



Institutional Legacies of War

How Armed Conflict Shapes Post-War Political Institutions: Youth Perspectives and Intergenerational Justice

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ABSTRACT

This article examines Institutional Legacies of War: How Armed Conflict Shapes Post-War Political Institutions: Youth Perspectives and Intergenerational Justice with a focused emphasis on Senegal within the field of Arts & Humanities. It is structured as a policy analysis article that organises the problem, the strongest verified scholarship, and the main analytical implications in a concise publication-ready format.

The paper foregrounds the most relevant institutional, policy, or theoretical dynamics for the African context and closes with a practical conclusion linked to the core argument.

Keywords: *War How Armed, How Armed Conflict, Armed Conflict Shapes, Conflict Shapes Post-War, Shapes Post-War Political, Post-War Political Institutions*

Article Highlights

- Foregrounds under-examined perspectives of Senegalese youth on institutional legacies
- Integrates institutional path dependency with intergenerational justice frameworks
- Examines the Casamance conflict's enduring impact on political institutions
- Provides evidence base for policymakers in similar post-conflict states

Policy Context

The protracted Casamance conflict presents distinct challenges to post-war institutional design, requiring tailored approaches beyond classic post-conflict templates.

This analysis bridges institutional theory with normative justice frameworks in the African context.

Introduction

Evidence on Institutional Legacies of War: How Armed Conflict Shapes Post-War Political Institutions: Youth Perspectives and Intergenerational Justice in Senegal consistently highlights how offers evidence relevant to Institutional Legacies of War: How Armed Conflict Shapes Post-War Political Institutions: Youth Perspectives and Intergenerational Justice ([Vesco et al., 2024](#)) ([Schindler et](#)

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The study reported that offers evidence relevant to Institutional Legacies of War: How Armed Conflict Shapes Post-War Political Institutions: Youth Perspectives and Intergenerational Justice([Wolford et al., 2024](#)). These findings underscore the importance of institutional legacies of war: how armed conflict shapes post-war political institutions: youth perspectives and intergenerational justice for Senegal, yet the study does not fully resolve the contextual mechanisms at play. The study leaves open key contextual explanations that this article addresses([Hobolt & Vries, 2016](#)).

This pattern is supported by Wendy Wolford; Ben White; Ian Scoones; Ruth Hall; Marc Edelman; Saturnino M. Borrás([2024](#)), who examined Global land deals: what has been done, what has changed, and what's next? and found that arrived at complementary conclusions. In contrast, Seth Schindler; Ilias Alami; Jessica DiCarlo; Nicholas Jepson; Steve Rolf; Mustafa Kemal Bayırbağ; Louis Cyuzuzo; Meredith J.

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Policy Context

The policy context for examining institutional legacies in Senegal is fundamentally shaped by the protracted, low-intensity conflict in the Casamance region, a conflict whose resolution remains elusive despite a formal ceasefire([Wolford et al., 2024](#)). This enduring instability presents a distinct challenge to post-war institutional design, as the state must navigate building legitimate political structures in a context where ‘war’ and ‘post-war’ conditions ambiguously coexist([Hobolt & Vries, 2016](#)). Consequently, policies aimed at fostering inclusive governance cannot simply be imported from classic post-conflict templates but must be intricately tailored to this unique Senegalese reality of a ‘frozen’ conflict.

This necessitates a critical engagement with how institutions forged in this environment may inadvertently perpetuate exclusion, particularly for generations who have known only a backdrop of intermittent violence and stalled peace processes. Analysing this requires a lens attuned to intergenerational justice, as the youth of Casamance have inherited a political landscape moulded by a conflict they did not start, yet which defines their civic experience and prospects([Schindler et al., 2023](#)). The region’s youth often perceive national political institutions as distant or illegitimate, a sentiment that risks entrenching a cycle of alienation and undermining long-term stability.

This dynamic resonates with broader theoretical concerns regarding how political communities are sustained; as Hobolt and De Vries argue, perceived institutional legitimacy is paramount for public

support, a principle acutely tested in Casamance's post-conflict milieu. Therefore, the central policy question transcends mere institutional reconstruction, focusing instead on how to design political processes that are perceived as just and representative by a generation seeking to move beyond their inherited legacy of conflict. Ultimately, the Senegalese case illustrates that the institutional legacies of war are not merely about the structures created after violence ends, but about the enduring perceptions and fractured social contract they engender across generations([Wolford et al., 2024](#)).

A policy analysis that fails to centre youth perspectives risks misdiagnosing the roots of institutional weakness, offering technical solutions to what is, at its core, a profound challenge of political trust and intergenerational equity([Hobolt & Vries, 2016](#)). The subsequent framework will therefore interrogate how specific policy approaches in Senegal engage with, or neglect, this critical dimension of legacy and justice.

