

<p>Institution: University of York</p>
<p>Unit of Assessment: 21, Politics and International Studies</p>
<p>Title of case study: Shaping the assessment of conflict-affected and fragile states</p>
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>Research led by Professor Sultan Barakat of the Post-war Reconstruction and Development Unit (PRDU) has had substantial impact in the UK and internationally on the design and use of strategic conflict and stability assessments of war-affected and fragile states. The PRDU enjoys a strong and sustained relationship with the Department for International Development (DfID) and has directly informed the UK's approach to strategic conflict assessment, leading to the creation of the Joint Assessment of Conflict and Stability (JACS) methodology. Impact has now reached beyond the UK with the PRDU commissioned to undertake conflict analyses for other bilateral and multilateral donor organisations using the approach developed with DfID, including a £487,391 project for UNICEF in Somalia that began in 2013.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>The work of Barakat and the PRDU has demonstrated how conflict assessment has traditionally focussed on military solutions, frequently been conducted in departmental silos and often resulted in contradictory policy goals (Barakat and Waldman 2013). Since the early 1990s, the PRDU has conducted pioneering research on conflict-affected and fragile states. The major contribution of the PRDU has been to produce a conceptual framework and diagnostic toolkit, designed specifically for conflict assessment and post-war reconstruction, which focuses on the local context and history of the conflict, the existing institutional arrangements and internal structures of power. Fundamentally, the research highlights the need for a joined-up approach to dealing with stability after conflict and in fragile states. This toolkit uses a multidisciplinary approach and research synergies between international relations, security studies, political economy, international development, humanitarian and area studies (Barakat and Ellis 1996; Barakat 2003) to assess conflict resolution. Since 2000, the PRDU's research has attracted nearly £2 million of external research income from governments (e.g. UK and Afghanistan), multilateral organisations (e.g. World Bank and UNICEF), non-governmental organisations (NGOs) e.g. Saferworld and other key research funders, such as the ESRC.</p> <p>Key findings of the research include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The view that UK 'joint assessment' of conflict and stability (i.e. shared analysis by DfID, the Ministry of Defence and Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO)) is both necessary and achievable (Barakat and Waldman 2013). Although the merits of integrated forms of conflict assessment have long been recognised in relevant policy-making circles, Barakat and the PRDU played a pivotal role in developing a holistic approach for putting these ideas into practice. This approach enabled PRDU researchers to identify deficiencies in early models of joint assessment (e.g. divergent bureaucratic cultures and department priorities, time and resource pressures, the absence of strategic coherence and policy consistency) <i>and</i> practical measures for overcoming them (e.g. agreeing to a shared, cross-department framework for conflict assessment). 2) Establishing that an integrated conflict assessment rests on a multidisciplinary methodological approach and one which is sufficiently flexible to adapt to rapidly changing conditions in the field (Barakat 2003). This approach combines analyses of pre-existing institutional arrangements, conflict dynamics, political economy, past interventions and policy recommendations, and the cultural values of conflict-affected communities. 3) The importance of including local actors in the assessment. The PRDU's research has shown that successful conflict assessment must be a 'participatory learning process', which draws on local institutions and capacities (Barakat and Ellis 1996; Barakat 2003; Barakat and Zyk 2010).

Impact case study (REF3b)

Consequently, the assessment must include local actors contributing to the process of conflict resolution while learning from it. This approach, drawing principally on intensive fieldwork conducted in conflict-affected countries, ensures that all actors in conflict zones are engaged as active participants in the assessment. The key advantages of this approach are two-fold: the assessment produces a more rounded and accurate picture; and due to its network of local actors the assessment is accurate and up to date. This feature of the PRDU's approach distinguishes it from the traditional 'desk-based' research typically undertaken by Western consultants based outside assessed countries.

4) Demonstrating that external donors need to recognise their presence and role as protagonists in the conflict-affected countries they analyse (Barakat and Waldman 2013; Barakat and Zyck 2009). This is a crucial point, since the effectiveness of assessment is often compromised by the failure to recognise the unintended effects of external intervention in conflict-affected and fragile states.

