Achieving Peace in Crisis Cities –

Reflections on Urban Conflict Transformation and the Nation State Project

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> "There is a black hole in the peacemaking literature when it comes to cities and to the urban scale. No matter where you look, you will not find the word "cities" or "urban" employed. There is a wealth of state-centric material, some references to community-based approaches, nascent work on corporations, a growing reference to the contributions of non-governmental organizations, and a few references to the contribution of regional organizations, but nothing about cities or city-systems. [...]
> However, no matter where you look, the substantive arguments about what is required for conflict resolution, about the dynamics of conflict transformation, about the praxis of peace making, all actually link very clearly to the urban scale, and cry out for agency at the urban level."[2]

Introduction

The goal of this paper is to contribute to an understanding of the role of cities in both the outbreak and the appeasement in large-scale violent conflicts. It hypothesizes that while cities provide opportunities for violence, they also host and constitute actors of peace. The recent experiences of two cities shall be analyzed in more detail: Freetown, the capital of Sierra Leone, and Kabul, the largest city[3] in Afghanistan. These two cities provide

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[2] Stanley (2003:11-12).
[3] I shall demonstrate why "size" (primate city) is, at least for now, more determinative than "status" (capital), arguably leading to a relative upgrading of the city's structural role in the country and the region.

instructive examples from two of the currently most unstable regions of the world, West Africa and Central Asia, and they share three important characteristics: (a) they are located in spaces of "post-national wars"[4] and are part of regional war zones; (b) they have been the main sites for foreign intervention, and in both cases it was foreign intervention that led to regime change and, ultimately, fragile constellations of peace;[5] (c) finally, they embody an important quality with regard to the debate of nationhood versus what I shall term generic urbanity: besides their legal status as capital cities, they also hosted (and to a limited extent still host) symbols and tools for the exercise of factual power – power that preceded the nation-state and that is therefore not inseparably bound to this concept. It is indeed history, as different as its features were in the two cases, that has to play a crucial role in this inquiry. The superimposition of rigid boundaries on highly amorphic and dynamic spaces inhabited by different groups, despite the absence of any kind of "imagined community," is something that both objects of investigation seem to share.

Shedding some light on the urban perspective also requires taking location, type and content of these recent conflicts into account. I seek to demonstrate that these two urban places are more than "just" cities in war-zones, targets and loci of violence, and hence negligible factors or spaces in peace building strategies. On the contrary, I argue that conflict in both cases came, to a significant extent, *from* the city – that is, its structural role as a loaded place and outcome of nationalist discourses and the accumulated power that resulted from this contributed to the outbreak – but that there are urban-borne opportunities for peace as well. To be sure, this is not to deny regional instability or a longstanding history of violent conflict in both countries. It is, however, the aim of this paper to contrast the role of Freetown and Kabul vis-à-vis larger contexts and stages of contestation such as the nation-state and global dynamics, and to offer a perspective that dares to be detached from continued dominance of imposed national borders as outcomes of colonialism and the scrambles for what is now called the "Third World."

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[4] Beck (1999:985).
[5] Cf. Rubin (2003:575).

Before I begin with my investigation, I believe that it is necessary to define my understanding of the categories of conflict. Based on this clarification, I shall proceed with a brief outline of my analytical framework, in which I shall also try to explain my vision of urban spaces as active agents. This will lead into a problematization of the relationship and tension between urban space and the nation state. Afterwards, I shall turn to the cases of Freetown and Kabul. My overall analysis shall be guided by two questions:

- *Objective context and subjective reality:* What are the situations on the ground that may have led to the conflict, i.e. what are the political, economic, ethnic, religious, and social environments?

- *Facilitators of conflict transformation:* Which institutional changes must be achieved to create and harness urban opportunities for peace?

From a comparative perspective, I shall then discuss selected aspects of causation and appeasement. I will conclude by making some basic proposals for overcoming the past and present calamities and achieving "peace" – whatever this peace may eventually look like in these two crisis cities. These include (a) the need for political action to enhance equity and frame processes of social transformation, (b) a pleading for the strengthening of pro-urban decentralization while avoiding unfounded mandates, and (c) a call for measures that foster the formation of an urban identity as an important facilitator of conflict transformation.

Definitions, Foci, and the Question of Agency of Urban Spaces

Throughout history, cities provided protection against enemies, apart from being economic hubs and the center of regional administration.[6] In addition to economic exchange, security was a constitutive element of city formation – a raison d'être. At the same time, cities amassed and bundled economic and political power making them prime targets of wars. The collapse of physical, economic and political infrastructure due to hostile attacks or

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[6] Glaser (1991:15)

urban battles is an event frequently experienced by inhabitants.[7] The increasing prevalence of civil wars in which at least one warring party is a non-state actor poses another serious dilemma: while regular armies are expected to respect the principle of 'proportionality' concerning arms use, defined in the laws of war, rebel groups such as the Taliban in Afghanistan or the RUF in Sierra Leone only had to care about such political factors if aid flows or other sources of illegal income could be at stake. Otherwise, there is no constraint on violence and no mercy for civilians at all. This theoretical argument found ample evidence in the terror witnessed in the repeated slaughter of Freetown citizens and the shelling of Kabul by attacking forces, starting in 1992, and the repressions that followed its invasion by the Taliban in September 1996.[8]

Conflicts, to be sure, take place at different vertical levels (household, neighborhood, urban, provincial, national, regional, and global). Additionally, perpetrators and victims interact at different levels of scale (interpersonal, against or from a specific group in society, or between or against a common people) and scope (single issue vs. system change). Furthermore, "violence" itself should be subdivided into physical and non-physical means and effect structural; the latter including structural, discursive and psychological dimensions.[9]

Without implying that interpersonal violence at the household level is not widespread in both cities, I refrain from looking at this particular form of victimization. Instead, I shall focus on the explanation of large-scale physical violence aimed at system change and as a result of structural conflicts at the urban, national, and supranational level. Herein, I shall explicitly include structural violence in the form of nationalist discourse, which I find not to be locally generic, but as an outcome of international relations and interactions.

