

SCOPING STUDY: RESEARCH GAPS ON 'CONFLICT'

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This scoping study addresses research gaps on ‘conflict’ as part of the Conflict, Crime and Security Research (GU) programme coordinated by the ESRC on behalf of RCUK. Specifically, the aim of the scoping study was to address the issue of identifying the research gaps on conflict in three ways:

- To provide a summary of themes in recent research with a view to highlighting current insights;
- Through the internal and external academic networks, the research team will identify current and emerging research gaps;
- The researchers will engage with the stakeholder and practitioner communities to ascertain the impact of conflict research to date and to elicit their priorities with regard to future research priorities.

A key feature of the scoping study was to highlight research issues on conflict from a variety of disciplines. This report primarily focuses on recent research from social sciences and arts and humanities but it also includes STEM-discipline perspectives on conflict issues as identified by these research communities. A team of academics from the University of Exeter were engaged to provide this scoping report and the approach involved three main elements: first, to identify from different disciplines, recent research themes on conflict; second, to conduct a survey of academics and stakeholders from the UK and further afield to gauge wider opinions on research gaps on conflict and, how to identify what issues arose with ensuring impact from academic research on conflict; third, to hold a workshop involving stakeholders to gauge reaction to the survey responses and the emerging research themes that arose from the recent academic literature and the survey responses.

The scoping study highlights six main research themes associated with conflict. These are: (i) understanding the shifting nature of conflict across time; (ii) interventions in conflict; (iii) the media and representations of conflict; (iv) technology and conflict; (v) conflict resolution and post-conflict transformations; and (vi) risk, insecurity and conflict.

Aside from the specific research questions that are associated with each of these six themes, we also highlight a number of recommendations relating to research funding on conflict. These relate to (i) maximising the potential of cross-disciplinary research on conflict; (ii) expanding the ‘tool-kit’ with which conflict issues can be addressed; (iii) improving pathways to impact involving stakeholders from the outset and over the duration of the project rather than as end-users, and (iv) consider the scale of projects that can accommodate to maximum effect the cross-disciplinary approaches and stakeholder involvement.

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1. Introduction

As the RCUK Global Uncertainties programme moves into its next phase through to 2018, the programme will focus on research areas relating to Conflict, Cyber Security and Transnational Organised Crime (now re-named as Conflict, Crime and Security Research). As part of this transition into this second phase, the ESRC, on behalf of RCUK, commissioned a scoping study on research gaps associated with conflict. An important feature of the scoping study was to look beyond social science research in this area and to highlight (in the first instance) research perspectives from arts and humanities and the potential for inter-disciplinary research crossing arts and humanities and social sciences. In the follow up to the initial version, how STEM-related subjects relate to these arts and humanities/social science perspectives was also addressed. Specifically, in response to the tender, we undertook to address the issue of research gaps on conflict in three ways:

- To provide a summary of themes in recent research with a view to highlighting current insights;
- Through the internal and external academic networks, the research team will identify current and emerging research gaps;
- The researchers will engage with the stakeholder and practitioner communities to ascertain the impact of conflict research to date and to elicit their priorities with regard to future research priorities.

Reflecting the inter-disciplinary remit of the scoping study, the submission from the University of Exeter ensured that the team reflected different disciplinary approaches to the study of conflict. The team was led by Professor Steve McCorrison (Economics) with colleagues from international relations (Dr John Heathershaw, Dr David Lewis and Professor Doug Stokes), history (Professors Andrew Thompson and Martin Thomas) and other disciplines in arts and humanities (Professor Rob Gleave). The ‘Exeter’ team were also supported by Sophia Zeschitz and Morgane Colleau.

We addressed the tasks in the scoping report in four main ways. First, we provide perspectives of key research directions from the different disciplines; second, we undertook a survey of academics (covering a wide range of disciplines) in the UK, Europe and the US as well as stakeholders in the UK to identify research priorities on ‘conflict’ and to reflect on how ‘impact’ on conflict research could be best met. Third, following the receipt of the survey responses, we held a workshop involving stakeholders and academics to present the main research issues that arose from the survey and to ‘test drive’ the likely main research themes that were emerging from the academic literature on conflict, in the process highlighting the insights from the different disciplinary perspectives and-together with the survey responses- to outline the likely priorities in addressing research on conflict as the RCUK theme on conflict, crime and security moves forward. Finally, we sought the reactions of STEM researchers to the research issues raised by the arts and humanities and social science disciplines. This was done via an additional survey of STEM researchers who were asked to comment on a draft of the report. While this survey of the STEM community was essentially partial in nature (i.e. they were being asked to comment on the perspectives of other disciplines rather than being asked to highlight the STEM-specific research priorities), the STEM community comments not only offer a broader insight into research priorities associated with conflict from the arts and humanities and social sciences but also note possibilities where these research communities can potentially interact.

The report is organised as follows. In Section 2, we provide a brief discussion to the policy context of conflict research from both a national and international perspective drawing on recent reports from the Ministry of Defence (such as the Global Strategic Trends) and the World Bank. These reflect two dimensions on why research on conflict matters: first, from a UK security perspective and how the new challenges in addressing the causes, forms and consequences of conflict impact on UK security, broadly defined; second, how the international development community addresses the impact of conflict on the citizens of developing countries. In Section 3, we summarize research perspectives from different disciplines. In Section 4, we report on the survey and workshop involving academics and stakeholders. We also note the process of engaging the STEM research community on conflict issues where the STEM perspective relates more narrowly to commenting on the research issues on conflict as identified by arts and humanities and social science disciplines. The major themes that arise from recent literature and the survey and workshop are summarized in Section 6. In Section 7, we provide our (provisional) recommendations reflecting research priority areas, the delivery of interdisciplinary research on conflict and pathways to impact.

2. Policy Context

Addressing the challenges of conflict in the various forms it can arise, the consequences of providing security against the potential consequences of conflict and the how to ameliorate the many dimensions associated with the human suffering that conflict and violence brings poses critical issues to stakeholders across the public and private sectors and civil society. Hence, in parallel with research by the academic community, stakeholders have identified the challenges and the priorities in addressing conflict-related issues as they concern UK strategic priorities and the resource implications for promoting security against perceived risks and impacts that can arise from conflict. From the UK perspective, these are most evident from the *National Security Strategy 2010* (National Security Council, 2010), the Ministry of Defence report on *The Future Character of Conflict* (Ministry of Defence, 2011) and the recent *Global Strategic Trends Towards 2045* (Ministry of Defence, 2014).

These documents have over-lapping themes on how the issues of conflict and the implications of conflict for UK security are identified; but since they run in parallel with identifying research issues on conflict and that the priority for impact is well-established by the academic community, it is worth noting the perceptions of stakeholders to place research in context and hence the research gaps that this report identifies.

The *National Security Strategy 2010 (A Strong Britain in an Age of Uncertainty)* highlights a range of security risks which will have implications for how the UK defence and security communities respond and the resources that are allocated to these efforts. While noting a range of priority risks associated with international terrorism, cyber security, international military crises and the impact of major accidents and hazards, it also identifies a range of economic, social, environmental and technical drivers of conflict that can create “uncertainty” for the UK. The report notes the changing character of conflict, the threats associated with energy security, the risks associated with climate change and the impact of environmental factors as well as the demand (associated with a rising global population) for natural resources such as food and water.

