Peace Work: Labour Markets, Work and Violence

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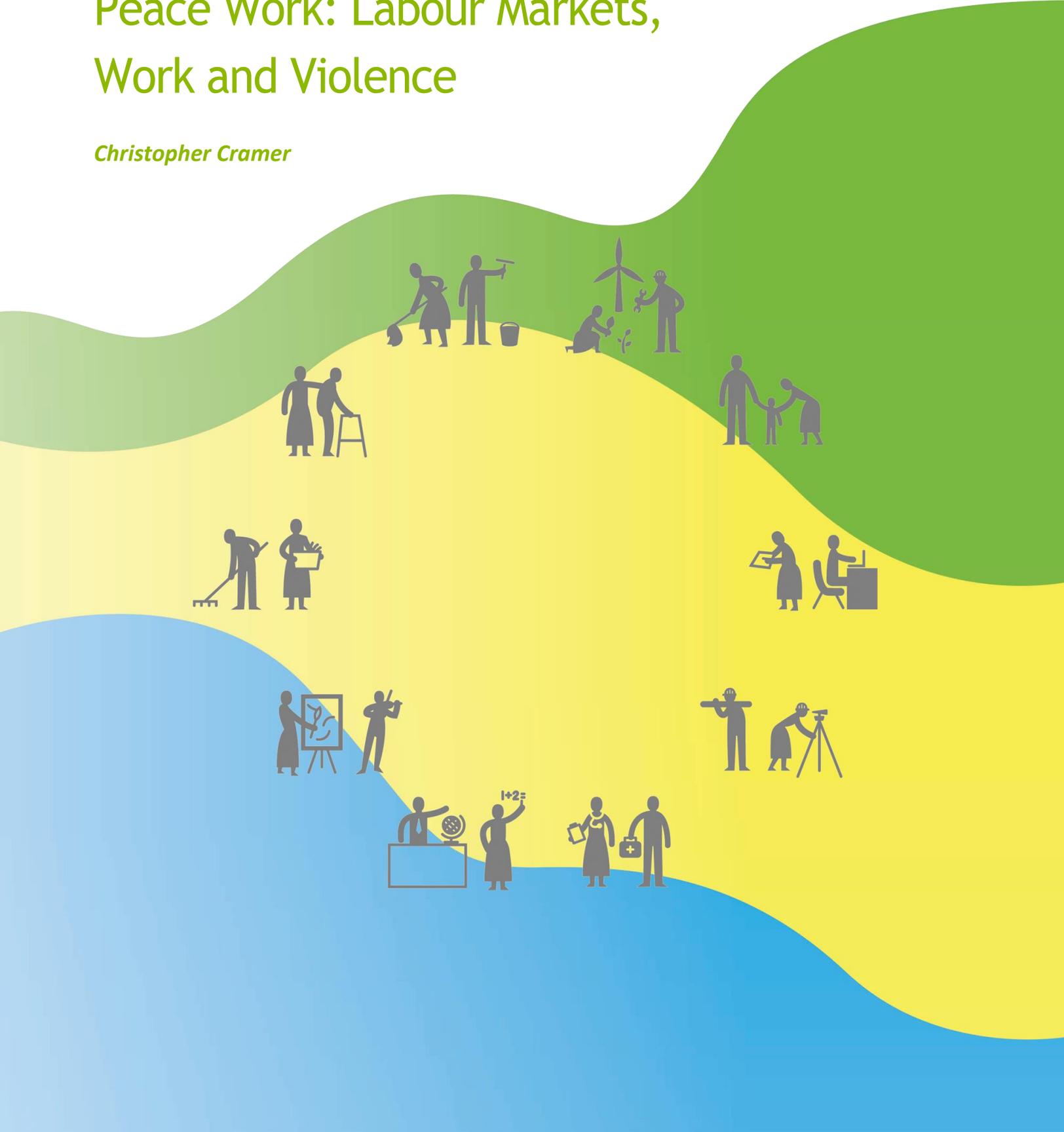
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Violence rights, referred violence and human freedoms

Violence in its many forms—physical, psychological, structural—has profound and complex effects on socioeconomic development. If human development is regarded as the expansion of freedoms, then violence has pervasive restricting impacts on these that go far beyond the obvious damage inflicted by warfare.

