

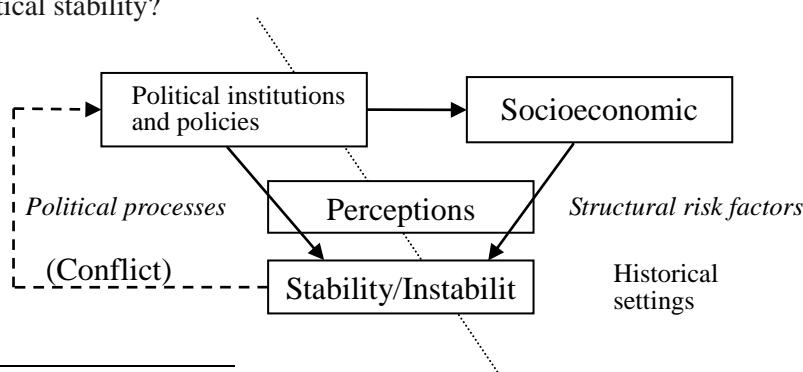
JICA Research Institute
 “Preventing Violent Conflict in Africa:
 Inequalities, Perceptions and Political Institutions”

JICA Research Institute has conducted a research project on conflict prevention in Sub-Saharan Africa since 2008. The research results are to be published from Palgrave Macmillan next year.

Aim To understand the forms of political and economic governance that would assist in the prevention of political violence that can undermine or reverse development.

Research framework The study explores the relationship between group inequalities (Horizontal Inequalities: HIs)¹ and political institutions. It focuses in particular on the role and interlinkages amongst three factors: subjective or perceived inequalities amongst identity groups; objective inequalities; and the participation of groups in political institutions.

1. *Objective HIs.* How severe are the prevailing objective HIs in terms of access to political power and state institutions, levels of socioeconomic development and access to economic resources? Have they resulted in group mobilisation, violent or otherwise, along ethnic, religious or regional lines?
2. *Subjective perceptions of HIs.* How do people perceive the prevailing political, socioeconomic and cultural status inequalities in their country? To what extent do these perceptions accurately reflect the ‘objective’ situation?
3. *Political institutions.* What types of formal and informal political institutions can be distinguished in our case study countries? How do these formal and informal political institutions affect the management of the prevailing objective and subjective HIs? Are certain types of political institutions more conflict-prone, or, conversely, conducive to sociopolitical stability?

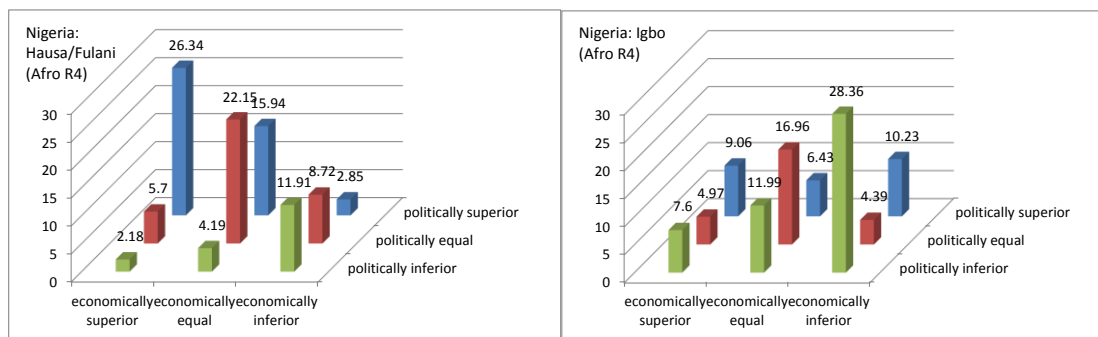


¹ The concept of HIs and its theorised relationship with political instability and violent conflict was first developed by the Oxford-based development economist Frances Stewart in the early 2000s and was subsequently extensively researched by the Centre for Research on Inequality, Human Security and Ethnicity (CRISE) based at the University of Oxford.

Case studies Comparative studies: Rwanda & Burundi, Cote d'Ivoire & Ghana, South Africa & Zimbabwe, and Uganda & Tanzania. Single country studies: Kenya and Nigeria

*JICA-RI conducted perception survey in seven countries: Ghana, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Uganda, Tanzania, Kenya and Nigeria.

A piece of findings: Our surveys show that there can be considerable differences between perceptions of socioeconomic HIs and actual HIs. For instance, it may happen that a group perceived as poorest is not the poorest according to social and economic statistics. This distortion of perceptions seems to be associated with political HIs. the groups that are politically marginalised appear to regard themselves as also being economically marginalised, even when this contradicts the objective evidence.



Correlations between Perceived Political HI and Perceived Socioeconomic HI in Nigeria

Main policy recommendations

1. Horizontal inequalities (HIs) are major root causes of violent conflict. The perspective of multidimensional HIs should be mainstreamed in development policy-making in Africa.
2. Objective and subjective HIs are not always in accord. Development practitioners and government officials should take care to avoid promoting misperceptions concerning HIs and their own fairness and impartiality.
3. Inclusive institutions, both formal and informal, are the foundation of peace. Outside actors should respect local initiatives for sustainable power-sharing and effective decentralisation.

Contributors Yoichi Mine (Professor, Doshisha University; and Visiting Fellow, JICA Research Institute, and the project leader), Frances Stewart (Emeritus Professor, Oxford University), Sakiko Fukuda-Parr (Professor, The New School), Thandika Mkandawire (Professor, London School of Economics), Mari Katayanag (Research Fellow, JICA Research Institute), Mwangi Kimenyi (Researcher, The Brookings Institute), Arnim Langer (Director, Centre for Research on Peace and Development, Leuven University); Satoru Mikami (Research Fellow, JICA Research Institute), Julius E. Nyang'oro (Retired Professor, University of North Carolina); Yuichi Sasaoka (Professor, Meiji University), Shinichi Takeuchi (Director, African Studies Group, Area Studies Centre at the Institute of Developing Economies Japan Trade Organisation, and Visiting Fellow, JICA Research Institute), and Ukoha Ukiwo (Senior Lecturer, University of Port Harcourt).