These drivers of conflict are developed in the Ministry of Defence report on *The Future Character of Conflict* (Ministry of Defence, 2011). These drivers include globalisation (as both a positive and negative influence), access and control over resources, and state failure. Also noted in the report is the changing character of conflict and the role of non-state actors particularly those that operate from or within failed states. The complexity of the ‘conflict’ process is also highlighted in the Ministry of

Defence report as ‘conflict’ cannot be easily characterised along a spectrum from war/conflict through to resolution and humanitarianism; rather, there are no discrete points in the conflict spectrum and, where conflict can be recurring, it is difficult to define the ‘post’ in a ‘post conflict’ environment.

Global Strategic Trends Out to 2045 (published in 2014) expands on issues that are drivers of, or as emerging dimensions of, conflict and which have perceived risks for the UK. These are identified as a number of thematic issues covering demography (for example, the impact of migration and social tensions), gender (including the prevalence of sexual violence), urbanisation (which can expose concentration of a population to violence or natural hazards), resource issues (covering competition over resources, food and population issues, energy security and climate change), the impact of extreme weather, globalisation and identity and the state. These thematic issues are tied to geography; for example, the risks of conflict over, say water or land, or the vulnerability to climate change may be more urgent in Sub-Saharan Africa than Latin America.

While the drivers of conflict noted above relate to economic, social and political aspects of conflict, these reports also note the significance of science and technology. For example, the use of biological and chemical weapons is clearly a priority risk relating to the form that conflict may take (see *The Future Character of Conflict*, Ministry of Defence, 2011). However, emphasis is placed on technology and the pace of technological change; these are manifest across a number of dimensions including connectivity, information and communications technology, cyber-security, defence capabilities and the conduct of conflict (for example, via unmanned systems such as drones).

From a broader perspective, the *World Development Report 2011* on theme of “Conflict, Security and Development” is particularly notable in documenting recent evidence on the scale and form of conflict and the impact of conflict and violence on under-development and the challenge of reconstruction in fragile and failed states that face recurrent cycles of conflict. Although there is evidence that (worldwide) that the number of deaths from civil wars has been declining over the last decade, it has also been observed that conflict is becoming more complex, violence (in a variety of forms) is often endemic in fragile states, and that conflict traps can often emerge (for example, 90 per cent of countries that had a civil war over the last decade or so also had a civil war sometime in the last 30 years). Perhaps most startling is the human cost of conflict in developing countries: it is noted in the World Bank report that “One-and-a-half billion people live in areas affected by fragility, conflict, or large-scale, organized criminal violence, and no low-income fragile or conflict-affected country has yet to achieve a single United Nations Millennium Development Goal”.

Other, recent high-profile evidence that sets the policy-context for conflict issues includes the recent International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC, 2014) that highlighted the potential links between climate change and conflict noting that climate change can “indirectly increase risks of violent conflicts in the form of civil war and inter-group violence by amplifying well-documented drivers of these conflicts such as poverty and economic shocks” (IPCC, Working Party 2, 2014). Along a similar vein, the links between food prices and conflict has also been noted with the recent World Bank “Food Price Watch” (May 2014) highlighting the links between recent events on world agricultural markets and food riots particularly in fragile states. Of course, the links between food security and conflict are complex with separating food insecurity as a cause of consequence of conflict an important issue to address. These issues of climate change and resource shocks and how they interact with conflict issues tie with the identification of priority risks from the UK Ministry of Defence.

3. Recent Perspectives on ‘Conflict’ Research across Disciplines

We identify, without aiming to provide a comprehensive literature review, some recent trends in the analysis of conflict from the perspectives of different disciplines. These short perspectives aim to tie the stakeholder context with the results from the survey. In combination with stakeholder context, the perspectives of different disciplines that address conflict together with the survey responses, form the basis of our approach to highlighting broad themes in which to reference the emerging research gaps on conflict and form the basis of our recommendations.

(i) Perspectives from International Relations

In the twenty-five years since the end of the Cold War and the ‘new interventionism’ of its immediate aftermath, a consensus has emerged in both academic and policy worlds that post-conflict stabilisation is a comprehensive and long-term process. In the 1990s, liberal ‘peace-building’ provided the nomenclature whilst from the 2000s, ‘state-building’ reflected the increased attention given to questions of security. However, the prospects and pitfalls of international efforts to intervene under the rubrics of peace-building and state-building have come under intense scrutiny, particular from critical academic analysts (Paris 2004; Doyle & Sambanis 2006; Richmond 2009; Chandler 2010).

In some respects, these debates are now moot. The large, Western-led-scale missions of peace-building of the 1990s and early 2000s seem unlikely to be repeated. For example, a rising China takes an increasing role in UN peace operations whilst an assertive Russia has directly challenged Western norms of conflict management. None of these powers fully accept the liberal agenda of peace-building and state-building but rather select aspects of this agenda and redefine it in their own terms. For example, Russia’s behaviour towards the minority Russian-speaking population in the Crimea and Eastern Ukraine is framed in terms of the Kosovo intervention of 1999 and is thankfully a rare example of how this can lead to confrontation. In national contexts, Sri Lanka’s brutal approach to ending its own civil war stands out as an alternative mode of ‘authoritarian conflict management’. More often, normative and practical differences are more nuanced and driven by pragmatism. A whole new research agenda has opened up in the last five years to consider the role and policy of ‘rising powers’ (with an ESRC funded programme on the theme).

There is a further way in which the debates of the 1990s and 2000s have now been superseded. That is in the increasing recognition of the significance of the ‘local’. Approaches in the field of International Relations frequently begin with the intervenors and their agenda, assuming the primacy of the third part in peace-building and state-building. Specifically, conflict is often localised and the effectiveness of nation-wide programmes and international strategies for peace-building differ a great deal from locality to locality. An increasing volume of literature has responded that conflict parties often co-opt international resources and, in fact, operate peace-building and state-building agendas which are formulated independently of international policy. The meeting of these agendas and actors creates what has been denoted as a ‘hybrid’ post-conflict space (MacGinty, 2010).

However, merely diagnosing ‘hybridity’, denying the privilege of the third party and emphasising ‘internal’ discourses of peace does little more than provide a better description of peace-building and state-building. The development of grand theories in this area may be a thankless task as the experience of early conflict theorists such as Burton (e.g. Burton (1993), and Azar (1990)). Rather, mid-level theoretical avenues are open that provide new spatial perspectives on the post-conflict. Our review of the recent literature from International Relations research suggests four promising lines of

inquiry that offer original intellectual interventions and policy-relevant research. In each of these, the state – far from being superseded – remains central.

First, the ‘local’ may be explored as a spatial category which is contested between international, elites and subordinate/subaltern actors. New research suggests the local is produced via sub-contracting arrangements with *local* or grassroots NGOs; such localities often work as liminal spaces between the national and international. For the state elite, the local is a scale of government which is putatively subordinate to metropole via formal and informal relations of power. For subaltern or subordinate actors, these efforts to produce the local are often resisted or superficially accommodated in practice as is the struggle over the local space where a great deal of post-conflict politics takes place. Research which takes local rather than national case studies can capture this variation with both statistical analyses of datasets and multi-sited ethnographies offering the prospect of exploring why certain localities are less violent than others.

Second, recent research suggests that regional patterns of conflict formation and resolution deserve greater attention. Work in security studies on regional security complexes and the policy reality of rising powers attaining status in their regions or ‘near abroads’ both contribute to this avenue of research. Cooley makes a persuasive case that Central Asia is a harbinger of multipolar futures (Cooley, 2012). Due to the absence of a regional hegemon – but major roles played by the US, Russia and China – national state elites get to set ‘local rules’ by which great powers may gain influence. In these circumstances, regional discourses and practices matter and defy general theories of conflict management.