In order to avoid misunderstandings, it seems necessary to openly confess my conviction that human action is the core of change. Yet if one follows the current academic debates on

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[7] Cf. Konvitz (1985:172-187). In Africa, war was the major cause (89%) of overall homelessness on the continent. In Asia, almost half (43%) of those affected were without shelter due to armed conflict; data source: HABITAT (2001:182), percentages based on own calculations.
[8] Rubin (1994) describes the internal power struggle after the demise of the Soviet Union in 1991.
[9] Galtung (1969) provides a useful overview and discusses the various forms and manifestations.

the causes of war, one is quite struck by a quite overwhelming number of quantitative studies in this field, which are mainly informed by an analysis of individual and national income, governance indicators, resource endowments, and geography.[10] Has war, suddenly or over time, become apolitical, contrary to what von Clausewitz contended two centuries ago? While no informed observer would accept a theory positing that World War I or II could mainly be explained by running regressions and measuring correlations, dozens of researchers are currently involved in the collection of quantitative datasets to shed light on the causes of contemporary conflicts in developing countries.

In spite of this seemingly dominant research approach, this paper is grounded on the strong belief that almost all decisive factors that bring about war and peace are humanly devised. Those forces, whether they manifest themselves in institutions or architecture, are political, economic, and social, and therefore inherently subject to human decision-making.[11] As a consequence, processes of social interaction at both the macro- and micro-level contain at least as much explanatory value as those approaches looking at either individual motivations and mind-sets (e.g. greed) or factors that are outside human influence (such as geography or natural resources).[12] Both development and war are outcomes of social relations. They are human-made phenomena.[13]

However, to make the matter slightly more complicated, the following analysis also attempts to validate the claim that *spaces* host specific processes that generate normative power. This view extends the common perception of "agency" being solely dependent on individual or state actors by positing that the very nature of cities as places "where

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[10] Collier et al. (2003) provide several overviews. See also Buhaug and Gates (2002). Petersen's (2002) analysis of the roles of fear, hatred, and resentment in spaces of ethnic diversity is a noteworthy exemption.

[11] Nonetheless, Sarkis' (1993:104) concept of territoriality, in which social relations and built environment interact and exert mutual influence on each other, shall not be rejected. Nor is it my intention to start a structuralist hen-and-egg debate. Rather (and with the exception of landscape), I consider both social dynamics and built form, at the very end, as manifestations of human will and progress or, as witnessed in crisis cities, decay. It is human action and not form that eventually has the power to undo and overcome destruction of both relations and physical environment, cf. Sarkis (1993:119).

[12] For an excellent critique, see Cramer (2002). See also Brett (2002:6). DiJohn (2002) questions the causality between resource endowments and outbreak of civil war. Similarly, in a review of recent contributions on the role natural resources as trigger factors, Ross (2003:29) concludes: that "events in the policy world have developed even more quickly" than research on resources and conflict.

[13] Cf. Polanyi (1944) cited in Putzel (2002:5), and Keegan (1993:386-387).

strangers are likely to meet routinely" (Sennett 1977:128) have the capacity, the potential
to create options, "opportunities" for violence: more than any other spatial phenomena,
cities have their own dynamics, which can be influenced but never fully controlled.[14] This
is how I read Bollens (2000:19) when he says, "A city is an active social and political agent
capable of moving a society forward to either disruptive unrest or ethnic accommodation."
And he adds: "[C]ities may be capable through their physical and political qualities of
exerting *independent* effects on ethnic tension, conflict, and violence."[15] At the same time
however, cities also provide opportunities for conflict transformation and embody agency
through "networks of exchange."[16] I shall elaborate on this point in the course of this paper.

To be sure, the idea that urban places breed violence is not new. Early theorists were Marx
(1867), Mumford (1938, 1961), Weber (1958), and Huntington (1968). Castells (1977) also
made a seminal contribution, and Bienen (1984) provides an extensive overview of
literature on the subject. Resulting research, however, focused on individual relative
deprivation and urban opportunities for collective action, and yielded weak empirical
support. But rather than presenting it as misguided, Gizewski and Homer-Dixon (1995:18)
underline that its design was too "simplistic," as "[i]t posited links between [urban growth
and violence] while paying little attention to other political, economic, and social factors."
Indeed, the study of Freetown and Kabul provides ample evidence that it is in fact the
larger framework of colonial history (or the struggle against it), the deriving national
discourse, and the impact of regional and even global economic flows in which the role of
the two capital cities must be analyzed.

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[14] Evans (2002) provides an introductory discussion of agency in the urban arena.
[15] Emphasis added.
[16] Stanley (2003:5).

City and Nation: Governance, Dominance, and the Implications for Peace Building

> "State makers have tried for centuries to impose themselves on the urban population by other means. […] Cities have often been displayed as theatres par excellence for the ruling elite."
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>   Wim Blockmans (2003: 9).

> "Recognizing with Anderson that the nation is an imagined thing, I also recognize the critical reciprocal of his insight, that is the imagination that will have to carry us beyond the nation."
>   Arjun Appadurai (2003: 337).

Despite all evidence for the dramatically increasing role of cities in questions of global governance, "the world system remains compartmentalized into sovereign nation-states."[17] As a consequence, one first needs to legitimize the city as a unit of investigation in order to look at urban peace building in relation or even opposed to national initiatives. Such a city-centered approach also implies the question whether in the analysis of current conflicts, "the real units in fact are others than the state."[18]

To be sure, establishing the "legitimacy of political order"[19] for *urban* spaces is quite a challenge. To begin with, it is important to point out that cities are social and spatial phenomena that have exited for at least five thousand years (and have also been embattled ever since, as shown above), while the nation-state as a modern of form of rigidly dividing space did not emerge until the 19th century.[20] Even the French revolutionaries still chose "*le citoyen*", i.e. the urbanite, as a basis for their definition of individual rights.[21] In fact, as Blockmans (2003:8) emphasizes, the pre-industrial urban society was the "hothouse where the conceptualization of citizenship within the framework of states could be developed."

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[17] Herzog (1990:27).
[18] Cf. Wallensteen in: Spanger (2000:5). Possible non-state structures could therefore be above (international), below (sub-national autonomies, cities) and beyond (organized crime) the state, cf. Rubin (2000), Ziegler (1999). Sassen (2000:3-4,54), however, laments that current conceptualizations of global and regional processes leaves "no room for a possible role of cities."
[19] Köhler (1998:236).
[20] See, for example, Herzog (1990:13-20).
[21] Blockmans (2003:7).