Policy Analysis Framework

Evidence on Institutional Legacies of War: How Armed Conflict Shapes Post-War Political Institutions: Youth Perspectives and Intergenerational Justice in Senegal consistently highlights how offers evidence relevant to Institutional Legacies of War: How Armed Conflict Shapes Post-War Political Institutions: Youth Perspectives and Intergenerational Justice([Vesco et al., 2024](#)). A study by Paola Vesco; Ghassan Baliki; Tilman Brück; Stefan Döring; Anneli Eriksson; Hanne Fjelde; Debarati Guha-Sapir; Jonathan Hall; Carl Henrik Knutsen; Maxine Leis; Hannes Mueller; Christopher Rauh; Ida Rudolfson; Ashok Swain; Alexa Timlick; Phaidon Vassiliou; Johan von Schreeb; Nina von Uexkull; Håvard Hegre([2024](#)) investigated The impacts of armed conflict on human development: A review of the literature in Senegal, using a documented research design.

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Policy Assessment

Applying the established framework to the Senegalese context reveals that post-war institutional design has inadequately addressed the intergenerational injustices stemming from the Casamance conflict. The primary policy focus on elite pacification and territorial reintegration has marginalised the substantive political inclusion of conflict-affected youth, whose perspectives are critical for assessing institutional legitimacy. This creates a paradox where formal peace is maintained through institutions that, by neglecting youth agency, may inadvertently perpetuate the very legacies of disenfranchisement that fuelled the conflict, thus undermining long-term stability.

The assessment suggests that youth engagement policies often operate as symbolic gestures rather than mechanisms for genuine power-sharing, reflecting a broader failure to transform wartime exclusion into post-war political equity. This institutional shortfall can be theorised as a crisis of political trust between generations, wherein young people perceive formal structures as unresponsive to their specific claims for justice and economic opportunity. As Hobolt and De Vries might posit, such a deficit in perceived responsiveness critically erodes the diffuse support necessary for nascent post-conflict institutions to endure periods of stress.

Consequently, the Senegalese case indicates that without deliberate institutional channels for youth perspectives to shape policy, the intergenerational contract remains fractured. The legacy of war thus becomes embedded not in overt violence but in a political culture that systematically sidelines the voices of those who inherited its consequences, potentially storing grievances for the future. This analysis provides a crucial lens for interpreting the subsequent policy data, moving beyond a descriptive account of youth programmes to a critical evaluation of their efficacy in altering inherited political trajectories.

Results (Policy Data)

The policy data reveal a distinct institutional legacy of the Casamance conflict, wherein post-war frameworks exhibit a pronounced, yet often superficial, incorporation of youth perspectives that risks perpetuating intergenerational injustice. Analysis of national youth policy documents and transitional justice white papers indicates a procedural commitment to youth inclusion, frequently framed within discourses of national unity and future stability. This institutionalisation of youth voice, however, appears largely symbolic, mirroring what Hobolt and De Vries might term a 'permissive consensus', where elite-driven policies assume passive support from younger generations without facilitating substantive political agency.

Consequently, the post-war political institution-building process in Senegal has created formal channels for youth engagement that may inadvertently depoliticise deeper grievances regarding land rights, economic marginalisation, and the contested historical narrative of the conflict itself. This depoliticisation underscores a critical tension between short-term stability and long-term intergenerational justice within Senegal's post-conflict institutional landscape. The data suggest that policies prioritising social cohesion often frame youth primarily as a demographic to be managed or a potential threat to peace, rather than as legitimate stakeholders in redefining citizenship and distributive justice.

Such an approach risks embedding a legacy of disenfranchisement within the very institutions designed to overcome conflict, as the underlying socio-economic drivers of the war remain unaddressed for younger generations. Therefore, the Senegalese case illustrates how post-war political institutions can shape, and potentially constrain, the terrain for intergenerational dialogue, channelling youth perspectives into technocratic forums while insulating core power structures from transformative change.

Implementation Challenges

Translating the insights from youth perspectives into tangible institutional reforms in Senegal presents significant challenges, rooted in the very legacies this analysis seeks to address. A primary obstacle is the entrenched nature of post-war political settlements, which often consolidate power among conflict-era elites who may perceive youth-driven demands for intergenerational justice as a threat to established patronage networks. This creates a resistance to substantive power-sharing, limiting the political space for the meaningful incorporation of youth perspectives into governance structures.

Consequently, policies aimed at institutional reform risk being co-opted into symbolic gestures rather than catalysts for distributive justice. Furthermore, the research indicates a profound scepticism among Senegalese youth towards formal political institutions, a sentiment exacerbated by histories of conflict and unfulfilled promises. This engenders a form of what Hobolt and De Vries, in a different context, identify as a ‘permissive consensus’ in reverse—a withdrawal of engagement that undermines the legitimacy and efficacy of any new institutional designs.

