural violence" (*i.e.*, systemic injustice). We view Galtung's definition of positive peace as consistent with the twin goals of improving democratic practices as described above with the pursuit of a negative peace as described here.

We emphasize several critical aspects of this definition, both for conceptual clarity and to focus the remainder of this report. First, *conflict* exists in all relationships and involves divergent interests or viewpoints, which can become polarized and lead to dynamics of confrontation. Conflict can be creative, however, and need not become violent. New scholarship on non-violent conflict stresses its creative component, showing how it more successfully ends in democratization and peaceful societies.[3]

Second, we focus on violent conflict, which however involves *contestation using armed force* that injures and kills both fighters and civilians. We exclude non-violent conflict as a result. Violent conflict involves the use of armed force that injures and kills civilians. This definition accepts the special role of violence proposed by Max Weber (2004), who defined the state as holding the monopoly over the legitimate use of violence. Since this report only analyzes violent conflict, we will use the terms "violent conflict" and "conflict" interchangeably.

Third, violent conflict is waged by *organized groups within society.* One of these is often the state itself, as conflict usually involves a direct challenge to the state's monopoly over the legitimate use of violence (Weber 2004). Violent conflict can involve two non-governmental groups, however, as when different insurgent groups battle each other. In either case, conflict involves clearly defined and organized groups capable of directing violence. This definition excludes more spontaneous forms of violence, such as riots, or acts conducted by more isolated individuals, even when that violence otherwise fits our definition.

Fourth, conflict is *fought over political goals.* This means that groups contest the nature of the state. That often comes in the form of either replacing the current government, altering the political system that governs, or seceding from the state. We exclude therefore the incidence of violent crime committed by individuals or criminal organizations that do not have alterations of the political status quo as their goal.

This definition of violent conflict, which is consonant with that offered by the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (Gleditsch *et al.*, 2002), allows violent conflict to vary along several important dimensions, as we emphasize in Box 4. Importantly, the definition is flexible enough to incorporate very different typologies of conflict. First, violent conflict can vary in the underlying *incompatibility* being fought over. Armed groups cite many reasons for their existence, including the redistribution of economic resources, presence of foreigners on national soil, and protection of an identity group it claims to represent. Our definition incorporates these different claims while also categorizing them as generally seeking to replace or reform the state or secede from the state.

Second, violent conflict can vary in its severity. Not all violent conflict rises to the level of war; instead, many conflicts kill only very few soldiers and/or civilians.

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[3] See, for example, the work of Chenoweth and Stephan (2011).

Box 4. Dimensions of Violent Conflict

Incompatibility	The core issue of the conflict is characterized by the UCDP as revolving around territory or the state. Secessionist conflicts involve a non-state armed group contesting the state's rule of a particular region. Conflicts fought over control-of-center, in contrast, revolve around competing visions of the central government. In the case of violent extremism, incompatibilities may not fall neatly into these categories.
Severity	The severity of violent political conflicts is usually conceptualized in their duration and the number of civilian casualties or battle deaths (*i.e.*, involving combatants on the battlefield). In most cases, wars involve far more combatant deaths on an annualized basis.
Interstate vs. intrastate (civil) conflict	Interstate conflicts pit two national governments against each other, while intrastate conflicts (also called "internal" or "civil") feature at least formally internal groups. Most conflicts since about 1946 have been intrastate.
Internationalized	Even violent internal conflicts can feature international involvement, as other governments intervene on one side or the other. Such conflicts are internationalized.

Third, violent conflict can pit different types of contestants against each other. The state is often the most easily recognized contestant, but violent conflict can also pit non-state armed actors against each other or against the state. Different states may fight each other, usually referred to as interstate conflict. Furthermore, states may aid non-state armed actors, either with direct military force or more covert means. The result is often conflict that involves shifting alliances of states, regional organizations, and non-state armed groups.

As in the case of democracy, defining violent conflict inevitably creates grey areas that remain difficult to classify. Most importantly, violent conflict may be difficult to assign neatly to categories: acts of violent extremism, for example, might occur during a civil war. The FARC and the paramilitary groups opposing it both committed acts meant to intimidate civilians. Whether such attacks should be considered part of a civil conflict or violent extremism is an open question. Similarly, attacks on sites of democratic practices, such as voting booths or peaceful assemblies, might be considered a coup, but also an act of extremist violence, election violence, or civil conflict, depending on who committed the act and with what intent. Furthermore, armed non-state actors—whether they are classified as extremist groups or more run-of-the-mill insurgents—may carry on criminal activities, as the FARC did in Colombia. Criminal syndicates, on the other hand, might use violence to influence politicians and judges in an attempt to forestall state prosecution, as criminal groups in Mexico have done. Clearly demarcating types of groups is no easy task. In Section 3, we will outline our approach to distinguishing between civil conflict, election violence, and extremist violence as a means of organizing the report.

Recent Trends

With these definitions in mind, we turn to a brief description of recent trends in democracy and conflict around the world. Understanding how conflict and democracy have evolved since the end of the Cold

War, and particularly how they have intersected, unearths important questions that help motivate our conceptual approach.

Democracy

We begin with the record of democratic change beginning in the early 1990s. Is the world more or less democratic today, and which dimensions of democratic practice have improved or declined most?

Figures 1 and 2 rely on two different measures of democracy to assess shifts in democratic practice in the developing world since 1990.[4] Figure 1 relies on data from the Polity IV project (Marshall & Jaggers, 2002) classifying regimes as democratic, mixed, or autocratic, as reviewed above. Figure 2 in contrast, relies on data from the Varieties of Democracy project described in Lührmann *et al.* (2018a, 2018b), describing trends in the project's five categories of democratic practice.

Figures 1 and 2 suggest a mostly happy record of democratic change from 1990 to 2005, but also indicate major challenges since that time, representing what several scholars have referred to as "democratic decline" (Diamond and Plattner, 2015). Polity IV data on institutionalized democracy demonstrates the seismic shifts occurring after the fall of the Berlin Wall: fully autocratic regimes disappeared around the world, reaching a low of 20 such regimes by 2015. Democracy, meanwhile, spread rapidly and by the mid-2000s represented half of all developing countries. In short, there has never been a moment since these data series began in which such a large proportion of the developing world has adopted forms of democratic governance. Similarly, Figure 2 shows continued increases in all five high-level principles of democratic practice as defined by V-Dem, confirming the good news from Polity IV.

Closer examination of Figures 1 and 2 does reveal two worrying trends, however. First, advances in democratic practice have occurred unevenly. V-Dem data suggest that the practice of elections has improved more rapidly than other dimensions of democratic practice: the data suggest that the mid-2010s were a time of the largest gap between electoral and other democratic practices. Citizen participation has remained particularly low, leading the V-Dem project to stress major challenges to egalitarianism and inclusion (Lührmann *et al.*, 2018a, p. 6).

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[4] All figures rely on data only for countries outside the developed democracies of Western Europe, North America, and the Pacific Rim, to reflect the milieu in which USAID works.

Figure 1. Regime Types Since 1990 (Polity IV)
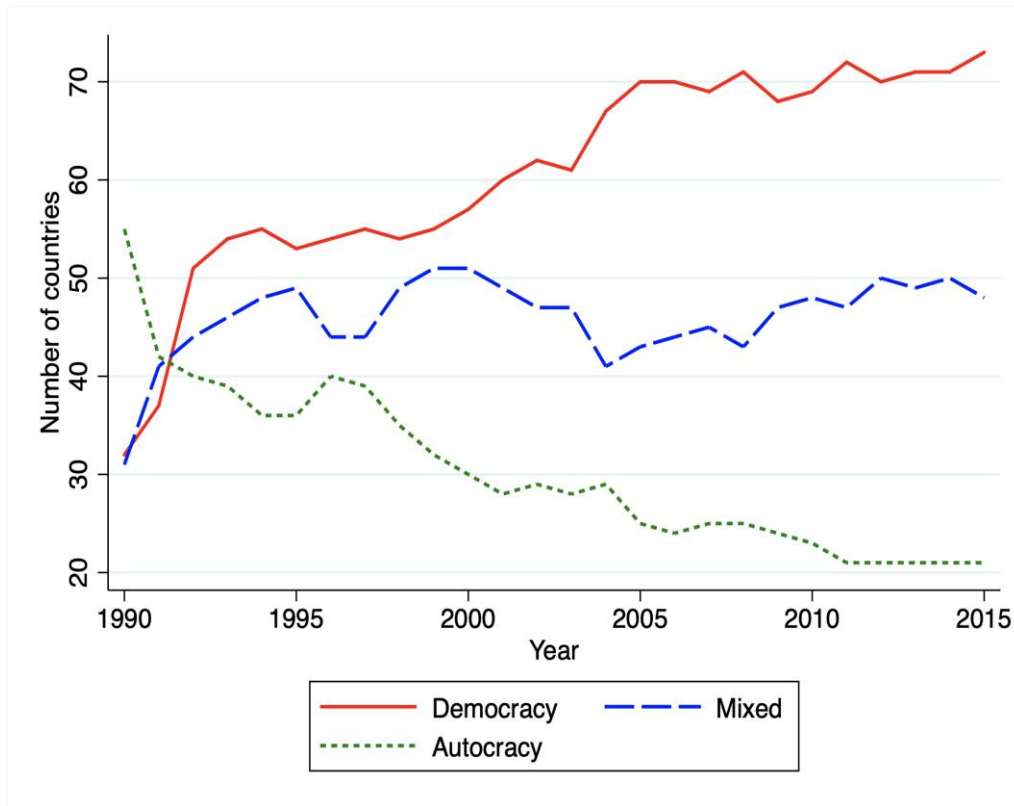
Figure 2. Components of Democracy Since 1990 (V-Dem)
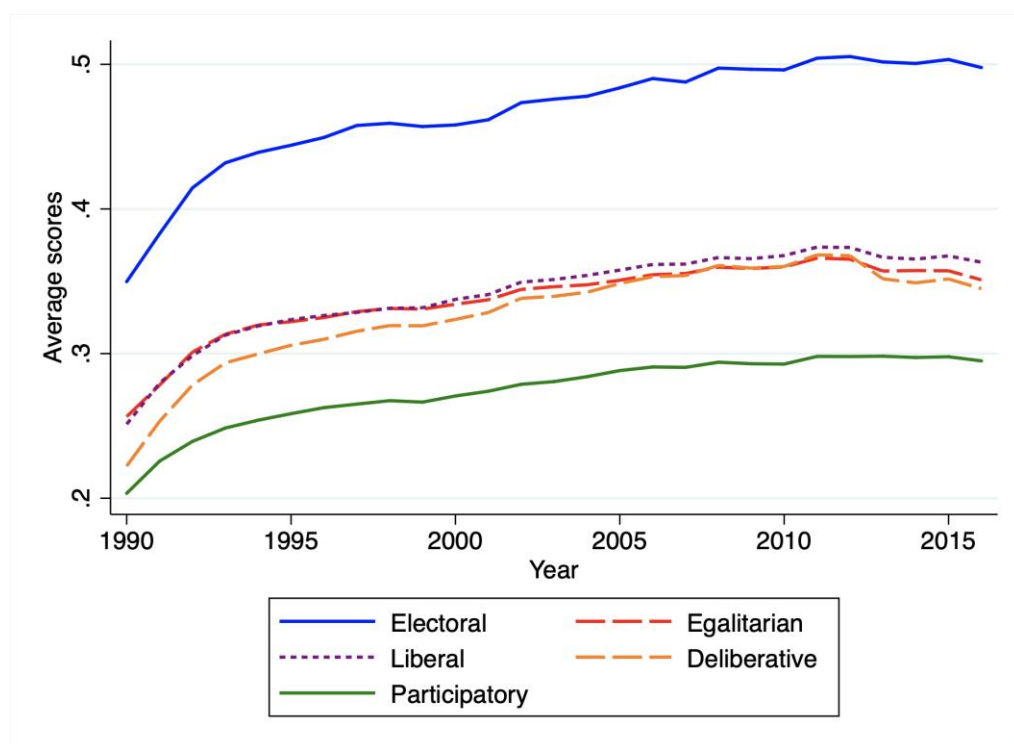
Second, we have witnessed a measure of democratic decline since 2005. Figure 1 shows that the "Third Wave" of democracy (Huntington, 1991, p.16) that began in the 1970s has mostly stalled. Since that point, Figure 1 shows a critical trend has been the conversion of autocratic into mixed regimes, which combine democratic and autocratic rule, raising fears that autocrats have adopted pretenses of democracy for window-dressing—elections, for example—while simultaneously continuing to rule despotically. Myanmar represents an interesting recent example, as relatively free and fair democratic elections have been combined with continuing control by the military and repression of ethnic minorities. Figure 2 also suggests some reason for pessimism: since 2010, indices for liberal, egalitarian, and deliberative practices have declined. V-Dem's recent report sounds the alarm regarding democratic backsliding, noting that for the first time since the late 1970s, an equal number of countries are "autocratizing" and democratizing (Lührmann *et al.*, 2018a: p. 7).

Figure 3. V-Dem Regime Types as of 2016
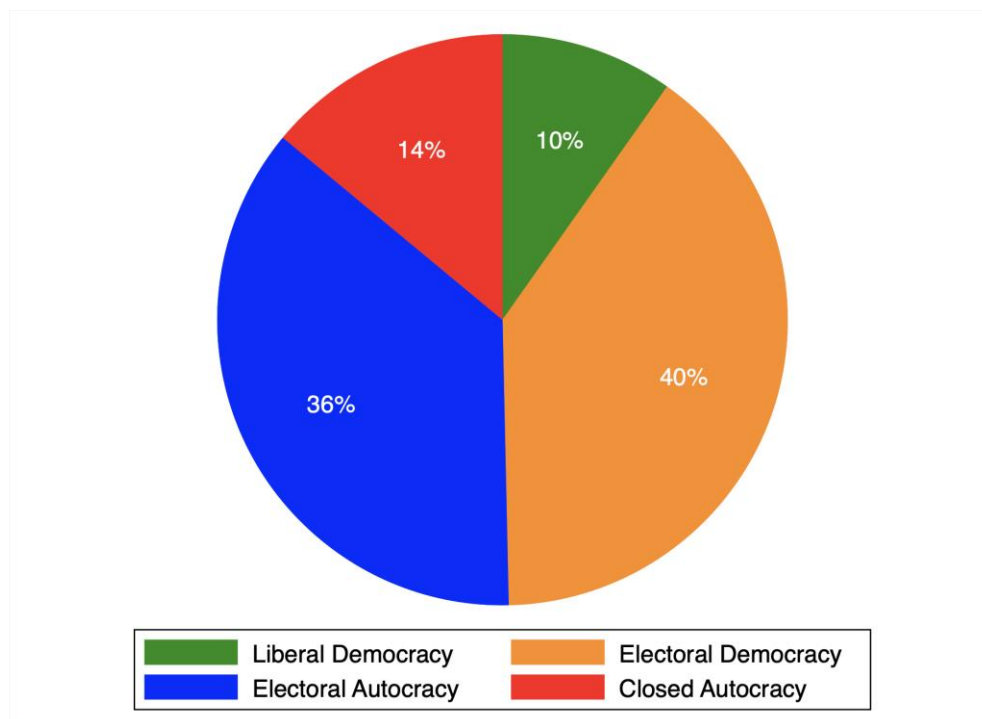
We conclude this portion of our analysis by examining a new classification of regimes based on V-Dem data for 2016 (Lührmann *et al.*, 2018b) described in Box 3. Figure 3 paints a picture of democratization's limited progress as of 2016. Liberal democracies, which guarantee rule of law and liberal principles, are rare in the developing world. A narrow plurality (40%) of regimes in the developing world are electoral democracies, but nearly the same proportion (36%) use elections only as window-dressing for autocratic rule.

Conflict

What of conflict? We rely on data on armed conflict from the UCDP, again focusing on developing countries since 1990. Figure 4 captures the number of countries suffering from active civil conflicts pitting

the government against one or more armed groups, highlighting the number of those that were internationalized.

Figure 4. Civil Conflict Since 1990
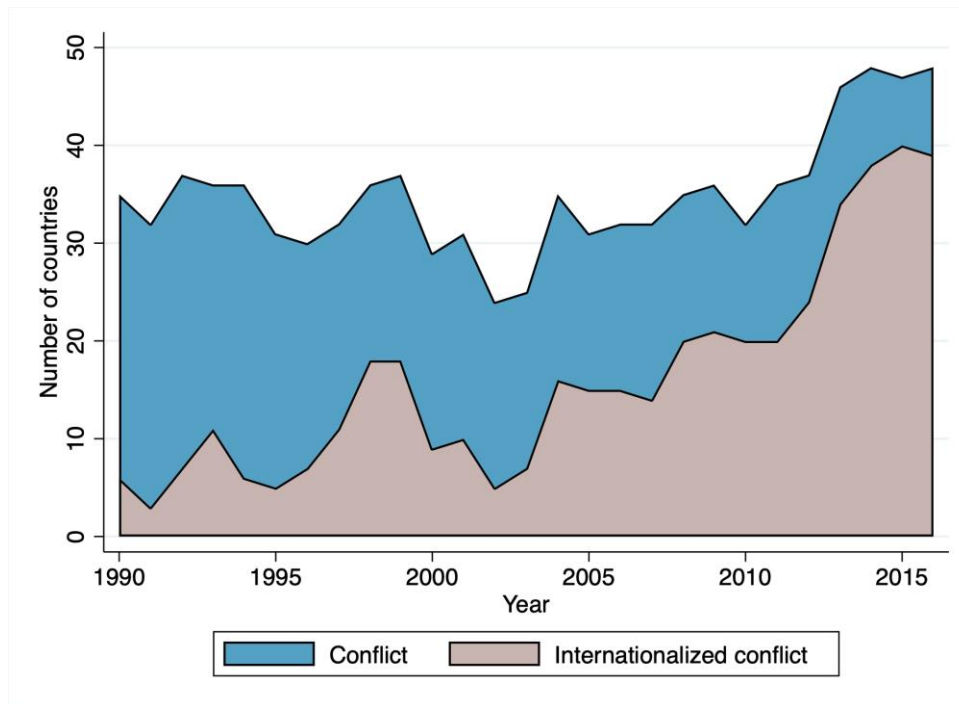
A long-running truism about civil conflict has been its decline after the end of the Cold War, which Figure 4 confirms: by the early 2000s, only about 25 countries experienced civil conflict and only a handful of those were internationalized. As in our analysis of democracy, these gains were reversed starting in the mid-2000s. After 2003, the number of countries in conflict has doubled to nearly 50, the vast majority of which have witnessed other countries intervening in their conflicts. Conflicts in Syria and Iraq are notable examples of this trend toward more intrastate conflict.

Links between Conflict and Democracy

We have thus far observed two simultaneous and worrying trends in the last several years: a decline in democratic practice and a rise in civil conflict. A central concern of this report is to understand how the practice of democracy and waging of conflict affect each other. One limitation to our ability to do so adequately is the tendency of scholars to compare broad indicators of democracy or regime types (as described above) with the incidence of particular kinds of practice. The result is that, apart from elections themselves, scholars often hypothesize about, but do not directly compare empirically, specific democratic practices with the incidence of violent conflict. Nevertheless, we discuss two trends that help us understand the important intersection of democracy and conflict.

First, democratic practice often occurs during conflict or sparks conflict itself. Figure 5 shows elections held in the developing world since 1990. Elections are a necessary condition for democratic practice: they may be held in different ways, but in any democracy, the legislative and executive branches are chosen in universal suffrage elections. Figure 5 relies on data from the UCDP and the National Elections across

Democracy and Autocracy (NELDA) (Hyde & Marinov, 2012) to examine three trends: 1) the total number of elections held in each year; 2) elections held in conflict, or those held in countries either currently in conflict or within 10 years of one (as defined in Figure 3); and 3) violent elections, or those that featured riots, protests, and/or organized violence (as defined by NELDA).[5]

Figure 5. Violent Elections Since 1990
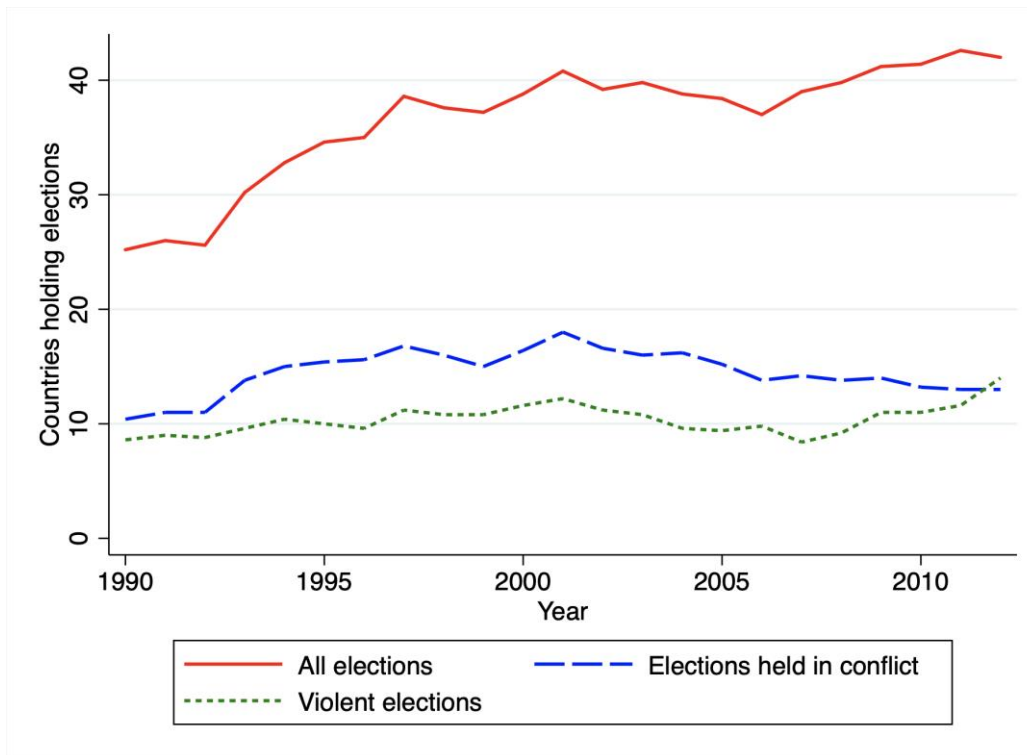
Figure 5 shows both the promise and dangers of the spread of elections around the world since the 1980s. Happily, more elections are being held in the developing world today than at any point since 1990—and, if we extended the time series, since World War II. Other sources confirm this trend and find that elections are more competitive today than in the past (Hyde, 2011; Flores & Nooruddin, 2016). Figure 5 also shows, however, that a large proportion of these elections are held in conflict-affected countries: since 2000, roughly one in three elections, in fact (as indicated by the long-dashed line). That proportion has thankfully declined, but remains stubbornly high: in 2012, for example, 26% (10 of 38) of elections held in the developing world were held in conflictual societies.

