

Chapter One

Contemporary Conflict Analysis in Perspective

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Introduction

“...at what point does the proliferation of ‘hunches’ add confusion or avoid critical issues in the field? Does yet another study that finds some statistically significant relationship between ecological (i.e. attribute and relational) variables and the incidence or some other characteristic of war help develop theory? For the most part, the causes of war ... remain as obscure as ever. Modern research has left a trail of uncertainty, partial clues, contradiction, and continued mystery ...”¹

“...there is no single cause of a conflict. Nor is there often any single precondition for sustainable peace. Different factors vary in importance, and reinforce or neutralise each other. The analysis of the situation must therefore include assessing the relative importance of the different indicators and their inter-relationship.”²

In an essay titled ‘The theoretical deficit in the study of war’, Thomas Cusak reminds us that although “war remains a major social problem”, it is reassuring to know that “in the last few decades a significant number of political and other social scientists have devoted considerable effort to the study of its causes and consequences”.³ Nonetheless, far from being unified, the study of armed conflict and war remains fragmented between disciplinary boundaries, which produce conflicting and often mutually exclusive theories. Most importantly, there is a disturbing lack of integrative knowledge on the subject.⁴ It is in this context that Kalevi Holsti’s comment quoted above must be put into perspective. In fact, what Holsti is rebelling against is what has commonly been referred to as the ‘tyranny of the single-cause’ in the explanation of war.

This book represents a commendable exception to the ‘tyranny of the single-cause’. In fact, the authors of the six chapters do not claim to have discovered “the philosopher’s stone, the magic formula, which, mechanically applied, will produce the desired result and thus substitute for the uncertainties and risks of political action the certitude of rational calculation”.⁵ On the contrary, backed by extensive primary data collected *in situ*, each chapter

illuminates the role that resources, both scarce and abundant, play among other variables in the onset and escalation of the violent conflicts portrayed. By focusing attention on the 'ecological variable', as an underestimated factor among more commonly cited ethnic, religious, weak state or other reasons for conflicts in places like Sudan, Rwanda and Somalia, this book enriches rather than reduces the debate on Africa's wars.

Often considered to face 'the greatest challenges to peace and stability', the African continent has been stage to ten high-intensity conflicts in the past 25 years, suffering casualties which range between 3 800 000 and 6 800 000 people and an astounding 155 million people directly or indirectly affected by war.

There is a complex relationship between ecology and conflict in sub-Saharan Africa, involving multiple actors, divergent and often conflicting interests, located at several levels of analysis. The access to and control of valuable natural resources, including minerals, oil, timber, productive pastures and farming land, have been crucial factors in the occurrence of violent conflicts across the continent. In their widest sense, the use and control of ecological resources as causes of conflicts has been motivated by both grievance and greed. Moreover, grievance related to the unjust and inequitable distribution of land and natural resources in many regions of Africa, and greed for valuable ecological resources have in many instances been the underlying causes of armed conflicts.

The consequences of conflicts linked to ecological control are staggering. Conflict in Sudan has resulted in an estimated two million deaths since 1983, as well as a humanitarian crisis of immense proportions. Similarly, Africa's 'First World War' in the Democratic Republic of Congo has resulted in an estimated 1.5 million deaths since 1998. Despite the extent, scope, and impact of conflict, crime and violence, the opportunity remains to redress and rectify access to and control over the continent's varied natural resources. It is hoped that this book will contribute to more substantial policy, legal and institutional reform of natural resource distribution and control, as a prerequisite for sustainable conflict prevention and resolution in Africa.

Developing Theories of Conflict Analysis

During the Cold War, the study of armed conflict and war was largely systemic in orientation and other conflicts were seen as 'proxy wars', 'small wars' or 'low intensity conflicts', to a large extent a product and creation of bipolarity. Systemic, global or world wars attracted the major part of scholarly attention, both within the field of international relations as well as strategic studies. Because the traumatic experiences of two world wars demonstrated that these wars produced far greater and graver consequences than

other wars, the growing focus on 'big wars'⁶ may be located within a strong normative orientation that permeated the post-1945 period. This was a result of attempts by academics and policy makers to understand such system-altering occurrences, hoping "that a better understanding of the causes of these wars will increase the possibility of preventing them".⁷ This concern led to an overwhelming focus on interstate wars and the vast majority of in-depth studies of war centred on strategic studies' issues such as nuclear deterrence and balances of power, alliances and arms races as well as the incidence, frequency and duration of interstate wars.⁸