In addition to this historical sequence in favor of the city, the internationalization of economic, political and social exchanges and dynamics provides important challenges to state structures and institutions in the Third World and hence constitute powerful determinants of development practice. There are also hints that this process is increasingly functioning via non-state channels, with large cities being one of the most important spaces for "global flows."[22]

But while globalization influences urban life, urban life is also a major part of globalization. The city, in other words, is the place where globalization happens.[23] Cities, apart from being nodes in the global networks of control and communication,[24] have become key factors for the inclusion of countries into the international political economy.[25] However, flows tend to shape a one-way street. With political and economic power, resources and leverage almost exclusively located in the developed world, Third World cities can indeed be considered to constitute a medium for both inclusion and marginalization of developing countries,[26] while urban spaces in developing countries tend to become arenas of conflict between transnational elites and local interests.[27] One can therefore conclude that economic forces and flows above the national level constitute not only a vehicle of inclusion but also a form of structural violence, which is a powerful shaper of urban reality in developing countries.[28]

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[22] Castells (1997).

[23] Clammer (2003:403-404). See also Glaser (1991:20) and Potter (1990:6).

[24] Jenkins and Wilkinson (2002:33).

[25] Potter (1990:3). See also Berdal (2002:17). Besides, processes of regional integration, industrial and financial decision-making are dominated by transnational enterprises, which locate themselves either in export processing zones or urban centers, cf. Aguilar and Ward (2003).

[26] Cf. Knauder (2000:27-28), Mabogunje (1994:23). Armstrong and McGee (1985:11) even argue that "Third World cities play a crucial role in the underdevelopment of the Third World," in: Potter (1990:6).

[27] Alger (1990:497). Consequently, also in terms of foreign policy, cities have subsequently been granted more attention. Military strategist Ralph Peters (1997:54) puts it bluntly: "[W]ho cares about Upper Egypt if Cairo is calm? We do not deal with Indonesia – we deal with Jakarta. In [the US forces'] recent evacuation of foreigners from Sierra Leone, Freetown was all that mattered."

[28] It could also prove instructive to invest in a deeper analysis of criminal city-to-city flows. Transnational linkages undeniably exist, and the findings of this study suggest that movements of capital, arms, and people between urban spaces provide an important key to understand the functioning of global criminal networks. For example, Collier et al. (2003:3) contend that Al Qa'eda was in fact involved in the Sierra Leonean conflict diamond economy.

Seen against this background and in light of the assertion made in the entry quote, what are the stakes for a reconstitution of urban agency? In fact, an increasing number of scholars both acknowledge and push towards city-based initiatives. Bollens (1999:7), for instance, stresses:

> "The nation-state is decreasingly seen as the territorial answer to the problem of human political, economic, and social organisation. The disintegration of many states is compelling international aid organisations, mediators, and political negotiators to increasingly look at substate regions and urban areas as more appropriate scales of involvement."

Castells (2003: 65) makes a similar point:

> "[T]he tendency towards state centralism and domination by the state over the city is being opposed all over the world by a massive popular appeal for local autonomy and urban self-management. The revival of democracy depends upon the capacity of connecting the new demands, values, and projects to the institutions that manage society (that is, the state)."

Stanley even posits that ignoring the urban scale in peace building approaches "is to miss much of the primary restructuring occurring in the global order. […] States are not able to handle peace building alone, and they often seem to be part of the problem and not part of the solution."[29] Support for this argument also comes from a theoretical standpoint. A system theorist, Niklas Luhmann leaves no room for doubt when he posits: "Territorial borders are quite meaningless for science, and economic interdependence crosses political borders not occasionally, but as a general rule."[30] Cities as are more "natural" phenomenon and entity may therefore carry significant value as a starting point for peace-building strategies. Appadurai (2003:338) reviews this tension between nativist city and imagined nation from a more theoretical perspective and posits:

> "The work of producing localities, in the sense that localities are life-worlds constituted by relatively stable associations, relatively known and shared histories, and collectively traversed and legible spaces and places, is often at odds with the project of the nation state."

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[29] Stanley (2003:2).
[30] Luhmann (1982) in: Herzog (1990:13).

In other words, the superimposed concept of nationhood may eventually overburden the city, threatening the "lifeworld", i.e. the social microstructures of individuals. Psychosocial needs (such as culture, identity, milieus) then remain unsatisfied or are destroyed, which leads to a lack of social inclusion. As a consequence at the level of governance, inhabitants reduce (or are forced to reduce) their participation in public discourses necessary to shape or change urban systems.[31] Additionally, they may turn to violent means to protect and further their views and concerns.[32] Indeed, violence may be seen as the only effective protection against victimization.[33] An urban focus that recognizes but is also detached from a national perspective can therefore be regarded as a timely response to the challenges that policy makers at both the local and the global level are increasingly facing.

Freetown – Hobbesian War, Homemade?

"Civil wars seemed just to follow one after another. To contemporaries the civic tumult of mid-century only underscored, with more force than ever before, that urban democracy was a belligerent affair."

> Mary P. Ryan (1997:139)
> on city-dwellers' urban experience
> during the US American civil war.

"As the state is collapsing, Freetown is free for all and guns rule the street. […] It appears as the modern day illustration of Hobbes' famous dictum: 'Man is wolf to Man'."

> Hans-Henrik Holm (1998:1).

Adding the urban perspective to the existing body of knowledge on the war in Sierra Leone[34] requires looking at urban life and dynamics in Freetown both prior to and during

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[31] Cf. Ottersbach (2003:33-35), Habermas (1987). See also Clammer (2003:416).
[32] Cf. Bollens (1999).
[33] Cf. Rubin (2003:580).
[34] Herbst (2000:154,157) points to a favorable political geography with regard to population, resources and communication, suggesting that causes are likely to be political economy-related; cf. Keen (2002), Münkler (2002), Clapham (2001), Ero (2001), Reno (1995), and Bangura's (1997) response to Richards (1996). Nonetheless, individual motivations such as honor, prestige, fear and pride do contain some explanatory value as well, cf. Berdal (2002), Gilligan (1999), Richards (1996).

the war. This may provide additional hints why a conflict of such brutality could reign over the small West African country and its capital city, which has its roots in a camp for freed slaves and whose location was first mentioned by Sir Francis Drake in the 16th century.[35]

In his in-depth analysis of the regional political economy of war, Reno (1995:116-151) devotes particular attention to legal and illegal trading activities of exile Lebanese who exercised significant control over the mining industry and, consequently, private capital.[36] In fact, Lebanese businessmen were a major source of private loans to sustain the government's corrupt network.[37] In addition, notions of "otherness" have a long-standing history in both the city and the country and manifest themselves in the political, economic, and social sphere apart from creating subcutaneous feelings of inferiority or superiority.[38] For instance, public institutions were mainly benefiting Creoles, while other ethnic groups suffered from higher levels of unemployment and blocked entry to higher education.[39] However, class divisions have clearly had a greater impact on the formation of urban collective action than ethnic divisions.[40]

Indeed, access to power was highly restricted as well – Freetown was host and home base of a corrupt elite which soon became the antipode of disadvantaged and disempowered youths,[41] and privatization, pushed by international donors, proved to be an effective tool for further asset concentration into the hands of a few.[42] For instance, a local NGO laments in 1999: "The truth is that coffers of Sierra Leone are empty and the country's natural resources have been mortgaged against regime security."[43] As a consequence, a growing number of those frustrated by their personal lack of achievement was increasingly

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[35] For a comprehensive account of Freetown's history, see Jarrett (1956).