Figure 5 offers another piece of sobering news: a large proportion of elections in the developing world generate violence themselves, characterized by low-level extra-institutional violence even if this falls short of the major armed conflict discussed right now. Worryingly, the proportion of what we label violent elections is growing: between 2010 and 2012, nearly 4 in 10 elections (47 of 122) featured riots, violence, or protests. Violent elections may have important implications for the potential of civil conflict, as in

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[5] Since the number of elections in any given year can vary greatly, Figure 4 presents the five-year moving average for each of the three trends.

Kenya's 2007-8 crisis, which was precipitated by significant post-election violence in which an estimated 1,200 people died and considerable economic damage was incurred (OHCHR, 2008).

We can see, therefore, that elections often occur in the midst of civil conflict or political instability. We next examine the converse point: where do civil wars happen? Figure 6 plots the probability of a civil conflict occurring in each of the three regime types developed by the Polity IV project between 1980 and 2014. We now extend the time series back to 1980 to emphasize an important trend.[6]

Figure 6. Probability of Civil Conflict by Polity IV Regime Type
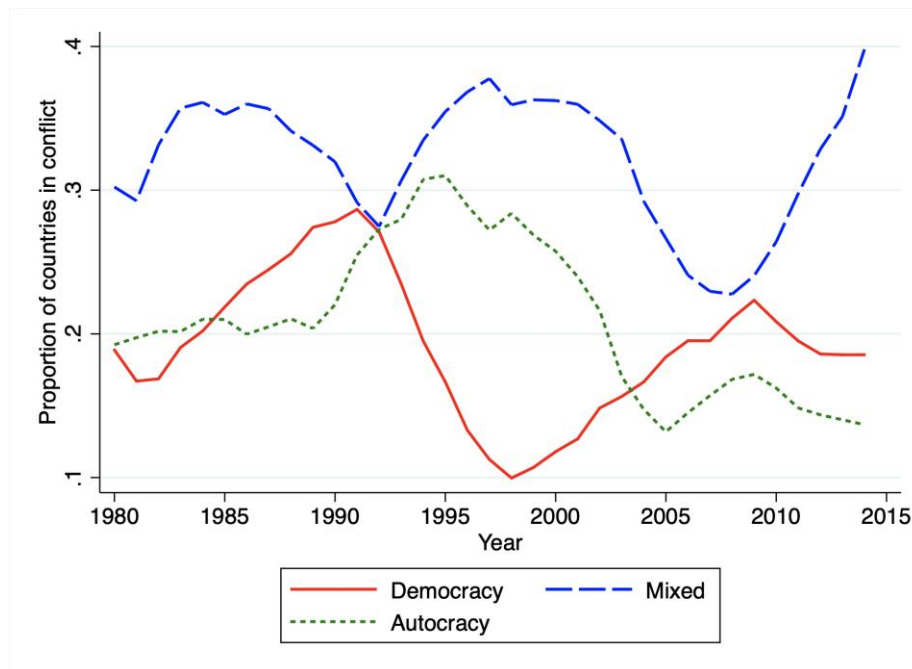
Figure 6. Probability of Civil Conflict by Polity IV Regime Type hints that mixed regimes are currently most likely to experience conflict, a fact that has remained true since 1980. After about 1990 for democracies and 1995 for mixed and authoritarian regimes, all three regime types became less likely to suffer from civil conflict. Since then, the rates of conflict have diverged. While the few remaining authoritarian regimes have remained relatively unlikely to experience conflict, the probability for democratic regimes has doubled (from about 0.1 to 0.2). Meanwhile, mixed regimes have become more likely to experience conflict than ever before: by the end of our data series, nearly half of all mixed regimes experienced a civil conflict of some kind.

We also examine the incidence of civil conflict in 2016 by V-Dem's Regimes of the World classification, as introduced above and described in Lührmann, et al (2018b). Figure 7 paints a different picture than Figure 6. Both types of democracy, both liberal and electoral, show a relatively low probability of conflict. In contrast, roughly half of both types of autocracy experienced civil war. Since the primary difference between democracy and autocracy in this schema is elections that meaningfully divide power (as opposed to serving as a rubber stamp), Figure 7 shows that elections do little to limit the incidence of civil war unless they fulfill this key function. It also shows that real protection of civil liberties can make a huge

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[6] Again, Figure 6 uses a five-year moving average to smooth year-to-year volatility in the data.

difference in civil conflict: only 1 of 13 (7%) liberal democracies experienced civil conflict in the developing world in 2016, versus 10 of 57 (18%) electoral democracies.

Figure 7. Conflict in 2016 by V-Dem Regime Type
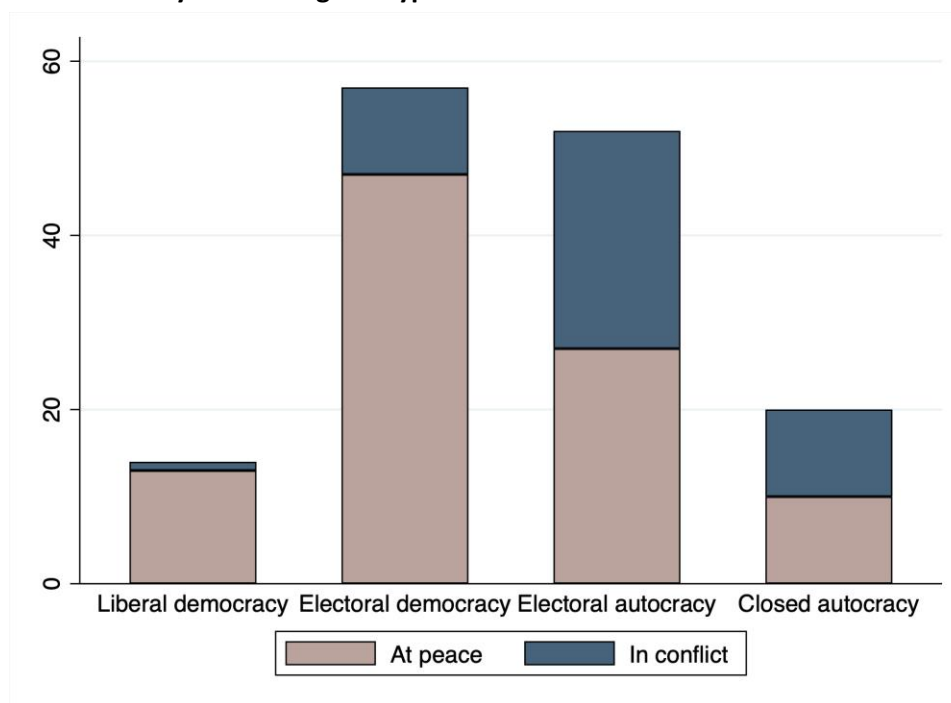
Summary

This broad review of trends in conflict and democratization highlights several important points that inform the literature review to follow. The evidence supports one happy conclusion: the number of developing countries at least formally practicing democracy, holding elections, and protecting civil and political rights remains at or near record highs, a product of the remarkable explosion of democracy between 1980 and 2005. Yet that progress has stalled or even reversed since 2005. At the very same time, conflict has increased around the globe, after declining between 1990 and 2002. Moreover, democratic practice has occurred in the shadow of violence: elections in the developing world often occur during civil conflict or themselves spark violence and political instability. Digging more deeply, these trends suggest the key role played by mixed regimes, which combine some attributes of democratic (*e.g.*, elections) with non-democratic practices (*e.g.*, coercion of the opposition). These regimes remain highly likely to experience conflict: most conflicts in the world today occur in mixed regimes. Holding elections is insufficient: autocratic regimes that hold them still suffer conflict at a high rate, while democracies suffer less conflict. The data thus suggest that in many cases, democratic practices (or emergent ones) are circumscribed by both other authoritarian practices and violent conflict. With these ideas in place, we describe our approach to the literature.

3. APPROACH AND OUTLINE

Section 2 briefly introduced several key terms and broad trends in conflict and democracy since 1990 and suggested that since the fall of the Berlin Wall, democracy and violent conflict have often co-evolved. This

basic premise—that of an intimate reciprocal relationship between violent conflict and the practice of democracy—focuses our approach to the scholarly review. We describe that approach here, beginning conceptually and then turning to implementation.

Conceptual Approach to Questions

Our conceptual approach to the review balances several important needs of Phase III of the Theories of Democratic Change project. First, this phase asks a more complex causal question, as we discussed above. Second, we recognize a need to align our approach with USAID's conceptual approaches to both conflict and democracy, as embodied in the work of the DRG Center and other offices within the Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance (DCHA) at USAID. Finally, we also remain sensitive to the challenges of the donor community's central goals in fragile societies: preventing, managing, and mitigating conflict and supporting democracy.

Figure 8 illustrates our conceptual approach to these questions, which also serves to organize the remainder of this report. First, we define our two major headings for the project. On one hand, we define three types of violent political conflicts for examination, which we define on the left-hand side of Box 5: civil conflict, election violence, and violent extremism. These three types are not entirely exclusive: armed insurgents can attack the electoral process, while extremist organizations are often contestants in civil conflicts. Still, these categories have been the most frequent areas of investigation for scholars of conflict in recent years. We define democratic governance using the DRG Center's five "key elements of democracy, human rights, and governance" in its Strategic Assessment Framework: consensus, inclusion, competition and political accountability, rule of law and human rights, and government responsiveness and effectiveness (USAID, 2014), defined on the right-hand side of Box 5.

Figure 8. Conceptual Approach
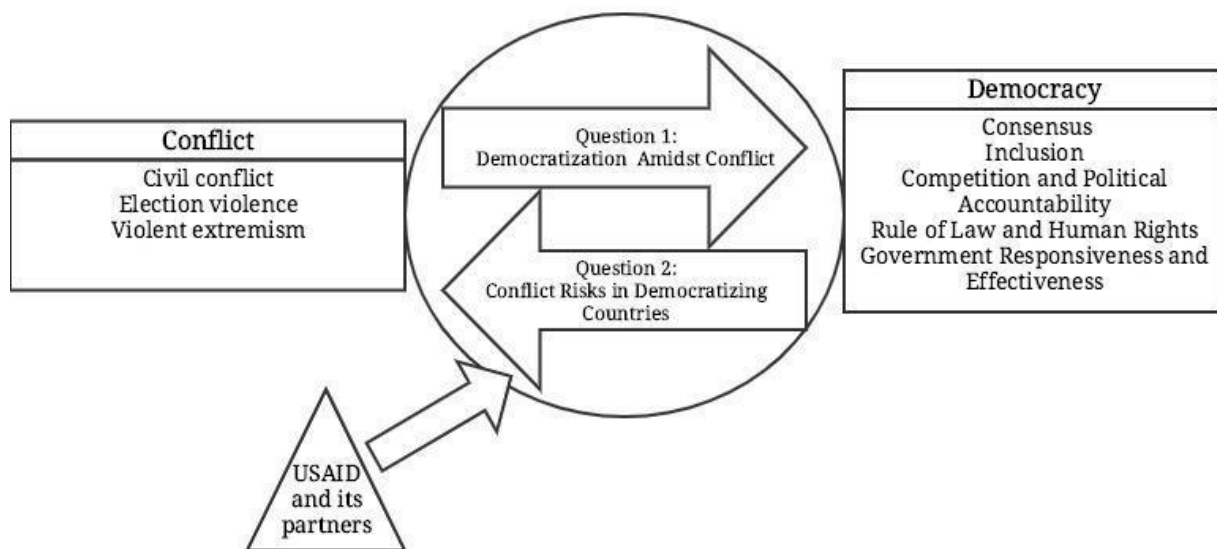
Box 5. Organizing Definitions for TOCM

Question 1: Democracy Amidst Conflict (USAID 2014)	Question 2: Conflict Risks in Democratizing Countries
1A. Consensus: Elite and mass agreements on fundamental questions underlying the polity, especially national identity. **1B. Inclusion:** The ability of all citizens to participate freely in public life. **1C. Competition and political accountability:** The existence of institutions that encourage accountability through vertical ties between voters and politicians and horizontal ties amongst political organizations. **1D. Rule of law and human rights:** Adherence to the law by politicians, citizens, businesses, and organizations and the protection of individual rights by the state. **1E. Government responsiveness and effectiveness:** The government's ability to address citizen needs efficaciously.	**2A. Civil conflict:** Violent conflict rising to a threshold of severity (usually 25 battle-deaths per year) that pits the state against an organized armed group. **2B. Election violence:** Violence committed by a variety of actors—especially the incumbent, but also the opposition, criminal groups, and armed militias—that occurs around elections. Actors use this violence mainly to manipulate election results or even to prevent elections from occurring. **2C. Violent extremism:** According to USAID, "advocating, engaging in, preparing, or otherwise supporting ideologically motivated or justified violence to further social, economic and political objectives" (USAID, 2011: p. 2).

Second, we identify two main questions—highlighted in the circle in the center of Figure 8—that unite the TOCM in Section 4 and the evaluation of the scholarly literature in Section 5. We also sub-divide these main questions into hypotheses by category, as shown in Box 5. Our identification of these main questions and the hypotheses under each are based on our record of published research in this area. The result is an impressive catalogue of areas where scholars have made important progress, as well as of critical questions demanding more intense research to provide answers that can guide practitioner activities. In each question, we consider the role of regional and international trends that condition the relationship between conflict and democracy. Each question also features a case that helps to illustrate the dynamics of the hypotheses contained therein.

Question 1, which we title, "Democratization Amidst Conflict," asks how violent political conflict shapes the practice of democracy and the probability of democratization. Specifically, we ask about how particular aspects of democratic governance shift in response to violence. The scholarship in this area generally is not as developed as in Question 2, but a burgeoning literature (to which the co-principal investigators have contributed) asks, for example, how violent political conflict can undermine democratic values and raise the probability of future coups. We organize Question 1 according to conflict's effects on specific aspects of democracy, as defined by the DRG Center's own Strategic Assessment Framework (USAID, 2014), described on the left-hand side of Box 5 above. Question 1 features an analysis of El Salvador's road to democracy after the conclusion of its civil war in 1992.

Question 2, which we title, "Conflict Risks in Democratizing Countries," asks how the practice of democracy and democratization affects the incidence of different kinds of conflict. Specifically, we focus on the three types of conflict discussed above: civil conflict, election violence, and violent extremism, as shown on the right-hand side of Box 5. Doing so recognizes that expectations for democracy's effects on conflict differ in critical ways from expectations for democratization's effects, as well as across different kinds of conflict. Hypotheses in this area, for example, focus on how democratization can spur civil war and how close elections can spark violence and political instability. We organize Question 2 according to kind of conflict, as defined above in Box 5. Question 2 features an analysis of the Arab Spring, with special emphasis on Tunisia and Libya.

Finally, throughout our review, we consider how USAID and its partners, as well as the broader practitioner community, can capitalize on new opportunities and mitigate risks in countries struggling toward democracy and peace. USAID must program in areas where weak democratic practice and violent conflict are stubbornly intertwined. Such programming creates challenges, but also opportunities, for USAID and its partners to support positive change toward peace and democracy. Each hypothesis considers the lessons of the literature for these key questions, reflecting how USAID can condition the relationships between conflict and democracy. Section 6 considers cross-cutting lessons for practitioners working in this intersection.

Procedure

We organized the work to produce Section 4's TOCM and Section 5's evaluation of the scholarly literature as follows. First, the core team (Dresden, Flores, and Nooruddin) developed materials for research assistants (RAs) to record their progress. These included an online spreadsheet that RAs used to track which articles and books they had read and a template for RAs to summarize each source. RAs were assigned sub-questions as initially identified in Spring 2018 through a seed document for each, which described the questions being asked, enumerated key sources to seed the review, and hinted at new directions worth investigating. Each RA then spent about a week for each sub-question, recording and summarizing sources. RAs also wrote a short summary for each sub-question. Dresden, Flores, and Nooruddin then reviewed the RAs' work and used it as the basis for the summaries contained below. This procedure generated an initial White Paper reviewed during an Academic Think Session in August 2018.

After reviewing reactions to the White Paper from academic experts and USAID, the core team worked with USAID to revise the general conceptual approach for a second draft – part of a general effort of converting the initial White Paper into a full Theories of Change Matrix. The conceptual approach described above is a product of that effort. After agreeing on the general approach, the core team broke down its original set of questions and sub-questions into more specific hypotheses, each of which would fall into one of the major questions and eight sub-questions as described in Box 5. In the end, 35 hypotheses were coded, 21 under Question 1 and 14 under Question 2. USAID and an additional three academic experts reviewed this second draft. The core team again reviewed these comments, modifying the general approach to create this final draft.

4. THEORIES OF CHANGE MATRIX

Question 1. Democratization Amidst Conflict

1A. Consensus

Number & Title	Summary	Evaluation	Lessons for Practitioners	Paradigmatic Citations
1A1. Negotiated Settlements as Hard Choices	Negotiated settlements to end civil war are better at initiating democratic change, but more likely end in renewed civil war than military victories.	The evidence supports the fragility of peace agreements in terms of renewed civil war but is less clear about their effect on democracy.	Implementers should focus on bolstering the credibility of negotiated settlements through monitoring and establishing lines of communication between the parties.	Walter, 1999; Toft, 2009
1A2. Power-Sharing Agreements and Hard Choices	Power-sharing agreements benefit both peacebuilding and democratization in post-war countries.	Power-sharing has important positive effects on peace in post-conflict countries, but its impact on democratization is far less certain.	USAID and its partners should help monitor power-sharing agreements while simultaneously engaging in democracy promotion programs for a time when the power-sharing agreements sunset.	Hartzell & Hoddie, 2007

Number & Title	Summary	Evaluation	Lessons for Practitioners	Paradigmatic Citations
1A3. Prosocial Effects of Violence Exposure	Exposure to armed conflict reinforces in-group ties and prosocial behaviors, including voter turnout.	There is robust evidence that exposure to violence increases prosocial attitudes and behaviors, but these effects are limited to individuals' in-groups. A variety of research methodologies, including survey and experimental studies, yield high confidence in these findings.	Practitioners should be sensitive to whether programming to support social cohesion after conflict is simply reinforcing these in-group ties or actually building bridges across conflict lines.	Blattman, 2009; Bellows & Miguel, 2009; Bateson, 2012
1A4. Polarizing Effects of Violence Exposure	Exposure to armed conflict reinforces citizen polarization.	Research from a variety of fields and methodologies strongly supports this hypothesis.	Individuals exposed to violence during conflict are likely to develop greater attachments to their in-group and greater animosities toward out-groups, creating serious challenges for social cohesion. These effects also persist over generations, indicating that programming to build social cohesion should be implemented over long time periods.	Bauer *et al.*, 2016; Balcells, 2012

1B. Inclusion

Number & Title	Summary	Evaluation	Lessons for Practitioners	Paradigmatic Citations
1B1. Armed Groups Undertaking Political Party Transformation	Armed groups undertake transitions to political parties when they fail to achieve political objectives on the battlefield and incumbents accept their participation.	There is near-consensus in support of this hypothesis in the literature, though the success of attempted transitions depends on other factors.	International actors can support armed groups' transition into political parties, but their opportunities to do so are constrained by incumbent governments and the military dynamics of the preceding conflicts.	Acosta, 2014; Shugart, 1992; Matanock, 2017
1B2. Political Parties and Intragroup Consensus	Rebel-to-party transitions are more likely to succeed if intragroup politics generate consensus on transition.	Case studies across a variety of geographic regions strongly support this hypothesis, though there is disagreement over the particular conditions under which intragroup consensus is generated.	Practitioners should find ways to structure support to nascent political parties such that it supports the resolution of intragroup conflicts.	Manning, 2004; Ishiyama & Batta, 2011
1B3. Political Parties and Conflict Legacies	Armed groups' choices during conflict condition their ability to successfully become political parties.	This is an emerging area of scholarship, but the growing body of findings is consistently supportive of the hypothesis.	Practitioners' ability to support successful transitions to political parties is constrained by conditions and choices that occur prior to the likely point of engagement.	Huang, 2016; Söderberg Kovacs, 2007

Number & Title	Summary	Evaluation	Lessons for Practitioners	Paradigmatic Citations
1B4. Women's Empowerment after Civil War	Civil war creates opportunities for women's empowerment.	There is strong consensus that conflict disrupts social, economic, and political power structures in ways that sometimes offer women opportunities for empowerment, particularly with international support. There is debate, however, as to whether the most visible of these gains are merely symbolic or whether they translate to material improvements in equality and democratic quality.	Conflict sometimes offers opportunities for international actors to support women's empowerment, particularly during or immediately after the conflict period. Programming should be sensitive to the risk that gains in women's empowerment may be in name only.	Hughes, 2009; Tripp, 2015

1C. Competition and Political Accountability

Number & Title	Summary	Evaluation	Lessons for Practitioners	Paradigmatic Citations
1C1. Voters Favor Peace	Most voters favor peace, causing elites to avoid renewed conflict.	There is little evidence that this hypothesis holds up to empirical scrutiny.	Practitioners should have modest expectations about the degree to which voters will constrain belligerent politicians.	Wantchekon & Neeman, 2002
1C2. Military Victory and Dominant Parties	Military victories are more likely to be followed by dominant party systems.	Recent studies provide strong empirical support for the hypothesis, though it is not completely uncontested.	Where military outcomes have heavily concentrated political power, democracy assistance may not be effective in supporting political competition.	Lyons, 2016
1C3. Implications of Elite Interests	National elites' domestic political calculations condition the effectiveness of post-conflict democracy assistance.	The existing scholarship supports the hypothesis that external assistance's effectiveness is dependent on national elites' interests. However, additional research is needed to identify the most effective strategies for international practitioners to navigate these challenges.	The effectiveness of democracy programming is constrained by domestic political calculations that may not be easily surmountable. Coordinating democracy assistance with other tools of diplomacy and development support may provide leverage to favorably alter such calculations.	Zürcher *et al.*, 2013