Third, greater attention is now paid to the hidden spaces of organised crime and the informal economy. There are few if any conflict and post-conflict contexts in which organised crime and the informal economy do not play a large role. Earlier research on ‘greed’ and political economy of war has given way to more nuanced analysis of patterns of state-crime relations (Kupatadze, 2012). Rather than seeing these state-crime spaces as corrosive to the peace, research is needed which explores how illicit profits and opportunities for corruption may be functional to stabilisation (Leenders, 2012, Cheng & Zaum, 2012).

Fourth, and returning from the ‘local’ to the ‘global’, a new area of research is opening up to study offshore spaces, networks of international finance and prospects for global regulation. Palan *et al.* (2010) and Shaxson (2012) have shown how offshore tax havens and anonymous company ownership are frequently used by organised criminal groups, sometimes in conflict and post-conflict settings. Here, company service providers based in London and New York assist some of the world’s most notorious regimes and rebel leaders. Global Witness’ policy research has provided similar agenda-setting studies; the organization won the 2014 TED prize for its work towards ending the anonymous company ownership rules which keep these spaces hidden. Sharman (2011) has shown how field experiments can be used to test the global anti-money laundering regime. Further research is needed to probe new regulations such as the UK’s proposal for a public registry of beneficial owners, the World Bank’s Stolen Assets Recovery mechanism and the Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative. The role of these global spaces in conflict and post-conflict politics demands further research.

(ii) Perspectives from Economics

Recent years has witnessed considerable growth in economists addressing the issue of conflict though there are still important aspects of conflict which the economics profession has yet to address.

Economists have addressed conflict from both a theoretical and empirical perspective with several reviews of different aspects of the literature recently published: see Blattman and Miquel (2010), Garfinkel and Skaperdas (2007) and Jackson and Morelli (2011). The review by Blattman and Miquel (2010) is the most broad-based review and they identify the main strands in the literature which has the closest alignment with the issues of conflict identified in the survey results discussed below.

From a theoretical perspective, economic approaches to conflict have drawn on microeconomics and, in particular, theoretical developments associated with asymmetric information, bargaining and commitment issues. In these settings, ‘rational’ sides (typically only two) in a conflict environment, each maximise a specified pay-off function but, due to the existence of asymmetric information or lack of commitment, conflict can arise in equilibrium. For example, two opposing sides may not engage in conflict if each were fully aware of either the other side’s capabilities or about the future likely gains of avoiding conflict but the presence of asymmetric information or lack of commitment in ensuring a peaceful outcome leads to conflict being a ‘rational’ outcome. While the theoretical approach to conflict is informative in dissecting core issues, as Blattman and Miquel (2010) note, there is considerable scope for further theoretical developments in addressing conflict including the application of contract theory, mechanism design and behavioural economics. In addition, there are a wider array of conflict issues that can be addressed by theory including counter-insurgency, conflict with more than two groups, the internal organisation of rebel groups and the roots of individual participation in collective violence (Blattman and Miquel, 2010, p. 23).

Theoretical work addressing the role and formation of “institutions” and its relation to conflict (and economic development more generally) has gained momentum in recent years. This line of research has been popularized by Acemoglu and Robinson (2012) while Acemoglu *et al.* (2010) deal with specific aspects of conflict, specifically the persistence and recurrence of civil wars. In a similar vein is the theoretical work by Besley and Persson (2011) who address the issue of fragile states and the coexistence of poverty, conflict and weak state capacity. Weak state capacity reflects the role of institutions, the rule of law and legal and fiscal capacity; they also note that weak states may be characterised by civil conflict with strong states (e.g. dictatorships) characterised by repression thus suggesting that the link between state capacity and alternative forms of violence is complex and where the distinction between civil conflict and repression relates to two- or one-sided violence (Besley and Persson, 2010).

Empirical work by economists tends to relate to two broad themes: cross-country econometric studies which may, for example, address the factors that determine the onset of conflict (e.g. inequality, negative economic shocks); and more detailed, sub-national scale studies which increasingly use household level data. These ‘sub-national’ studies are particularly important in addressing the ‘locality’ of conflict and with the increasing availability of household level data, it makes this line of enquiry increasingly feasible. The ‘household in conflict’ dimension of addressing conflict is consistent with the concerns of ‘locality’ as highlighted in International Relations research.

Blattman and Miquel (2010) highlight concerns with empirical studies, many of which are especially pertinent with reference to the use of cross country studies. Two general issues stand out: one issue is the identification of exogeneity (is poverty a cause of conflict or a consequence?); a second is the often (at best) loose connection between theory and empirics. Taken together, there is considerable scope for a better match between theory and empirics (particularly in the use of sub-national data) and a closer interaction between the two as the economists’ approach to conflict progresses.

On a more specific issue, the link between conflict and resources (relating to food, water, climate change impacts and so on)-and reflecting the broader concerns from a stakeholder perspective outlined in Section 2- has been a recent line of research by economists. In relation to food, in part this reflects the underlying expected demands on food availability in future years as world population grows and it also reflects in part, the recent commodity price spikes of 2007-2008 which were associated with riots and civil disturbances in many countries and its potential links with developments in the Middle East and the 'Arab Spring'. Barrett (2014) provides a survey of the potential links between food security and political stability with Brinkman and Hendrix (2013) also surveying the issues. Arzeki and Brückner (2011) provide evidence of the links between food price spikes and civil disturbances using data for 12 countries between 1970-2007 and find that increases in food prices are associated with civil disturbances and violence. Besley and Persson (2009) also use commodity prices as a measure of negative economic shocks and the outbreak of conflict. Brückner and Ciccone (2010) also address this issue. Although the effects of recent commodity prices and the potential links between conflict and food security are a growing concern, the links between (external) economic shocks (which commodity prices represent for many developing countries) also features in the empirical literature: see, for example, Miquel *et al.* (2004), Miquel and Satyanath (2011) and Ciccone (2011). The link between resource endowments and conflict have been addressed most recently by Caselli *et al.* (2013).

In the context of the potential links between climate change and conflict, Hsiang *et al.* (2013) survey these issues in what has become a contentious area of identifying the effects of climate change and the mechanisms via which these effects arise. They find strong causal effects linking climate impacts to human conflict. Using detailed environmental data provides an interesting dimension to addressing conflict (see Brückner and Ciccone, 2011) while Couttenier and Soubeyran (2013) find a weak link between drought and civil war.

Addressing of conflict is becoming one of the main sub-fields of economics/economic development and economists have opened a rich line of enquiry that draws upon both theory and empirics. While the research agenda within the confines of economics is broad, there is also considerable scope for economists to engage with other disciplines. While the focus of economics research has overlap with the concerns emerging from an International Relations perspective (e.g. the concerns with 'locality' non-state actors, tax havens and so on), economics has the potential to expand the theoretical and quantitative 'tool-kit' to address these research issues and, arguably, the contribution of the economics discipline (particularly in the UK) has been under-utilised to date.

(iii) Perspectives from History and the Humanities

Historical perspectives on conflict are many and diverse. They span the entire range of historical study (military, political, economic, cultural etc.). They reach backwards to the distant as well as extending forwards to the proximate past. They deploy different theoretical and conceptual perspectives, yet for the most part are united by their empirical underpinning in systematic archival research. And they increasingly engage with research on conflict from other disciplines in the humanities and the social sciences, including the scholarship referred to in other sections of this report. The recent and striking growth of interest in transnational, imperial and global histories is also likely to sustain if not strengthen the investment of history as a discipline in the study of conflict into the foreseeable future.