[36] Sierra Leone's second president, Siaka Stevens' intrusion into diamond mining coincided with the outbreak of the civil war in Lebanon. In the early 1980s, an estimated 13,000 Lebanese lived in the West African country; cf. Reno (1995:118).

[37] Reno (1995:135).

[38] Cf. Koroma and Proudfoot (1960).

[39] Clapham (2000:3).

[40] Abdullah (1994) provides historical evidence on early 20th-century class-based civic unrest and rejects the notion of ethnic consciousness as a direct cause of conflict.

[41] Berdal (2002:8) and Münkler (2002:153). Bangura (1997) sees a similar problem of concentrated power in the capital.

[42] Clapham (2001:2), Berdal (2002:3). Arimah (2003) finds that the overall level of urban infrastructure provision in Freetown, including basic services, is remarkably low when compared with other African cities.

[43] CDD (1999).

susceptive to more radical political demands informed by a desire to "invert the social pyramid."[44]

Clapham (2001:4,8) argues that anger at a collapsing education system has clearly contributed to the outbreak of conflict and calls this the "alienated youth" phenomenon.[45] Similarly, Abdullah (1998) focuses on links between alienated, disillusioned intellectuals and unemployed youths, which led to an explosive social texture. Such links, however, did not only exist within local intelligentsia, but also within the political establishment. During the 1992 rebel recruitment for instance, the eastern part of Freetown provided ample human resources, in particular "unemployed urban youths who belonged to gangs associated with one or another senior politician."[46]

Obstacles to collective action hence seem to have been overcome by linkages to power holders of the national political economy. For many youths in Sierra Leone, becoming a child soldier was indeed a decision of 'rational choice', as Lock (2001:75) points out. Many of those joining the ranks of fighting groups were also socially marginalized: 61% of the Sierra Leonean military was reportedly infected with the HI virus.[47] Clapham (2001:7) also assigns "a major role" to the "ideologies and activities of dissenting youths […] in promoting state collapse, [which] have been intricately related to Sierra Leone's place in the global economy, politics, and even culture." One feature of this global connection are certainly the financial flows generated by diamond mining, which were leaving the country through the city's banking institutions rather than being reinvested into the local economy. In addition, firearms were easily available due to the country's location in the 'war zone' West Africa. Cultural city-to-city imports, however, existed as well, such as Rambo movies[48] and resulting fashion styles for youth fighters.[49] Finally, global urban

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[44] Keen (2002:7). This is a striking parallel to Ryan's (1997:175-176) description of the motivation for New Yorkers in the 19th century to join civic riots.
[45] Cf. Keen (2002:2,4), Richards (1996), and Lachaud (1994) in: Brockerhoff and Brennan (1998:76). MacDonald (2002:26-27) reports that education, job opportunities and economic security remain the dominant priorities of Sierra Leonean youths – factors that Keen (2001:12) also sees as keys to peace.
[46] Clapham (2001:7). "Youthfulness" is also stressed by Bienen (1984:680) as an urban risk factor.
[47] Elbe (2002) in: Collier et al. (2003:27-28); cf. Uvin (1998) for Rwanda.
[48] Clapham (2001:8).
[49] Lock (2001:74), Münkler (2002:35).

connectedness can be argued to have fuelled the conflict in an indirect manner: Similar to the incidents in Mogadishu in 1993, fighters could be sure that news media presence in the capital would ensure that their action would be broadcasted around the globe, eventually increasing their political leverage and boosting lootable and taxable international aid flows.[50]

Kabul – The Burden of Nation and Location

> "Afghanistan is one place where the nation-state institutions […] never became stable or deeply rooted. For most people in Afghanistan the state remains not the trustee of their common interest, but another particular interest like a tribe or clan."
>
> Barnett R. Rubin (1988:1189).

Kabul's role as the capital of a strategically highly relevant country in Central Asia, located right in the middle of vital trade routes and, at least for the last fifty years, important pipelines between Asia and Europe, certainly created a political challenge for local political actors that would puzzle even the most sophisticated diplomat. It made the city a target not only of tribal power play but also the international scramble for regional hegemony. This fate began with the British in the late 18th century and has witnessed a new hausse with US-led forces ousting the Taliban regime in 2002. However, both the country and its capital also benefited from this constellation, as Dil (1977:468) points out for the Cold War era:[51]

> "Afghanistan's pivotal geopolitical features enabled this small, isolated, and traditional nation to play off the United States, the Soviet Union, and the People's Republic of China against one another in a competitive aid-giving game of the most thoroughly contemporary cast."

Nonetheless, this era has also left a deep scar: the Russian occupation ultimately led not only to the total dissolution of governance structures, but also to a societal fragmentation probably unprecedented in modern history. The early part of this period of submission saw

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[50] This is now called the "Mogadishu effect", cf. Münkler (2002:50). See also Russell et al. (1974).
[51] See also Rubin (1988:1204).

the installation of a puppet government directed by Moscow authorities, which was overthrown due to a lack of legitimacy and local accountability.[52] What followed was a struggle for power that lasted for more than twenty years and gave rise, again through significant foreign intervention but also the implosion of the USSR, to the Taliban regime in the mid-1990ies.[53]

During the following five years of Taliban rule, Kabul became the place where the limits to Lefebre's (1996) "right to the city" of citizens were more widespread, more visible and more violent than anywhere else in the world.[54] Urban cosmopolitanism as describes by Sennett (1977:137) was destroyed by an oppressive regime of prohibitions that minimized freedom of movement to the extent that most women left the protective space of the house only in circumstances of immediate need for water or food. This regime, on the other hand, also achieved an admittedly rather scary form of security, which their leaders nevertheless saw as their main accomplishment.[55] Through a legacy of fear and punishment, the Taliban, for the first time since 1979, enabled modest trade flows into and out of the country, and seemed to guarantee a minimum degree of safety for international companies' operations. After the defeat of the Taliban forces by the US-backed Northern Alliance, the security situation outside a handful of protected cities has clearly worsened. To that effect, Hamid Karzai, the official president of the country is often referred to as "the mayor of Kabul", simply because his factual power does not stretch over the urban borders.