Urban livelihoods for young girls who drew a kind of infographic classification scheme for the range of insecurities they feel in districts of Bogotá (Moser and McIlwhaine 2000) are cramped by threats from gangs, rape, street fights, drunks and more. The freedoms available to members of (often violent) gangs in East Harlem described in Bourgois (2003) are severally curtailed by violence: by the structural violence of changing labour markets that have emptied out older and some argue more rewarding forms of work; by a history of exclusion by and violence from earlier immigrant arrivals; and daily by often vicious harassment by police officers. One of the gang members, Caesar, talking about witnessing police brutality puts it this way: "That's stress management right there. That's release of tension. That's my-wife-treated-me-dirty-you'll-pay. That's terrorism with a badge. That's what that is" (Bourgois 2003, p. 36). Institutional violence by police—an institutional framework in which police employees arrogate to themselves weakly regulated violence rights—is a common feature of many parts of the world.

Another example is given in Moser and Hollands' (1997) work on Kingston, Jamaica, where respondents argue that constant harassment "mek the youth dem behave wickeder" (see also Wacquant 2003, Soares et al. 2005). The freedom of Asad Abdullahi (Steinberg 2015), a Somali emigrant who has confronted and evaded a variety of forms of often extreme violence in Somalia, Ethiopia and elsewhere to make a living in South African townships selling basic consumer goods from a convenience store, or *spaza*, was repeatedly, savagely curtailed by violence. That violence might be classified as 'xenophobic violence', of the kind that broke out most infamously in a number of South African urban areas in 2008. There continues to be debate about the sources of this violence and whether or not the perpetrators themselves were victims of structural violence manifest in poor state service delivery and limited employment prospects. It may, in other words, have been one example of 'referred violence', in which, just as a pain in one part of the body can 'refer' to an original problem in another part of the body, violence gets passed around a society.

These examples of the human development consequences of violence raise a number of analytical issues. First, while property and human rights are staples of the development literature, there has been little focus to date on violence rights, or the rights of certain people and organizations to exercise violence against individuals or groups. There are issues around how and to whom they are

allocated, how they are restricted, how they are enforced, what happens when they are contested, and how the governance of violence rights interacts with that of human, labour and property rights.

Second, while the development literature has begun to reverse its 'jobs dementia' (Amsden 2010) in recent years, albeit belatedly (Fields 2007) and very partially, and while the literature on violence and development has grown massively in the past 15 years or so, the literature to date has not addressed the connections between violence and work, labour and employment in much depth. This has begun to change, but there is a great deal yet to do to improve our understanding.

Such understanding may begin with a probing of how labour market and labour relations issues are involved in the causal processes generating violence and large-scale armed conflict, how they are sites of the effects of such violence, and what role they may play in post-war reconstruction and recovery or in violence prevention programmes. Issues of work, its forms and the lack of it run through some of the examples above. Further, it is important to acknowledge that violence often involves a form of labour itself: It is organized, it can entail specialization, it is often remunerated and can be a source of social solidarity or belonging, it may generate value, and it is often exercised within employment relations, in armies, police forces, gangs and mafia-type organizations. As Gambetta (1993) argued, the Mafia is a kind of firm that sells a good, protection, and in this firm violence is an input, though one whose use is best restricted.

Third, if we are better to understand the links between violence and labour or employment/unemployment, it is important to include but to go beyond just looking at war or large-scale armed conflict. What North et al. (2009) called 'the violence problem' is perhaps the fundamental governance issue, and it is pervasive globally and historically.