1D. Rule of Law and Human Rights

Number & Title	Summary	Evaluation	Lessons for Practitioners	Paradigmatic Citations
1D1. Post-Conflict Coup Risk	Post-conflict democracies are at higher risk of military coups d'état.	Relatively few studies have focused on the risk of coups in the aftermath of armed conflict, so the existing evidence supporting the hypothesis cannot be considered robust. More research is needed.	Democracy assistance and security sector reform efforts must be closely coordinated.	Gassebner *et al.*, 2016; Cheeseman *et al.*, 2018
1D2. Post-Conflict Rule of Law	Post-conflict democracies experience weak rule of law.	Evidence from a number of case studies consistently supports the hypothesis, though the ways in which the topic is addressed varies across studies.	Practitioners must be sensitive to the ways that programs may be manipulated to legitimize processes that unintentionally concentrate power in the hands of a few at the expense of institutionalization and/or undermine the justice mechanisms they seek to support.	Loyle & Davenport, 2016

Number & Title	Summary	Evaluation	Lessons for Practitioners	Paradigmatic Citations
1D3. Transitional Justice Helps Democratization	Transitional justice initiatives can support democratization.	Credible empirical evidence from published studies is limited, relying heavily on single case studies and anecdotal evidence. The overall thrust of the findings is not bullish about the value of transitional justice initiatives for promoting democracy.	USAID and its partners should only support transitional justice efforts if they are paired with a credible mechanism for holding a party accountable if found guilty.	Olsen *et al.*, 2010
1D4. Informal Institutions and Democratic Stability	Informal institutions or practices outside of formal institutions may bolster the stability of post-conflict democracies.	The few studies that have highlighted such informal practices and institutions confirm their stabilizing effects in the short-term. It is unclear what their long-term effects on democratic quality might be.	Programming should be sensitive to what local institutions already exist and might complement solutions to the challenges of democratization in a given post-conflict context. At the elite level, some informal mechanism of negotiation and crisis management is likely to be necessary for a long time after fighting stops.	Manning, 2002

1E. Government Responsiveness and Effectiveness

Number & Title	Summary	Evaluation	Lessons for Practitioners	Paradigmatic Citations
1E1. The Dangers of Post-Conflict Democratization	Rapid post-conflict democratization raises the probability of renewed civil war.	The evidence generally supports this hypothesis, but also suggests that meaningful post-conflict democratization is possible when state-society relations have been transformed by insurgent groups.	USAID and its partners should dedicate resources with a long time-horizon in the expectation of an extensive period of instability.	Paris, 2004; Flores and Nooruddin, 2009a
1E2. Rushed and Founding Elections can Destabilize	Rushed and founding elections can be destabilizing and lead to conflict initiation and recidivism.	Robust evidence is provided in support of these hypotheses, generated both by careful case studies of paradigmatic cases (*e.g.*, Lyons, 2016; Manning, 2002; Reilly, 2006) and by statistical analysis of cross-national time-series datasets.	The key takeaway is that successful democracy promotion could in fact lead to more violence in the short run as democratic reforms increase uncertainty about the future political equilibrium.	Flores & Nooruddin, 2012; Cederman *et al.*, 2013
1E3. Elections in Weak States	Elections held prior to adequate statebuilding hurt future democracy.	Evidence is robust that elections in weak states hurt democracy, but is far more limited about possible solutions.	Extreme caution is required when encouraging weak states to hold elections prior to accumulating adequate state capacity as these more often than not hurt democratic practice.	Huntington, 1968; Flores and Nooruddin, 2016

Number & Title	Summary	Evaluation	Lessons for Practitioners	Paradigmatic Citations
1E4. Development and Democracy in Reverse	Civil war unleashes severe economic repercussions that endanger future democratization.	Though the logic of this hypothesis is intuitive, the evidence is lacking.	Practitioners should develop methods to survey and monitor civilians during and after conflict to analyze socioeconomic conditions.	Collier *et al.*, 2003
1E5. Conflict and Trust in Institutions	Conflict exposure reduces trust in formal institutions.	Only a few studies have examined this hypothesis. While their findings are consistent, it is not possible to place high confidence in it without further research.	If conflict reduces the willingness to trust formal institutions, this might serve as an impediment to the current model of institution-building as a crucial first step in peacebuilding.	Jung, 2012
1E6. Regional Organizations Support Democratization	Regional organizations can support democratization after conflict.	Evidence for the claim that regional organizations can support democratization is based on cross-national time-series statistical analysis, though the coverage of the data sets used can be limited by geography and time.	USAID and its partners should focus on helping states build state capacity by advising them on technical details of policy implementation.	Donno, 2013

Question 2. Conflict Risks in Democratizing Countries

2A. Civil Conflict

Number & Title	Summary	Evaluation	Lessons for Practitioners	Paradigmatic Citations
2A1. The "Violent Middle" and "Peaceful Ends"	Consolidated regimes (both democracies and autocracies) are less likely to experience civil war than intermediate regimes.	This hypothesis has been subject to more than 20 years of study, but the evidence in favor remains mixed.	Practitioners should pay special attention to regimes that combine aspects of both democracy and autocracy, and to precisely how those institutions create conflict potential.	Hegre *et al.*, 2001; Jones & Lupu, 2018
2A2. Political Institutions Shape Probability of Civil Conflict	Systems that fragment power are at a lower risk of civil conflict.	The strength and quality of the evidence in favor of this hypothesis is high across different studies of different institutional choices. Of particular importance is the research on foundational constitutional choices that can inform policy choices.	USAID and partners advising post-conflict and young democracies contemplating far-reaching constitutional choices should advocate on behalf of parliamentary systems with proportional representation electoral rules that reduce the risk of concentration of power in a single political actor.	Joshi, 2013; Mattes and Savun, 2009

Number & Title	Summary	Evaluation	Lessons for Practitioners	Paradigmatic Citations
2A3. Rapid Democratization	Rapid democratization raises the risk of civil war in countries lacking institutional preconditions.	Statistical analyses of patterns of conflict generally support this hypothesis.	Practitioners should temper their expectations of democratization's pacifying effects, especially in countries with weak institutions, and dedicate increased aid to countries attempting the transition.	Huntington, 1968; Mansfield and Snyder, 2005
2A4. Elections as Seeds of Civil War	Elections heighten the risk of an outbreak of civil conflict, especially in contexts where ethnic identity is politically relevant or civil conflict ended recently.	The evidence doesn't show a general effect of elections on civil war but shows persuasively that elections in certain circumstances raise the probability of conflict.	Monitor elections being held in difficult circumstances and encourage elites to build inclusive coalitions.	Cederman *et al.*, 2013; Flores and Nooruddin, 2012
2A5. Ethnic Exclusion Encourages Conflict	Ethnic exclusion in democracies leads to greater risk of civil conflict.	Research on the consequences of ethnic exclusion for the risk of civil conflict has benefited from significant investments in better data collection and operationalization of key concepts. Confidence in these results is high.	For USAID and other intervenors, advocating for inclusive political institutions is critical. Where such institutions are absent, supporting civil society and peacebuilding programs that offer a counternarrative of nonviolent political action may help reduce conflict by encouraging excluded groups to seek other avenues for redress.	Cederman, Buhaug, & Rød, 2009

Number & Title	Summary	Evaluation	Lessons for Practitioners	Paradigmatic Citations
2A6. Respect for Women, Less Civil War	Societies that respect women's rights are more likely to avoid civil war.	Recent statistical analyses support this hypothesis, but more attention is needed.	Practitioners should promote women's rights, but with the caution that doing so can taint these campaigns by associating women's rights with Western influence.	Hudson *et al.*, 2014

2B. Election Violence

Number & Title	Summary	Evaluation	Lessons for Practitioners	Paradigmatic Citations
2B1. Institutions to Reduce Electoral Violence	More consolidated democratic institutions lower the risk of election violence.	Only a handful of articles have explored these relationships in great detail, but the evidence strongly supports the assertion.	Practitioners should double-down on longer-term programming with the goal of strengthening key democratic institutions.	Hafner-Burton *et al.*, 2014
2B2. Ethnic Identification, Elections, and Violence: a Vicious Cycle?	Contentious elections and election violence heighten ethnic identification, which in turn makes future elections more violent.	While there is strong evidence in favor of these links, scholars have also found countervailing evidence, suggesting that this vicious cycle isn't necessarily the norm.	Practitioners should time programs celebrating common, inter-ethnic, cross-cutting ties with election campaigns.	Kuhn 2015; Eifert *et al.*, 2010
2B3. Vulnerable and Violent Incumbents	Vulnerable incumbents more likely use violence before elections to retain power, triggering post-election instability.	Studies have generally supported the impact of incumbent insecurity on pre-election violence by the state and pre-electoral violence's effect on post-election violence.	Increase efforts to monitor close and contentious elections and support reforms that constrain incumbents.	Hafner-Burton *et al.*, 2014; Hafner-Burton *et al.*, 2018
2B4. International Election Support and Violence	Election observer missions increase the risk of election violence, but long-term capacity-building reduces the risk of election violence.	The evidence for this assertion is very new, but casts doubt on a violence-inducing effect of election observation. Long-term capacity-building, however, contributes to violence prevention.	Closely watch elections that attract large numbers of election observers. Focus on longer-term programming that increases confidence in the electoral process.	Birch & Muchlinski, 2018; von Borzyskowski, 2019

2C. Violent Extremism

Number & Title	Summary	Evaluation	Lessons for Practitioners	Paradigmatic Citations
2C1. Ethnic Inclusion and Violent Extremism	Systems that are more ethnically inclusive are less prone to terror attacks.	These findings are in line with other scholarly findings on how political exclusion affects civil conflict. This is still a new literature, however, and a great deal of research remains to flesh out these mechanisms.	Practitioners should monitor ethnically exclusive states for extremist violence.	Piazza, 2011; Choi & Piazza, 2016
2C2. Democracy and Violent Extremism	Democracies are more prone to domestic violent extremism.	While research on the political causes of terrorism is improving, confidence in many of these findings should be limited due to poor conceptualization and operationalization of key variables (such as terrorism) and the quality of data used to test the hypotheses.	If the preponderance of evidence is to be believed, then the implication is that advocating for democratic reform in some countries will make them more vulnerable to terrorist attacks.	Dugan & Chenoweth, 2012; Chenoweth, 2010b
2C3. Inclusive Democracy and Violent Extremism	More inclusive democracies lessen democracies' risk of violent extremism.	As in the last hypothesis, research on the political causes of terrorism is rapidly changing but remains plagued by any new literature.	USAID and its partners should be aware of particular conditions in newly democratizing countries that make terrorism more likely, especially less inclusive democratic institutions.	Aksoy & Carter, 2014

Number & Title	Summary	Evaluation	Lessons for Practitioners	Paradigmatic Citations
2C4. Statebuilding and Violent Extremism	Strong states that are effective and legitimate deter violent extremism.	Rigorous empirical evaluations of this hypothesis are limited, with most scholars relying on case studies of particular instances as evidence. However, the core argument is consistent with other literatures focusing on diverse forms of civil conflict.	Given robust evidence across different domains of civil conflict that statebuilding is positive, international actors should bolster government effectiveness while encouraging downward accountability.	Nasser-Eddine *et al.*, 2011; Windsor, 2010.

5. EVALUATION OF THE LITERATURE

Question 1. Democratization Amidst Conflict

This section presents 21 hypotheses about "Democratization Amidst Conflict." We derive these from a growing literature that asks how violent political conflict shapes the practice of democracy and the probability of democratization. This literature indicates that there are two significant ways in which the post-conflict context poses unique challenges for democratization. First, legacies of the preceding conflict directly shape aspects of democracy such as political party formation, voter attitudes, and institutionalization of the rule of law. Second, following major violent conflict, some aspects of democratization or democratic practice may elevate risks for conflict recurrence in ways that are distinct from conflict risk in other contexts. Such conflict recurrence undermines democracy by threatening both the stability on which it depends and the purported connection between democracy and peacebuilding. While this latter set of hypotheses often has parallels to those presented in Question 2, they are not identical.

The hypotheses are organized according to how particular elements of democratic governance (as defined by USAID's DRG Center) shift in response to violence. Much of the research surveyed below is recent and consensus is yet to be achieved on many of the key hypotheses in this literature, but a proliferation of high-quality data sets on granular components of democracy and conflict bodes well for future scholarship in these areas. We provide our assessment of the strength of the empirical evidence undergirding these hypotheses below, and hope that this might spur continued research, especially where the current repository of knowledge is limited. We provide a fuller articulation of our approach in Section 3.

Question 1 relies on El Salvador's post-conflict experience to provide a real-world example of these dynamics in action.

Box 6. El Salvador's Road to Democratization after War

By Charles Davidson and Thomas E. Flores

El Salvador's civil war (1980-1992) pitted successive U.S.-backed governments against the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN), an organization comprised of different leftist groups that waged a prolonged insurgency. The war traces its roots to deep political exclusion and persistent socioeconomic inequality: 95% of the country's income was controlled by a landowner class comprising only 2% of the population, known also as the "coffee oligarchy" (Paris, 2004, p. 122, Zamora and Arnson, 2003, p. 6). By the late 1970s, worsening economic conditions, frustrated hopes for land redistribution (due to opposition by the landed elite), election fraud, and repression inspired an armed uprising. For many, the Salvadoran Civil War started as a result of "the holding of land in the hands of a few" (Wood 2003:2).

During the war, death squads and government military units alike frequently murdered opponents of the regime. Most famously, the assassination of the Roman Catholic archbishop of El Salvador, Saint Óscar Romero, galvanized support for the FMLN from formerly non-violent activists and peasants in the countryside (Wood, 2003, p. 105). External interveners—including the United States, Israel, Chile, and Cuba—prolonged the conflict further by providing arms, cash, and expertise to one or the other side.

Throughout the 1980s, several attempts at peace foundered, plagued by the inability of either side to commit credibly to the peace (Matanock, 2017, p. 164). Yet by the late 1980s, both sides began to admit that the conflict was in a stalemate. An intensification of conflict in the late 1980s and 1990s, which included widespread killings of civilians by roaming death squads as well as the FMLN, actually accompanied a UN-sponsored peace process, as both sides jockeyed for military advantages. The FMLN's surprising announcement of its desire to participate in elections helped shift the international environment for peace. Finally, the Chapultepec Peace Accords were signed in 1992, ending 12 years of conflict that killed at least 75,000 people, mostly civilians (Wilson, L. and Stoumbelis, 2012).

The post-accords peace has seen the establishment of regular democratic rule in El Salvador. The FMLN became a political party and won the presidency in 2009, leaving an ironic legacy for the Marxist group: leading a liberal democracy (Casas-Zamora, 2009). The United Nations monitored the peace until 1997, beginning a process of security sector reform. A truth commission documented the violence of the conflict, though an amnesty was also declared by the Legislative Assembly.

El Salvador is often cited as a case of successful peacebuilding, including measures for inclusive politics, removing military influence from the political process, growing personal freedoms, and a heightened regard for human rights. However, the peace accords' limits have become increasingly clear over time. Critics argue that while El Salvador has accomplished a measure of peace and political and economic liberalization, that peace has reproduced many of the realities that led to conflict, including poverty and inequality (Paris, 2004, p. 113-14), persistence of social stratification, professional emigration, and a dramatic increase in crime. El Salvador's persistently high levels of crime and violence continue to create insecurity for citizens and perpetuate cycles of political, financial, personal, and civil imbalance and strife.

1A. Consensus

1A1. Negotiated Settlements as Hard Choices

Hypothesis: Negotiated settlements to end civil war are better at initiating democratic change, but more likely end in renewed civil war than military victories.

Paradigmatic Citations: Walter, 1999; Toft, 2009

Summary: Post-conflict transitions almost always involve a particularly daunting challenge: simultaneously building peace and incubating democratic practice in a context characterized by the recent existence of armed insurgency, weak political institutions, economic stagnation or collapse, and the social-psychological toll of the conflict. These tensions can be seen in the analysis of peace agreements to end civil wars, which have been the subject of intensive theoretical and empirical scrutiny. Scholars define three main ways that civil conflicts conclude: a peace agreement or ceasefire, the military victory of the government or rebels, or the gradual de-escalation of the conflict without a formal conclusion.

Scholars have long argued that negotiated settlements more likely collapse than military victories by one side or the other, especially in the first, most fragile years after they are signed. The main theoretical thrust of this argument has centered *not* on whether such agreements fairly divide power: parties to a settlement can nearly always find terms that satisfy everyone. Instead, negotiated settlements are fragile because each side fears the other will abrogate the agreement, known as the credible commitment problem (Walter, 1999, p. 129; Toft, 2009, p. 9; Mason *et al.*, 2011, p. 185). A long

empirical literature has mostly confirmed these intuitions: negotiated settlements tend to be correlated with a shorter peace.

In contrast, negotiated settlements may be better suited to initiating democratic change, since they promise a more equitable distribution of political power (Gurses & Mason, 2008, p. 320; Toft, 2009, p. 2). Military victories by insurgent groups might lend themselves easily to the establishment of a one-party state, for example (Lyons, 2011), though this effect may depend on the nature of the war fought (Lyons, 2016). There is some uncertainty on this point, as others have found only a weak effect of negotiated settlements on post-conflict democratization (Fortna & Huang, 2012, p. 801). Others have found that the content of negotiated settlements *does* matter. For example, settlements that guarantee the participation of former insurgents in peaceful politics and/or contain power-sharing provisions may help solve the credible commitment problem; see [Section 1B](#) for more information on these areas.

Evaluation: The proposition that negotiated settlements are more fragile in securing the peace than military victories has received strong support in the empirical literature on civil war. Our scholarly understanding of post-conflict democratization pales in comparison to that of post-conflict recurrence, however, despite new advances. Scholars' empirical evidence on whether negotiated settlements better set the stage for democracy is still nascent, however.

Lessons for Practitioners: An important implication of this hypothesis is the need for third-parties who can bolster the credibility of negotiated settlements (Walter, 1999). One influential analysis of United Nations Peacekeeping Operations (UNPKOs), for example, stresses the role outsiders can play in raising the benefits of peace, reducing the costs of violations, monitoring violations, and enhancing communications between the two sides (Fortna, 2008, pp. 83-93). USAID and its partners should engage in monitoring and information-sharing with local elites.

Box 7. El Salvador's Negotiated Settlement

> *By Charles Davidson and Thomas E. Flores*
>
> The 1992 Chapultepec Peace Accords ended El Salvador's long civil war after 21 months of intensive negotiations. The main goals of the agreement were to end the war through negotiations, promote democracy, and to protect human rights and reunification (Castañeda and Arnson, 2003, p. 1) The successful peace process is seen as the result of declining international support for both the government and the FMLN, the mediation of the UN, and the recognition by the protagonists that they were trapped in a hurting stalemate (Karl, 1992). The accords have endured, but not without a series of challenges after 1992 that included continuing class conflicts over land and labor issues, the reintegration of former soldiers, and the perpetuation of human rights violations.

1A2. Power-Sharing Agreements and Hard Choices

Hypothesis: Power-sharing agreements benefit both peacebuilding and democratization in post-war countries.

Paradigmatic Citations: Hartzell & Hoddie, 2007

Summary: Scholars of civil conflict have dedicated enormous energies to the analysis of power-sharing agreements. Power-sharing comes in many varieties, with key features including whether they focus on territory, economic, military, or political provisions (Hartzell & Hoddie, 2005, 2007; Cederman *et al.*, 2015). Scholars propose that these provisions help solve two problems simultaneously: they strengthen

usually fragile peace agreements and help set the stage for democratization, which can be destabilizing in post-conflict countries.

Power-sharing dampens the tensions inherent in the transition process by reducing the uncertainties of whether key parties will have access to power. They also define the means by which groups can manage future conflicts. Peace agreements that contain power-sharing, then, should last longer than those that do not. Creating multiple, interlocking forms of power-sharing in a single peace agreement may stabilize the peace even more. Furthermore, power-sharing might bolster fragile post-conflict democracy. As we review in Hypothesis 1E1 below, post-conflict countries offer a number of obstacles for democratization. Power-sharing helps solve this conundrum by addressing elites' insecurity, setting the stage for future democratization; fully democratizing rapidly may just not be feasible (Hartzell & Hoddie, 2015: 64).

The empirical record of power-sharing agreements is mixed. On one hand, they have been shown to benefit the peace in post-conflict countries (Hartzell & Hoddie, 2005, 2007; Brancati & Snyder, 2013, p. 829). There is more disagreement on the question of democratization, however. An earlier assessment found that, while power-sharing supported peace in the short-term, it hurt democratization in the long term by making wartime divisions permanent (Roeder & Rothchild, 2005). Other studies lend credence to that assertion (Jung, 2012), provide evidence that power-sharing can promote corruption, especially when natural resources are present (Haass & Ottmann, 2017), and promote longer-term violence by convincing elites that violence will earn them a seat at the table (Tull & Mehler, 2005). Other analyses conclude more optimistically that some kinds of power-sharing – specifically inclusive and constraining power-sharing – contribute to peace and democratization (Graham *et al.*, 2017). This might be especially true when we recognize that power-sharing agreements might be most likely in cases where challenges to post-conflict democratization are most rife; in the longer-term, power-sharing likely bolsters democratization (Hartzell & Hoddie, 2015).

Evaluation: Power-sharing has important positive effects on peace in post-conflict countries, but its impact on democratization is far less certain.

Lessons for Practitioners: USAID and its partners should help monitor power-sharing agreements while simultaneously engaging in democracy promotion programs for a time when the power-sharing agreements sunset.

Box 8. Power-Sharing in El Salvador

By Charles Davidson and Thomas E. Flores

Power-sharing mechanisms were primarily designed to address the socioeconomic exclusion acknowledged to be a major cause of the war, using several different provisions to redistribute political power (Zamora, 2003, p. 6). These provisions pursued two goals. First, there was an agreed-upon movement toward demilitarization by the FMLN with the agreement that the Salvadoran Army would restructure (Wantchekon, 2000, p. 341). This reform formally dismantled the security forces and created a new civilian police force that would include former FMLN combatants, while also limiting the mandate of the army (Wood, 2003, p. 29). In return, the FMLN would enter the democratic process as a political party (*ibid*), assuring it some measure of political viability in the future. Second, the accords promised extensive land reform, including with former FMLN combatants, though progress was highly circumscribed. Power-sharing was bolstered by external monitoring by the United Nations and other external actors. (Matanock, 2017, p. 222-23). The result in part was heightened participation in politics by organizations not present during or before the war (Wood, 2003, p. 86).

1A3. Prosocial Effects of Violence Exposure

Hypothesis: Exposure to armed conflict reinforces in-group ties and prosocial behaviors, including voter turnout.