Paradoxically, while the bulk of scholarly attention was focusing on understanding 'the wars that mattered' (i.e. interstate wars), the conflict landscape around the world was gradually assuming a very different profile. As Ted Robert Gurr and his team based at the University of Maryland's Center for International Development and Conflict Management have uncovered, there was a sharp increase in the total magnitude of violent conflict within societies from the 1950s to the 1980s.⁹ What the authors refer to as "societal conflicts" represented roughly three times the magnitude of interstate war during most of the last half century, increasing sixfold between the 1950s and the early 1990s.¹⁰ In this sense, as pointed out by J. David Singer, "while the conventional wisdom sees the level of regional and communal war as something new – permitted, if not catalysed, by the end of superpower confrontation – the evidence suggests otherwise".¹¹ This discrepancy in the perceptions of when, where, how and what types of conflicts developed during and after the Cold War is encapsulated in the following words by the Center for Systemic Peace,

"... contrary to popular myths, it was the Cold War period that was characterised by increasing incidence and magnitudes of political violence, mostly 'civil wars', that gradually decimated large areas of the world, seduced fragile political relations into hostility and chaos, led many newly emergent and some long-established states to the brink of structural failure (and beyond) ... the Cold War 'image' lent a curious patina of civility and stasis that served as the perfect cover for the subterranean ravages wrought during the Third World War."¹²

When the Berlin Wall came down in 1989, it was widely anticipated that threats to international peace and security would be substantially reduced and that the world at large would benefit from what came to be known as the 'peace dividend'. The final triumph of the neo-liberal democratic model was seen by some as evidence of the *end of history*. However, initial evidence that this would not be the case came in the form of the instability that followed the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet republics. The collapse of the Soviet Union saw hitherto concealed conflicts erupt around issues of governance and self-determination, ethnic division and territorial disputes. In fact, the peaceful example set by Czechoslovakia's

'Velvet Revolution' was the exception rather than the rule in a Cold War transition characterised by turbulence and instability.¹³ In addition, the end of superpower patronage to client movements worldwide was considered to have created a power vacuum whose inevitable results would include "the spread of violence and the emergence of disparate groups, ostensibly fighting in the name of ideology, religion or ethnicity, but seeking to finance their operations through local taxation, plunder and pillage".¹⁴

However defined, these conflicts had in fact become the rule in a world that was fast changing from the predictability of bipolarity to a vaguely defined unipolar 'New World Order'. This caused a fundamental shift in the analysis of war and armed conflict, a shift that permeated all disciplines that focused on this most destructive of human activities. These became the conflicts that mattered, for not only could they threaten global peace and security in their tendency to metastasise to neighbouring countries, but they also caused unprecedented levels of human and material destruction. Largely focused on a 'clausewitzian universe' of interstate wars, academia and policy-making circles in the West were largely unprepared for the task of explaining such 'societal conflicts'. The tools of strategic and war studies seemed increasingly irrelevant to explain ethno-nationalism, religious militancy, environmental degradation, resource scarcity, preventive diplomacy, peacekeeping or humanitarian intervention.

In fact, after the end of the Cold War and in particular the latter half of the 1990s, the incidence of such conflicts increased. Conflict monitoring projects such as those led by Schmid and Longman (PIOMM) and Wallensteen and Sollenberg (SIPRI) have found a disturbing escalatory trend in the occurrence of violent conflicts. While a total of 22 high-intensity conflicts were being fought worldwide in mid-1995, this number rose to 25 by November 1999. Equally perturbing was the increase in low-intensity conflicts which rose from a low of 31 in 1996 to a high of 77 by mid-1999. On a lower violence threshold, violent political conflicts also increased dramatically, from a low of 40 in 1995 to a staggering 151 in mid-1999.¹⁵ As Miall, Ramsbotham and Woodhouse found, this raises the following question:

"What are we to call these conflicts? Current terminology includes 'internal conflicts' (Brown (ed) 1996), 'new wars' (Kaldor and Vashee (eds) 1997), 'small wars' (Harding 1994), 'civil wars' (King 1997), 'ethnic conflicts' (Stavenhagen 1996), 'conflict in post-colonial states' (Van de Goor et al (eds) 1996) and so on, as well as various expressions used by humanitarian and development NGOs and international agencies, such as 'complex human emergencies' and 'complex political emergencies ...'"¹⁶

If war had in fact changed, its transformation needed to be explained. It is in this context that the 'structural transformation of war' proposition was put forward by, among others, Martin Van Creveld, Kalevi Holsti and Mary