Violence at work, the violence of work

Violence is so pervasive, as fact and threat, that Kalyvas et al. (2008, p. 1) argue that "much of what we identify as order is simply violence in disguise." Labour markets, labour relations and the institutions that regulate them are among the sites where order may be violence in disguise, Marx's "daily civil war over the length of the working day." For many people in advanced industrialized countries that war may have settled into accepted legal norms, but in many parts of the world it is a struggle still being fought. Multinational agro-businesses, for example, find ways to eke out unpaid overtime from workers. And the BBC recently exposed involuntary 16-hour working days in factories in more mature Asian manufacturing sectors supplying Apple (Bilton 2014).

Violence in the workplace takes a variety of forms very much related to the distribution and enforcement of violence rights. As Chappell and Di Martino (2006) point out, violence often affects employees (and employers) through the violation of existing violence rights, for example, in the instances of terrorism affecting workplaces. In the 9/11 attacks, 319 firefighters, 50 police officers, 35 airline crew members and 36 civilian employees at the Pentagon, as well as hundreds of people working for the mainly financial and commercial companies operating in the World Trade Center were killed. Many workers, including transport workers, people travelling to work, and workers in the tourism industry were among the victims of bombings in Bali, Indonesia, in October 2002, in Madrid in March 2004, and in London in July 2005.

But there is a much larger problem of violence at work, often involving either the poor regulation of formal violence rights or simply the prevailing formal or informal distribution of violence rights. This can range from the sexual abuse to which women are often subjected simply in order to gain access to job opportunities, through bullying or 'mobbing' within the workplace, to the high levels of violence against trade unionists in some countries—above all in Colombia, but also elsewhere, including South Africa—and the violence of workplace fatalities in underregulated workplaces. The problem of violence in labour is global. Some argue it is at the heart of the pursuit of productive efficiency in globalized trade. Thus Cowan (2014) analyses the securitization of labour in global logistics, shipping, containerization and docks, and the bodily damage (as well as more sophisticated management of labouring bodies) done by a set of trading networks often beyond the scope of clear national or international regulations.

A particular example of where violence rights are unclear, and bound up with the contestation of other rights, such as the right to strike or to decent work, is the recent experience (against a deeper historical background) in South African mining. At the peak of conflict at the Lonmin-owned mine at Marikana in 2012, police shot dead 36 miners on strike—a wildcat strike for higher wages. Subsequently, 270 striking miners were arrested and charged with murder under an apartheid-era law, though they were later released. These events were far from random outliers, taking place within a sector at the heart of the South African economy (Fine and Rustomjee 1997), and defined by a history of harsh and conflictual labour relations. Donham's (2011) study of just one previous episode, in which two Zulu workers at a mine were hacked to death on 16 June 1994, shows how violence can break out where violence rights, political rights and labour rights are all under contention during a moment of transition. Dunham cites a new mine compound manager who was struck when he arrived at the mine in 1992 by the state of labour relations. He described the general manager's attitude to the workforce as: "Let's rubberize them and we will have them back to work" (i.e., shoot them with rubber bullets) (Donham 2011, p. 125). There is a broader perception of violence in relations between mining companies and people living in surrounding or nearby areas. During a

break in conflict resolution discussions between a mining house and a community group in Bojanala district, this sequence of banter was recorded (Bench Marks Foundation 2012, p. ix):

> **Mine manager**: "Our relationship with the community is like a marriage, we must not get third parties to spoil our relationship, when there are problems in a relationship we must try and resolve them. The government through its intervention is acting like a marriage councillor, but we must resolve our issues ourselves."

> **Community member:** "This marriage you are referring to is problematic, because we woke up one morning in 2008 to find this mining company in our bed, we were violated because there was no consultation, it was sex without consent – it was rape."

> **Mine HR manager: "**Hau bana, there is nothing like rape in traditional weddings or marriage, the wife has to do what the husband wants...."

Employment equals peace, unemployment equals war?