Among the key contributions made by history to the study of conflict is the way it helps us to stand back and gain a wider perspective on the shifting nature of conflict across time. This includes not only

the changing nature of the threats to international peace and stability but the context in which those threats play themselves out. It also sheds light on how conflict is influenced by changing geopolitical regimes, and changing international norms around the conduct of warfare and its impact on civilian populations.

The study of the past is inevitably influenced by the concerns of the present, which explains the greater attention that has been paid recently by historians to the rise of intra-state conflicts, secessionist struggles, and insurgency and counter-insurgency campaigns; the role of religion in conflict; the relationship between conflict and environmental concerns and climate change; and the effects of conflict on civilian populations and, in particular, women (gender-based violence in conflict, for example) and children (child soldiers, for example)¹.

Military history remains a vitally important branch of the historical study of conflict and one which reaches beyond the academic community to engage wider audiences and stakeholders. Major recent studies by leading military historians of the First World War (Strachan (2006), Sheffield (2014)), Second World War (Bevor (2012), Overy (2013)), and the wars of decolonisation (Burleigh (2013), French (2011)), have featured widely in the print and broadcast media, and remain one of the most fruitful avenues for large-scale public engagement with the past.

The memory and memorialisation of conflict has long been of interest to history and the humanities. Here the centenary of the First World War deserves particular mention (Winter, (2002) and (2014)). Over the next 4 years, there will be a very significant addition to the already large and diverse historiography on the First World War, much of it funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council. It remains to be seen how (and how far) this new scholarship will shift academic understanding of a war that shaped the rest of the twentieth century and that over that century was subject to successive rounds of historical revisionism. What is clear, however, is that this major historical anniversary is re-opening a dialogue between the past and the present about the nature of this particular conflict but also about conflict in general.

Much of the pressure to remember and commemorate is welling up from below. But that in turn gives rise to the challenge of how to link what is local and specific to broader national narratives of the First World War. We also have a chance to expand the public understanding of the war – in terms of what it means for Britain today. The latest scholarship is rightly emphasising that this was a *global* war, not just involving European soldiers fighting in Europe, but soldiers from across the Commonwealth fighting in the Middle East and Africa and beyond. History and the humanities have a role to play in making the centenary commemoration more inclusive – recovering voices and perspectives lost or marginalised in previous anniversaries of the conflict, and linking its 100th anniversary to another major national narrative, namely Britain's growing ethnic and racial diversity over the last half century.

Within and beyond military history, the academic landscape of conflict study is changing and new historical approaches, methods and themes are widely in evidence. Examples include:

¹ Gender-based issues are, of course, broader than the focus on women (as part of the impact of conflict or their role in the reconstruction following conflict) or the issue of sexual violence, important as these issues are. As the World Bank has noted, male gender roles also matter including the link between masculinity and violence and the role of young males in the 'life cycle' of conflict.

- The role of the media in representing and internationalising conflict; how, over time, the media has shaped impressions and experiences of what war is; what is made visible by the media and what is not.
- The role of technology in conflict (for example, the impact of new weapons systems, and the social mobilisation enabled by new media technologies).
- The role of language in conflict including the ways in which wars are labelled, violence is named, and conflict are categorised, and the resulting impact on public perceptions of conflict and the legitimacy of warring parties; and the importance of language relating to how the military and other personnel in conflict communicate their purpose and show greater cultural sensitivity toward local populations.
- Understanding the nature of violence in conflict, including larger-scale atrocities and abuses of human rights as well as more individualised and chaotic forms of violence and violence targeted-for religious, racial or other reasons-at particular social groups.
- How international conflicts and civil wars are ended and the contribution of international organisations to conflict resolution.

A very promising development has been the interest taken by historians in the relationship between history, culture and post-conflict reconstruction and transformation. There is new work on global governance and the contribution of international and supranational organisation to the resolution of conflict (the League of Nations in particular; see Clavin, (2013) and Pedersen, (forthcoming 2014)). Historians, lawyers, philosophers and cultural studies scholars share an interest in the contribution of reparative and restorative justice and truth and reconciliation initiatives (“litigating the past”) as a way of societies coming to terms with difficult and divisive pasts (including scholarship on post-apartheid South Africa and “post-conflict” Northern Ireland). Historians and scholars and practitioners of performance have come together to explore the contribution of artistic, literary and cultural practices to dealing with personal and collective trauma and to different modes of engagement with the past that may allow societies to imagine alternative futures.

Another rapidly emerging area of scholarship, which mirrors the above concerns with 1990s liberal ‘peace-building’ and 2000s ‘state-building’ (see the section on International Relations), relates to the history of humanitarian interventions (Simms and Trim (2011) is just one of the more prominent examples). This is by no means exclusively historical and indeed brings history into close conversation with scholars in other disciplines (International Relations, political science, legal studies, to name but a few). It argues for treating the bitter and bloody intra-state conflicts of the 1990s (Bosnia, Iraq, Liberia, Rwanda, Somalia, the Southern Sudan and Zaire) – and the West’s interventions in these conflicts - as historically contingent, with their meanings closely tied to the particular contexts in which they took place. But it also seeks to show how, by taking a longer perspective on forcible external interventions in conflict, whether actually motivated or simply justified by humanitarian purposes, contemporary difficulties and dilemmas can be brought into sharper perspective.

These include, but are not limited to:

- The consequences of the more routine interaction of humanitarians with military forces and the conflation of humanitarian with peacekeeping, stabilisation and security operations;
- The question of sovereignty, and the constraints it imposes on humanitarian action, in particular how, at a time of its resurgence, might state sovereignty be qualified or reframed according to the needs of humanity and to provide a firmer legal and moral basis for

collective interference (see, most recently, the “R2P” concept), and the need for sovereignty to be better historicized;

- The challenge to traditional Western assumptions about the universality of humanitarian action from the rise of an array of loosely defined secondary powers, the decline of the West’s hegemonic influence, and the growing number of humanitarian actors from the Global South.

In addressing these questions what was at first a largely discrete body of scholarship, aimed at bringing together historical and contemporary perspectives on humanitarian intervention, is now opening out into a much broader enquiry into the changing nature of the humanitarian landscape over the last two centuries. There is particular interest in the subject of international humanitarianism from a younger generation of historians who are eager to engage with other disciplines, and to set contemporary challenges in a wider chronological perspective.

Significantly, in terms of stakeholder engagement, several humanitarian actors with long-standing involvement in conflict have recently expressed a desire to learn more from their pasts and to open up their archives to academic researchers – the International Committee of the Red Cross, Save the Children Fund, and Oxfam, for example.

There are major opportunities to significantly expand our knowledge and deepen our understanding of the role of international humanitarianism in conflict. New scholarship on the history of human rights (Moyn (2012) and Simpson (2001)) has not yet been related to that on the history of humanitarianism (how historically have the distinction and separation lines between the two been drawn?). In defining the boundaries of humanitarian action, its long-term relationship to development deserves more attention (why have they so long existed in a state of “troubled rapport?”). And the problems of access and acceptance raised so poignantly today by Syria and other contemporary conflicts (how do you get to the most difficult spots?) beg the question of what lessons we can learn from the past about the politicization of aid in conflict zones, the value of humanitarian principles of neutrality, impartiality and independence in ensuring civilian populations are protected, and the limitations of international humanitarian law in cases of ‘internal’ or ‘lower threshold’ armed conflict.