Paradigmatic Citations: Blattman, 2009; Bellows & Miguel, 2009; Bateson, 2012

Summary: A large literature developed over the past 15 years has found that—contrary to perceptions of atomized, traumatized individuals withdrawing from community life—exposure to violent conflict appears to have some prosocial effects on individuals' subsequent attitudes and behaviors. A large literature based particularly on experiments and surveys conducted in conflict-affected societies has found that individuals placed in a wartime context punish selfish behavior and reward cooperation more than those in a peacetime context (Gneezy & Fessler, 2012). Those exposed to violence also exhibit higher levels of altruism (Voors *et al.*, 2012), egalitarianism (Bauer *et al.*, 2014), and prosocial decision making (Gilligan *et al.*, 2014) in experimental research. Experiencing violence can also lead to a sort of "war weariness" that leads individuals to favor peace over continued conflict (Hazlett, 2018). Taken together, these findings suggest that many individuals react to the pressures of conflict by turning to their communities in ways that reinforce local bonds and increase social capital. Studies in sub-Saharan Africa have found that exposure to civil war violence can lead to increased voting behavior, community leadership, and attendance at community meetings (Blattman, 2009; Bellows & Miguel, 2009). This complements the body of findings indicating that terrorist attacks increase voter turnout (Balcells & Torrats-Espinosa, 2018; Robbins, Hunter, & Murray, 2013). Increases in threats can also increase non-voting political participation and reduce protest behavior (Hutchison, 2011). This literature suggests that the experience of conflict may lead individuals to more actively participate in the civic and political lives of their communities in ways that are not necessarily contentious or destabilizing.[7]

Evaluation: The finding that exposure to violence has prosocial effects is robust across a number of studies and cases but requires two caveats when situated within the larger body of research. First, violence during ongoing conflict does not necessarily have the same effects on political participation, as some armed actors use violence strategically to deter civilian behaviors such as voting (see, *e.g.*, Gallego, 2018). Second, as discussed in Hypothesis 1A4 below, these prosocial effects are frequently limited to in-groups. Violence may well lead civilians to behave more altruistically toward members of their in-group, but to be more antagonistic toward members of out-groups.

Lessons for Practitioners: Increased altruism, cooperation, and civic participation in the aftermath of conflict may present opportunities for international actors to work effectively with communities who have relatively high stocks of social capital. Practitioners should be sensitive, however, to the boundaries of these ties and consider the feasibility of bridge-building across communities emerging from conflict.

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[7] Some have attributed such effects to a form of post-traumatic growth (Blattman, 2009). The post-traumatic growth hypothesis is not universally supported by the literature, however. High levels of trauma in Rwandan survey respondents have been found to correlate with negative opinions of reconciliation indicators such as non-violence and interdependence, for example (Pham *et al.*, 2004; Vinck *et al.*, 2007). One study found that post-traumatic growth occurred at lower rates in conflict-displaced populations as compared to in response to other types of trauma, but that younger people and those in refugee camps (as opposed to internally displaced persons) may be more likely to experience growth (Powell *et al.*, 2003).

1A4. Polarizing Effects of Violence Exposure

Hypothesis: Exposure to armed conflict reinforces citizen polarization.

Paradigmatic Citations: Bauer et al., 2016, Balcells, 2012

Summary: While [Hypothesis 1A3](#) that violence exposure increases individuals' prosocial attitudes and behaviors has found significant scholarly support, so too has the hypothesis that violence exposure increases polarization among communities. The prosocial effects of conflict experience appear to be limited to an individual's in-group and do not extend to the relevant out-group (Bauer *et al.*, 2016). Some social psychologists have termed this "politicized collective identity," defined as an individual's identity as part of a group membership in which explicit motivations to engage in power struggles in society is entitled (Simon & Klandermans, 2001, p. 323). One prominent survey in Rwanda after the 1994 genocide, for example, found that individuals exposed to multiple traumatic events or who met criteria for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) were less likely to show positive attitudes toward notions of interdependence with other ethnicities (Pham *et al.*, 2004). Sociologists have found similar effects on in-group support and out-group blame under conditions of chronic terrorism (Spilerman & Stecklov, 2009).

Put simply, scholarship across several fields has suggested that insecurity sharpens individuals' perceptions of the divisions between their group and others, generating hostility toward the latter (Beber, Roessler, & Scacco, 2014). Behavior, and particularly voting behavior, then follows these perceptions. Voting patterns in multiple countries reflect this type of polarization (Berrebi & Klor, 2008; Getmansky & Zeitzoff, 2014; Kibris, 2011; Kibris, 2014; Grossman, Manekin, & Miodownik, 2015, Hadzic, Carlson, & Tavits, 2017).[8] Surveys of citizens in Israel have also found that major waves of violence (*i.e.*, the Second Intifada) increased citizens' threat perception, in-group identification, and political intolerance of out-groups (Shamir & Sagiv-Schifter, 2006). One recent study found that right-wing content in Israeli books increases during periods of violence and that the elevated levels persist even after violence subsides (Mitts, 2018). Additional survey evidence from Israel indicates that terrorist attacks significantly affect adolescents' perceptions of out-groups, but that these effects do diminish over time (Bar-Tal & Labin, 2001).

Exposure to a range of types of political violence has been found to limit political tolerance (Hutchison, 2014; Beber *et al.*, 2014) and prioritize parochial over national identities (Rohner *et al.*, 2013). This polarization of identity is notably part of a broader set of social processes that lead to lasting change during and after civil war (Wood, 2008; Bateson, 2012). For example, evidence from Spain and Colombia indicates that states displace citizens dependent on their identity and political loyalties (Balcells & Steele, 2016).

Most studies indicate, however, that these polarizing effects are enduring. Research at the crossroads of studies on conflict and repression has found lasting effects on political identities and attitudes. The grandchildren of Crimean Tatars victimized by the Soviet Union have been found to more strongly

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[8] Some of this may be context-dependent, however. Following the 2007-2008 Kenyan election violence, one study found that victims of political violence demonstrated high levels of prosocial behavior, but when inter-ethnicity was made salient, cooperation levels dropped significantly (Becchetti *et al.*, 2014). Recent evidence from the Basque region of Spain (De la Calle & Sánchez-Cuenca, 2013) and Colombia (Weintraub *et al.*, 2015) similarly suggest that the relationship between violence and voter preferences is more nuanced than prior studies suggested.

identify with their own ethnic group, see themselves as victims, participate politically, and oppose Russia; compared to grandchildren of Crimean Tartars *not* victimized by the Soviet Union (Lupu & Peisakhin, 2017). Similar intergenerational effects preserving polarization have been found in Spain (Balcells, 2012; Aguilar *et al.*, 2011). Exposure to political violence and victimization thus has polarizing effects on individuals' political attitudes that are handed down through generations and may have deleterious consequences for the long-run stability of democracy.

Evaluation: The literature is not completely unified about this hypothesis, but the strong majority of findings support it. The combination of increased pro-social attitudes identified in Hypothesis 1A3 toward an in-group and mistrust toward an out-group is unsurprising in the context of elevated risk. Altruism and parochialism may be mutually reinforcing as joint responses to conflict (Choi & Bowles, 2007).

Lessons for Practitioners: Peacebuilders enter into a context that is deeply politically polarized by the experience of violence. This both constrains international actors' ability to foster reconciliation and highlights the ways that inter-communal bridge building is so important for democracy as well as peace. Polarization that leads to support for hardline parties, for example, can undermine the prospects for inter-party compromise and the political stability of a new, post-conflict democracy. The intergenerational effects of violence also indicate that reconciliation efforts should be thought of on the longest timeline possible.

Box 9. Violence Exposure in El Salvador

By Charles Davidson and Thomas E. Flores

The lingering effects of the civil war in El Salvador are both persistent and multi-faceted, affecting the public's attitudes toward politics and mental suffering. Violence exposure has wrought at least two types of changes on Salvadorans. First, citizens report lower regard for democracy and the rule of law, a result of the "abusive, corrupt, and ineffective nature" of the police and judicial systems of the country, itself a result of the heavy-handedness deemed necessary by the government during the transition from civil war (Pérez, 2004). Salvadorans feel that they must exist in spite of the government and rule of law due to their low faith in the police, which in turn diminishes their confidence and support for the democratic system (Pérez, 2004, p. 628). Gang and criminal activity intensify this lack of faith for Salvadorans at home and abroad.

Second, the violence of the civil war and its continuation since have caused strains in emotional health through PTSD and social problems within families and social groups. This has caused lingering, cyclical effects on Salvadoran mental and emotional health. These mental health challenges can be seen in teachers, who often drop out of their profession due to the strain, affecting the education of children and adolescents (Rojas-Flores *et al.*, 2015).

1B. Inclusion
1B1. Armed Groups Undertaking Political Party Transformation

Hypothesis: Armed groups undertake transitions to political parties when they fail to achieve political objectives on the battlefield and incumbents accept their participation.

Paradigmatic Citations: Acosta, 2014; Shugart, 1992; Matanock, 2017

Summary: Scholarship suggests that stalemate on the battlefield and the willingness of the government to tolerate former insurgents' participation are threshold conditions for their entry into peaceful electoral politics. Successful transition requires that parties demilitarize, organize, democratize, and adapt to a new mode of operation (de Zeeuw, 2007). A variety of factors, from an armed group's prior experience with politics to particular levels and types of international support, can increase the likelihood of a successful transition. Such transformations are not guaranteed, nor are they necessarily complete when undertaken. Armed groups frequently participate in elections without fully disarming, continuing to exercise violence or at least maintain the capacity for it (de Zeeuw, 2007; Young, 2007; Wittig, 2016). Yet an armed group's decision to shift its strategy away from a primarily military one toward engagement in the peaceful political arena is significant. A key driver of that decision appears to be the recognition that armed struggle alone will not lead to military victory. Intervenors must thus be realistic about the prospects for successfully supporting a transition if the timing is not ripe. Armed groups typically decide to participate in elections when they reach some form of military stalemate (Shugart, 1992; Giustozzi, 2007; Acosta, 2014), particularly if they believe that they have the popular support to have success at the polls (Wantchekon, 2004; Acosta, 2014). In addition to military stalemate, however, armed groups are more likely to make a transition if they have the support (or at least tolerance) of the government (Acosta, 2014; Matanock & Staniland, 2017).[9]

Since the end of the Cold War, a common mechanism of rebel-to-party transition has been the inclusion of provisions in peace agreements explicitly supporting such transformations (Söderberg, Kovacs, & Hatz, 2016). When peace agreements spell out how former armed actors will demobilize and transition to political parties, interveners can gather information, offer conditional incentives, and sanction non-compliance in ways that strengthen participants' faith that the agreement is being honored (Matanock, 2017, p. 216). These provisions have been found to help prevent conflict recurrence and are most likely to lead to successful transformation when they involve multiple provisions for inclusion such as mandated elections or power-sharing agreements (Söderberg, Kovacs, & Hatz, 2016). The recent peace agreement in Colombia fits squarely within this model, for example.

The involvement of third parties in reaching and implementing such agreements is another key element not only of initiating a transition, but also of succeeding in the effort. International support has been found to be an important factor in both (Shugart, 1992; Giustozzi, 2007; Manning & Smith, 2016). International support can make the difference in transformation by providing recognition and legitimacy, financial support and assistance, and monitoring and guarantees that reassure disarming groups in a tenuous security environment (Dudouet, Planta, & Giessmann, 2016). In providing financial support and assistance, however, not all programming has been found to be equally successful, particularly if it focuses on national rather than local-level issues, misses important historical context, or creates tensions between locally preferred policies and those acceptable to donors (Curtis & de Zeeuw, 2009). Instead, interventions that increase new parties' skills, organizational development, and capacity-building facilitate transitions, as well as those that build links between citizens and parties (Dudouet, Planta, & Giessmann, 2016).

Importantly, there is debate in the scholarship as to whether or not the transformation of rebel groups into political parties facilitates long-run democratization overall. Such transformations certainly increase

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[9] How the government treats these would-be political parties depends on a variety of factors, including their ideological compatibility with the state, electoral usefulness to the incumbent government, and their actual autonomy from the regime (Staniland, 2015).

the inclusivity of a political system, at least at the elite level. Yet some scholars have argued that they are frequently tied to power-sharing arrangements that can limit the vertical ties of political elites to voters that are seen as crucial for political competition and accountability (Matanock, 2017, p. 269), thereby forcing a tradeoff between peace and democratization. The majority of recent scholarship has recognized the potentially countervailing effects on different components of democracy and has eschewed study of rebel-to-party transformations' impact on overall levels of democracy in favor of narrower, more concrete outcomes and mechanisms.

Evaluation: The scholarship shows near-consensus that rebel-to-party transitions are indeed attempted only once battlefield stalemate motivates rebels to transform and government to accept them into the political process. Whether these attempted transitions are successful depends on other factors. International engagement does help in the ways discussed above, but other factors such as the legacies of groups' choices during conflict (see Hypotheses 1B2 and 1B3 below) serve as powerful constraints.

Lessons for Practitioners: There are a variety of ways that international actors can support rebel-to-party transitions, from direct party-building support to broader democracy assistance that helps to reinforce the political terms of a peace agreement. The effectiveness of these efforts, and the timing at which they are likely to be successful, are strongly conditioned by the preceding conflict dynamics and combatant organizations' resulting incentive structures.

1B2. Political Parties and Intragroup Consensus

Hypothesis: Rebel to party transitions are more likely to succeed if intragroup politics generate consensus on transition.

Paradigmatic Citation: Manning, 2004; Ishiyama & Batta, 2011

Summary: Rebel groups fail to make the transition to political parties in one of two ways: either they largely abandon the attempt and return to violence as a primary strategy or they remain committed to peaceful political competition but fail to attract (or retain) meaningful popular support, which many do for an extended period of time (they continue to do both over an extended period of time (Matanock and Staniland, 2017). The internal politics of these armed groups are equally important to both outcomes. Factionalism within an armed group can lead to splits that see some committed to peaceful politics while others return to violence. Infighting can also reduce the effectiveness of a nascent political party, depriving it of the political resources to be successful at election time.

A shift from armed conflict to peaceful politics inevitably involves changes in priorities and the relative power of different factions or individuals. Not all armed groups are equally capable of navigating these changes, so transition is only likely to succeed where intraparty politics produce support for the change (Manning, 2004; Söderberg Kovacs, 2007; Manning, 2008; Ishiyama & Batta, 2011; Berti, 2013; Dudouet, Planta, & Giessmann, 2016). This can mean finding desirable retirement options for military leaders who cannot effectively make the transition; solidifying cohesion among group leaders by agreements on hierarchy and/or internal power-sharing; and sustaining the ambitions of younger cadres who see peaceful politics as a path to influence. A key question that emerges from this literature is whether elites within these groups see transformation as preserving or undermining their positions of authority.

A competitive electoral environment may help structure the intraparty politics that are so critical to a successful transition (Manning, 2008), yet post-conflict elections are also more likely to be competitive

where armed groups in conflict developed some of the organizational structures that facilitate transition (Dresden, 2017). A particular challenge is that armed groups are frequently undertaking transitions in the context of a peace agreement that provides for some type of political power-sharing arrangement. While such arrangements may facilitate peace in the short-term, a number of studies have noted that they risk damaging the quality of democratization in the longer term, ossifying political cleavages and limiting voter choice (Mukherjee, 2006; Jarstad, 2008; Söderberg Kovacs, 2008; Jung, 2012; Tull & Mehler, 2005).[10] Some institutional arrangements may mitigate these problems by encouraging parties to broaden their appeal beyond their base (Reilly, 2006), but not all scholars agree that such institutional choices outweigh the legacies of armed groups' choices during the preceding conflict (Allison, 2006).

Evaluation: Qualitative studies across a range of cases in a variety of geographic regions have found support for this hypothesis. These case studies include Mozambique, Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Nepal, Colombia, and Indonesia. This breadth indicates that the broad hypothesis has strong support, though there is some disagreement among findings over particular mechanisms (*e.g.*, whether a hierarchical command structure during conflict facilitates or impairs intragroup negotiations to undertake transition).

Lessons for Practitioners: Finding ways to structure support to nascent political parties that facilitates the resolution of intragroup conflicts may help to secure successful transition. This may mean supporting exit options for elites who lack the skills or interest to participate in politics or supporting factions whose interests would be served better by participation in party politics than by a return to arms.

1B3. Political Parties and Conflict Legacies

Hypothesis: Armed groups' choices during conflict condition their ability to successfully become political parties.

Paradigmatic citations: Huang, 2016; Söderberg Kovacs, 2007

Summary: Research is nearly universal in identifying local and organizational-level factors as being key to success for groups seeking to make the transition from rebels to political party. Two factors seem particularly important for these groups. First, how dependent was the group on the local civilian population for its survival during the conflict? Armed groups that enjoyed broad-based popularity and/or relied on civilian support during the conflict itself are far more likely to transition successfully (Allison, 2006; Huang, 2016; Ishiyama & Widmeier, 2013). In contrast, those armed groups who relied on external sponsorship or aid during the conflict are less likely to do so (Söderberg Kovacs, 2007; Colaresi, 2014).

Second, does the armed group have the benefit of experience in non-violent politics or *political* (as opposed to violent) mobilization? Groups that had experience participating in politics prior to the conflict or that developed some kind of "proto-party structures" during the war are much more likely to see success as political parties later on (van de Goor & de Zeeuw, 2007; Söderberg Kovacs, 2007; Berti, 2011; Dresden, 2017; Zaks, 2017). While rebel groups may be able to rely on their military capabilities or

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[10] Though most scholars agree that a government victory in civil war has negative consequences for democratization, there is, admittedly, a lack of consensus on whether rebel victory facilitates longer-term democratization (Toft, 2010) or strong authoritarianism (Lyons, 2016).

the weakness of the incumbent government to fight to a stalemate and force an inclusive peace agreement, the patterns of authority and behavior that are established during conflict are difficult to overcome later. Even relatively close relationships with civilian populations may not be sufficient to sustain a successful political party if the organizational capacity is not also there.

Evaluation: While this is a growing area of scholarship that has emerged primarily over the last ten years or so, there is consistent evidence in favor of the hypothesis that the legacies of conflict have a lasting effect on armed groups' abilities to successfully become political parties after conflict. This is based on both cross-national statistical work and qualitative studies of particular cases.

Lessons for Practitioners: All of these conditions occur prior to the likely moment of international actors' engagement. These conditions thus serve as constraints on USAID and others, rather than opportunities for impact.

Box 10. The FMLN as a Political Party

By Charles Davidson and Thomas E. Flores

The transition of the FMLN from insurgent group to political party was a vital and driving force in the peace process in El Salvador. The influence of international actors—in particular their shift in the wake of the conclusion of the Cold War to a more humanitarian lens—allowed monitoring of compliance that bolstered the credibility of the FMLN's participation (Matanock, 2017, p. 222). They accomplished this through making aid and development supplied to both the FMLN and the government contingent upon cooperation through the democratic process and successful elections. The FMLN remains one of two major parties, and has won presidential elections in 2009 and 2014.

1B4. Women's Empowerment after Civil War

Hypothesis: Civil war creates opportunities for women's empowerment.

Paradigmatic Citations: Hughes, 2009; Tripp, 2015

Summary: There is little argument or debate that women are targeted for particular mistreatment and victimization during times of armed conflict (Sjoberg & Peet, 2011; Cohen, 2013; Baines, 2014). Yet the limited narrative of women as *victims* of armed conflict has been challenged in recent years both by a reexamination of the roles women play during war itself (Sjoberg & Gentry, 2007; Wood & Thomas, 2017; Cohen, 2013; Thomas & Bond, 2015) and by an emerging literature on the ways that conflict opens up opportunities for women's subsequent political empowerment. Studies of women during and after armed conflict have found that women frequently take up previously male-dominated roles in political and economic life. This includes higher representation in national legislatures (Hughes, 2009; Hughes & Tripp, 2015; Fallon *et al.*, 2012), particularly after longer and more destructive conflicts. Such conflicts force women to take on greater responsibility outside the home for self-preservation and often also encourage collective action among women in movements for peace (Moran & Pitcher, 2004). These break down norms and build up networks that persist into the post-conflict period, resulting in political empowerment (Tripp, 2015; Fuest, 2008). International support for gender equality and legal mechanisms for women's empowerment during post-conflict programming and institution-building are frequently cited as an important factor as well (Freedman, 2015; Mageza-Barthel, 2015; Tripp, 2015).

Rwanda's oft-cited status as the country with the highest proportion of female legislators serves as just one example of these processes (Berry, 2015).

Yet some have questioned whether the gains from such processes have an impact or are merely symbolic. Some research has found that women's empowerment after armed conflict reduces the risk of conflict recurrence after peace agreements, for example (Shair-Rosenfeld & Wood, 2017). Yet if a weak legislature in a highly personalist authoritarian country has high levels of women's representation, is that a good indicator of empowerment? Just as conflict opens up opportunity structures for women's mobilization, it also creates cross-cutting pressures that may limit the effects of that mobilization. Women's social mobilization may be divided between those seeking empowerment and those who explicitly identify themselves as victims, or efforts to re-establish patriarchal social structures may be seen as a crucial part of "getting back to normal" after war (Berry, 2017). Efforts to bolster women's legal protections can be effective in supporting their agency (Hirsch, 2011, p. 199), but often only for certain groups of women whose status or geographic location grant them specialized access to intermediaries such as NGOs (Lake *et al.*, 2016). Women displaced to urban areas during conflict may be more likely to participate in the labor force and earn a higher share of household income, but this is accompanied by increases in domestic violence and no clear gains in other areas of economic empowerment (Calderón *et al.*, 2011). To put it simply, the effects of conflict on women's empowerment are unclear.

Evaluation: The scholarship, based on both cross-national statistical studies and qualitative case studies, is solid and coherent on the core hypothesis. Violence really does appear to disrupt socio-economic and political structures enough to provide opportunities for women's empowerment, particularly while the international community supports such processes. Yet there is still debate in the literature over whether the most visible gains women make are material for questions of democratization and equality, or merely symbolic.

Lessons for Practitioners: The immediate post-conflict period may offer significant opportunities to pursue women's empowerment, particularly if women were politically active during the conflict in peace movements or other forms of collective action. Such efforts should be sensitive, however, to the risk that the programs offer the illusion, without the substance, of empowerment.

1C. Competition and Political Accountability

1C1. Voters Favor Peace

Hypothesis: Most voters favor peace, causing elites to avoid renewed conflict.