Kaldor. 'Low-intensity conflicts', 'wars of the third kind' and 'new wars' were the concepts put forward by the three authors to describe the prevailing form of armed conflict in the second half of the 20th century.¹⁷ On the ground, the visible signs of the structural transformation of war are evident from the way it is conducted. A far cry from the structured conduct of conventional war, contemporary wars do not typically have a precise beginning, since in the vast majority of cases there are no formal declarations of war that would indicate the initiation of hostilities. In addition, contemporary armed conflicts conspicuously lack definitive battles, decisive campaigns and formal endings. They typically last for decades. In the way they are conducted, contemporary wars are fought by loosely knit groups of regulars, irregulars, cells, and occasionally locally based warlords under little or no central authority. As Van Creveld points out, "Very rarely do they [LICs] involve regular armies on both sides, though often it is a question of regulars on one side fighting guerrillas, terrorists, and even civilians, including women and children on the other."¹⁸ An important consequence of this is that in this new type of organised violence the distinction between war (understood as violence between states or organised political groups for political motives) and organised crime and large-scale violations of human rights is largely blurred.¹⁹

Furthermore, contemporary armed conflicts develop within what Kaldor terms the new "globalised" war economy. In the present day 'war economies' are highly decentralised and only a fraction of the population participates directly in the war. This participation is usually undertaken amidst high unemployment scenarios characterised by heavy dependence on external resources, a decline in domestic production and physical destruction coupled with interruptions in normal trade and taxation mechanisms. These factors force parties in conflict to finance themselves either through plunder and the black market or external assistance by diaspora communities, support from neighbouring governments or illegal trade in arms, drugs or valuable commodities.²⁰ Finally, an important characteristic of contemporary warfare is complexity. Complexity is an important dimension of 'new wars' because in the vast majority of cases there are several and varied factions involved, as well as a multitude of external parties which may provide consultation, funding, technical support and in many cases direct military involvement and assistance.

The structural transformation of war described above is seen by Kaldor, Holsti and Van Creveld to be a consequence of a radical change in conflict goals. The profile of wars has changed because 'new wars' are "about identity politics in contrast to the geo-political or ideological goals of earlier wars".²¹ Ranging from ethnic politics to nationalist movements claiming independence or secession, the vast majority of groups engaged in contemporary armed conflicts define themselves on the basis of their identity, whether of a national, ethnic, religious or cultural character. In fact, self-determination is

considered the primary cause of contemporary warfare by the Minorities at Risk Project. Nearly 100 national and minority peoples took part in serious violent conflict at some time between 1945 and 1990. Sixty conflicts were fought over issues of group autonomy and lasted at least a decade and at the beginning of 1996 there were more than 40 violent ethno-political conflicts under way.²²

Identity politics has assumed centre stage in the discourse of groups involved in contemporary conflict. Kaldor considers this inevitable in contexts generally characterised by the weakening of the state and in some extreme cases its disintegration, which often leads to “the erosion of the monopoly of legitimate organised violence”.²³ Similarly, Holsti locates the causes of “wars of the third kind” in the “fundamental quarrels about the nature of communities and the problems of state-building” in a world where communities “have adopted the mystique of statehood as the ultimate and final political format”.²⁴ These wars are not about foreign policy, security, honour, or status. They are about statehood, governance, and the role and status of nations and communities within states. The growth in identity politics is attributed by Kaldor to the vacuum created by the absence of forward-looking projects and the failure of “other sources of political legitimacy” such as socialism or the nation-building rhetoric of first generation post-colonial leaders. Holsti emphasises that “new and weak states are the primary locale of present and future wars” and that consequently we can understand contemporary war better “if we explore the birth of states and how they have come to be governed”.²⁵

‘Greed versus Grievance’: Tautological Debate or Two Sides of the Same Coin?

A shift of focus has occurred. To explain these armed conflicts, analysts and policy makers looked at the groups in conflict and their claims in order to establish what these conflicts were about.²⁶ Turning away from the systemic level, analysis began to focus on local actors and local situations to better understand the reasons behind claims for self-determination aiming for independence, autonomy, secession, the control or participation in government. This shift in focus strongly influenced the development of conflict types by analysts seeking to clarify the nature of the issues in conflict. Conflict causes have in fact become the “most frequently invoked typology” and within these, as Singer points out, “all the usual suspects are found: territory, ideology, dynastic legitimacy, religion, language, ethnicity, self-determination, resources, markets, dominance, equality, and, of course, revenge”.²⁷ To a large extent this explains the plethora of definitions that now exist for contemporary wars and the relentless search for a ‘golden formula’ applicable to all.