At the start of twenty-first century, the growing political significance of humanitarian crises suggests such questions are likely to inform the agenda of future conflict research in history, but equally it is clear that they will not be adequately answered without history engaging extensively with other disciplines.

(iv) Perspectives from Arts and Humanities: Identities and Beliefs

Arts and humanities contributions to the study of conflict and security fall into three principal categories. First, arts and humanities disciplines can provide an understanding of the cultural context of conflict. The ideas and beliefs which provide much of the narrative of conflict situations act, in no small measure, as drivers of violence. In the contemporary period, notions of identity often draw on the cultural history of an imagined community, or an appeal to a set of utopian religious ideals. See, for example, Anderson (1991) Cash (1996) and Cavanaugh (2009). Understanding conflict, and therefore understanding which strategies to end conflict will prove workable, require greater sensitivities to these dynamics. This perspective is almost entirely absent in the literature on conflict and security, and arts and humanities disciplines have not yet been able to make a significant contribution to the field. However, the UK research base has impressive resources in the study of the cultures, religions and history of the current arenas of conflict. Realising the potential of this research base for the study of conflict and security, and enabling it to inform public debate and policy

formation, is a major priority in the coming years. However, if arts and humanities disciplines are to make a stronger impact on conflict and security research, a coordinated effort is required. Of particular note here, is the contribution of Area Studies disciplines, where the languages, culture, religion, history and literature of a particular are studied in a single institutional unit. The understanding provided by such a cross disciplinary approach enables an unmatched depth of analysis, and though institutionally the Area Studies approach is under some pressure nationally, it remains the primary venue for understanding conflict and security issues in a wider perspective.

Second, arts and humanities disciplines can provide a nuanced and sophisticated understanding of the cultural effects of conflict, and the potential success of resolution efforts in a particular cultural conflict. This is recognized by unconventional approaches to conflict resolution and reconciliation that focus on empathy and trust through e.g. performance arts; see Zelizer (2007) and Ramsbotham *et al.* (2011). In simple terms, the role of arts and culture, history and religion in providing long-term solutions to conflict situations is poorly understood. Rarely do post-conflict strategies by governments, NGOs or Third Sector organisations look beyond the infrastructural requirements, and the inability to embed programmes of reconstruction within the post-conflict cultural conflict provides part of the explanation for their regular failure. Nevertheless, the manner in which conflict impacts the literature, music and arts of a society provides a rich vein for research area. As with the role of ideas and beliefs as drivers of conflict, the arts and humanities potential in this area has yet to be fully realised, and integrated into conflict and security studies. However, it is in these areas, alongside the institutional building and provision of basic services, that the success of a post-conflict strategy is measured. The cultural processing of conflict through the arts, and its long-term contribution to the security of post-conflict societies is often seen as an optional extra, a serendipitous benefit of conflict resolution. Recent research indicates, however, that if these cultural processes are not fully understood or activated, and the incorporation of the themes and tensions of conflict are not integrated and expressed, then post-conflict infrastructural programmes will prove unstable and temporary. The arts and humanities contribution here is, once again, thoroughly cross-disciplinary, and the principal research question lies in how to harness the research skills in various disciplines, marry them with cognate research in the social sciences and elsewhere, to provide fully integrated research. This is the case, not only in the analysis of conflict, but also in the interrogation of notions of security and its role in conflict resolution. In both the processing of conflict and the entrenching of security, analysis employing arts and humanities methodologies will enable the development of more effective strategies for resolution and reconstruction.

Finally, conflict and security studies usually move forward without a full consideration of the ethical perspective, and the notions of morally acceptable and unacceptable actions in different cultural settings. Most conflict and security studies literature builds on a set of presumptions about what is and what is not moral, and these are rarely questioned. Indeed, most of the terrorism studies literature assumes amorality, e. g. Schmid (2011) without further investigation or explicit application of moral-philosophical principles. While critical research confirms that moral standards are not unambiguous (see Bauman, 2013) and not generally upheld in conflicts (see Walzer, (2006) and Downs (2008)), morality (as opposed to legality) is hardly ever investigated in mainstream research on conflict. However, exploring the ethical perspectives for and against particular security measures and interventions, and participating or abstaining in conflict situations, should be fully integrated into the field. This is a major area of arts and humanities research, not only in philosophy but also in political theory and religious studies, which has been neglected in the current state of the field. That there are diverse ethical perspectives is, of course, obvious, but understanding the fundamental questions which underlie these differences rarely form an element of either the academic discussions or the policy

formation. Furthermore, since much moral thinking is now culturally contextualised, deeper awareness of the nature of the different world-views and moral priorities in the world makes for an assessment of both conflict and intervention more ethically complex.

In a field usually dominated by the social sciences, arts and humanities research-particularly as it relates to Identities and Beliefs-is a much-underutilised resource for a more thoroughgoing analysis. The three areas of arts and humanities research named above form the major priority areas that emerge in the field of conflict and security, and will prevent the one-dimensional view of the field which has emerged in the current literature. First, a comprehensive understanding of individual conflicts and conflict in comparative perspective across history and across diverse cultural contexts is impossible without the nurturing of research and the development of expertise. The challenge is to integrate these insights in a truly inter-, multi- and cross-disciplinary way.

Second, how are the effects of conflicts on peoples to be measured? A healthy cultural arena is one of the major marks of a successful post-conflict programme of resolution and reconciliation. Knowledge of that cultural health, and effective ways of assessing and measuring it, lie at the heart of much arts and humanities research, and therefore form a crucial element in both policy formation and the construction of programmes to promote societal well-being post-conflict.

Third, the ethical decisions, and the complexity of those in a culturally and religiously diverse global environment, is not yet an element in conflict and security studies, and the possibilities for exciting and challenging research is available if connections between philosophy, religious studies and the humanities generally can be made with social science disciplines.

4. Eliciting Views on Research Gaps on Conflict

To identify a broader range of views on the research gaps on conflict, we undertook a several-pronged approach to this issue. First, we conducted a survey of researchers in the arts and humanities communities and social sciences as well as the stakeholder community; second, we conducted interviews with stakeholders and academics in both the UK and US; third, we held a “Stakeholder Workshop” where the outline of the scoping study was presented and the findings of the research gaps that arose in the survey were presented and discussed. This last step helped us to fine-tune the priorities for research and to ‘road test’ the research issues on conflict that we report below. This “Stakeholder Workshop” was held in mid-June (2014) at the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) in London and involved stakeholders from government (including the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the Ministry of Defence and the Department for International Development), civil society (International Alert), research institutes (Overseas Development Institute and the Institute for Development Studies) and academics from outside Exeter (Professor Zaum, University of Reading) as well as representatives from the Exeter team (Professor Rob Gleave, Professor Steve McCorrison and Sophia Zeschitz). In addition to the above process, we also took into account the responses to an earlier ESRC exercise on research issues on conflict carried out in autumn 2013.

Given the importance of ‘impact’, and given that the views of the stakeholder communities would be pertinent in identifying research gaps, we took the opportunity to seek views by stakeholders and the academic community on what worked and what did not work when it came to ‘impact’ on conflict. A question on the survey therefore related to impact and we report on the reactions to ‘impact’ below.

In the sub-sections below, we report on: (i) the details of the survey of arts and humanities and social science researchers; (ii) some general observations that arose from the survey, the interviews and the stakeholder meeting; and (iii) the insights from STEM disciplines on the research priorities

highlighted by the arts and humanities and social science disciplines This leads to identifying thematic issues relating to the research gaps on conflict that have arisen from the scoping exercise involving the recent academic literature, the survey and the stakeholder workshop.