Paradigmatic Citations: Wantchekon & Neeman, 2002

Summary: One of the classic hypotheses underlying early theories favoring democratization after civil war is that democratization preserves peace by allowing voters to hold elites accountable for their actions. This would have an essentially moderating and stabilizing effect on the political system as peace-favoring voters serve as a check on the ambitions of elites who might prefer a return to violence (Wantchekon & Neeman, 2002). There is some evidence that those exposed to violence do more heavily favor peace and the potential granting of concessions to opposition (Tellez, 2018; Beber, Roessler, & Scacco, 2014). An influential study noted that the duration of post-conflict peace is longer when peace accords include more actors from civil society, for example (Nilsson, 2012). Other studies have found

that citizens in Liberia (Harris, 1999) and Mozambique (Manning, 2002, p. 170) engaged in strategic voting to support the electoral outcomes that they believe will satisfy ambitious elites in order to preserve peace, rather than based on their own candidate preferences (Matanock and Garcia-Sánchez, 2017). New evidence based on the experience of Colombia disagrees, finding that voters seek to punish insurgents (Matanock & Garbiras-Díaz, 2018; Tellez, 2019), especially urban voters who have avoided violence but identify with more hawkish elites (Weintraub *et al.*, 2014; Liendo & Braithwaite, 2018).

Evaluation: The direct empirical evidence for this hypothesis is extremely limited. The strong findings in support of Hypothesis 1A4, that voters are deeply polarized after conflict, suggests that any relationship between post-conflict democratization and peace is not attributable to voters' pacifying effects on elites.

Lessons for Practitioners: Voters cannot be assumed to serve as an effective check on elected officials who are willing to return to war. Programming should take this into account in evaluating the intersection of peace-building and democratization.

1C2. Military Victory and Dominant Parties

Hypothesis: Military victories are more likely to be followed by dominant party systems.

Paradigmatic Citations: Lyons, 2016

Summary: There has been an extensive debate over whether the manner in which a conflict ends affects a country's ability to subsequently democratize. Some studies have argued that negotiated settlements are more conducive to post-conflict democratization, particularly when they entail a variety of power-sharing provisions (Gurses & Mason, 2008; Hartzell & Hoddie, 2015; also see Hypotheses 1A1 and 1A2). Others have suggested that military victory—particularly rebel military victory—can be more conducive to democratization over the longer term (Toft, 2010).

The contemporary prevalence of hybrid regimes has shifted this debate away from a focus on institutional democracy and toward an interest in the *de facto* competitiveness of post-conflict political systems. While competitive elections after civil wars are now common, many political systems become dominated by a single party that strongly retains its grip on power (de Zeeuw, 2010). Whether post-conflict elections are competitive or dominated by one party is connected in important ways to the legacies of war (Dresden, 2017). The likelihood of dominant party systems following conflict is thought to be higher after military victories because only those combatant organizations with the coercive or political capacity to dominate subsequent political life are likely to achieve victory (Lyons, 2016). Not all party dominance necessarily rests on cheating, as with the African National Congress in South Africa after Apartheid, but the seeds of purely political dominance are still often planted in the preceding conflict (Muriaas *et al.*, 2016).

Evaluation: Recent scholarship suggesting that military victory facilitates dominant party systems after civil war both provides strong findings and connects to studies of the relationship between negotiated settlements and democratization. This makes the support for the hypothesis strong, though not completely uncontested.

Lessons for Practitioners: The effectiveness of democracy assistance after conflicts ended by military victory will be constrained by the realities of political power dynamics that have their roots in preceding violence.

1C3. Implications of Elite Interests

Hypothesis: National elites' domestic political calculations condition the effectiveness of post-conflict democracy assistance.

Paradigmatic Citations: Zürcher *et al.*, 2013

Summary: Democratization is not always in the political interests of local elites. The extent to which democracy emerges in both form and practice depends heavily on its adoption costs for these local elites—how much might genuine democratization threaten their interests, compared with the additional internal or external support it might bring them? (Zürcher *et al.*, 2013, p. 26). Foreign aid alters this calculus and is thus effective in promoting democratization, but only where the incumbent is confident that she will be able to retain power after the next election (Wright, 2009). Democracy assistance can also serve as a particularly effective form of long-term peacebuilding support to mutually suspicious rivals, as engagement such as election monitoring provides a regularized means of reassuring parties that the terms of a political settlement are not being violated (Matanock and Lichtenheld, 2017). Two major shortcomings in the approach to post-conflict democracy assistance have been the tendency to focus on project success rather than genuine institutional deepening (DeZeeuw, 2005) and the broader tendency for the World Bank to locate programming in the most favorable situations, rather than tackling the places where the aid is arguably most needed (Flores & Nooruddin, 2009b). These studies parallel the finding that incumbent desperation increases the effectiveness of development assistance after conflict (Girod, 2015a).

Evaluation: The research that has been conducted in this area is strongly suggestive of support for the hypothesis. Additional research would help to more effectively identify the diplomatic and programmatic tools available to help democracy assistance efforts navigate and overcome the constraints of domestic political realities in post-conflict countries.

Lessons for Practitioners: Tailoring programming to the opportunities and constraints of political realities is important for both realistic expectations and effective implementation. Additionally, democracy assistance should be considered in tandem with the other tools of foreign aid and diplomacy to craft a coherent strategy of leverage over and/or support for particular national political actors.

1D. Rule of Law and Human Rights

1D1. Post-Conflict Coup Risk

Hypothesis: Post-conflict democracies are at higher risk for military coups d'état.

Paradigmatic Citations: Gassebner *et al.*, 2016; Cheeseman *et al.*, 2018

Summary: The risk of coups d'état is higher in post-conflict countries (Girod, 2015b; Gassebner *et al.*, 2016). Particularly if a country has experienced multiple rounds of conflict, weak political institutions, low elite cohesion, and limited civilian control over the military make coups even more likely (Cheeseman *et al.*, 2018). Under such conditions, the willingness of elites to be constrained by

democratic institutions is understandably low. This is problematic because a baseline level of elite accommodation and habituation is distinct from—and yet important to—the process of democratization (Burton & Higley, 1987). Where strong institutions and high civilian government legitimacy exist despite internal security threats (as in India), civilian control of the military is less likely to be challenged by coups (Staniland, 2008). Unfortunately, building strong institutions and political legitimacy in the wake of conflict are two of the largest challenges of peacebuilding.

Evaluation: One of the particular challenges of evaluating this hypothesis is that the type of institutional weaknesses and social divisions that are found to precipitate civil wars are also likely to increase the risk of coups (Clark, 2007), though some have suggested that leaders choose strategies that substitute one risk for the other (Roessler, 2011). The balance of the limited evidence for this hypothesis is fairly strong. The low number of studies that have focused on post-conflict coups limit the reliability of the findings and suggest that more research in this area is needed. The strategies available to national or international actors to prevent such coups are even less clear. This is another potential area for future research.

Lessons for Practitioners: Democracy assistance will need to be closely coordinated with security sector reform efforts after conflict in order to build a military that is not only capable, but also committed to civilian oversight and control.

1D2. Post-Conflict Rule of Law

Hypothesis: Post-conflict democracies experience weak rule of law.

Paradigmatic Citations: Loyle & Davenport, 2016

Summary: Democratic institutions require a separation of state and political resources and processes in order to function impartially and ensure an even playing field for electoral competition. Several aspects of political conflict and its resolution undermine this separation in ways that affect subsequent democratic practice. Patronage networks and clientelism often survive or even thrive during wartime environments. Countries that relied on patronage networks prior to conflict will see these strategies replicated by all actors during war and maintained subsequently (Hensell & Gerdes, 2012; Heydemann, 2018). Under such conditions of weak rule of law, even a strong civil society can promote patronage systems and undermine citizenship, further weakening the prospects for democratic governance (Belloni, 2008). Such systems ensure privileged access to public resources for certain individuals, undermining the fundamental relationship between citizens and democratic institutions.

Even perceived efforts to institute accountability mechanisms after war can have perverse effects on building up the rule of law. Efforts to identify parties culpable for political violence may be biased in ways that punish potential political opponents while treating political supporters with relative impunity, as was found to be the case in Kenya after its 2007-2008 electoral violence (Hassan & O'Mealia, 2018). Even transitional justice mechanisms, often thought of as an effective way to introduce accountability without retribution, are not immune from manipulation. Such mechanisms can be designed with restrictive mandates, conflict surrounding their processes, and restrictions on civil liberties that bias their proceedings or serve to reinforce incumbent political power (Loyle & Davenport, 2016; Loyle, 2018). By politicizing nascent legal mechanisms, such efforts undermine the separation of state and political institutions that is crucial to rule of law and democratic governance. This is compounded when reform efforts transform the formal institutions of rule of law but fail to transform the informal

institutions or practices that undermine their impartiality or effectiveness. Together, these effects serve to reinforce the type of politically dominated, though formally democratic, systems so prevalent after conflict.

Evaluation: The support for the hypothesis that rule of law is weak after civil war is consistent in the scholarship that examines it. Much of this scholarship focuses on case studies, a methodology that is appropriate to a subject involving manipulation and power dynamics that will inevitably vary across contexts.

Lessons for Practitioners: USAID would do well to be sensitive to these potential pitfalls in selecting partners and designing programs to help move countries out of conflict. There is a risk that USAID could inadvertently legitimize processes that consolidate power in the hands of a few or undermine the very justice mechanisms they are seeking to support.

Box 11. Crime and the Rule of Law in El Salvador

By Charles Davidson and Thomas E. Flores

State violence and human rights violations dramatically decreased after the 1992 conclusion of El Salvador's civil war but social violence remains starkly high. In 2015, El Salvador held the dubious title of most violent country not experiencing civil war (*The Guardian*, 2015). Continuing corruption in the judiciary and police undermine the public's faith in democratic legitimacy and the rule of law, leading some to question whether post-war Salvadoran society has truly reunified (Zamora in Arnson, 2003, p. 5). Certainly, the Chapultepec Peace Accords have prevented the outbreak of further civil war, yet continued crime and uneven access to justice represent a kind of "uncivil democracy" (Pérez, 2004) in which citizens continue to experience consistent insecurity (Call, 2003).

1D3. Transitional Justice Helps Democratization

Hypothesis: Transitional justice initiatives can support democratization.

Paradigmatic Citations: Olsen *et al.*, 2010

Summary: In the aftermath of conflict, citizens harmed directly or indirectly by the violence seek justice. This is particularly true when the leaders and perpetrators of violence are now vying to occupy political, bureaucratic, and military roles in the post-conflict phase. The legitimacy of the post-conflict state is hurt when such actors enjoy impunity. This has led many to advocate for some form of transitional justice to permit victims to seek redress and to hold the worst offenders accountable. The hypothesis is that such transitional justice initiatives allow victims to achieve some closure by empowering them to face those who perpetrated the violence, and therefore to allow society to move forward beyond its contested past.

The literature on transitional justice is distinct from that on power-sharing but is related in its attention to creating the conditions to build a stable foundation for statebuilding and democratization. Nalepa (2010) argues that Eastern European efforts at transitional justice were compromised by the infiltration of former officials into the transitional justice efforts. This reduced the exposure of these officials, which allowed them to cede power rather than clinging on for fear of punishment, but at the price of compromising the integrity of the transitional justice process. Other findings suggest that truth commissions alone are most harmful to democracy, but if combined with trials and amnesties, can have a positive effect (Olsen *et al.*, 2010). The logic is that opening up old wounds without seeking to provide

accountability or closure does nothing to promote democracy. Taylor and Dukalskis (2012) suggest that the public nature of the trials is critical to generating a positive outcome for democracy. Public accountability is critical to limit the cooptation of the process by those it is meant to hold accountable.

Evaluation: Credible empirical evidence from published studies is limited, relying heavily on single case studies and anecdotal evidence. The overall thrust of the findings is not bullish about the value of transitional justice initiatives for promoting democracy.

Lessons for Practitioners: USAID and its partners should only support transitional justice efforts if they are paired with a credible mechanism for holding a party accountable if found guilty.

1D4. Informal Institutions and Democratic Stability

Hypothesis: Informal institutions or practices outside of formal institutions may bolster the stability of post-conflict democracies.

Paradigmatic Citations: Manning, 2002

Summary: The formal institutional practices of democracy may not be sufficient to manage all of the crises that emerge in insecure post-conflict environments. Particularly where carefully negotiated peace agreements tie the form of democratic institutions to the fundamental conditions of peace, these institutions may have limited flexibility. In some cases, this creates new unforeseen political tensions or incentives that weak democratic institutions cannot manage, leading to renewed violence and/or system breakdown (Atlas & Licklider, 1999; Roberts, 2002). In some cases, such as Mozambique, informal processes of ongoing negotiation and conflict management help to prevent crises from spiraling out of control when the rules of the democratic game prove too rigid to satisfy the interests of all key actors (Manning, 2002). Informally institutionalized forms of elite accommodation and localized conflict management (Sandefur & Siddiqi, 2015; Fanthorpe, 2006) may serve as an important bridge out of the immediate conflict period, supplementing rather than displacing formal democratic institutions. These studies dovetail in important ways with literature that emphasizes localized peace processes and initiatives as distinct from, though not necessarily in opposition to, internationally supported efforts at state building and peacebuilding (Richmond, 2013; Leonardsson & Rudd, 2015). This literature also builds on a much larger body of scholarship from the field of conflict resolution emphasizing the importance of reconciliation initiatives (*e.g.*, Kaufman, 2006) and civil society support (Pouligny, 2005; Paffenholz & Spurk, 2006).

Evaluation: Perhaps due to the inherent tension between ideal-type democracies that are legitimated exclusively via their reliance on formal institution and the notion that informal institutions may bolster rather than undermine democratic stability, this hypothesis is under-studied. The few studies that have been conducted on the subject suggest that further research is warranted.

Lessons for Practitioners: Programming should be sensitive to what local institutions already exist and might serve to complement solutions to the challenges of democratization in a particular post-conflict context. It should also acknowledge that some form of ongoing, informal conflict management or mediation process is likely to be necessary at the elite level for years after a conflict.

1E. Government Responsiveness and Effectiveness

1E1. The Dangers of Post-Conflict Democratization

Hypothesis: Rapid post-conflict democratization raises the probability of renewed civil war.

Paradigmatic Citations: Paris, 2004; Flores and Nooruddin, 2009a

Summary: Scholars have long argued that post-conflict democratic transitions fail to produce either democracy or peace (Paris, 2004, p. 6). Their arguments often are informed by those of Hypothesis 2A3; both focus on the dangers of rapid democratization without certain preconditions in place (*e.g.*, previous experience of democratization, strong rule of law). Post-conflict countries likely suffer from several "pathologies" that make democratization particularly difficult, including a ruptured civil society, politicians who can take advantage of ethnic hatreds that grew during conflict, and weak rule of law (Paris, 2004). Elites will also struggle to form durable post-conflict commitments to peaceful competition when democracy is weak: they fear being shut out of power permanently after losing an initial election (Flores and Nooruddin, 2009a). These fears make post-conflict elections in new democracies especially dangerous, as well (Flores and Nooruddin, 2012). In post-conflict countries with weak institutions and little past experience of democracy, democratic competition more likely ends in conflict and democratic reversals.

Empirical tests of this hypothesis have generally supported it. One estimate suggests that only 55% of the countries that experienced civil war between 1945 and 2006 met even a minimal definition of democracy (Hartzell & Hoddie, 2015, p. 37). This transition to democracy and peace may be especially thorny in countries characterized not only by long-running war but also autocratic rule: there, the rapid transition to democracy can slow economic reconstruction and hasten conflict recurrence (Flores & Nooruddin, 2009a). The risk of a coup during this period is also especially high (Girod, 2015b). Barnett and Zürcher (2009) and Zürcher, *et al.* (2013) provide a fairly devastating critique of current efforts to build peace through democratization and statebuilding promoted by external actors. Their argument is that the compromises with local elites required to get peacekeepers and peacebuilders on the ground limit the effectiveness of any reforms that can be implemented.

This general pessimism about the post-conflict transition to peace and democracy has at times been challenged, however. One important lesson from the literature points away from the state itself and toward insurgent groups to understand the path to democracy and peace. Rebel groups differ in how they mobilize during civil war: those that rely on civilian support more likely institute new patterns of governance, transforming state-society relations (Weinstein, 2006, p. 12). Such groups more likely mobilize civilians into politics, setting the stage for more effective democratic governance when wars end (Huang, 2016, p. 9-10). Peace agreements that establish in detail how former insurgent groups will participate in elections have been shown to benefit peace, though perhaps at the cost of democracy in post-conflict countries (Matanock, 2017). And power-sharing agreements have been shown to reduce uncertainty in post-conflict transitions, which benefits both peace (Hartzell & Hoddie, 2005, 2007; Brancati & Snyder, 2013, p. 829) and democracy (Hartzell & Hoddie, 2015). Hypothesis 1A2 and our case studies focus on these dynamics more specifically.

Evaluation: The evidence generally supports the proposition that rapid post-conflict democratization presents daunting challenges and risks both a return to conflict and democratic reversals. New scholarship, however, shows that meaningful change can occur in particular circumstances—especially when rebel groups have transformed people's relationship to the state.

Lessons for Practitioners: USAID and its partners should dedicate significant aid with a long time-horizon for new post-conflict democracies in the expectation that these regimes will be at high risk of democratic reversal and new conflict for an extended period. USAID and its partners can work to support electoral and party systems that encourage more inclusive coalitions, particularly in societies divided along identity lines. (Reilly, 2006). Interveners should be aware that trade-offs exist between normatively desirable goals, which may require sequencing of programming goals. Finally, in evaluating these trade-offs, interveners should also closely consider the local contours of the post-conflict environment. Scholars have long recognized that violence during civil war may vary radically across towns and villages, driven by purely local concerns (Kalyvas, 2006; Balcells, 2017).

1E2. Rushed and Founding Elections can Destabilize

Hypothesis: Rushed and founding elections can be destabilizing and lead to conflict initiation and recidivism.

Paradigmatic Citations: Flores and Nooruddin, 2012; Cederman *et al.*, 2013

Summary: The stakes of elections in some contexts can be so high that they inhibit successful democratic consolidation. A good example of this is recent research on the practice of holding rushed elections in post-conflict societies. In the immediate aftermath of a violent civil conflict, there is often a vacuum of legitimate governance authority, which hurts the reconstruction efforts. A norm has evolved to hold elections to select and legitimate the post-conflict government as soon after the fighting has stopped as possible. Increasingly the timetable for such elections, as well as rules incorporating the former armed actors in the conflict, are included in the peace agreements that are negotiated to end the fighting (Matanock, 2017). While the hopes for these elections is high, among citizens and external audiences alike, rushed elections in post-conflict countries increase the risk of civil war recidivism significantly (Flores and Nooruddin, 2009a, 2012; Brancati and Snyder, 2013), especially when held in countries with limited prior experience with democracy.

A similar tension is documented in the context of founding elections. Founding elections are the first or second elections after a country adopts (or resumes) the practice of holding elections to choose its leaders. Some scholars had argued that such founding elections have particular symbolic importance and therefore greater democratizing potential (*e.g.*, Lindberg, 2006), but this optimism has waned. More recent scholarship based on a larger number of countries and with more rigorous methods of analysis suggests that any positive bump of founding elections dissipates quickly (Flores and Nooruddin, 2016). More troubling even, first and second elections have been linked more generally to the outbreak of ethnic and non-ethnic civil wars (Cederman *et al.*, 2013). One explanation for this is that elections require that all parties accept and respect the norm of turn-taking: today's loser needs to believe she has a plausible chance of victory in a future election. If she perceives – or fears – that the victor will so stack the deck as to make future victory impossible, then she has no reason to accept the results of today's election, and a return to arms might be a rational move to increase bargaining leverage (see Durant and Weintraub, 2014).

Evaluation: Robust evidence is provided in support of these hypotheses, generated both by careful case studies of paradigmatic cases (*e.g.*, Lyons, 2016; Manning, 2002; Reilly, 2006) and by statistical analysis of cross-national time-series datasets.

Lessons for Practitioners: The arguments surveyed above have important implications for the efforts of democracy promoters such as USAID and its partners. The key takeaway is that successful democracy

promotion could in fact lead to more violence in the short run as democratic reforms increase uncertainty about the future political equilibrium.

1E3. Elections in Weak States

Hypothesis: Elections held prior to adequate statebuilding hurt future democracy.

Paradigmatic Citations: Huntington, 1968; Flores and Nooruddin, 2016

Summary: Modern policymakers and scholars accept the idea that democracies built in weak under-resourced states are more likely to fail (Boutros-Ghali, 1992; Besley & Persson, 2010; Flores & Nooruddin, 2016). Democracies elect leaders to run the state on behalf of citizens, and citizens choose between competing visions of the best way in which this should be done at periodic elections. Weak states inhibit democracy in two ways. First, they limit the ability of politicians to cater to the needs of citizens, which in turn alters the dimensions on which elections are contested. Second, state weakness undermines the constraints on use of executive authority, which allows for abuses that can threaten democracy.

The clearest evidence of the first mechanism comes from political economy scholars examining the fiscal consequences of globalization. Bastiaens and Rudra (2018) paint a depressing picture of the evisceration of developing country tax revenues caused by globalization as trade taxes, traditionally the mainstay of the exchequer, are reduced to promote free trade. The result is an emaciated state, denied the fiscal space required to build the roads, rails, seaports, and airports, or schools and hospitals, demanded by its citizens. Put bluntly, globalization has robbed leaders of the resources required to build the states they lead. The consequence for democracy is problematic: when leaders lack the resources to invest in basic infrastructure and to provide public goods and services, they must win elections using other strategies. Increasingly they resort to identity appeals to cultivate their base, and, when these prove insufficient, to electoral malpractice, opposition harassment, and other illiberal tactics (Flores & Nooruddin, 2016; Simpser, 2013). The result is that elections in the absence of adequate prior statebuilding hurt democracy, rather than consolidate it.

The second mechanism builds on the recognition that democracies rely on credible constraints against arbitrary executive power. Weak states do not provide institutional checks on executives, which hurts democracy. Investing in state capacity is therefore important for future democratization. Fortin-Rittberger shows that post-Soviet states that possessed stronger state capacity historically made more successful democratic transitions after the fall of communism (Fortin, 2012). Widner (2001) describes the painstaking work required to build the rule of law in Tanzania and the critical role of elites like former Chief Justice of Tanzania, Francis Nyalali in committing their life's work to protecting the principle of an independent judiciary. Strong rule of law helps fight the corruption that is endemic to post-conflict and fledgling democracies and that saps state capacity (Themnér & Utas, 2016). Samuels (2006) shows that careful constitutional design is critical to bolstering governance and inclusiveness of institutions.