To understand and hope to improve human development, it is important to appreciate the significance in their own rights of violence at work, violence in work and the common violence of work. International Labour Organization Director-General Guy Ruyder claimed, for example, in 2014 that "work claims more victims than war." [1] These issues are also directly relevant to understanding the links between war and work. For the literature on violent conflict and development has been lulled by narcolepsy-inducing rhetorical commonplaces of what many view as the liberal peace thesis. The broad version of this holds that "war is development in reverse. War retards development and development retards war" (World Bank 2003, p.1). A narrower version holds, effectively, that employment is 'good' (peace promoting) and unemployment 'bad' (conflict enabling). This has led to extremely limited understanding.

The argument underpinning this view is a simple form of rational choice economics: Unemployment in developing countries is likely to reduce the opportunity cost of violence, and, therefore, by reducing 'recruitment costs' for insurgents, it increases the statistical risk of civil war (or other forms of violence). The evidence reveals a far more complex reality. The argument, though, remains influential and as discussed below it has been revived to account for variations in the sustainability of peace settlements.

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[1] See: www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_302517/lang--en/index.htm.

Unemployment and the discontent ('grievance') it stirs—as well as the reduced opportunity cost of violence—may be significant in some conflicts. Honaker (2008), for example, delves into the labour force data in Northern Ireland and argues that, contrary to many other analyses, the evidence does suggest that high Catholic unemployment rates do statistically predict Republican violence during 'the troubles'. But we do not know enough about this, and simple descriptive statistical analysis suggests (Cramer 2010) that there is absolutely no clear pattern across countries connecting recorded unemployment levels (where there are data) with data on the onset of or casualty levels in violent conflicts. Country-level statistical analysis has also undermined the simple idea of an unemployment-violence link. Berman et al. (2009, p. 3) argue that "if there is an opportunity cost effect, it is not dominant in either" Iraq or the Philippines.

Reflecting the concerns raised above about the *types* of jobs and the *conditions* of work, as well as about the political context within which labour markets exist and are regulated, rather than only employment and unemployment *levels*, other research shows that motivations for joining in collective violence are not restricted to the unemployed. Drawing on judicial records as well as datasets recovered from captured insurgent CD-ROMs in Colombia, Gutierrez Sanin (2008) makes it clear that many people joining violent organizations in Colombia's war were employed, indeed, often at above average wages. For many gang recruits in cities in the United States, evidence shows that it is as much the *stresses of* employment and the *types of* employment available that matter to their choices, in combination with other factors (ethnic, family, etc.), rather than unemployment (Padilla 1992, Bourgois 2003). Coughlin and Venkatesh (2003, p. 52), using different methods, also argue that participation in violent gangs in the United States is shaped by "political views that their ethnic groups suffer discrimination in schools, *labor markets*, and financial institutions" (emphasis added).

We might say, then, that labour markets, relations and institutions are often mechanisms through which freedoms, capabilities and opportunities are severely restricted or removed in ways that join other mechanisms to produce the violent behaviour and organizations that in turn inflict damage on other people's human development. Again, this is an instance of referred violence.

The labour market consequences of violent conflict

If employment-related issues can be part of the causal processes leading to violence, violent conflict also has many, and complex, effects on labour markets, relations and institutions. Violent conflict does not just reduce employment, though this can be a powerful effect of conflict. In some circumstances, warfare has historically increased net employment, as, for example, in the 'total wars' of the 20th century. Violent conflict in most developing countries in the late 20th and early 21st centuries, however, has not functioned in quite the same way. What often happens is a redistribution

of employment and a shift in forms of labour relations. Where violent conflict sunders major infrastructural arteries, where it destroys power plants and fuel facilities, where it starves industries of foreign exchange for imported inputs, then clearly employment in much manufacturing, in manufacturing-related or tourist-linked services, and in some forms of agriculture can be forced into decline.

