Youth, Conflict & Peacebuilding: Incentives for Youth Mobilization & Reflections on Our Programming

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“Web” of Youth Transitions
Explaining Youth Violence: Key Lenses from the Literature

- “Group Dynamics” Lens
  Youth Bulges & Polarized Boundaries

- “Grievance” Lens
  Frustration & Failed Expectations

- “Greed” Lens
  Opportunities & Coercion
“Group Dynamics” Explanations

- “Youth Bulges” / “Security Demographics”: 
  \[ \text{Lots of Young Men} = \text{Lots of Violence}? \]
  - Emphasis: Biological vs. Institutional

- Polarized Boundaries & Social Networks: 
  \[ \text{Crisis-Fed “Us-Them” Networks} = \text{Violence}? \]
  - Emphasis: Family vs. Identity Group
  - Emphasis: Ethno-Religious vs. Class
  - Emphasis: Psycho-social vs. Institutional
“Grievance” Explanations

- Frustration and Failed Expectations: Unmet Expectations = Violence?
  - Emphasis: Relative vs. Absolute Deprivation
  - Emphasis: Comparing w/ Other Groups vs. Comparing w/ Recent Experience
  - Emphasis: Political vs. Economic Participation
“Greed” Explanations

- Opportunities and Coercion: Organizational Incentives = Violence?
  - Emphasis: Carrots vs. Sticks
    (Example: War Booty vs. Fear)
  - Emphasis: Political vs. Economic Options
What Do You Think?

- Which Explanation – or Theoretic Lens – Best Explains Youth Violent Mobilization in the Conflict Settings You Know Best?

- Other Explanations?
Effective Explanations of Violence: Synthesis Based on Case Knowledge

Group Exercise: Mobilizing Youth Violence

Imagine You Are the Leadership Junta:

- State Military
- Non-State Armed Group
- Gang / Criminal Network
- Political Party

Consider Goals, Strategies, and Constraints
Questions to Consider in Groups: Mobilizing Youth Violence

- What are the Primary Goals of Your Organization?
- How Does Involving Youth Help you Achieve Goals?
- What Roles Do You Want Youth to Play?
  
  *Is This the Same/ Different for Young Men & Women?*
- How Do You Plan to Involve Youth? Methods?
- What are Contextual Factors Working for You?
  
  *How Do You Channel/ Leverage Such Factors?*
- What are Key Constraints That You Face?
From Violent Mobilization to Strategies For Peacebuilding & Development

- What Lessons Can Our Organizations Learn From These Kind of “Violent” Networks?
- What Kind of Incentives Do Our Programs Offer to At-Risk Young People?
- How Can We Strengthen Our Youth Focus?
- What are the Main Challenges We Face?
Dilemmas for Youth Programming

Consider Risks & Benefits Along Continuum

- Protection vs. Participation
- Global vs. Local Definitions of Youth
- Donor Demands vs. Local Needs
- Political vs. "Programmatic" Focus
- Others?
Ladder of Youth Participation: From Manipulation to Decision-Sharing
3 Keys for Alternative Youth Mobilization

- Enhancing Youth Political and Economic Opportunities
- Encouraging Social Ties across Common Boundaries
- Offering Incentives for Nonviolent Youth Mobilization
System Dynamics in Action: Bathtub Dynamics of Model Population Flows

- Yearly Changes = “Faucet” Rates: Maturation, Mortality, and Attractiveness of Mobilization
Synthesizing Mobilization Theories: A View from System Dynamics

Attractiveness for Militant Mobilization

Economic and Political Grievances (Unmet Expectations)

Level of Conflict (Challenge to Authority)

Number of Youth Militants

Government Repression

Attractiveness for Militant Mobilization

Political Grievances Loop
Synthesizing Mobilization Theories: A View from System Dynamics

Attractiveness for Militant Mobilization
Economic and Political Grievances (Unmet Expectations)
+
Level of Conflict (Challenge to Authority)
+
Political Grievances Loop

State Fear Loop
Government Repression
+
Number of Youth Militants
+
Level of Conflict (Challenge to Authority)
+
Attractiveness for Militant Mobilization

Economic and Political Grievances (Unmet Expectations)
Political Grievances Loop
Synthesizing Mobilization Theories: A View from System Dynamics

Attractiveness for Militant Mobilization

Number of Youth Militants

Probability of Contact with Militants (Social Network Effect)

Level of Conflict (Challenge to Authority)

Militant Resource Mobilization (Internal and External)

Organizational / Greed Loop #1

Organizational / Greed Loop #2

Number of Youth Militants

Militant Resources Available Per Recruit

Total Militant Resources Available

Militant Resource Mobilization (Internal and External)
A Brief Primer on System Dynamics: Integrated Causal Loop Diagram