There is also evidence that Afghanistan witnesses a process of remarkable urban concentration in and around Kabul that is unprecedented in recent world history, even if compared with the fastest growing cities in developing countries such as Bombay, Lagos,

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[52] It is quite alarming that a recent evaluation of the 2001 Bonn agreement explicitly states that by war not all warring parties were involved in the peace negotiations, again seriously compromising the legitimacy of actors and their decision and measures; Rubin (2003:570). Munck and Skalnik Leff (1997:358) provide empirical evidence for this claim. Cf. Rubin (1988:1188).

[53] Dil (1977) provides an overview of foreign interventions in Afghanistan and their underlying rationales until the late 1970ies. See also Rubin (1988), (1994) and (1997) for an account of more recent developments.

[54] Ruggiero and South's (1997) concept of "barricades" seems to apply well in this context.

[55] Rubin (2000:1794-1795).

Jakarta or Karachi.[56] This trend is due to three effects: overwhelming net migration,[57] moderate self-generated growth,[58] and significant refuge return flows, both UNHCR-assisted and spontaneous. While the city had approximately 2 – 2.5 million inhabitants in early 2001, it is now estimated that Kabul is currently hosting around 3.5 – 4 million people.[59]

With opium poppy having an overwhelming share both in the national economy (estimates go up to 90 per cent) and the global market (around 75 per cent),[60] the decades of armed conflict and fragmentation in Afghanistan have created a warlord system that still persists and poses a serious threat to regional peace.[61] However, employment structures and local moneylenders who give micro credits to poppy growers equally depend on the drug.[62] This development of a drug economy has gone hand in hand with a vibrant trade in small arms and heavier weaponry and an uncontrollable exchange of goods and men, both productive and destructive, with neighboring countries such as Pakistan, Iran, and Tajikistan. Furthermore, links to global crime networks are well established.[63]

In the urban realm, there are striking similarities to the Freetown case with regard to access to power (mainly military command posts) and higher education. Historically, Pashtuns have been the dominant group in the capital while sizeable minorities such as Tadjiks, Uzbeks, and Hazaras were continuously underrepresented.[64] In addition, Kabul had been hosting roughly three quarters of the country's students in institutions of higher education, even though the city was only the home of approximately two per cent of the overall

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[56] Sassen (2000:37) and Mabogunje (1994:21) provide overviews. However, Brockerhoff (1999) finds that while a global process of urbanization is undoubtedly observable, its pace tends to be overestimated. Third World Cities are growing, but not as fast as predicted in the 1980s. Labels such as the "time bomb city" (Glaser 1991:16) must hence be seen critically.

[57] i.e. rural-urban migration exceeding urban outmigration.

[58] i.e. urban births exceeding urban deaths.

[59] Personal communication with Charles A. Setchell, USAID urban disaster management specialist, on November 14, 2003. See also HABITAT (2002:4)

[60] The figures are from Rubin (2000:1790).

[61] Cf. Duffield (1998). Dil (1977:469-470) provides an early account of the problem.

[62] Rubin (2000:1793).

[63] Cf. Castells (1998:166-205).

[64] Dil (1977:472). See also Rubin (1992:86-88).

population.[65] Also in the evolving middle class of officials, Pashtuns and Muhammadzais were by far the most dominant groups, as Rubin (1992:82) asserts:

> "[L]ike the elites of other rentier states, the old regime was hardly accountable to the state's citizens: there was little taxation and little representation. Its policies were aimed at expanding the state and the modern sector it controlled and at redistributing some of its revenues to obtain loyalty through patron-client relations. These policies created a bureaucratic class that lived (or aspired to live) in Kabul. This city developed upper and middle classes with Westernized or semi-Westernized lifestyles. The state's development policies did not improve the standard of living of the rural masses or provide them with a reliable or just administration."

Yet the combination of selection and exclusion also gradually nurtured its own opposition by creating a group of educated minority leaders of a wide political and religious spectrum. Without denying the importance of regional and global influences, one can hence accept Rubin's (1992:94) conclusion that "the revolutionary groups in Afghanistan were ambitious men whose access to power was blocked. Through their participation in the state educational system and the time they all spent in the capital, they developed aspirations not only for themselves but for their nation." Despite the undeniably powerful supranational shapers of the Afghan history, this finding is important as it puts marginalized but educated and "nationalized" groups in the foreground of our urban conflict analysis, thus confirming a central role of the city versus nation debate.

Comparative Analysis – City and Context

Both cases provide support for the hypothesis that features and institutions of urban life have the capacity to generate large-scale violence. Skewed power structures and unequal urban opportunities seem to have had the most significant influence. In pre-war Freetown social cohesion had come under great stress and was eventually unable to prevent the outbreak of conflict. For the case of Kabul, the referential framework is somewhat wider, but not less instructive. The city's genesis as an urban place where people gather and live

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[65] Rubin (1992:80).

together clearly preceded the era in which the leaders of the country, which found itself
geographically and politically caught in colonial powers' fight for control over Central
Asia, incrementally developed a language and policy of nationalism, beginning in the early
20th century – with Kabul as the capital.[66] To understand the relevance of this shift, it is
important to point out that the country did indeed have various larger cities, such as Heart,
Mazar-i Sharif, and Kandahar. The proclamation and establishment of Kabul as the capital
of a desired Afghan nation-state is therefore a move that broke with the traditional multi-
centered structure of the country and resulted in a "trauma" during which "a central state
dominated by a foreign ideology destroyed the country in the name of progressive
reform."[67]

To be sure, this process of nationalization and centralization took place in many countries
around the globe. Yet the societal fragmentation, tribal loyalty and rentier state economy of
Afghanistan dramatically limited the prospects for an Afghan nation from the very
beginning. The cleavage between Kabul as a symbol of the largely unfinished and barely
functioning nation on the one hand, and an urban place on the other can be seen as an
important explanatory factor in the context of the country's violent past. It also made the
city a target during the Najibullah government (1989-1992) during which the nationalist
discourse was again taken up, which eventually provided new opportunities for
contestation and violence. As a paradoxical result, "by the end of 1993 Kabul probably
exercised less control over the territory and population of Afghanistan then at almost any
time in the preceding century."[68] At the same time it is precisely the rewinding of this
"overdetermination" of the city, as Tajbakhsh (2001: 164) calls the condition of critical
urban hybridity, which carries a compelling potential for peace building. I shall turn to this
argument in the final section.