Yet the labour market effects of violent conflict are more complex than this and highly varied. Violence can weaken the quality of labour supplies through direct physical or psychological injury, through the disruption of health and education services, and through increased mortality and morbidity (Mallet and Slater 2012). Plümper and Neumayer (2006) argue that the effects of war especially on women are extremely high and last long after war ends (see also Byrne 1996). Violence also changes labour relations and the types of job available, as well as loosening the regulation of labour markets and weakening central control over violence rights.

This is linked to the ways that violent conflict can and often does unleash mechanisms of 'primitive accumulation': the use of extra-economic or non-economic coercion to wrest assets from their owners/occupiers through, for example, forced displacement and wartime land accumulation, and to force people to join wage labour markets for their survival (in or on the fringes of camps for refugee and internally displaced people, or in urban and rural labour markets where trade and production of both licit and illicit commodities continues or thrives). The demand for labour in the production, processing and trade of commodities often produced in conflict-affected contexts—coca/cocaine in Colombia or opium/heroin in Afghanistan, for instance—can be high, far higher than in the production of domestic staple crops. UNODC (2009) estimated that some 2.4 million people in Afghanistan were involved in opium cultivation.

The redistribution of labour opportunities and workers in contexts of conflict is not something restricted within national boundaries. Regional conflict complexes, as they have been called, often generate complicated labour markets and frequently abusive labour relations and working conditions across borders, helping to create what Hammar (2014) calls 'displacement economies'. Many refugee women during the Mozambican war ended up working as illegal—and cheap—workers on globally competitive agro-business farms in South Africa during the late 1980s and early 1990s. Ugandan rural labour markets contain many people with Congolese or Rwandan conflict-related origins who may experience discrimination in hiring practices and treatment.

Arguably, though, conflicts taking place in developing countries also have labour market effects far away in advanced industrialized economies. Thus, wars in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere in the Global War on Terror have spawned a massive expansion in the global security-industrial complex, ranging from highly skilled IT and technical innovation labourers to arms industry blue collar workers, infantry employment and private sector 'guard labour'. It may even be said that

infringements on human freedoms in one context can—by stimulating employment—enhance or redistribute capability-enhancing employment elsewhere.

Paying for peace, producing peace and working for peace

The human development consequences of violent conflict do not evaporate when a military victory is secured or a negotiated peace settlement agreed. It is often noted that the distinction between war and peace is fanciful and overly abstract; the 'peace in between' (Berdal and Suhrke 2012) is one in which post-conflict violence is often rife, whether or not a society actually falls into a 'civil war recidivism' trap. One facet of this is that war economies commonly carry over—with their regulatory tropes—into peacetime (Cramer 2008, 2009; Pugh 2008). It has proven very difficult quickly to re-establish, or for the first time really to establish, 'decent work' conditions, and dignified types and conditions of employment after the formal end of wars. In fact, this has not yet been a sufficiently high priority for governments or development agencies.

What happens to labour markets and employment levels, and their consequences for the quality and viability of peace, remains underresearched. The simplistic assumption that the fact of employment must be 'good' for peace and unemployment 'bad' reappears in the literature on the economics of peace. Collier (2007), for example, argues that the rate of growth of the economy is the single most important factor across countries in reducing the statistical risk of civil war recidivism and suggests—we know this little—that this probably operates through the employment mechanism. Certainly, we know that there is evidence, from Liberia for example, of ex-combatants being hired to harass voters in the run-up to elections, and that some of these ex-combatants were hired as part of the 'no war no peace' economy after the formal end of war to secure (with violence rights self-arrogated to former military leaders) property rights in post-war rubber plantations. We know too that summary dismissal of large numbers of 'specialists in violence' from Baathist security forces after the invasion of Iraq in 2003 spilled into the other causes of protracted violence in post-Saddam Hussein Iraq. But we do not know enough to make sweeping claims about employment levels and the durability of peace deals, or about the influence on the viability or quality of peace of forms and conditions of employment.