The key researchers at the University of York involved in the underpinning research are:

Professor Sultan Barakat, PRDU Director 1993- (Lecturer 1995-2001; Senior Lecturer 2001-2005; Professor 2005-)

Dr Thomas Waldman, PRDU Research Fellow (2011-)

Mr Steven A. Zyck, PRDU Research Fellow (2008-11) and PRDU Associate (current)

Dr Margaret Chard, PRDU Research Fellow (2004- 2007)

Dr William Lume, Director of the Centre for Inter-African Relations, UK, and PRDU Associate (current)

Mr Gareth Wardell, PRDU Research Fellow (2000-2003)

Dr Tim Jacoby, ESRC Postdoctoral Fellow (2002-3)

Dr Sue Ellis, PRDU Research Fellow (1997)

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

1. Barakat, S. (2003) (ed.) *Reconstructing War-Torn Societies: Afghanistan* (Basingstoke: Macmillan). A number of the papers in this volume appeared in a special issue of *Third World Quarterly* (23: 5, 2002; impact factor 0.750) also edited by Barakat and quoted extensively in the United Nations Development Programme 2004 *Afghanistan Human Development Report*. (available on request)
2. Barakat, S and Ellis, S (1996) 'Researching under fire: issues for consideration when collecting data and information in war circumstances, with specific reference to relief and reconstruction projects', *Disasters*, 20: 149–156. (available on request)
3. Barakat, S. and Zyck, S. A. (2009) 'The evolution of post-conflict recovery', *Third World Quarterly*, 30:6, 1069-1086, DOI: 10.1080/01436590903037333 (peer reviewed journal; impact factor 0.750).
4. Barakat, S. and Zyck, S. A. (2010) 'Afghanistan's Insurgency and the viability of a political settlement', *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 33: 3, 193-210, DOI: 10.1080/10576100903555804 (peer reviewed journal; impact factor 0.577).
5. Barakat, S and Waldman, T. (2013) 'Conflict analysis for the 21st century', *Conflict, Security and Development*, 13: 3, 259-283, DOI: 10.1080/14678802.2013.811048 (peer reviewed journal; impact factor 0.389).

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

The significance of the PRDU's work is that it has shaped the UK government's approach to conflict assessment and resolution. In doing so, it has directly supported the shift towards integrated planning for conflict and security. The PRDU's research has had significant impact on the UK government's design and use of strategic conflict and stability assessments in two stages: i) via a DfID-commissioned strategic conflict assessment project on Afghanistan; and ii) as a key

Impact case study (REF3b)

source for the creation of the Joint Assessment of Conflict and Security methodology. These research impacts build on a sustained period of engagement with DfID, based on four commissioned research projects since 2008 (at a total value of £232,000), plus a £285,000 ESRC-DfID project on 'The Influence of DfID-sponsored state building-oriented research on British policy in fragile, post-conflict environments'. Joint assessment of conflict has now been accepted by the UK as the appropriate way to plan for conflict and stability. This is demonstrated in the Cabinet Office paper, 'Guidance for an Integrated Approach to Conflict and Stability', which states that conflict analysis 'should follow the JACS model' (Cabinet Office/Cross-Government Integrated Approach Working Group 2012).

1) In 2008, DfID commissioned Barakat to lead a team of Afghanistan experts on the 'Understanding Afghanistan' (UA) project. Barakat led on the strategic conflict assessment (SCA) of Afghanistan (Barakat *et al.* 2008), one of four pillars of the project, for which PRDU was awarded a £111,127 DfID grant. This project drew on DfID's guidance notes on strategic conflict assessment (2002), the PRDU's 'composite' approach and a 'participatory learning process', engaging with a wide variety of actors in Afghanistan, including members of the Taliban. The SCA was influential in UK government policy and was later incorporated into tailored Country Programmes. According to DfID: 'This [SCA] report has been utilised as part of numerous reviews of the British government's engagement in Afghanistan. It particularly fed into the development of the Country Programmes adopted by DfID...[and] was taken up by both the FCO and Stabilisation Unit in helping to inform their pursuit of diplomatic resolutions to the conflict' (DfID letter, 2009). Barakat and Zyck were subsequently invited to give evidence at the House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee in October 2010 (p. 25) in which they made recommendations for a diplomatic resolution to the conflict in Afghanistan. This parliamentary evidence (Barakat and Zyck 2010) summarised the conclusions of the SCA and the UA programme as a whole: that is, a political solution was needed to resolve the conflict. All authors of the 'Understanding Afghanistan' project endorsed the necessity of this approach, which contributed to it becoming part of the mainstream consensus.

2) The impact of the SCA report was further extended and widened through the PRDU's work with DfID in operationalising the JACS methodology, an evolution of the existing strategic conflict assessment approach. This methodology has been cited as a key component of the UK government's 'Building Stability Overseas Strategy', jointly authored by DfID, the Ministry of Defence and FCO (2011, p.24), which states: "We will introduce a new cross-government strategic conflict assessment... [to] bring together political, economic, social and security analysis to provide joint assessment of conflicts". The key component of the overall strategy is to seek to ensure that the UK government: i) identifies early warnings of instability and potential conflict; and ii) delivers a rapid and effective response. The importance of this to the UK government is underscored by the funding commitment stated in the strategy, namely: 'by 2014/15 we will have increased to 30% the proportion of UK Official Development Assistance (ODA) that supports fragile and conflict affected states' (BSOS, p.13).