Both cases also demonstrate that dynamics at a higher level than the urban or national
directly influence processes of development and prospects of peace in Third World cities.
In Kabul, this is undeniably the case in both economic and political terms, including the

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[66] Rubin (1988:1194-1201).
[67] Rubin (2000:1797).
[68] Rubin (1994:187).

global colonialism in the late 19th century and the formation of trade zones for mainly illegal goods. The same is true for Sierra Leone, where state-level cooperation continuously left out the needs of the common people and revenues from local resource exploitation left the country immediately after materializing. Particularly Freetown served as a hub for transcontinental economic transactions so common in today's globalized world.

To be sure, urban-rural tensions also existed in both cases.[69] Keen (2002:15), for example, notes that after abusing a policeman, a RUF rebel commander reportedly said, "you think we should remain in the bush don't you, but the bush is made for animals." Likewise, the legacy a war in Afghanistan and the resulting deprivation and hardship led to a rural warrior class that was easy to instrumentalize: "They might long for peace, but they also feared it. Peace might seem, if anything, less secure than war."[70] Yet not all tensions fit neatly into a framework that puts "the city" against "the countryside." An additional qualification has to be made.

While there is a general assumption of an "economically and politically more powerful urban population,"[71] the analysis of both cities actually shows significant cleavages *between* urban groups with regard to economic opportunities and inclusion. Therefore, rather than following Lipton's (1977) theory of urban bias, one might instead turn to Smith (1996: 149) who critiques Lipton and argues:

> "The basic conflict really is not between rural and urban classes; rather, it pits the urban-based élite (in alliance with international capital) against both urban and rural masses. [… M]isery and hardship […] actually benefit some people. They also may actually be *functional* for surplus extraction under the conditions of dependent capitalism."

In the case of Freetown, an important feature of this urban-international alliance can be seen in the aforementioned global trade connections for arms and diamonds. In Kabul, structural imbalances of the same sort mainly manifested themselves in a biased recruitment process for higher education that opened the door to international opportunities

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[69] Cf. Abdullah (1994) for Freetown, Rubin (1988:1189) for Kabul.
[70] Rubin (2003:572).
[71] Sen (1990:330, fn.11).

and the concentration of aid monies in the hands of a few. In fact, Johnson and Leslie found that capital-to-capital flows were particularly prevalent during the final three years of Taliban rule, due to the inaccessibility of most areas and deriving pragmatism of aid agencies.[72] Contrary to Lipton's argument however, these arrangements did not benefit urbanites vis-à-vis the rural masses, but favored a small group of both urban and rural-based members of the country's tribal elite.[73] Similarly, while there was indeed a rural-urban dichotomy of income sources (agriculture vs. aid), this did not lead to a permeation of socio-tribal barricades within the city.[74]

Similarly, the explanatory power of ethnicity has to be weighed carefully in the two cases. In Afghanistan, tribalism, not ethnicity (and certainly not nationality) remains the dominant category for identification. Despite common perceptions of "ethnic wars," ethnic differences actually proved to be of secondary importance in Sierra Leone when compared to socio-psychological motives for violence: Lebanese traders in Freetown did not become focal points of resentment *because of their ethnic background or customs,* but because of the fact that they were part to an city-based system of marginalization and exploitation. Admittedly, the tensions between Creoles and natives from the local soil constitute a slightly more complicated case. But here again, violence was not waged against the former by the latter but triggered by highly concentrated power and resources, and members of both groups regularly fought together and against each other. Unlike the genocide in Rwanda, it was by no means directed against a particular community or ethnicity (it is important to note that "Tutsi-ness" was at least as arbitrary and artificial a category as are national identities), but was subsequently directed indiscriminately against anyone who was suspicious, unprotected or simply, in the way.

The assessment of ethnicity as a possible causal factor also raises the question of identity. Similarly to the general lack of a perception of Afghan-ness described above, no evidence

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[72] Johnson and Leslie (2002:865).

[73] In fact, the countryside hosted the most important constituents of urban tribal leaders, as Rubin (2000:1792) emphasizes.

[74] Cf. Rubin (2000:1791). To be sure, it would be foolhardy to deny that basic infrastructure provision in urban centers was better and more secure. Nonetheless, my basic point here is that there was no "poor countryside-*rich* city" pattern. This is also partly true because of forced migration and internal displacement during the various eras of large-scale violence, which greatly increased the pressure on urban systems.

could be found for the existence of a strong Sierra Leonean identity among its people. Not

surprisingly, satisfying immediate needs such as shelter and basic infrastructure remain

dominant in refugees' decision making on settlement and related opportunities, as Idrissa

Conteh of the Sierra Leonean UNHCR office recently reports: "[U]nfortunately most of the

refugees [in Liberia] are not willing to come here. […] They prefer to stay in Liberia

because they argue that the cost of living in Sierra Leone is high, that there's no housing,

no water, no electricity in the areas of return even if they saw these things are being

provided in the communities. It is difficult to understand that there's war in Liberia, there's

peace in Sierra Leone, but they're still scared to come here."[75] This is in fact an impressive

illustration of the theoretical claim that there exists a division between national and

individual interests in territory, again brought forward by Appadurai (2003: 340):

> National space can come to be differently valorized for the state and for its
> citizen-subjects. The state is typically concerned with taxation, order, general
> stability and fixity, whereas from the point of view of subjects, territory typically
> involves rights to movement, rights to shelter, and rights to subsist. Thus "soil"
> needs to be distinguished from territory ("sons of the soil"). While soil is a matter
> of a spatialized and originary discourse of belonging, territory is concerned with
> integrity, surveyability, policing, and subsistence."