Evaluation: Evidence for the claim that weak states make elections less likely to yield democratic improvement is quite robust, based both on detailed historical analyses of particular cases and on cross-national time-series statistical analysis. We have more limited evidence for claims about what sort of solutions might work to promote statebuilding and democratization simultaneously (see Jarstad & Sisk, 2008).

Lessons for Practitioners: Extreme caution is required when encouraging weak states to hold elections prior to accumulating adequate state capacity as these more often than not hurt democratic practice.

1E4. Development and Democracy in Reverse

Hypothesis: Civil war unleashes severe economic repercussions that endanger future democratization.

Paradigmatic Citations: Collier *et al.*, 2003

Summary: It is commonplace in writing on civil conflict to state that its socioeconomic consequences are dire. Scholars regularly refer to conflict as "development in reverse" that can lead to a "conflict trap," a vicious cycle in which economic decline caused by conflict makes future conflict more likely (Collier *et al.*, 2003; Kim & Conceição, 2010).

This hypothesis actually consists of two steps, however. The first step is to demonstrate the link between conflict and poor development outcomes. We can group this literature into three broad categories. First, economists have cataloged the broad economic effects of conflict, judging them to be severe. Scholars have found important effects of patterns of consumption (Hess, 2003) and investment (Imai & Weinstein, 2000). The effects of conflict likely transcend borders as well (Murdoch & Sandler, 2002, 2004), though this effect may be confined to countries directly contiguous with countries in conflict (De Groot, 2010). The result is slower growth in countries suffering from civil war (Collier, 1999). These costs are large, though the costs from interpersonal violence (*e.g.*, homicides, assaults) may be much larger (Hoeffler, 2017, p. 430). The 2011 *World Development Report* concluded that violence, broadly conceived, is the single most important barrier to meeting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), for example (World Bank, 2011, p. 62). A burgeoning literature on the individual-level consequences of civil conflict also shows how conflict dynamics affect the socioeconomic lives of individuals and households. These scholars suggest that displacement caused large and permanent welfare losses in Colombia (Ibáñez & Vélez, 2008) and that the loss of a house and/or land sent formerly relatively well-off Rwandans into poverty (*e.g.* Justino & Verwimp, 2008).

Scholars have also identified major health and educational outcomes of conflict. As with the economics literature, these effects have been shown at both the macro and micro levels. A recent assessment argues that conflict hurts health outcomes directly and indirectly and in both the short and long-runs through direct casualties, the destruction of health infrastructure, and forced migration, with the long-run costs being quite severe (Ghobarah, Huth, & Russett, 2004; Iqbal, 2010). Military spending skyrockets both during and after civil conflict, which may crowd out social spending on health and education (Collier *et al.*, 2003, p. 86). Sexual violence during conflict has particularly insidious consequences, particularly for victims' (especially women's) social inclusion and mental health (Josse, 2010). Sexual violence is also one driver of the higher rates of HIV/AIDS (among other infectious diseases) in countries suffering from conflict (Iqbal & Zorn, 2010), especially in countries with pre-existing patterns of vulnerability for women (Seckinelgin, Bigirumwami, & Morris, 2011). Micro-level studies show that social effects of conflict were felt outside direct conflict zones in Sri Lanka (Johnson, 2017); conflict stopped the schooling of vulnerable populations in Guatemala (Chamarbagwala & Morán, 2011); and conflict particularly affected boys' education in Timor-Leste (Justino, Leone, & Salardi, 2014).

The second step is to show that specific development effects of civil war are connected to poor democratic outcomes. Three literatures help to answer this question. First, scholars have begun to analyze the social and attitudinal effects of conflict, which have been reviewed in Hypotheses 1A3 and 1A4. Some of these effects may support or weaken support for democracy, as we have seen. Second, a small literature has begun to analyze conflict's longer-term effect on democratic practice, though this

relationship has not been fully theorized. Elections held during conflict more likely feature violence (Hafner-Burton, Hyde, & Jablonski, 2014, p. 168) and some tentative evidence suggests that even after conflicts end, democratic change is fragile, especially when economic recovery is significantly delayed (Flores & Nooruddin, 2009a, 2016). Certain pathologies of elections, such as election boycotts, may become more likely for years after a conflict ends (Flores & Nooruddin, 2018). Finally, a long literature in political science and economics has connected development outcomes to prospects for democratization, claiming that low income per capita (Przeworski *et al.*, 2000) and natural resource dependence (Ross, 2012) inhibit democratization. Many of these same factors may worsen during civil conflict.

Evaluation: The logic of this hypothesis is intuitive, but the empirical evidence is underwhelming. In most cases, conditions such as poverty and inequality were already barriers to democracy and peace before conflict broke out. Civil conflict may hurt democratic practice for reasons unrelated to its economic repercussions, moreover. The scholarly literature has done much to demonstrate the effects of conflict on economic and human development, but largely has not connected these effects directly to democratic difficulties, though circumstantial evidence suggests that democratic practice suffers in post-conflict countries.

Lessons for Practitioners: Practitioners should work to interrupt the hypothesized cycle of socioeconomic decline and weak democratization after conflict. This is a tall order, however. One recent review of foreign aid and conflict has questioned whether it helps prevent recurrence in post-conflict countries (Findley, 2018, p. 369-371). Other hypotheses suggest that democracy aid, monitoring of peace and power-sharing agreements, and careful attention to localized patterns would behoove interveners. Another possibility is to adopt new, sophisticated micro-level survey techniques to identify patterns of displacement, poverty, health risks, *etc.* New research suggests the importance of asking civilians to define security and development for themselves and then test for improvements in those locally defined metrics (Firchow, 2018). Furthermore, new micro-level evidence on particular interventions can help test programs as well (Fearon, Humphreys, & Weinstein, 2009; Annan, Blattman, & Mazurana, 2011). Investing in these capacities, likely through partners, can expand USAID's ability to identify the specific development challenges in a particular setting, challenges that likely vary widely from context to context.

Box 12. Postwar Development in El Salvador

By Charles Davidson and Thomas E. Flores

While sweeping reforms took place in El Salvador following the civil war, deep development problems persist. Scholars have noted that political solutions have been far more successfully implemented than economic reforms to alleviate inequality and poverty (Zamora, 2003, p. 6). Despite human development advances, such as improvements in immunization rates and decreases in inequality, El Salvador faces major barriers to continued economic growth. In particular, continued pervasive insecurity limits development in El Salvador. Crime drives the continued migration of the country's educated workforce, which has handicapped the economy, perhaps most notably in education, where quality suffers. The result is an economy heavily dependent on the $2 billion a year that is sent into the country from Salvadorans living abroad (who, interestingly, are prohibited from voting in the country's elections) (Castaneda, 2003, p. 2). Finally, development is hindered by the recurrence of natural disasters, as exemplified by two major earthquakes that devastated the country in 2001.

1E5. Conflict and Trust in Institutions

Hypothesis: Conflict exposure reduces trust in formal institutions.

Paradigmatic Citations: Jung, 2012

Summary: [Hypotheses 1A3](#) and [1A4](#) generated significant empirical support that individuals who experience violence increase their trust in and reliance on their communities, but that this is limited to members of their own identity or communal groups and excludes out-groups. This trust also does not extend to formal institutions of government. Exposure to conflict violence can lead individuals to participate civically at the same time that they favor engagement with known individuals and kin networks over formal market institutions, for example (Cassar *et al.*, 2013). This appears to be part of a broader pattern of victimization and trust, wherein even crime victimization has been found to increase dissatisfaction with democracy (Bateson, 2012). Trust in institutions can also be affected by the particular form that the post-conflict political settlement takes. For example, some limited survey-based evidence from Bosnia and Herzegovina has suggested that power-sharing agreements can reduce public confidence in newly created political institutions (Jung, 2012). This compounds arguments by some scholars that power-sharing institutions are at a high risk for becoming rigid and unresponsive to political and demographic changes over time (Horowitz, 2014; McCulloch, 2017).

Evaluation: The evidence for this hypothesis is extremely limited, and so high confidence should not be placed in it. However, the basic hypothesis remains plausible and its implications for policy are serious. With little scholarship to refute or confirm the hypothesis, this remains an area that requires further research.

Lessons for Practitioners: If conflict exposure reduces trust in the formal institutions of democracy, this may undermine the current model of institution-building as a crucial first step in peacebuilding. Supporting processes of institutionalization would require serious effort to legitimize those institutions in the eyes of the broader public early on.

Box 13. Public Attitudes Toward Democracy in Post-War El Salvador

By Charles Davidson and Thomas E. Flores

The Salvadoran Civil War is often cited as evidence that continuing human insecurity after civil war limits democratic confidence (Wilkerson, 2008, p. 32; Flores & Nooruddin, 2016, p. 165). Broad rural support for the FMLN *during* the war continued *after* the war: Salvadorans who encountered the FMLN during the war, lived in the areas occupied by the group, or suffered more violence during the war tended to vote for the FMLN in the first post-conflict election in 1994 (Allison, 2010, p. 121-22). Still, political participation declined after the peace process, even though political grievances persisted (Wood, 2003, p. 16). An analysis of data from the Latinobarómetro survey project shows that satisfaction from democracy has only surpassed 50% once since surveys began in 1995, coinciding with the FMLN presidential win in 2009. Still, Salvadorans' faith in democracy collapsed again with a surge in violence after the mid-2000s.

Figure 9. Satisfaction with Democracy in El Salvador, 1995 – 2010

% satisfied with democracy — % with sufficient income
% not experiencing crime

Source: Latinobarometro. Note: Peace agreement in 1992; 1st election in 1994. No survey conducted in 1999.
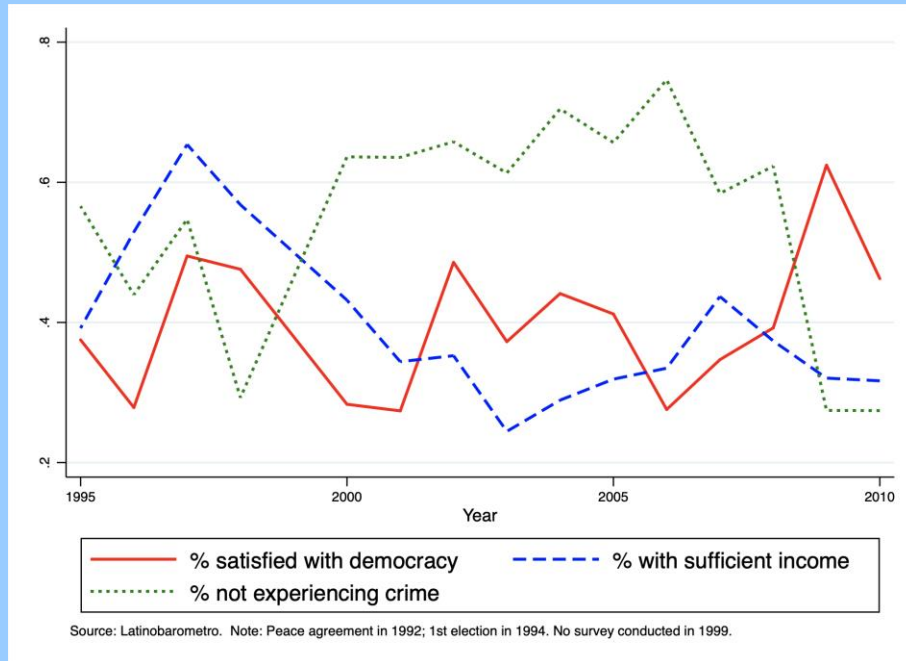
1E6. Regional Organizations Support Democratization

Hypothesis: Regional organizations can support democratization after conflict.

Paradigmatic Citations: Donno, 2013

Summary: A growing literature asks how regional organizations, international organizations, and other outside influences such as governments and aid agencies may work to promote democracy and mediate conflict within a particular country. The general thrust of this research is that regional organizations have an important role to play to subsidize learning best practices and investments in state capacity necessary for holding successful elections. Further regional organizations seek to aid post-conflict societies via their interventions to stabilize the peace.

Kalyvitis and Vlachaki (2010), Savun and Tirone (2011), and Lührmann *et al.* (2017) argue that democratic aid can support democratization and reduce conflict in democratizing states; Wright (2009) argues similarly for foreign aid in general. Haggard and Kaufman (2016) emphasize the importance of outside pressure from external governments on domestic elites to change and democratize. This is consistent with research by Hyde (2007, 2011) and Donno (2010, 2013) who discuss the role played by election monitors and regional organizations for enforcing democratic norms against would-be autocrats who seek to cheat and bend the rules (though Simpser and Donno (2012) suggest that such monitoring can backfire and have the unintended consequence of harming governance and administrative capacity in the state).

Mansfield and Pevehouse's (2008) argument suggests that standards-based and economic international organizations should be more attractive to democratizing states than political organizations, which

indicates the types of leverage that should be most successful in inspiring authentic democratic practice among members. Poast and Urpelainen (2018) similarly argue that regional organizations provide the technical support required for states to democratize. Also, regional organizations help enforce democratic standards by suspending member states that backslide politically, *e.g.* through democracy reversals, coups, or human rights violations (von Borzyskowski and Vabulas, 2019).

These arguments are consistent with the logic of Torfason and Ingram (2010) who argue that international organizations enable democratic diffusion by facilitating communication between members, and encouraging a sense that democracy is the only legitimate form of government (see also Obydenkova, 2007). This creates a norm expectation that other member states seek to emulate.

Evaluation: Evidence for the claim that regional organizations can support democratization is based on cross-national time-series statistical analysis, though the coverage of the data sets used can be limited by geography and time.

Lessons for Practitioners: USAID and its partners should focus on helping states build state capacity by advising them on technical details of policy implementation.

Question 2. Conflict Risks in Democratizing Countries

Question 1 asked how the experience of conflict alters prospects for democracy and the quality of democratic practice. Now we reverse the causal arrow to provide an assessment of our knowledge about how democracy and the process of democratization affects the risk of violence in societies. We organize 14 distinct hypotheses about this relationship by the type of violence being investigated, with a focus on the three most common forms. Political violence ranges from large-scale organized challenges to the legitimacy of the state and its borders, which we label "civil conflict"; to more episodic violence centered on the holding of elections; to the use of violence by extremist elements in society seeking to divert political resources. The lines between these are admittedly blurry: in many cases, insurgent groups can be branded extremist and can commit election violence. Violence during elections, meanwhile, could be interpreted as extremist violence, insurgent attacks, or election violence. If the Taliban attacks a polling station during an election in Afghanistan, is that part of its decade-plus-long armed conflict or is it an election violence event? Indeed, the study of election violence illustrates this challenge well: election violence is a broad phenomenon that can include very different acts, including attacks by insurgent groups, intimidation by incumbents, riots by voters. The breadth of behaviors included in the term "electoral violence" thus hinders more fine-grained predictions of when election violence will occur. Moreover, scholars have not always linked violence in one stage to violence in another, making an analysis of patterns or sequences of electoral violence rarer than would be desirable (Hafner-Burton *et al.*, 2018). Nor have authors done enough to conceptualize and empirically test how legacies of other forms of violence (*e.g.*, civil war, crime, *etc.*) may raise the probability of electoral violence.

Resolving such debates is beyond the scope of this report, but fortunately resolution is not a prerequisite for this exercise. Contributors to the scholarly literature surveyed below make clear the type of violence that forms the dependent variable for their analyses, and we follow their lead, while indicating to our readers where ideas developed to explain one type of violence might usefully help us understand another.

Question 2 leverages the divergent experiences of Tunisia and Libya following the Arab Spring to illustrate these dynamics in action. We introduce these cases below.

Box 14. Divergent Outcomes of the Arab Spring in Tunisia and Libya

By Katherine Nazemi and Jennifer Raymond Dresden

On December 17, 2010, in the Tunisian town of Sidi Bouzid, 26-year-old fruit vendor Mohammed Bouazizi self-immolated in front of a local municipal office in protest of his treatment at the hands of police. This event sparked protests across the Middle East and North Africa in what came to be known as the Arab Spring. While Tunisia's protests led to the ouster of its long-ruling president and a tentatively successful transition to democracy, other countries that experienced uprisings were less fortunate in the results. Among the most violent failed transitions of the Arab Spring was Libya's. The comparison of Tunisia and Libya offers a useful illustration for many of the hypotheses presented by Question 2 of this report.

Tunisia

On the eve of the 2011 revolution, Tunisia was characterized by a large middle class, a strong educational system, and an organized labor movement (Anderson, 2011). Yet it was also a dominant-party autocracy, where President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali and his Democratic Constitutional Rally (RCD) had held power since 1987. Corruption within Ben Ali's family was high, and political freedoms were restricted with a carefully censored media and tightly controlled opposition parties. Tunisia also faced high unemployment, especially among youth, and poor living conditions. All these factors—unemployment, corruption, lack of political freedoms, as well as food inflation and poor living standards—contributed to the spread of protests in 2011.

Within ten days of the initial protests, demonstrations spread, and within a month Ben Ali had fled the country. After an initial period of uncertainty, a High Commission was formed from the merger of several political groups as a transitional authority. The High Commission took steps toward free elections, including establishing an electoral law based on proportional representation, requiring that party lists run equal numbers of male and female candidates, and forbidding certain former ruling party members from running.

These steps laid the groundwork for increased political activity, and the following months saw 116 new political parties register ahead of October elections. Ennahda, an Islamist party that was outlawed under the old regime, won 41 percent of seats and formed a governing coalition with two secular leftist parties (National Democratic Institute, 2011). Between 2012 and 2013, however, the assembly struggled with political controversies, and popular protests proliferated until a political compromise replaced the Ennahda government with one of technocrats and independents (Gall, 2013).

Over the next two years, the Constituent Assembly drafted a new constitution, which was ratified in January 2014. The adoption of the constitution allowed the country to move forward with presidential and parliamentary elections in late 2014. Nidaa Tounes, a secular leftist party, won both the presidency and a plurality of seats in the legislature. The presidential run-off election saw 60 percent voter turnout (International Foundation for Electoral Systems).

Tunisia's economic problems have not dissipated, and dissatisfaction with the country's economic situation is still widespread. Popular protests have broken out continuously since 2011, often in response to high unemployment rates and food prices. Moreover, Tunisia continues to face challenges with violent extremism. It has seen terrorist attacks within its own borders and has had the largest per

capita rate of foreign fighters travelling to Syria and Iraq to join the self-proclaimed Islamic State (Dodwell *et al.*, 2016, p. 7). Upcoming parliamentary and presidential elections will thus occur against a backdrop of ongoing economic and security challenges.

Libya
The 2011 Arab Spring revolution in Libya overturned the fragile order that Muammar al-Qaddafi had constructed in the country over 42 years of authoritarian rule. While many observers and practitioners saw the fall of Qaddafi as an opening for transition to a more democratic political system, it was also an opening for conflict as various sub-state powers competed openly and violently for access to the institutions and resources of the fledgling state. Since Qaddafi's fall, the country has seen four different formal governing bodies, none of which has been able to consolidate authority or provide security across the country, and varying levels of violent conflict between local militias.

Over four decades of rule, Qaddafi's regime weakened or systematically dismantled many of Libya's state institutions and simultaneously built up centralized control over its oil resources. Qaddafi and his close associates controlled the country via the army, invasive security and intelligence apparatuses, and Revolutionary Committees, each designed to undercut oppositional activity (Vandewalle, 2012). This left Libyans with weak rule of law, multiple competing factions mitigated by an elaborate patronage system and coercive apparatus, and few institutions outside those necessary to capitalize on the country's rich oil resources.

In February 2011, amid ongoing turmoil in Egypt and Tunisia, protests broke out in the Libyan city of Benghazi. Protests quickly spread to other cities, with deadly clashes between demonstrators and security forces. Subsequent NATO military intervention crippled Qaddafi's forces and army units, and militias defected across the country. Qaddafi loyalists were driven from Tripoli and Benghazi, and the National Transitional Council (NTC)—a collection of opposition elements recognized by the international community—took the capital in August 2011.

The NTC provided for the election of a General National Congress (GNC) to serve as a legislature and form a new government, and a Constitutional Drafting Authority to draft a permanent constitution (Sanchez & Cooper, 2011; Mezran, 2014). The GNC elections—Libya's first parliamentary elections—were held in July 2012, and the Muslim Brotherhood's Justice and Construction Party came to dominate the body by securing the support of independent members (Glenn, 2017). Before long, the GNC found itself challenged as eastern militias launched military campaigns in 2014, storming the parliament building in Tripoli and fighting against Islamist militias in Benghazi (Tawil, 2014). Against this backdrop of violence, two competing governments both laid claim to national authority. The GNC retained support of western militias, while eastern factions backed the newly formed House of Representatives (HoR). These two rival camps have engaged in a prolonged conflict that continues to the present. Although Libya's oil revenues plummeted, the factions were able to secure support from competing foreign sponsors (Coker, 2016).

Amid this conflict, the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) attempted to broker a peace agreement between the HoR and the GNC. In December 2015, representatives from the two parliaments signed the Libya Political Agreement (LPA), designed to unify the factions and provide a path to a new elected government (Yaakoubi, 2015; Associated Press, 2015). Implementation of the LPA did not get far, but international actors have pressed for Libyans to hold presidential and parliamentary elections (Zaptia, 2018). At the same time, Libya has experienced multiple terror

attacks, including ones on the High National Election Commission headquarters on May 2, 2018, and one on the National Oil Corporation headquarters on September 10, 2018 (Elumami, 2018; Wintour, 2018). Without progress on important electoral prerequisites, and in a highly precarious security environment, Libya's next elections could trigger further violence in the country's ongoing internal conflict.

2A. Civil Conflict

2A1. The "Violent Middle" and "Peaceful Ends"

Hypothesis: Consolidated regimes (both democracies and autocracies) are less likely to experience civil war than intermediate regimes.

Paradigmatic Citations: Hegre *et al.*, 2001; Jones & Lupu, 2018

Summary: This hypothesis is the first of several that investigate the impact of political regimes on the incidence of civil war, following on work in international relations showing that democratic countries tend not to fight interstate wars against each other.[11] Later, we will also turn to the question of whether *changes* in regimes raise the probability of civil war. In an influential paper, Hegre, et al (2001) joined previous scholars (*e.g.*, Muller and Weede, 1990) in proposing an "inverted-U" hypothesis, which stated that the risk of civil war is lowest in consolidated democracies and consolidated autocracies and highest in "intermediate" or "mixed" regimes, which combine elements of democratic and dictatorial rule. In other words, in a uni-dimensional scale of democracy, the ends are peaceful, while the middle is violent.