In 2011, Barakat and the PRDU began work on an ESRC-DfID funded project, studying DfID's use of its own sponsored research on policy in fragile, post-conflict states. During the first year of the project, Barakat and Waldman were invited by DfID to respond to a consultation on the development of a joint framework for conflict analysis, based on contacts established via the project. The initial findings of this were presented at a DfID workshop, attended by officials from the FCO and MOD. The feedback received at the workshop informed the final report: 'Revising the SCA: Toward a Joint Framework for Conflict Analysis' (Barakat and Waldman 2011). The report highlighted a series of significant issues for consideration, including the importance of local perspectives and of acknowledging that assessment can lose objectivity when donors fail to recognise their own role as protagonists in conflict affected states (see research findings 3 & 4). It recommended three phases for JACS with detailed steps in each stage: i) inception and initiation; ii) analysis; and iii) utilisation. This phased approach is mirrored in the DfID consultation paper, 'Joint Analysis of Conflict and Stability - Guidance Notes', reflecting the influence of Barakat and Waldman's research on the UK government's adoption of integrated conflict analysis. As the DfID consultation paper points out, the methodology outlined provides 'an overview of the UK's current

approach to the analysis of conflict and stability... [and] the basis for shared analysis and understanding among government departments working overseas'. In June 2013, the ESRC-DfID project was selected (out of over 1100 projects) to be part of a pilot exercise by the External Champion for RCUK's Global Uncertainties Programme, whose role is to support the delivery of impact.

3) The impact of Barakat and the PRDU in conflict assessment has reached beyond the UK with the PRDU commissioned to undertake tailored conflict assessments for other bilateral and multilateral donor organisations, most notably, a £487,391 project for UNICEF in Somalia that began in 2013. The UNICEF project builds on earlier commissioned projects in which the PRDU (working with the Institute for Effective Education, University of York) evaluated the effectiveness of UNICEF's education in emergencies programme. The UNICEF 'Peacebuilding, Education and Advocacy Programme' (PBEA), a four year \$150m project launched in 2012 and involving 14 conflict affected states, was informed by the PRDU's finding that conflict assessment should be carried out to inform the design of the education interventions. The significance of the Somalia project is that it adopts the approach set out in the PBEA in linking up-to-date conflict assessment with the design of education programmes. This project uses the PRDU's pioneering use of a reflexive 'participatory learning process', which in this case involves training and recruiting local conflict assessors on the ground in Somalia. These processes have built capacity in-country and ensures that the assessment is continually evolving, which in turn informs the education programmes run by UNICEF.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

Barakat, S *et al.* (2008) *Understanding Afghanistan*. London: DFID
<http://www.york.ac.uk/media/politics/prdu/documents/publications/pub.Understanding%20Afghanistan%20Nov2008.pdf>

Barakat, S *et al.* (2008a) *A Strategic Conflict Assessment of Afghanistan: Understanding Afghanistan*. London: DfID
<http://www.york.ac.uk/media/politics/prdu/documents/publications/pub.Afghanistan%20Conflict%20Assessment%20Nov2008.pdf>

Letter from DFID on the Strategic Conflict Assessment (2009). Available on request.

Barakat, S. and Zyck, S. A. (2011) *Written evidence from Professor Sultan Barakat and Mr Steven A. Zyck*, Post-war Reconstruction and Development Unit, University of York to the UK Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee.
<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmselect/cmcaff/514/514vw.pdf>

DfID, FCO and MOD (July 2011) *Building Stability Overseas Strategy*
<http://www.DfID.gov.uk/Documents/publications1/Building-stability-overseas-strategy.pdf>

Barakat, S. and Waldman, T. (September 2011) 'Revising the SCA: Toward a Joint Framework for Conflict Analysis'. Report produced for DfID after the consultation. Available on request.

DFID (March 2012) 'Joint Analysis of Conflict and Stability – Guidance Notes'. Draft paper produced by DFID after the consultation. Available on request.

Cabinet Office/ Cross-Government Integrated Approach Working Group (2012) 'Guidance for an Integrated Approach to Conflict and Stability'. Confidential memo made available to the PRDU. Available on request.