The Survey

We complemented the perceptions of the current themes in the literature on conflict from different disciplines (Section 2 above) with a survey of academics and stakeholders who are engaged in conflict issues². As noted above, the survey was complemented by interviews and the stakeholder workshop. In line with the remit of the scoping study, the survey questions were sent to a variety of different disciplines involving academics from arts and humanities and social sciences. Academics from anthropology, economics, international relations, politics, development studies, geography, linguistics, arts and culture, theology, security studies were contacted with the reach of the survey extending beyond the UK academic community to include Europe and the US. The views of stakeholders and research users from the private sector, government and civil society were also sought³.

The survey was sent to approximately 200 researchers and stakeholders with a response rate of around 20 per cent. Given the time constraints of the scoping study, initial contact was followed up by a single reminder if no response had been initially received. The survey was followed up by interviews either when the respondent indicated that they would prefer to be interviewed or where they were willing to elaborate on their survey responses with an interview. This part of the process involved both academics from the UK and US and with stakeholders.

The survey involved the following questions:

1. In what ways have the policy agenda on ‘conflict’ and/or perceptions on the nature of ‘conflict’ changed in recent years?
2. What have you found most helpful or convincing in recent academic research on ‘conflict’?
3. What areas of potential research are understudied and/or must be priorities for future research on ‘conflict’?
4. What is the best pathway to the effective use of research by stakeholders and policymakers?
5. What research methods may provide the most insights to stakeholders and research users?
6. What potential overlaps between disciplines would be the most useful?

² The respondents to the survey including the disciplines they are associated with are listed in the appendix.

³ A further consideration regarding stakeholders relates to engagement with the private sector both in terms of the role of the private sector in conflict arenas and in terms of the exposure to the effects of conflict.

General Observations

The Importance of Inter-Disciplinary Research on Conflict

There was unanimity on the importance of inter-disciplinary approaches to conflict. The perceptions, however, varied between relatively 'narrow' views on what inter-disciplinary interactions may be feasible through to broader views on the potential of less obvious collaborations across disciplines. For example, the 'narrow' views on inter-disciplinary research related to engagement between closely-related disciplines: political science and law (on say addressing legitimacy of conflict) would be an example of 'narrow' inter-disciplinarity or political science and development studies (on intra-state conflict).

'Broader' perceptions of inter-disciplinarity involved a wider spectrum of disciplines and more unique combinations. Examples here would include combinations of social sciences (e.g. economists and political scientists and historians) to understand conflicts in the past (e.g. the factors driving counter-insurgency) or the post-colonial impact on conflict. Other responses referred to the importance of arts and culture in combination with social sciences; for example, the role that the arts (drama, theatre, poetry) can contribute in the process of reconciliation in the post-conflict stage.

Other views on the potential of inter-disciplinarity were centred on specific research questions as opposed to explicitly identifying which combinations of disciplines would be most fruitful. Examples of this would include issues relating to "trust", "social norms", "ethnographic perspectives on conflict" and "institutions". There are two observations to be made with regard to these perceptions. First, it would involve a wider combination of disciplines to address these issues (economics, psychology, political science, theology etc.) than the more 'narrow' views of inter-disciplinarity. Second, these views on inter-disciplinarity related to a broader perspective of the conflict process which relates to not seeing the onset of conflict as a discrete event and where a resolution ends the conflict but where conflict and violence are endemic and where the 'life cycle' of conflict involves a process of post-conflict reconciliation and reconstruction. In other words, 'conflict' is seen here as an issue in which societies and people adapt, resolve (to varying degrees) conflict or where they have to develop resilience the potential for conflict or violence.

One aspect of research which was particularly noted at the stakeholder workshop was the relevance of area studies. While much of the responses to the survey related to research topics, participants at the stakeholder event noted the importance of in-depth knowledge of a particular region/country in addressing conflict issues. In this context, area specialists cross disciplinary boundaries with knowledge of religion, customs, history, culture and language which would provide an important dimension to inter-disciplinary research tied with specific research topic issues.

However, some survey respondents expressed concerns with inter-disciplinary research. Most obvious in this regard (which was especially noted by academics) is that research assessment (in the UK) occurs along disciplinary lines. Many researchers noted this was a barrier to research of this kind even if the subject warranted it. Related to the assessment of inter-disciplinary research is the treatment of applications; for example, there is a perception that an inter-disciplinary project can fall between two stools and not be appropriately ranked if it is reviewed by subject experts with a less open mind about the significance of inter-disciplinary research. These issues pose challenges but are arguably not unresolvable.

Another potential barrier to inter-disciplinary research was differences in the methodologies that would be applied. For example, some respondents noted that while they saw the importance of inter-

disciplinary research, they were lukewarm about the approaches to conflict from some disciplines. In this regard, there was a wider gulf between how different disciplines approach conflict, say through the use of quantitative studies as opposed to qualitative studies with some researchers from disciplines that would take the latter approach indicating suspicion about the former.

Methods

High quality research requires an appropriate methodological base and the survey responses produced less clear insights into what ‘best’ or ‘frontier’ methods could be applied to address conflict. Perhaps this would be expected given the disciplinary base of the respondents. However, some observations on methods to approaching research on conflict can be construed from the responses:

- There was no great appetite for ‘sweeping’ cross-country quantitative studies. As noted in Section 3(ii), econometric studies by economists have often taken this approach to determine the onset of conflict. But this was regarded, while of interest to some extent, not specifically informative when it came to understanding conflict in particular countries or locations.
- Field work was seen as being important; this ties with the importance of understanding the ‘local’ dimensions of conflict and the move away from the dimensions of conflict from inter-state to intra-state conflict. The idea of ‘locality’ also ties with the increasing availability of household level data as noted above.
- Case studies (both historical and contemporary) were seen as being useful in understanding the causes and impact of conflict.
- Less obvious in the survey responses but more so in the stakeholder workshop was the potential for economic theory. This points to the different methodological approaches to conflict. As noted above, there is a developing body of economic theory that addresses conflict and there was a view that the potential for theoretical insights had been underplayed to date. As noted in the literature review above, there are still many outstanding issues on how economic theory can address conflict but there was an observation that some of these issues had been underplayed to date.
- There was little reference to what may constitute ‘frontier’ empirical methods for addressing conflict with limited exceptions. For example, the potential for satellite imagery for gauging the incidence of conflict was referred to. Other references were made to experiments to gauge how people may change behaviour to the risk of violence was also mentioned.

Many of these issues related to the appropriate methodologies relate to the disciplinary approaches from the respondents. In part, the appropriateness of methods ties with the dimensions of conflict that is seen as a priority (e.g. there is no traction in addressing the ‘locality’ of conflict with cross-country econometric studies). But it may also reflect lack of trust or lack of awareness about what different methodological approaches can bring to the study of conflict. Taken together, while many respondents recognised the importance of inter-disciplinary research, there is considerable potential in fostering inter-disciplinary research that can come via the use of different methodological approaches.

Impact

As noted above, given the stakeholder input into the scoping study, we also explored how research on ‘conflict’ can be better communicated to stakeholders. There are a wide range of stakeholders who have an interest in ‘conflict’ issues including various government departments (the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the Ministry of Defence, the Cabinet Office, the Department for International Development), civil society (e.g. Oxfam, Saferworld, International Alert) as well as a variety of research users such as think-tanks (RUSI, Chatham House) and other research institutes (Overseas Development Institute). A summary of the responses to the impact question in the survey are noted below.