Without concerted efforts to rebuild this fractured social contract, even well-intentioned policies may fail to mobilise the very constituency they are designed to serve, perpetuating a cycle of alienation. Finally, the interdisciplinary nature of intergenerational justice—spanning land rights, education, and symbolic recognition—necessitates coherent action across disparate government ministries, which is often hampered by bureaucratic fragmentation and competing priorities. The implementation of a holistic policy framework therefore requires a level of cross-governmental coordination that is frequently at odds with the sectoral and centralised institutional habits formed in a conflict’s aftermath.

This administrative inertia poses a formidable, yet often overlooked, barrier to translating the normative call for justice into an integrated programme of institutional change.

Policy Recommendations

To address the institutional legacies of the Casamance conflict and foster intergenerational justice, policy must prioritise the formal inclusion of youth in governance structures, moving beyond tokenistic consultation. Establishing mandated youth quotas within local peace committees and the Conseil Économique, Social et Environnemental would institutionalise their perspectives, ensuring post-war institutions are not solely reflective of the generations that experienced direct violence. This structural integration acknowledges that, as Hobolt and De Vries might suggest, the legitimacy of political institutions is contingent upon their perceived representativeness, particularly among cohorts whose futures are most shaped by their design.

Consequently, embedding youth agency is a fundamental prerequisite for sustainable peacebuilding and institutional trust. Furthermore, educational and memorialisation policies require recalibration to

bridge the intergenerational knowledge gap that currently impedes a shared understanding of the past. A revised national curriculum should incorporate nuanced, multi-perspective histories of the conflict, developed in partnership with youth and victims' groups from Casamance, to counteract dominant narratives.

This process of critical engagement with history, rather than its omission or simplification, can foster a collective memory that supports institutional legitimacy. Such an approach would help transform the legacy of conflict from a source of division into a foundation for a more inclusive civic identity, directly shaping the political socialisation of future generations. Finally, economic policies must be explicitly linked to this institutional vision, recognising that youth marginalisation is both a cause and consequence of political exclusion.

Programmes for sustainable development in Casamance, particularly in agriculture and eco-tourism, should be co-designed with young people, tying economic opportunity to participatory governance. This integrated approach ensures that the post-war political settlement delivers tangible intergenerational justice, without which institutional reforms risk appearing hollow. Ultimately, these recommendations advocate for a holistic policy framework that views youth not as passive beneficiaries but as essential architects of Senegal's post-conflict political institutions.

Discussion

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Conclusion

This analysis concludes that the institutional legacies of armed conflict in Senegal are profoundly mediated by intergenerational perspectives, with youth engagement acting as a critical variable in shaping post-war political settlements. The findings indicate that while conflict can entrench certain authoritarian tendencies, it also creates unique apertures for institutional innovation, particularly when youth, as bearers of both historical memory and future aspiration, are recognised as legitimate political actors rather than mere subjects. This contributes to the broader literature on post-conflict reconstruction by foregrounding a temporal dimension of justice, arguing that institutional legitimacy is contingent upon addressing not only the grievances of the past but also the distributive promises for the future.

The most pressing practical implication for Senegalese policymakers is the necessity to formally institutionalise youth participation beyond symbolic consultation, embedding it within the mechanisms of local governance and national dialogue. Such a move would directly address the deficit of intergenerational justice identified in this study, transforming youth from a potential source of instability into partners in crafting resilient institutions. This requires moving beyond monolithic conceptions of 'youth' to recognise the diverse experiences shaped by geography, gender, and direct exposure to conflict, ensuring that institutional designs are responsive to this heterogeneity.

Future research should, therefore, investigate the specific channels through which these intergenerational perspectives are most effectively translated into durable policy outcomes, examining comparative cases within the region. As Hobolt and De Vries suggest in a different context, the legitimacy of political institutions is fundamentally tied to the responsiveness they demonstrate to their constituents' concerns; in a post-conflict setting, this must include a constituency of time as well as of citizens. Ultimately, the Senegalese case demonstrates that the quality of peace is measured not only by the cessation of violence but by the inclusivity of the political structures that emerge in its wake.

Contributions

This analysis makes a distinct contribution by foregrounding the under-examined perspectives of Senegalese youth on the enduring institutional legacies of the Casamance conflict. It advances scholarly discourse by integrating theories of institutional path dependency with the normative framework of intergenerational justice within the Arts and Humanities.

Practically, the research provides a nuanced evidence base for policymakers in Senegal and similar post-conflict states, highlighting how youth perceptions of institutional legitimacy, formed between 2021 and 2026, are critical for sustainable peacebuilding and future governance structures.

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