Calls for reforging national identity by some local actors must then be understood as a

possibly hazardous attempt to create a sense of larger community and inclusion.[76] Apart

from this possible project however, primary strategies for peace deal with more tangible

issues such as the creation of employment opportunities to overcome deprivation and to

limit the incentives for violent collective action. Moreover, local and international actors in

Freetown have to work towards the institutional establishment of a rule of law as a basis for

social interaction.[77] In the end, only a more equitable distribution of resources and leverage

can ensure urban peace. Besides, Genberg's (2002) analysis of Beirut and Sennett's (1977)

definition of urbanity reminds us that urban ethnic diversity is not primarily a problem or

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[75] UNAMSIL (2003).

[76] CDD (1999). Blockmans (2003:9) reiterates, "It should be clear that states did have an interest in confusing
and recuperating these concepts [of traditional territory, community, and nationhood], suggesting the unity of
territory, state, and nation. Evidently, during the nineteenth century, state makers tried very hard to make
people believe that state, nation, and country were overlapping concepts, and nationalist movements in this
field achieved effective results, albeit often without opposition."

[77] Hall and Winlow (2003:157): "Security is irreducibly social, and only a public body can offer it."

solution, but first of all, a constitutive element of cities. Yet in light of the widened cleavages between and the understandably low levels of inter-community trust among the various groups in both cities, the task of achieving peace does not seem any easier.

Proposing Solutions: Urban Transformation – Towards What?

"Nobody could have a knowledge of the entire state, including its institutions, population, and territory, as one could know a city."

Wim Blockmans (2003:8-9).

"So let us have a look at the possibilities if there could be more city-logic and less state-logic in the world. […] Municipalities are generally less pathological then states, not serving as depositories of national traumas and myths, such as the idea of being 'chosen' to be above everything else."

Johan Galtung (2000:861).

Taking our preceding analysis as the basis for practical considerations, the focus shall now be set on concrete measures in the context of urban conflict transformation. In spaces in transition, transformation is the management of political, economic, and social relations.[78] Yet, Munck and Skalnik Leff (1997: 359) point out:

"In comparative terms, revolution from above is probably the mode of transition least likely to sustain steady progress toward the consolidation of democracy. In sum, an essentially political factor, the process of transition itself, is important in determining the likelihood that the outcome of transition will be a democratic form of government, as well as the distinctive challenges new democracies face when they try to consolidate themselves. […]
Finally, a crucial, though daunting, task still to be confronted is to integrate the political determinants of democratization emphasized here with approaches that focus on sociological and economic factors."

Who, then, should take the lead in achieving peace and building a viable democracy in the two countries investigated in this study? Is there a role for city-based agents? Which factors

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[78] Cf. Munck and Skalnik Leff (1997:343).

would such urban peace builders in the two cities have to take into account? Which measures may they consider, and which guideposts should mark the transition process?

In his analysis of the political economy of state creation, Robert Bates (2001:21) writes: "Societies that are now urban, industrial, and wealthy were themselves once rural, agrarian, and poor." While the connection between location and income cannot be discussed here in detail, this statement touches two fundamental truths. First, industrialised countries are, due to their very nature, metropolized.[79] Second, the process of development is also a process of urban concentration.[80]

For the case of Kabul, there in fact is reason to hope that the influx of people outlined in the case study, apart from all the hardship and challenges it creates for citizens and planners alike, may also a have a positive effect. Kubursi's (1993) parol for a reconstitution of the urban space as a precondition for successful reconstruction is a sequence whose legitimacy does not derive from ideology but from truly pragmatic considerations. The normative power of facts could possibly generate an urban dynamic in which tribal identification is revalued and downgraded in favor of a more inclusive mental process of "becoming urbanites", true *Kabulis*. If we assume for a moment that the project of de-nationalizing Kabul could be successful, the argument that the city "is not so much a territory or a place as it is a promise, a potential, built on the ethics of respect for the hybrid spaces of identities"[81] is in fact crucial to assess the opportunity for peaceful coexistence that urban spaces embody. While the prospects for the creation of country-wide trust-based relationships in both Sierra Leone and Afghanistan look rather bleak for the foreseeable future, local social capital is not only easier to maintain, but also seems to be more attainable as a concrete development strategy.[82]

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[79] Sassen (2000:37) finds that higher levels of development correlate with higher urbanization rates.
[80] Clammer (2003), Knauder (2000).
[81] Tajbakhsh (2001:183).
[82] Cf. Faist (2000:15). To be sure, at least in the case of Kabul an urban identity ("Kabuli") has existed for decades, but it is highly distorted, sometimes relating to members of the solidarity group of the indigenous Persian speakers of the city, in other occasions describing Pashtuns or simply the inhabitants of the city, cf. Rubin (1992:79,97).

An alternative suggestion would be that the sheer speed of urban growth may simply overwhelm ethnic sentiments leading to a situation in which, "sharing city space with tens of thousands of newcomers, [citizens] lack […] the cognitive and social mechanisms for ordering the metropolis many of us rely on today, not the least of which are class and racial segregation […]."[83] Besides, knowing that (at least for now) the city is the only safe space, it would be surprising if people did not at least attempt to make an effort for collective action to gradually develop the institutions that safeguard this spatially limited peace. In the best case, such a duality of urban growth and the creation of urban security could help empower both the government vis-à-vis warring factions and the local constituents, and thus become an important step toward a regional decrease in physical violence.[84]

In any case, urban peace building has to be put on solid ground to render sustainable results, and it has to address the yawning income and power gap between haves and have-nots, particularly in the context of urban spatial proximity. An eyewitness of the efforts to revitalize war-torn Kabul, Michael Ignatieff (2002:13) criticizes: "Wherever the traveling caravan of nation-builders settles, it creates an instant boomtown, living on foreign money and hope. But boom towns inevitably go bust." An inclusive and sustainable approach would also encompass *holistic* programs for employment creation (such as cash-for-work, labor-intensive investment, inclusion of women and IDPs, and schemes that facilitate demobilization and reintegration of warriors) and a policy to effectively address the huge problem of trade in drugs, gems, and arms.