- It was noted that academics and policy makers reacted to very different time pressures. For example, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office typically have to respond to specific issues within a very short period of time. This, in turn, has implications for how they engage with researchers and what research they use.
- How research is communicated to stakeholders is also important. While the criteria for academics relates to refereed journal articles or books, research users need research insights in a much more usable form. Perhaps this takes the form of briefings or policy reports of between 2/3 pages as policymakers have little scope for digesting books or trawling through academic journals.
- Given the different priorities between academics and stakeholders, some reactions to the survey question noted that think tanks were more useful to policy makers than academics.
- The importance of creating networks was also highlighted. In part, this may reflect the time pressure faced by policymakers that has the consequence that they returning to familiar researchers for input. This suggests that the approach to impact has to be considered in some way.
- Of more substance in terms of the message that policymakers and stakeholders need to make decisions is to understand ‘what’ works in terms of conflict and ‘why’ some intervention works. From the policymakers point of view, detailing a particular episode of conflict may be interesting but does not give the policymaker much evidence to give advice particularly is the incidence of conflict arises in a different setting.

Given the diverse community of stakeholders that have an interest in research on conflict, the above observations have pertinence for how research on conflict can be turned into better impact. Aside from learning what stakeholders need from researchers and how to communicate research, the responses noted above suggest that impact may be better made by co-production which involves an engagement between researchers and stakeholders from the outset of the project and where the questions of ‘what works in conflict intervention’ and ‘why specific interventions work’ can be addressed as the research develops.

STEM Perspectives

Following the survey of the arts and humanities and social science communities, an initial draft of the scoping study was produced which detailed the motivation of the scoping report, the perspectives of different disciplines and the nature of the survey, as detailed above. We also identified the major

research themes that had arisen from this exercise. This draft was then sent to researchers from the STEM community who were invited to comment on the report and to highlight research themes that may not have been identified (or given sufficient weight) and to highlight areas of potential synergy between STEM and arts and humanities and social science researchers. A list of potential STEM researchers who may be willing to comment on the report were provided by the ESRC and ESRC.

On receipt of the report, STEM researchers were given the following guidelines in framing their comments:

- From the perspective of your discipline, what would you identify as the main research priorities on ‘conflict’?
- In relation to the research gaps on ‘conflict’ highlighted in the report, what priorities would you highlight?
- What-if any-potential synergies between social sciences and arts and humanities could arise on ‘conflict’?
- Any other comments on ‘conflict’ you would like to offer.

In general terms, there was broad agreement with the main research themes detailed below on conflict and respondents were also in agreement on the issues relating to impact. In terms of research issues, the majority of respondents highlighted issues as they relate to the role of cyber-related issues. In large part, these comments complemented the insights from arts and humanities and social sciences. For example, STEM researchers highlighted that the significance of technology was broad reaching relating to the spread and the life-cycle of conflict (how cyber technology makes the ‘local’ now ‘global’; how technology influences the scale and spread of conflict and how the low cost of cyber technology impacts on this) but it also highlighted issues that were not identified by the arts and humanities and social science communities. The governance and architecture of the internet would be an example of this. STEM researchers noted the importance of network effects which, although it overlaps with issues regarding the spread of conflict and issues of social cohesion in the context of post-conflict reconstruction, also highlights a different perspective for addressing these effects⁴. Finally, in terms of methods, the role of computing technology was highlighted as a means of tracking perceptions on conflict (for example, the use of ‘Text Analytics’ for tracking perceptions of conflict that could complement more traditional data gathering methods such as the media or questionnaires⁵). With reference to the research themes outlined below, the STEM perceptions related principally to cyber-related issues as they arose with respect to Theme 4 (Technology and Conflict) though the role of cyber technology also impacted on other themes.

5. Research Gaps on Conflict: Emerging Themes

We summarize below the research gaps identified by the survey respondents which we combine with insights from the perspectives of different disciplines that address the issue of conflict. Since some respondents noted the same priorities and give the wide range of issues that the issue of ‘conflict’ can encompass, we compile the research gaps under relatively broad themes and note specific research

⁴ The analysis of networks crosses economics, computer science, sociology and other disciplines, An introduction to the field of networks as employed in the social sciences can be found in Jackson (2008). Recent applications of network analysis to conflict can be found in König *et al.* (2014) while Acemoglu and Jackson (2014) address the role of networks in the context of social cohesion.

⁵ A useful introduction to Text Analytics aimed at humanities and social science researchers is Dickinson, Brew and Meurers (2013) *Language and Computers*. Also worthy of reference in this regard is the ESRC project “Detecting Terrorist Activities: Making Sense”

issues associated with each theme. In the following section, we bring together issues associated with research gaps (both from the survey and the literature overviews), methods and impact in the Recommendation Section below.

Theme 1: Understanding the Shifting Nature of Conflict across Time

A common response in the survey was to note that addressing conflict is less about inter-state conflict (and the security implications that would arise from this) to more complex and varied forms of conflict that are now observed across many countries. The responses were more detailed than ‘more research’ on the causes and consequences of conflict and suggest that conflict is often more nuanced and more complex in the way in which it has been typically portrayed. For example, non-state actors are becoming more of a feature of conflict while the idea that only two sides are engaged in conflict is not wholly accurate in many conflict environments. A summary of the key gaps that were highlighted are noted below:

- ‘new’ wars
- the rise of intra-state conflicts, secessionist struggles and the consequences of these alternative forms of conflict
- non-state actors
- understanding grievances
- state capacity and different forms of conflict
- urbanisation as a driver of conflict
- conflict over resources (food, water)
- the interaction between climate and conflict
- networks and the spread of conflict

Theme 2: Interventions in Conflict

A range of issues were identified relating to the resolution of conflict and highlighted a range of interventions including military, economic, diplomatic, humanitarianism and the relation between them. This is also tied with a more general issue about the ‘life cycle’ of conflict. While conflict may perhaps be treated (at least in some disciplines) as a discrete event that breaks out and is then resolved, the nature of conflict and conflict resolution evolves over a period of time with a series of interventions. Research issues that were identified under this heading included:

- the ‘life cycle’ of conflict
- state stabilisation
- justification and authorisation for intervention
- intervention and legitimacy
- humanitarianism
- non-Western perspectives of conflict and the role of regional organisations (e.g. the Arab League)

Theme 3: The Media and Representations of Conflict

The role and use of the media can impact on how conflict is perceived and indeed on the conduct of conflict. In part, this is related to the accessibility to communications technology and the globalisation of the media but it is also related to how conflict is perceived and communicated in conflict environments. The highlighted gaps include:

- globalisation of the media and the internalisation of conflict
- how public understanding of conflict is shaped by the media
- the impact of the digital age (*Twitter, Facebook*) on the representation of conflict
- social media and the globalisation of ‘local’ conflict
- multiple narratives and the use of social media and technology in the spread of conflict

Theme 4: Technology and Conflict

In the initial stage of this scoping study, the research communities related to arts and humanities and social sciences. The research gaps noted below relate to the perceptions on the interaction of technology and conflict from these disciplines. The response of the STEM related mainly (though not exclusively) to this research area. The main observations from the latter included:

- social mobilisation and new technologies
- the risks of digitisation and the cost structure of information and the spread of conflict
- deterring conflict with the use of cyberspace
- technology and the impact of new weapons systems
- ethics and legitimacy of new technologies
- information security
- the organisation of conflict groups, self-radicalisation and the internet
- using computer technology to track perceptions of conflict