Scholars point not to the virtues of either democracies or autocracies, but the internal institutional inconsistency of intermediate regimes as an explanation of both the "peaceful ends" and "violent middle" (Hegre *et al.*, 2001; Gates *et al.*, 2006; Pierskalla, 2010). In regimes in which all incumbents, political parties, and opposition forces know the rules of the game and understand them as being settled, they possess shared interests in maintaining those rules. The logic may work differently in autocracies versus democracies, however. In autocracies, all actors understand that the dictator will do anything to retain power, which inhibits insurgency. In democracies, diffuse power makes it easier for leaders to step down because they understand they may recapture power in the future. In both cases, however, institutions are self-reinforcing, which limits the probability of civil war. In mixed regimes, however, actors are uncertain about the rules, which makes conflict more likely.

The evidence on the "inverted-U" hypothesis stretches back over 20 years and is decidedly mixed. One recent study notes that 111 scholarly articles tested the proposition between 1995 and 2016, with no clear conclusion (Jones & Lupu, 2018, p. 652). Several influential studies show little difference in the probability of civil war for fully democratic and fully autocratic regimes (generally defined as regimes with either very high or very low scores on a uni-dimensional measure of democracy), with both experiencing war less often than intermediate regimes (Hegre *et al.*, 2001, p. 42; Fearon and Laitin, 2003, p. 84). Others argue, however, that the relationship is an artifact of how the popular Polity IV dataset codes intermediate regimes: by capturing conflict, it distorts the relationship between regime type and civil war (Vreeland, 2008). Studies using a corrected measure of democracy have conflicting

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[11] This voluminous literature falls outside this review's focus, but for an excellent introduction to conceptions of the democratic peace, see Oneal and Russett (2000).

results (Vreeland, 2008; Jones and Lupu, 2018). Recent work shows that the conflicting evidence likely is due to how regime type and conflict are measured: for example, the "inverted-U" relationship may be true of more minor civil conflicts, but not for civil war.[12]

Evaluation: As noted above, this work has been the subject of sustained scholarly attention for nearly two decades, but both the logic and evidence underlying the hypothesis have been subjected to challenges. Theoretically, authors do not differentiate between the internal cohesion of a regime and its capacity. Nor do they ask why intermediate regimes cannot themselves consolidate. Empirically, the evidence remains indecisive, and scholars have not devoted sufficient attention to asking whether particular kind of "intermediate" regimes are more prone to conflict.

Lessons for Practitioners: This hypothesis offers less direct guidance to practitioners than others, since the content of political regimes fall outside USAID and its partners' control. It does suggest, however, that practitioners should pay special attention to regimes that combine aspects of both democracy and autocracy and to precisely how those institutions create conflict potential.

2A2. Political Institutions Shape Probability of Civil Conflict

Hypothesis: Systems that fragment power are at a lower risk of civil conflict.

Paradigmatic Citations: Joshi, 2013; Mattes and Savun, 2009

Summary: A key dimension on which political systems vary is the extent to which their rules coordinate or fragment political power among competing factions. An emerging view is that, across a variety of institutional forms, systems that avoid a concentration of power in a single political faction generate more stable and peaceful outcomes. Three such institutional choices that have received sustained scholarly attention are parliamentarism, proportional representation electoral rules, and power-sharing.

Parliamentary political systems and proportional representation electoral systems have robust, statistically significant effects on deterring recurrence, and power-sharing, especially political and security power-sharing, has been shown to be effective too (Joshi, 2013; Call, 2012; Mattes & Savun, 2009). Moreover, Call's research indicates that civil war recurrence is especially likely as a response to elite exclusionary behavior, whether through repression of political rivals and opponents or violation of a previous power-sharing agreement. There is also evidence that horizontal social inequality (where social/educational opportunities are tied to ethnic or religious identities and there are strong ethnic affinities) tends to lead to conflict, which suggests that power-sharing or inclusive institutions could deter conflict by helping advance disadvantaged ethnic groups through reform (Ostby, 2008). This claim may also be supported by research into "dual sovereignty" as a major cause of civil war: when two or more groups have the capability and popular support to represent a legitimate second authority in a country (Quinn, Mason, & Gurses, 2007). Nevertheless, in the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina, power-

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[12] Scholars also have argued that repression of dissent is less likely in democracies: in other words, there is a "domestic democratic peace." In this telling, consolidated democracy not only reduces the probability of civil war but also guards against political repression, unlike autocracy. Other work shows that consolidated regimes, both democratic and autocratic, are more stable than intermediate regimes, but consolidated democratic regimes are the most stable of all (Gates *et al.*, 2006). Again, the jury remains out on this particular version of the hypothesis: some research has shown a lower rate of repression in democracies (Jones and Lupu, 2018, p. 665), though scholars have also shown that democracy's pacifying effect is felt more readily on certain human rights violations than others (Davenport, 2007; Hill and Jones, 2014).

sharing has been argued to be the source of entrenched wartime cleavages and weakened faith in institutions and democracy (Jung, 2012).

The particular nature of ethnic cleavages, for example, may be more or less likely to give rise to civil war. Linguistic cleavages appear to be more conflict-prone than religious cleavages, contrary to conventional wisdom (Bormann *et al.*, 2017). Similarly, the socioeconomic structure within which a political system is embedded matters. Where groups are segmented and living in effective social and economic isolation, conflict risk is higher than when they coexist within a single, albeit hierarchical and repressive, system (Vogt, 2018). This builds on other work that has suggested that significant civil society ties that cut across identity lines may help to mitigate or prevent political violence (Varshney, 2002, p. 10). Other scholars have noted that particular institutional configurations may enable or exacerbate systems of ethnic politics. Presidentialism in particular is cited as raising the stakes of elections in ways that parliamentary systems need not experience (Fall, 2008).

Power-sharing is a more context-specific version of the above dynamics in that it is an explicit arrangement to divide power among the different factions within society. An earlier assessment found that, while power-sharing supported peace in the short-term, it hurt democratization in the long term (Roeder & Rothchild, 2005), but a more recent analysis concludes more optimistically that some kinds of power-sharing—specifically inclusive and constraining power-sharing—contribute to peace and democratization (Graham *et al.*, 2017).

Evaluation: The strength and quality of the evidence in favor of this hypothesis is high across different studies of various institutional choices. Of particular importance is the research on foundational constitutional choices that can inform policy choices.

Lessons for Practitioners: USAID and partners advising post-conflict and young democracies that are contemplating far-reaching constitutional choices should advocate on behalf of parliamentary systems with proportional representation electoral rules that reduce the risk of concentration of power in a single political actor.

2A3. Rapid Democratization

Hypothesis: Rapid democratization raises the risk of civil war in countries lacking institutional preconditions.

Paradigmatic Citations: Huntington, 1968; Mansfield and Snyder, 2005

Summary: This is the third in a line of hypotheses regarding the influence of regimes on the probability of civil war. Hypotheses 2A1 and 2A2 were *static:* certain regimes are more prone to war. This hypothesis, in contrast, is *dynamic:* in short, it suggests that rapid moves toward democratization raise the risk of civil war when countries lack preconditions such as strong rule of law. Much of the logic of this hypothesis developed in studies of interstate conflict but has transferred to the study of civil conflict. This logic notes that political transitions, even if in normatively desirable directions, are periods of immense uncertainty. In transition periods, old established rules of the political game are off, and actors vie for power knowing that the victor has the chance to dictate the new rules in ways that could consolidate her power. For the would-be opposition, the stakes in the transition period are therefore extremely high: lose the transition and remain a loser for the foreseeable future.

This scholarship accepts the idea that consolidated democracy likely reduces the probability of conflict by convincing elites that peaceful competition for power is in their best interests (as in Hypothesis 2A1). It also accepts that certain countries that democratize rapidly will avoid civil war if they possess

important preconditions for stable democratic rule. These preconditions include an impartial legal system, rule of law, and strong national identity (Mansfield and Snyder, 2007, p. 7). When these conditions are met—or at least have begun to take root—*before* democratization, it more likely leads to stable democratic rule and peaceful politics. Examples include Germany and Japan after World War II, South Africa after apartheid, and the Czech Republic.

When pre-conditions are lacking, however, rapid democratization in "institutional wastelands" makes civil war more likely *and* endangers future attempts at democratization, if they occur (Mansfield and Snyder, 2007, p. 7). This argument echoes foundational political treatises about the impact of weak institutions on political instability (Huntington, 1968). These dynamics are compounded by the inchoate nature of social bonds and national ties during transition periods. Ascriptive identities based in religion, ethnicity, or region harden, as citizens cling to those identities that seem most stable at a time when everything else is unsure. Political elites also rely on nationalistic and/or ethnic appeals that build mass support for violent conflict at precisely these times as a means of keeping power (Snyder, 2000; Mansfield & Snyder, 2002, 2005). These dynamics can place domestic minority groups at risk. Such conflict cements ethnic polarization, endangering further attempts at democratization (Mansfield and Snyder, 2007, p. 7). Examples of these dynamics include Afghanistan and Iraq.

Evaluation: Statistical analyses of patterns of conflict generally support this hypothesis (Mansfield and Snyder, 2005; Cederman, Hug, & Krebs, 2010, p. 384). One study also shows that rapid "autocratization" leads to a higher risk of civil conflict, but that the period of danger is far shorter than for democratization (Cederman, Hug, & Krebs, 2010). Nor are attempts by outside interveners likely to surmount these obstacles (Downes and Monten, 2013). Another notable study shows that new democracies with a history of military rule have a higher baseline risk of conflict than other new democracies (Cook & Savun, 2016, p. 751).

Lessons for Practitioners: USAID and its partners should temper expectations of rapid moves toward democratization in contexts in which supporting institutions remain weak. Aid during democratic transitions has been found to reduce the risk of civil conflict during democratic transitions, in part by bolstering democracy's credibility in the eyes of elites and the broader public (Savun & Tirone, 2011, p. 236; Lührmann *et al.*, 2017).

Box 15. Rapid Democratization in Libya

By Katherine Nazemi and Jennifer Raymond Dresden

While the transitions in both Tunisia and Libya were swift, the first round of post-Qaddafi elections in Libya took place in 2012 in the context of weak or non-existent state institutions, a fragmented security apparatus, and in the presence of independent armed militias that were willing and able to use force to influence outcomes (Lacher & Cole, 2014). Furthermore, Libya's oil resources were a focal point for armed competition. In the absence of strong state institutions, the governing body formed by the 2012 elections served as a new venue for existing factional divisions (Wehrey, 2016) and produced zero-sum mentalities as winners took steps to lock out their opponents. The confluence of these factors contributed to the civil war sparked by the subsequent 2014 elections (Wehrey & Lacher, 2014).

2A4. Elections as Seeds of Civil War

Hypothesis: Elections heighten the risk of an outbreak of civil conflict, especially in contexts where ethnic identity is politically relevant or civil conflict ended recently.

Paradigmatic Citations: Cederman *et al.*, 2013; Flores and Nooruddin, 2012

Summary: This hypothesis emerges from two broad scholarly literatures. First, scholars have hypothesized that democratization may raise the risk of political violence, as we discuss in Hypothesis 2A3 above. Second, scholars have found elections raise the risk of different types of political violence, as we see in Section 2B below. This hypothesis is related to those arguments, but also distinct, since it focuses on whether elections themselves (as opposed to general processes of democratization) spur *civil war* as a specific kind of violence.

The literature has focused on two contexts in which elections may be especially prone to causing civil war: countries where ethnic identity is politically salient and with post-conflict contexts. In countries where ethnicity is politically relevant, incumbents more likely appeal to voters in ethnic-nationalist terms. Doing so mobilizes co-ethnics and rationalizes excluding ethnic others from politics. These steps may prompt election losers to mount armed challenges to unfavorable results. One study finds that the risk of ethnic conflict, especially secessionist conflict, is higher after elections (Cederman *et al.*, 2013). Elections in countries during post-conflict transitions are also especially fraught: if held too quickly after a conflict concludes, especially in countries with fragile democratic institutions, the result is more likely to be conflict recurrence (Flores & Nooruddin, 2012, p. 559; Brancati & Snyder, 2013, p. 824). Involving former insurgent groups makes post-conflict elections more peaceful, however (Matanock, 2017).

One recent critique of the violent elections hypothesis notes that elections in developing countries tend to occur at politically difficult moments: the problem is not the election, but other challenges that caused the election to be called in the first place. Taking this timing into account, elections in Africa are not correlated with civil war (Cheibub and Hays, 2017).

Evaluation: Only a small number of studies have focused on the specific effect of elections on civil conflict, which means the evidence is thinner than studies of election violence or the impact of democratization on conflict. The evidence does not show a *general* effect of elections on civil war but shows persuasively that elections *in certain circumstances* raise the probability of conflict.

Lessons for Practitioners: USAID and its partners should monitor elections in developing countries and pay special attention to elections held in dangerous contexts (*e.g.*, when held too quickly after conflicts end, in poorly institutionalized settings, in ethnically contentious countries, at politically difficult junctures). Early warning systems that monitor electoral rhetoric, particularly around ethnicity, might be useful to detect potential violent threats. Working with elites to build broad coalitions might also be a useful step at politically fraught moments.

2A5. Ethnic Exclusion Encourages Conflict

Hypothesis: Ethnic exclusion in democracies leads to greater risk of civil conflict.

Paradigmatic Citations: Cederman, Buhaug, & Rød, 2009

Summary: Exclusive democracies are sustained by privileging certain ethnic groups above others, generating widespread grievances and making them an often-precarious strategy of rule. Systematic exclusion of a minority group *as such* from political or economic resources is generally included, even if this exclusion is not formally enshrined in law.

Exclusive democracies raise the risk of war by increasing or perpetuating intercommunal grievances. When particular identity groups are excluded from access to the political arena and the state or are otherwise systematically marginalized, this increases their willingness to participate in armed rebellion against the system. Secessionist conflict in particular can result from these dynamics, as groups attempt to separate from the state in order to pursue their own interests independently. Importantly, though, this depends on the relative strength of the excluded ethnic group, with conflict more likely when a group estimates that it may have a reasonable chance of success. Conflict is thus more likely to break out where an excluded group has a larger relative share of the population of a country or where its geographic concentration favors secession (Cederman, Buhaug, & Rød, 2009). Relatively large excluded minority groups may be even more likely to initiate conflict where there is an external kin group willing to assist them (Cederman, Girardin, & Gleditsch, 2009) or where secession would give them control over natural resources (Asal *et al.*, 2016).

Elites from the excluded group tend to respond to political exclusion in ways that raise the risk of armed conflict. Seeing little prospect for success within the system, they tend to frame political choices as between existential threat and self-determination. This radicalizes followers who become persuaded of the ineffectiveness of peaceful measures and makes them more willing to become full participants in armed rebellion (Tezcür, 2016), particularly where the state responds to early resistance with violence (Rørbæk, 2016). This helps to explain, for example, why civil wars are more likely to be started by an ethnic group than any other type of social group (Denny & Walter, 2014).

Evaluation: Research on the consequences of ethnic exclusion for the risk of civil conflict has benefited from significant investments in better data collection and operationalization of key concepts. Confidence in these results is high.

Lessons for Practitioners: For USAID and other intervenors, advocating for inclusive political institutions is critical. Where such institutions are absent, supporting civil society and peacebuilding programs that offer a counternarrative of non-violent political action may help reduce conflict by encouraging excluded groups to seek other avenues for redress.

Box 16. Avoiding Ethnic Exclusion in Tunisia

By Katherine Nazemi and Jennifer Raymond Dresden

Despite being relatively ethnically homogenous, Tunisia faced various other cleavages on the eve of the 2011 revolution, with socioeconomic differences and religious divides being particularly salient. Why was Tunisia able to transition relatively peacefully despite these cleavages? Research on civil conflict in the Middle East has found that excluded ethnic groups are significantly more likely to engage in rebellion (Vogt *et al.*, 2016). In 2013, Tunisia was among the least ethnically exclusive Middle East and North African countries (Vogt *et al.*, 2016). Some have argued that the political exclusion of religious groups under Ben Ali's tightly controlled regime created a vacuum that radical groups were able to use to their advantage in recruiting youth members in the immediate aftermath of the regime's fall (Fahmi & Meddeb, 2015). Yet studies have found religious differences to be less conflict-prone than other types of divides. Additionally, Tunisia's socioeconomic groups largely coexisted rather than living in isolation from each other, which as some studies have found, mitigates potentially destabilizing effects.

2A6. Respect for Women, Less Civil War

Hypothesis: Societies that respect women's rights are more likely to avoid civil war.

Paradigmatic Citations: Hudson *et al.*, 2014

Summary: A new literature suggests that improving the status of women within society reduces the incidence of civil conflict. Historical analysis of patterns of violence has suggested that societies that respect women's rights are generally more peaceful, and that this relationship is causal (Pinker, 2012, p. 527-528). Gender inequality privileges cooperative rather than competitive worldviews, including nationalistic and ethnocentric political narratives, which then are translated into politics (Caprioli, 2005, p. 165-166). Women may be less likely to lend support to violent conflict and, when included in politics, voice these opinions more forcefully (Melander, 2005, p. 696). Male-dominated groups also tend to engage in violence against others as a form of bonding (Hudson *et al.*, 2014).

Evaluation: Recent statistical analyses support this hypothesis, but more attention is needed. Studies show that societies that better protect women's rights—as indicated by representation in national legislatures, protection from violence, and more equitable family laws, for example—tend to experience less intrastate war (Caprioli, 2005; Melander, 2005; Hudson *et al.*, 2014). The effects they estimate are quite large. This scholarship is prone to questions of spuriousness and reverse causation, however. Shifts toward recognizing women's rights might be more likely to happen in times of peace or relatively low threat of war, which would mean that the relationship between gender inequality and conflict is less clear-cut than recent studies suggest (Pinker, 2012, p. 685-686).

Lessons for practitioners: Practitioners are faced with a dilemma in acting on this hypothesis. On one hand, programming that enhances women's position in society—through reforming land inheritance laws or training women to run for office—may have important follow-on effects on the risk of civil war. On the other hand, pushing for these changes can imbue the promotion of women's rights with a Western imprimatur, which risks a violent counter-response.

Box 17. Women's Rights and Conflict in Libya & Tunisia

> *By Katherine Nazemi and Jennifer Raymond Dresden*
>
> One of the striking differences between Tunisia and Libya has been the historical differences in women's rights. While Tunisia undertook relatively progressive policies toward women's rights beginning in the 1950s (Charrad, 2001, p. 1), by the eve of the Arab Spring, Libya was notably less open to women's empowerment (Kelly, 2010, p. 18). Moghadam (2017) argues that gender norms and legal rights, as well as past histories of female political mobilization, helped shape the outcomes of the Arab Spring revolutions in Libya and Tunisia. Prior to 2011, the political and social status of women in Tunisia was more egalitarian than other Arab Spring countries, with higher rates of female literacy and labor force participation, semi-institutionalized women's organizations, and women leading political parties and in the judiciary. Feminist groups had the capacity to mobilize, and a legacy of political participation even under conditions of authoritarianism. Indeed, during the transition period, popular protests were mobilized at several points when it seemed that women's rights were under threat (Amara, 2012). In contrast, Libya's gender relations prior to 2011 were more patriarchal, with a weak civil society and a lack of institutionalized women's groups capable of organized political participation. The deteriorating security situation and the normalization of violent modes of political participation in the aftermath of Qaddafi's fall contributed to the exclusion of women and girls from

political spaces. Moghadem argues that these differences in large part shaped the outcomes of the revolutions, culminating in a functional democracy in Tunisia and a breakdown of politics in Libya.

2B. Election Violence

2B1. Institutions to Reduce Electoral Violence

Hypothesis: More consolidated democratic institutions lower the risk of election violence.

Paradigmatic Citations: Hafner-Burton *et al.*, 2014

Summary: Scholars have produced strong evidence that consolidated democratic institutions reduce the risk of civil war, as we see elsewhere in this report. New scholarship shows the same relationship for election violence, that freer and fairer elections and more consolidated democratic institutions pacify elections (Collier & Vicente, 2012, p. 118; Hafner-Burton *et al.*, 2014, p. 157-158; Salehyan & Linebarger, 2015, p. 41-42).

Consolidated democratic institutions have at least three pacifying effects on elections. First, stronger institutions constrain insecure incumbents from engaging in violent harassment of their enemies—an important driver of violence we will discuss further in Hypothesis 2B3. Second, consolidated democratic institutions more likely assure opposition parties that elections have been conducted fairly, reducing the probability of boycotts and post-election protests that may turn violent (Hafner-Burton *et al.*, 2018). They can also hold incumbents legally accountable for violent acts. Third, more consolidated democratic institutions provide more information and a template for how elections work. Countries that are new to holding elections and lack reliable information on past or present voting patterns are more prone to pre-election government harassment (Hafner-Burton *et al.*, 2014, p. 156) and post-election ethnic conflict (Cederman *et al.*, 2013, p. 389).

Scholars have identified particular institutions that help reduce the risks of election violence as well. First, institutions that weaken the executive's control over the security apparatus can limit pre-election violence. More robust institutions limit incumbents from unilaterally declaring a state of emergency (Hafner-Burton *et al.*, 2014, p. 157-158). Second, proportional representation (PR) systems lower the stakes of elections, reducing the risks of violence (Fjelde & Höglund, 2016, p. 316). Finally, inclusive electoral management bodies (EMBs) provide a forum to resolve disputes among contestants, which provides steps short of violence to negotiate (Opitz, Fjelde, & Höglund, 2013)

Evaluation: Only a handful of articles have explored these relationships in great detail, but the evidence strongly supports the assertion. More research is needed to identify particular institutions (as opposed to systemic democratic consolidation) that can reduce the risk of violence.

Lessons for practitioners: Practitioners should double-down on longer-term programming with the goal of strengthening key democratic institutions, such as those mentioned above: inclusive electoral management bodies, institutions that lower the stakes of elections, and constraining incumbents' control of the security apparatus. See Hypothesis 2B3 below for more detail on this question.

Box 18. Avoiding Election Violence in Tunisia

By Katherine Nazemi and Jennifer Raymond Dresden

Three sets of elections since the overthrow of President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali's regime – the 2011 Constituent Assembly elections, the 2014 parliamentary and presidential elections, and most recently, the 2018 municipal elections – have all taken place without significant recorded violence (Carter Center, 2011; National Democratic Institute, 2014; Amara, 2018). Three factors in particular seem to have made this possible: a strong independent electoral commission whose guidelines were enforced and respected; the cooperation of political leaders with the electoral commission to refrain from negative campaigning and to denounce acts of violence when they occurred; and the delegation of election-day security to a professional armed force largely viewed as neutral and unbiased by the population (Grewal, 2018; Carter Center, 2014). These institutional factors echo the findings highlighted above. However, sporadic political violence, including the assassinations of prominent political leaders in 2012 and 2013, occurred between election periods. Additionally, some evidence suggests that female political candidates and voters faced forms of political violence that were less easily visible (Ballington *et al.*, 2014; International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, 2014).