Nor is there nearly enough good research evidence about the employment (and through that potentially peace-supporting) dimensions of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes (Blattman and Annan 2015). Humphreys and Weinstein (2005) found very mixed results for the reintegration of former soldiers in Sierra Leone through these programmes, including their ability to secure employment. Twelve percent of ex-combatants in their large dataset reported having no employment at all after the end of the programme, and they suggest that a broader

definition of unemployment to encompass underemployment in small-scale agriculture would record a much higher number. Blattman and Annan (2015) studied an agricultural training and counselling programme in Liberia and found evidence that this did deter men from engaging in illicit labouring and from joining mercenary activity across the border in Côte d'Ivoire. As discussed below, the record of international interventions specifically designed to consolidate peace through youth employment schemes is underwhelming. And post-war employment can easily become prey, as it did, for example, in Zimbabwe (Kriger 2003), to political influence reflecting the political settlement at the end of a violent conflict.

Most of the limited number of studies of post-conflict employment and labour markets focus, as in Blattman and Annan's experiment, on supply-side interventions. There is even less attention to the demand for labour, to the extent to which post-conflict economic growth generates high rates of employment, and the extent to which this involves anything faintly approaching 'decent work'. The contrast is stark with the widespread political commitment to economic growth and full employment after World War II and in the wake of the economic upheavals of the inter-war years in Europe.

Instead of pursuing (and developing critiques of) the typical post-conflict 'triple transition' (Ottoway 2002) of security reform, democratization and market-oriented economic reforms, one way to encourage greater attention among policy makers, development agencies and researchers to the connections between labour markets and peace is to shift the focus to three interconnected challenges faced by societies emerging from violent conflict. These challenges are: how to pay for the peace, how to produce peace and how to work for peace.

Accelerating development and ensuring that it involves progressive human development requires substantial fiscal foundations, and the challenges of reconstructing an economy and society in the wake of destructive violence involves special costs. The question of how to pay for peace through mobilizing a variety of resources, in human development terms, is necessarily also a question of who pays for the peace: Who bears the burden of economic recovery and institutional renewal, and who benefits from any peace dividend. But it is not possible to develop lasting fiscal foundations of peace and development without an expanding productive base. Therefore, the peacetime challenge is also about producing (for) peace. And if peace is to be produced and paid for in ways that secure increasing access to decent work, then the challenge becomes one of working for peace too—ensuring that more and more people are employed in activities that themselves generate a widening tax base.

Given the emphasis throughout this piece on the type and conditions of work as much as on the level of employment, it is also important to devote more resources to ensuring better 'voice' regulation in labour markets, better representation for workers and stronger labour law enforcement capabilities in states.

A big knowledge gap

While there is frequent lip service paid to the importance of post-conflict employment creation, and a widespread assumption that unemployment must be a high risk factor in the breakdown of peace, we know remarkably little about what really works in post-conflict contexts and about whether what works for employment works for peace and political stability. Holmes et al. (2013), like Mallet and Slater (2012), emphasize how limited the evidence is and show how much of what has been studied focuses on immediate post-conflict, short-term programmes.[2] The challenge, as they show, is how to convert short-term reconstruction and public works employment schemes or supply-side schemes such as those studied by Blattman and Annan (2015) into long-term expansion of employment. Walton (2010) finds that the evidence that using youth employment schemes, at least as stand-alone programmes, in post-conflict environments to reduce instability is very weak. But few studies have looked at the possible importance for stability, peace and social cohesion of post-conflict attention to employment rights—Pugh (2008) being one exception.

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[2] Examples of evaluations of interventions aiming to support employment, through public works infrastructure schemes or training schemes, include DFID's (2014) review of its Sustainable Employment and Economic Development Programme II (SEED II) in Somalia, and Christian et al.'s (2013) evaluation of the World Bank-supported Labor Intensive Works Program in Yemen. Assessments in both cases found mixed results; in neither case, though, is there evidence of these programmes contributing much to larger scale increases in labour demand or indeed to stability and peace.

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