Theme 5: Conflict Resolution and Post-Conflict Transformations

A variety of issues were raised with regard to post-conflict issues and there was a strong representation from the arts and humanities on a range of issues that arise on how to move on from conflict episodes. The issues raised include:

- the role of regional bodies and international organisations in the resolution of conflict
- the role of national and human rights law in reducing conflict
- conflict negotiation
- legal mechanisms for reparations and restitutions
- the memorialisation of conflict
- arts and cultural interventions (e.g. the use of theatre)
- legacies of conflict
- refugees and displacement
- gender
- the role of institutions and institution-building

Theme 6: Risk, Insecurity and Conflict

As noted above, conflict is often portrayed as a discrete event and media representations of conflict report the most obvious aspects of conflict (bombing, refugee crisis and so on). Yet, in many cases, people live with the threat of conflict and even when conflict occurs, people adjust and live within the context of a conflict environment. Moreover, potential triggers of conflict (such as access to resources and, say, the potential impact of climatic events) change how people behave and how they make decisions. Finally, survey respondents noted a wider context for addressing how people’s lives are affected in fragile states and how economic development is hindered when the threat of conflict

exists; important in this regard is violence in different forms even if the more obvious forms of conflict do not arise. Issues highlighted include:

- climate change, resource insecurity and conflict
- domestic and trans-national responses to insecurity
- violence in different forms
- resilience to conflict
- conflict without violence (living with the threat of conflict)
- organised crime: forms; links with fragile states; control
- on-line non-traditional political organisations and the emergence of conflict

7. Recommendations

Each of the six themes outlined above highlight specific research issues that can be addressed in conflict research offering the potential for new insights into the changing dynamics of conflict that have emerged over recent years. While much of the research agenda on conflict may focus directly on conflict, there is also a broader agenda that relates to “Risk, Insecurity and Conflict” that relates to a broader perspective of ‘conflict’ relating to resilience to conflict, conflict without violence and organised crime. As such, funding innovative research that ties with these themes is an important starting point. Our recommendations, however, also relate to a broader perspective of research on conflict that complements the research issues noted above, specifically how research on conflict should be supported.

Key Recommendations

(i) Identify and Support Innovative Research on Conflict

Despite the extensive literature on conflict-related issues, research on conflict continues to be a dynamic area of research and of considerable importance to the stakeholder community. This, in part, reflects the changing dynamics of conflict and evolving challenges of conflict that policy-makers and stakeholders face. It also reflects progress in the study of conflict with new sources of data becoming available at the micro-level and the broadening of the questions that conflict research has begun to address. Many of these issues are highlighted under each of the broad themes above. But there is also scope for encouraging disciplines that to some extent have been under-represented in the UK’s contribution to research on conflict (e.g. economics) and there also exists the opportunity for balancing qualitative and quantitative approaches to conflict. The application of innovative techniques and access to data sources in conflict-affected countries would make important contributions in this regard. In sum, there is considerable scope for expanding research on conflict as the challenges of conflict-related issues evolve and given the potential of a wide range of disciplines which will offer new insights and access to a wider range of ‘tools’ and methods to contribute to the challenges of addressing conflict.

(ii) Create a Platform for Meaningful Cross-Disciplinary Research

The scoping study has identified unanimous support for cross-disciplinary approaches to conflict. This, of course, need not come at the expense of supporting discipline-specific research but the potential for expanding cross-disciplinary approaches to conflict is

considerable. This need not necessitate that academics from different disciplines publish ‘joint’ papers but there should be a framework where different disciplines can address common issues and where academics can challenge and question the insights from alternative disciplines. The research topics outlined above are one possible way of addressing this where the over-arching topic via which different disciplines can contribute.

Cross-disciplinary research can also involve bringing alternative methodological approaches which can be useful as a platform for engaging researchers from different disciplines. This could involve, for example, the contribution of STEM researchers and the combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches.

(iii) *Developing Impact*

The importance of impact is widely accepted by the research community but there seems to be aspects via which engagement and impact on conflict-related research can be improved. Aside from the details about the specific forms of communication with stakeholders, one potential is to involve stakeholders as part of the project from the outset. This brings its own challenges including the time commitment from the stakeholder group and the consistency of the representation from stakeholders.

(iv) *Scale and Range of Activities*

Meaningful cross-disciplinary research and improving the potential for impact suggests larger-scale funding for conflict related research. To bring academics together to address a common issue on conflict will likely necessitate appropriate levels of project-specific funding to make this successful as well as a relatively open mind by researchers about the contributions that can be made by different disciplines. Other means of expanding the range of discipline-specific and cross-disciplinary a research on conflict include network awards and considering the scope for international collaboration.

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Appendix: List of Respondents to Scoping Survey

STEM

Muffy	Calder	Glasgow	Computing Science
Ian	Brown	Oxford Internet Institute	Information Security
Florian	Egloff	Oxford Internet Institute	Information Security
Graham	Faircloud	Oxford Internet Institute	Information Security
Ross	Anderson	Cambridge	Security Engineering
Eric	Atwell	Leeds	Engineering/Computing
Tom	Chen	City	Cyber Security/Mathematics Science, Technology, Engineering, and public policy
Brian	Collins	UCL	Psychology
Paul	Taylor	Lancaster	
Tom	McCutcheon	DSTL	
Aad	van Moorsel	Newcastle	Computing Science
Marc	Lacy	Lancaster	Security Lancaster

non-STEM

David	Miller	Bath	Sociology
Dominik	Zaum	Reading	Politics & IR
Chris	Barrett	Cornell	Economics
Anke	Hoeffler	Oxford	Economics
Wendy	Pullan	Cambridge	Architecture English/African and Middle Eastern Studies
Caroline	Rooney	Kent	Politics
Neil	MacFarlane	Oxford	Politics/ Peace & Conflict Studies
Oliver	Richmond	Manchester	Politics & IR
Meera	Sabaratnam	SOAS	Politics & IR
Jan	Selby	Sussex	History
Simon	Ball	Leeds	History
David	Omissi	Hull	History
Bertrand	Taithe	Manchester	History
Paul	Cornish	Exeter	Strategic Studies
Gareth	Curless	Exeter	History
Paul	Newton	Exeter	SSI
Esther	Reed	Exeter	Theology Sociology, Politics and International Studies
Timothy	Edmunds	Bristol	Sociology
Marie	Gillespie	Open University	Economics
Patricia	Justino	IDS	Education
John	Preston	East London	Applied Economics
Ron	Smith	Birbeck	Physics
Alan	Webb	Open University	

Nick	Wheeler	Birmingham	IR
Stephanie	Lehner	Queen's Belfast	English
Richard	Whitman	Kent	Politics & IR
Graeme	Herd	Plymouth	School of Government & Business
Paul	Jackson	Birmingham	Political Economist
Jenny	Pearce	Bradford	Peace Studies
Paul	Rogers	Bradford	Social & International Studies
Carol	Kersten	King's College London	Theology & Religious Studies
Catriona	McLeish	Sussex	Science Policy Research Unit
James	Revill	Sussex	Science Policy Research Unit
Marc	Rockmore	Clark University	Economics
Willa	Friedman	Centre for Global Development	Economics

Other

Stephanie	Blair	Stabilisation Unit
Paul	Barbour	World Bank
Matthew	Preston	FCO
Ian	King	DFID
Malcom	Chalmers	RUSI
Craig	Oliphant	Saferworld
James	Kidner	FCO
Michael	Clarke	RUSI

Note: There were additional respondents who remained anonymous. The disciplines associated with the respondents relate to self-reporting and not classified by the authors of the report.