2B2. Ethnic Identification, Elections, and Violence: A Vicious Cycle?

Hypothesis: Contentious elections and election violence heighten ethnic identification, which in turn makes future elections more violent.

Paradigmatic Citations: Kuhn, 2015; Eifert *et al.*, 2010

Summary: This scholarship proposes three relationships that together describe a vicious cycle of strong ethnic identification, elections, and violence. First, elections heighten ethnic identification. Ethnic identity is far from static—instead, it likely rises and falls in response to events. Politicians can activate those identities and likely do so during elections, especially when they are close (Eifert *et al.*, 2010, p. 495; Higashijima & Nakai, 2016, p. 125). Second, elections more likely become contentious in societies in which ethnic identity dominates vote choice, especially in unconsolidated democracies. In such elections, traditional campaigning will do little to increase a party's or candidate's chances since elections essentially devolve into turning out one's own co-ethnics. This environment incentivizes politicians to use violence against rival ethnic groups in the run-up to elections (Kuhn, 2015, p. 93; Cederman *et al.*, 2013, p. 390). Finally, ethnically based violence may further reinforce ethnic identification and its political salience (Sambanis and Shayo, 2013).

Evaluation: Sound logic and evidence support the idea of a vicious cycle between ethnic identification, elections, and violence. Nevertheless, scholars have also found countervailing evidence. Cross-cutting cleavages, for example, weaken ethnicity's hold on the electorate, interrupting the vicious cycle described above (Dunning and Harrison, 2010). Voters in sub-Saharan Africa, meanwhile, consider policy performance to a greater extent than ethnic identity (Bratton *et al.*, 2012). Other research shows that discrimination in favor of co-ethnics does not rise during electoral campaigns (Michelitch, 2015). The evidence is therefore mixed that an election-violence-ethnicity vicious cycle is the norm.

Lessons for Practitioners: Practitioners should consider programming that interrupts the vicious cycle described here. For example, election violence prevention programs may help to reduce violence while raising turnouts (Collier and Vicente, 2014). Programming that celebrates common, cross-cutting identities during elections might reduce the hold ethnic identification has on vote choice.

2B3. Vulnerable and Violent Incumbents

Hypothesis: Vulnerable incumbents more likely use violence during elections to retain power, triggering post-election instability.

Paradigmatic Citations: Hafner-Burton *et al.*, 2014; Taylor *et al.*, 2017; Hafner-Burton *et al.*, 2018

Summary: Scholars of election violence mostly presume that incumbents and opposition parties use violence to win elections: in other words, election violence is strategic (Hafner-Burton *et al.*, 2014, p. 154; Kuhn, 2015, p. 89). Incumbents have little need of violence if they are winning handily, however. In this situation, the costs of violence likely outweigh the benefits. When they sense that an election may weaken them politically, especially when they fear losing, they more likely use violence, however (Taylor *et al.*, 2017). This may happen either because reliable polling shows them trailing or they lack polling at all (Collier & Vicente, 2012, p. 118; Hafner-Burton *et al.*, 2014, p. 156). Violence intimidates citizens and opposition candidates and helps incumbents secure victory.

Using violence in the run-up to a close election may offer the short-term benefit of securing electoral victory, but also risks post-conflict instability. Incumbent violence helps election losers solve collective action problems, helping them organize protests and riots that challenge incumbents' legitimacy (Hafner-Burton *et al.*, 2014, p. 158; Hafner-Burton *et al.*, 2018, p. 466). Post-election protests, in turn, incite a more violent government response, risking the incumbent's hold on power.

Institutions that credibly constrain incumbents prevent this slide from incumbent insecurity to post-election instability. These institutions prevent them from harassing the opposition and sanction those who do (Hafner-Burton *et al.*, 2014, p. 158).[13]

Evaluation: Studies of election violence have generally supported the impact of incumbent insecurity on pre-election violence by the state and pre-electoral violence's effect on post-election violence. As is usual, there is some disagreement on this effect (Daxecker, 2014; Birch and Muchlinski, 2017), though this may originate in differences in how scholars measure election violence (Birch and Muchlinski, 2017, p. 15).

Lessons for Practitioners: USAID and its partners should closely monitor elections deemed "close" by polling and/or media accounts, especially in contexts where democratic institutions are weak. It should also develop methodologies to intervene quickly when evidence of pre-election violence by an incumbent mounts, as these situations may become more unstable post-election. USAID and its partners can also support political reforms that constrain executives' ability to exploit the country's security apparatus to violently suppress dissent.

2B4. International Election Support and Violence

Hypothesis: Election observer missions increase the risk of election violence, but long-term capacity-building reduces the risk of election violence.

Paradigmatic Citations: Birch & Muchlinski, 2018; von Borzyskowski, 2019

Summary: In previous hypotheses, we identified lessons for practitioners seeking to reduce election violence. Scholars have also begun to study particular interventions, with a focus on election observation versus longer-term capacity-building.

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[13] We discuss the broader institutional milieu's effect on election violence in Hypothesis 2B1 above.

We can think of this hypothesis as part good news, part bad news. In bad news, election observation missions may actually *increase* election violence. Election observers may increase incumbent violence in the pre-election period because incumbents will hesitate to intimidate voters on election day itself, so they move their intimidation to earlier points in the electoral calendar (Daxecker, 2014). Other scholars disagree, however, finding that overall levels of pre-election violence decline when observers are present (Asunka *et al.*, 2017; von Borzyskowski, 2019), though violence may only move to areas of the country unobserved by election monitors (Asunka *et al.*, 2017). During the post-election period, election reports that condemn an election may increase violence as opposition parties seize on new evidence that the election was far from credible (Daxecker, 2012; von Borzyskowski, 2017, 2019).

In good news, longer-term strategies lessen the risk of election violence. Capacity-building efforts by the international community (*e.g.*, technical assistance to build EMBs, aid to political parties) have a positive effect by bolstering the credibility of elections and providing dispute resolution mechanisms (Birch & Muchlinski, 2018, p. 386; Borzyskowski, 2019, p. 5-6). Efforts to transform elites' and voters' attitudes through dialogue, mediation, and national pacts to eschew violence may also reduce violence by incumbents and their allies (Birch & Muchlinski, 2018, p. 386).

Evaluation: The evidence in favor of this hypothesis is very new, and little evidence suggests a clear inflammatory effect of election monitoring. More exact comparisons of short-term versus long-term interventions will likely come in time: not all shorter-term interventions (*i.e.*, to prevent violence in a particular election that is coming soon) will necessarily inflame tensions, nor will all long-term interventions help. For example, one set of evaluations found that anti-violence campaigns before an election in Nigeria reduced violence and increased turnout (Collier and Vicente, 2014; Fafchamps and Vicente, 2013.

Lessons for Practitioners: USAID and its partners should beware of elections with foreign election observers: these may be more combustible events. Practitioners should also focus on longer-term programming that reduces election violence through its confidence in the electoral process.

2C. Violent Extremism

2C1. Ethnic Inclusion and Violent Extremism

Hypothesis: Systems that are more ethnically inclusive are less prone to terror attacks.

Paradigmatic Citations: Piazza, 2011; Choi & Piazza, 2016

Summary: A relatively new literature has proposed that greater ethnic exclusion creates incentives for violent extremist attacks (Piazza, 2011; Ghatak, 2016; Choi & Piazza, 2016). Groups suffering ethnic exclusion, in short, are motivated by that exclusion to engage in violence against civilians. Authors have primarily discussed political exclusion but economic exclusion may also motivate small groups of marginalized citizens to engage in violence (Piazza, 2011). Ironically, the political exclusion may have its worst effect in countries attempting to open up politically and economically, since that opening may create new mobilization opportunities for aggrieved minorities (Ghatak, 2016).

Evaluation: These findings are in line with other scholarly findings on how political exclusion affects civil conflict. This is still a new literature, however, and a great deal of research remains to flesh out these mechanisms.

Lessons for Practitioners: Given the prominence of ethnic exclusion in civil war, this hypothesis (especially if its support is corroborated by future studies) suggests that policymakers should monitor ethnically exclusive states for extremist violence.

2C2. Democracy and Violent Extremism

Hypothesis: Democracies are more prone to domestic violent extremism.

Paradigmatic Citations: Dugan & Chenoweth, 2012; Chenoweth, 2010b

Summary: Are democracies at greater risk from domestic and international terrorism? The primary argument for why democracies experience more terrorism than autocracies is that they provide the opportunities that enable terrorism. Political freedoms, constraints against executive power, stronger rule of law, and checks against abuse of police and internal security authority create spaces that can be exploited by groups who use terror to attack the state. In autocracies, greater state surveillance works with reduced freedom of association and more draconian police powers to eliminate the spaces terrorists require for fundraising, recruitment, and logistical operations. In addition, leaders of such organizations find it harder to hide from authorities then they might in democracies (San-Akca, 2014; Chenoweth, 2010b). These pathologies are heightened in transition countries, sometimes called "anocracies," in which democracy is not fully consolidated and where governance and state capacity are limited (Bandyopadhyay & Younas, 2011).

Chenoweth has championed a particular argument about how democracies promote terrorism. She argues that democracies create environments where political groups compete for support, and in these competitive mobilization efforts, they are driven to escalate tactics to demonstrate their commitment to their cause. This in turn leads to the emergence of terrorist groups in democracies. Chenoweth supports this by tracking political competition and democratic participation levels and finds a statistically significant correlation between terrorist group emergence and political competition (Chenoweth, 2010a, 2010b).

The mechanisms underlying the finding that terrorism is more likely to occur in more democratic systems is vague on motives. Terrorists might have greater 'opportunity' in democracies but what is their motive? Why do they fight against a system that affords them the freedoms and protections that make their existence possible? An interesting explanation is offered by Savun and Phillips (2009) who argue that democracies have more activist foreign policies that cause backlash and leads to greater transnational terror as groups attack the democratic state that is seen as interfering in the domestic politics of another country. This explanation cannot explain higher levels of domestic terrorism in democracies though.

Evaluation: While research on the political causes of terrorism is improving, confidence in many of these findings should be limited due to poor conceptualization and operationalization of key variables (such as terrorism) and the quality of data used to test hypotheses.

Lessons for Practitioners: If the preponderance of evidence is to be believed, then the implication is that advocating for democratic reform in some countries will make them more vulnerable to terrorist attacks.

Box 19. Violent Extremism in Tunisia

By Katherine Nazemi and Jennifer Raymond Dresden

Tunisia has seen several major domestic terror incidents since 2011, including the attack at Sousse beach in June 2015 and at the Bardo National Museum in March 2015 that killed 38 and 22, respectively. The sources of terrorism are many and nuanced, yet some factors particularly relevant to the Tunisian case include socioeconomic grievances, particularly among the youth, and high expectations following the revolution that went unmet under the new government (Fahmi & Meddeb, 2015). Harassment by police and security forces, and social alienation of outwardly religious individuals, as well as a sense that participation through normal political channels is useless have also contributed to extremism (Ghribi, 2016). Additionally, financial and social incitements from extremist groups have been relevant pull factors (International Republican Institute, 2016).

2C3. Inclusive Democracy and Violent Extremism

Hypothesis: More inclusive democracies lessen democracies' risk of violent extremism.

Paradigmatic Citations: Aksoy & Carter, 2014

Summary: Hypothesis 2C2 suggested that democracies are more prone to violent extremism. But are all democracies equally vulnerable? The literature suggests not. Democracies that are more 'inclusive' are at lower risk of terror attacks. Inclusion can be facilitated by electoral institutions such as proportional representation, rules that enable political participation, and efforts at conciliation via ethnic accommodation (Dugan & Chenoweth, 2012; Aksoy & Carter, 2014; Gleditsch & Polo, 2016; Dalacoura, 2011). Dalacoura (2011) argues that democracy can dampen radical extremism that is conducive to terrorism. Aksoy and Carter (2014) find that electoral permissiveness only decreases terrorism from groups with "within-system" as opposed to "anti-system" goals, *i.e.* those that can pursue their demands through peaceful political action, when provided the opportunity to do so, will choose that over terrorism.

Moreover, greater ethnic exclusion, electoral rigidity, a right-wing ruling party, or political actors with a veto promotes terrorism in democracies (Young & Dugan, 2011; Aksoy, 2014; Danzell, 2011; Dugan & Chenoweth, 2012; Ghatak, 2016; Choi &; Piazza, 2016).

Finally, new democracies are most at risk of domestic and transnational terrorism (compared to old democracies and dictatorships). Though old democracies are still more likely to experience terrorism than dictatorships, taken with what we know about the rule of law and inclusive institutions, this may suggest that democratic consolidation can deter terrorism (Piazza, 2013).

Evaluation: As in the last hypothesis, research on the political causes of terrorism is rapidly changing, as in any new literature, but the evidence is supportive of this hypothesis.

Lessons for practitioners: USAID and its partners should be aware of particular conditions in newly democratizing countries that make terrorism more likely, especially less inclusive democratic institutions.

2C4. Statebuilding and Violent Extremism

Hypothesis: Strong states that are effective and legitimate deter violent extremism.

Paradigmatic Citations: Nasser-Eddine *et al.*, 2011; Windsor, 2010.

Summary: Violent extremism can weaken states, but scholars have also argued that strong states are more successful in deterring violent extremism (El Khazen, 2005). State strength here refers to the functioning of administrative and political institutions that enact policy effectively and enjoy broad-based societal legitimacy (Holmer, 2013; Nasser-Eddine *et al.*, 2011). State strength should mean that the state need not engage in widespread repression against alleged extremists, which can be counter-productive by reducing legitimacy of the state among the targeted populations (Bartlett and Birdwell, 2010). Mohammad (2005) links limited regime legitimacy and government effectiveness with the rise of extremism in Islamic states. Windsor (2003) argues that the process of democratization should be seen as part of the process of statebuilding and that it can help fight terrorism as well. The core argument linking these works is that violent extremism is more likely to find roots in society when the state is perceived as ineffective and illegitimate.

Evaluation: These findings are in line with other scholarly findings on how state weakness affects civil conflict. Rigorous empirical evaluations of key hypotheses are limited, however, with most scholars relying on case studies of particular instances as evidence.

Lessons for Practitioners: While evidence linking state strength to violent extremism is still limited, the stronger findings that connect state strength to civil conflict (as in Hypotheses 2A1 and 2A3) suggest that investments in supporting government effectiveness and downward accountability as a means of bolstering legitimacy are worthwhile for international actors.

6. GENERAL LESSONS

Five decades of scholarly inquiry makes clear that democratization is a difficult and uncertain process, a lesson already discussed at length in Phases I and II of the Theories of Democratic Change project. Our review concentrates on a particular pathology of democratic practice: its reciprocal relationship with violent armed conflict. The hypotheses discussed in Question 2 highlighted how democratic practice in the developing world generates additional armed conflict due to the uncertainty and destabilized political institutions that it engenders. Increasingly these conflicts are internationalized in ways that generate negative spillovers for other young democracies. Question 1, meanwhile, showed how violent conflict complicates democratic practice, perhaps for years or decades to come.

In this section, we identify three cross-cutting lessons learned from our survey of the democracy and conflict literature(s). None of these is original to us, but we take the opportunity to reiterate them nevertheless because it is clear that even if these lessons are well known in theory, they are only rarely reflected in practice. We go beyond simply restating them, though, and think about how the theoretical framework implied by the general lessons might be turned into actionable policy advice for USAID and other development professionals.

The first and most challenging lesson is that *democracy promotion consists of hard choices between competing goals*. For instance, USAID is tasked with promoting U.S. interests abroad, but the pursuit of U.S. interests might actually endanger other goals such as economic reconstruction, statebuilding, and peacebuilding (Girod, 2015a; Lake, 2016). To take another example, the form of democratic practice acceptable to national elites, for example, might fall well short of U.S. hopes and stated policies. Meanwhile, democratic practice at times will yield leaders hostile to the United States: accepting the legitimacy of these leaders will challenge the most committed democrat. Similarly, orthodox economic policy might well not be in the best interests of a newly democratizing country: Tunisia's struggles with IMF structural adjustment serve as a recent example. Finally, at the heart of this report is the realization

that democratization will often heighten the risk of armed conflict. Designing more effective policy to aid fledgling democracies recovering from conflict requires honest answers to these difficult questions. A good start would be to standardize streamlining conflict prevention into democracy support.

The second general lesson is that *national and local contexts differ and both matter for designing effective interventions*. Throughout the literature, scholars have highlighted the importance of local historical, cultural, economic, and political conditions for designing effective democracy assistance programs and policies. Taking our first point about "hard choices," national contexts will often shape the art of the possible for democratic reforms. From this general guideline, we would highlight two points. First, particularly for countries emerging from conflict, the legacies of that violence are powerful and long-lasting. An appreciation of deep historical context is necessary, but not sufficient. A solid understanding of the way that conflict itself has restructured the strategic interests of elites, the social environment and networks of civilians, and the economic life of a country is key to designing effective intervention in areas ranging from political party development to women's economic empowerment. This lesson emerges throughout our discussion. Second, programming must be sensitive to geographic variation within countries. Security, economic, and demographic conditions vary widely across any country and especially in those at risk of or recovering from conflict. At the extreme, conflicts will continue, with each driven by different local agendas, making for a highly uncertain programming environment.

Our third lesson is that we must *seek to lengthen time horizons for democracy promotion policy and consider the dynamic effects of the sequencing of reforms*. This lesson is brought home starkly by the proposition that state-building is key to democracy promotion and conflict prevention. Weak states breed chaos (Bates, 2001). When political institutions are too weak to channel popular participation productively, elections produce praetorian rather than liberal politics (Huntington, 1968). In contexts characterized by weak institutions, practitioners have faced a particular "hard choice:" statebuilding takes years, if not decades and centuries, but the standard practice of democracy promotion insists on mass-suffrage elections held early in a process of democratization. Investing in political parties that are legitimate voices of citizens and state institutions that can manage their competition autonomously and peacefully is critical for future democracy promotion, but still risks an extended period of instability and potential for violence. No one suggests that we delay elections and democracy promotion indefinitely, but unless practitioners can promote the development of stable public institutions to perform the work of the state set out by elected politicians, leaders cannot generate the performance legitimacy required to yield long-term democratic dividends (Flores and Nooruddin, 2016).

The three lessons highlighted above are intentionally general enough to apply to a variety of regional contexts and have implications for different types of democracy promotion activities. We spell out a few specific suggestions for future democracy promotion efforts by USAID and its partners below.

First, *democracy assistance cannot be separated from other external interventions in young democracies*. The "hard choices" theme discussed above emphasizes that the practice of democracy and democratization depends on the security and economic environments. Yet interventions in these areas do not always work together. For example, the schedule for a first post-conflict election might be negotiated as part of a peace treaty without the input of democracy promoters who understand the challenges of mounting elections in inchoate democracies. Structure adjustment programs to shock the economy back into life likely do not take into account the financial needs of peacebuilding and statebuilding, potentially endangering those goals. Policymakers require a more holistic and

consolidated approach that privileges investments in fundamental state capacity as much as holding a first election.

Second, *we must grapple with the loss of legitimacy of traditional power associated with democracy promotion and the ascendance of alternative governance models that focus on development over democracy.* Technocratic models of governance promise rapid economic growth without the messy political realities of democratic practice. The challenge of such models to democracy promotion lies in the premise that popular legitimacy can be earned not through electoral means, but through creating security (often violently) and galvanizing economic growth. It is unclear if these alternative models of governance actually outperform democracy in the long-run: little evidence suggests that they do, in fact. Yet they tempt elites and citizens alike where democracy has failed to deliver material improvements in people's lives. This has two potential pitfalls. First, national and local power-holders have the ability to undermine or even manipulate interventions to their own benefit, even if they do not have the ability to shut them out altogether. USAID and other external actors must be sensitive to the risk that programs designed to bolster rule of law (for example) might actually undermine it if not carefully designed and implemented to avoid manipulation. The rise of hybrid regimes around the world make this kind of strategic management all the more important. Second, the local appeal of alternative governance models is exacerbated when historical democracy promoters are perceived to be hypocritical in ignoring democracy violations in strategic allies while condemning the same acts in other states. In a globalized arena, where states are paying careful attention to what is happening in other states, such behavior is magnified. The U.S. Department of State's decision to endorse the fraudulent 2017 election in Honduras is an example of such an unfortunate call (Nooruddin, 2017).

Third, *preserving the peace and guaranteeing the protective security of citizens in young democracies needs to be a higher priority for democracy promotion*. When citizens are beleaguered by high crime rates, satisfaction in democracy drops (Flores & Nooruddin, 2016, Chapter 7). Citizens must feel safe in order to focus on politics; the absence of safety enables strong-men populists to rise to power. The scholarly literature on the relationship between conflict and democracy is full of cautions about the risks of rapid political change. This is clearly reflected in the analysis of nearly every question discussed above. Particularly for countries emerging from conflict, intervenors must recognize the very real limits of their ability to uniformly pursue peace and deeper democracy simultaneously at all times and in all places.

Fourth, *elections must be recognized as flash-points for violence* that contribute to the coarsening of ethnic identity. While elections are a necessary condition for democracy (Przeworski *et al.* 2000), we understand better today that elections are a focal point for considerable political activity and turmoil in countries with limited prior experience with democracy. Parties contending for power in such elections often retain the potential to return to arms since disarmament is rarely complete, and election violence is high, often resulting in the hardening of ethnic cleavages. Yet elections are vital. Therefore, we recognize USAID's development of a comprehensive Electoral Security Framework and urge continued investments in better early warning technologies for identifying and responding to ethnic troubles that might backfire on democracy promotion efforts.

Finally, a difficult yet fundamental truth to admit is that *scholarship on many of the primary questions concerning democracy promotion and conflict studied in this report has only limited answers to offer*. Much of what we know is based on single case studies of oft-studied cases, too often relying only on anecdotes and interviews of key policymakers rather than on rigorous evaluations of policies that aimed to prevent conflict or promote democracy. For academics to support policymakers more usefully, more

primary research must be conducted, ideally generating insights from new cases and leading to the creation of cross-national data sets that can be analyzed using rigorous statistical techniques to yield generalizable findings that can be combined with case contexts to yield useful policy recommendations. Self-interested though it may seem, we urge USAID and other actors to *increase funding to social scientists studying such topics.*

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