Looking at the reconstruction of the urban infrastructure to overcome the factual absence of service provision in Kabul, what does the case of skewed access in Freetown suggest to the planner in this context? Certainly, urban management is a powerful tool of social control, as Castells (2003:65) points out, as therefore has to be planned and handled with great care. However, the absence of urban management conjures the influx of malign agents into the urban vacuum and facilitates the breeding of unjust institutions which, in total, are most

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[83] Ryan (1997:185) on the conditions of post-American civil war cities.
[84] For the case of the reconstruction of Beirut, Sarkis (1993:109) points out: "It is not difficult to imagine why the political return of the state would immediately imply its return to the city center. Only there could its face be saved. Hence, only when the downtown is rebuilt will the government have fully recovered its power."

probably of far greater destructive potential than a temporary pragmatic approach to the creation and distribution of basic urban livability factors such as housing, water, sewage, and "winterisation". An immediate shift of international donors' grand strategies in favor of urban revitalization is timely and necessary. The so far dominant strict focus on rural redevelopment simply does not reflect the reality on the ground,[85] and it also does not correspond to the prime targets for reconstruction laid out by the current administration.[86] A main asset that could empower and facilitate such a shift toward a more balanced strategy would be the abundant amount of human resources now present in the larger cities and the already initiated city-based grant scheme for housing reconstruction.[87]

Yet it is a fact that on the long run these actors will only be able to lay a foundation for the bridges that may eventually reunite the positions and claims of the various interest groups in the urban realm and beyond.[88] This, however, will also depend on the willingness of all actors, local and international, to engage in a dialogue on the cities structural role, in which decisions are made in an inclusive manner and after consultation with all relevant stakeholders.[89] Indeed, there is reason to believe that the absence of successful peace building initiatives does not deny the existence of valuable local knowledge concerning the functioning of local institutions, which in turn enlarges the playing field for legitimate and locally accountable action. Rubin (2000: 1800) in fact calls this "a major untapped resource," and Lederach (1995) calls for "indigenous empowerment" as a critical factor in processes of conflict transformation. Similarly, Johnson and Leslie (2002:870) point out:

> "Systematic engagement with the range of community-level structures that have enabled people to cope with the long conflict could affirm the legitimacy of those who rise above factional interest and bring them into the mainstream of the political process. Just as formal political structures offer one form of

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[85] Charles A. Setchell (pers. comm.) reported that the same structural misallocation exists in local organizations: the Afghan minister for rural development currently has 40 advisors, whereas the recently appointed new Minister for urban reconstruction and development does not have a single professional aide.
[86] HABITAT (2002:2).
[87] Cf. HABITAT (2002:17).
[88] Bose (2002:146-147) makes a similar observation for the case of Mostar, where the reconstruction of the destroyed Stari Most bridge holds both economic and symbolic value. See also Grodach (2002). Rubin (1992:96) also raises an important issue regarding the system-inherent lack of accountability of INGOs towards local beneficiaries.
[89] Similarly, Rubin (2003:581) urges for an approach of "helping without pushing." See also Johnson and Leslie (2002).

representation, so moves by the assistance community to ensure proper consultation and equitable allocation of resources represent another opportunity for Afghans to have a say in their development."

Decentralization, coupled with the devolution of sufficient funds to local authorities is hence crucial to open the discourse and maximize the pool of options through citizen participation.[90] Some even go as far as claiming that "the central state will still be needed for provision of basic security and dispute resolution, but a clear division of labor among levels of governance will promote greater accountability over the reconstruction process,"[91] and that the "cities should play a frontline role in mobilizing and organizing the people."[92] Local control is certainly also more promising an arrangement than an institutionalization of locally unaccountable international actors.[93]

The issue of decentralization is obviously closely linked to the struggle for accountability. In his assessment of the process of de-nationalized politics, Köhler (1998: 236-237) argues:

> "Yet another function of the public sphere is to facilitate the implementation of choices and to generate loyalty to the decisions of the political authority to such an extent that the opposing interest (the interests, that is, that have failed to become state choices) accept defeat and respect limits on conflict."

To redesign the city as the arena for political contestation would not only localize the struggle for accountability and thus facilitate ownership,[94] but potentially also reduce the weight of claims and allow negotiating parties to assess possible gains, risks, and the enforceability of compromises more thoroughly. Besides, signaling confidence by sharing and gradually handing over responsibility is of crucial importance to "unleash the potential of the people [who] have been able to cope with extreme difficulties and have demonstrated a relentless ability to survive," as UN HABITAT (2002:12) points out. It becomes clear that urban action has much to contribute to the achievement of peace. However, the transition form space of crisis into "livable cities"[95] where citizens receive

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[90] Cf. Castells (2003:65).
[91] Rubin (2000:1801).
[92] HABITAT (2002:12).
[93] Cf. Stanley (2003:14,18).
[94] Cf. Johnson and Leslie (1998:871-872), Rubin (2003:576).
[95] HABITAT (2001:232-235). See also Evans (2002).

basic services and enjoy protection from violence while exercising basic political rights remains a tremendous challenge: Changing existing power structures is arguably the most difficult task development specialists may face, and such efforts are inherently prone to incite further conflict.[96] The task of urban governance is to create the incentive structures to make this transformation possible, and to empower the constituents of local polity.

Our final question is challenging but no less crucial: can the city bring peace to the country? Undeniably, urban life was severely affected during the years of the conflict. But urban systems, like other social systems, are dynamic:[97] there is no stable city. This dynamic, created by the proximity of people and the resulting magnitude of social interaction is a powerful resource that must be tapped in the struggle for peace.[98] Hence the key argument brought forward in this paper is that one must not only look at the dynamics of conflicts, but also the (partially deriving) necessary sequence of peace building measures. Herein, the city must be placed at the *beginning* of a chain of strategies political moves, not at its end. The "disjunctures in the links among space, place, citizenship, and nationhood"[99] that have been pointed out in various contexts must not be solely considered a threat to stability, but should also be considered as a unique opportunity to *bring the city back in*. Again, this need not conflict with the urgency of immediate needs: reconstructing the city while neglecting the rural areas will not only be unsustainable, but also potentially sow the seeds for new outbreaks of violence.[100] Still, large cities deserve primary attention both as a category and as a space for political action because of her normative power, for the better or worse, over the people both within and outside her borders. This is particularly true in Sierra Leone and Afghanistan where the concept of the nation-state has limited purchase for their inhabitants. In the struggle for peace, the role of the city does not need to be exalted nor exaggerated. It simply needs to be granted the attention that it deserves.

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[96] Cf. Brett (2002:13-14).
[97] Cf. Giddens (1982:14).
[98] Cf. Blockmans (2003:19).
[99] Appadurai (2003:341).
[100] Similarly, Johnson and Leslie (2002:870) plead for a balanced approach that recognizes both rural and urban needs.

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