At opposite sides of the aetiological spectrum, two recent examples have included the development of an 'ethnic conflict' type and a 'resource war' type. 'Ethnic conflict' became in the beginning of the 1990s "the most fashionable term and last resort to explain contemporary social conflicts".²⁸ Yet, what do we mean when we attribute the 'ethnic' classification to conflicts as varied as Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Tamil insurgency in Sri Lanka, the civil wars in Rwanda, Burundi and Angola? There have been two main scholarly approaches to 'ethnicity'. On the one hand, ethnicity is considered a primordial or inherited group characteristic that some scholars would argue is biologically based.²⁹ On the other hand, ethnicity has been conceptualised as an instrument, a contextual, fluid and negotiable aspect of identity, "a tool used by individuals, groups, or elites to obtain some larger, typically material end".³⁰ According to Timothy Sisk, instrumentalists argue that ethnic identities,

"... wax and wane, contingent on a wide variety of variables, including the capacity and skills of political entrepreneurs who can effectively mobilise groups for collective aims and articulate beliefs about common ancestry and destiny ... some instrumentalists (alternatively known as structuralists) suggest that ethnic identity is socially constructed, often created or de-emphasised by power-seeking political elites in historically determined economic and social arrangements."³¹

Although the distinction between these two seemingly opposing views may at first appear academic, "the extent to which scholars see ethnicity as immutable and innate versus socially constructed influences beliefs about the type of political systems that can best ameliorate conflict along ethnic lines."³² In fact, contemporary conflict analysis has gradually realised that they "are not mutually exclusive and can in fact be describing different sides of the same coin".³³ This has given rise to a 'constructivist' approach to 'ethnic conflict', one proposed by Lake and Rothchild as well as Sisk. Lake and Rothchild concluded that "ethnicity is not something that can be decided upon by individuals at will, like other political affiliations, but is embedded within and controlled by the larger society" and therefore it can only be understood within a 'relational framework'.³⁴ Sisk emphasised the idea of ethnic identity as "multifaceted and fluid" in that "not only may any single individual possess more than one identity characteristic, but the boundaries of group identity can change dramatically over time".³⁵

Consequently, it becomes crucial that the conflict researcher critically analyses situations that may be described by participants and outsiders as 'ethnic conflicts'. This entails understanding that although a basic human need, identity and by extension ethnic identity is fluid, malleable, constructed and negotiable. As Ted Gurr rightly emphasises, while cultural identity may be stronger and more enduring than most other collective identities (i.e. ideological or class), it is most likely to provide the basis for political

mobilisation and conflict when it provides the basis for invidious distinctions among peoples (inequalities among cultural groups in status, economic well-being, access to political power) that are deliberately maintained through public policy and social practice.³⁶

At the other end of the aetiological spectrum a number of recent studies have sought to portray contemporary wars as driven essentially by economic agendas, particularly those conflicts in the developing world. As Jakkie Cilliers points out, this approach has been collated into that of 'resource-wars' and is sometimes put forward as reflecting a 'new' type of war.³⁷ While the role of resources in the onset and continuation of violent conflicts has been the object of study for many decades, until recently studies have for the most part centred on the role played by scarcity or relative scarcity of resources as prime triggers of violence, both at the individual as well as the collective level. Rupesinghe and Anderlini, for example, consider that stagnation and protracted income decline in poor and middle-income countries (i.e. the cases of Algeria, Sierra Leone, Liberia and Lebanon); unequal growth and unequal distribution of resources in cases of accelerated economic growth (i.e. Mexico and South Africa) and finally structural adjustment policies and changing distribution of resources may act as triggers of violent conflict.³⁸ Development theory has also focused on the role that resources and societal development play on the onset of violence. In this respect, Gurr considers that "for the last half century at least, societies at low levels of development have suffered much more from societal warfare than prosperous societies".³⁹ Recent studies, however, have focused on resource appropriation in situations of abundance as the fundamental underlying cause of war. According to the 'resource-war' proposition, groups engaged in violent conflict are not primarily motivated by grievance (i.e. ethnic discrimination, inequality, historical animosity), but essentially by economic agendas and therefore greed. Issues of identity and self-determination are dismissed in favour of a focus on the role that resources, by and of themselves, play as the main objectives of groups engaged in war.

A strand of the 'resource-war' hypothesis has recently become known as the 'greed theory' of conflict through the work of Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler.⁴⁰ In its original formulation, Collier et al defined the 'greed hypothesis' in the following terms,

"... the discourse on conflict tends to be dominated by group grievances beneath which inter-group hatreds lurk, often traced back through history. I have investigated statistically the global pattern of large-scale civil conflict since 1965, expecting to find a close relationship between measures of these hatreds and grievances and the incidence of conflict. Instead, I found that economic agendas appear to be central to understanding why civil wars get going. *Conflicts are far more likely to be caused by economic opportunities than by grievance* [my emphasis] ..."⁴¹

In 'On the economic causes of civil wars' Collier and Hoeffler use a model based on expected-utility theory under the premise that "rebels will conduct a civil war if the perceived benefits outweigh the costs of rebellion".⁴² Using statistical regression methods to test four independent variables (per capita income, natural resource endowment, population size and ethno-linguistic fractionalisation) the authors found that "higher per capita income reduces the duration of civil war and the probability of its occurrence" and that the predicted duration of civil war is found to be much shorter if income is higher. This leads them to conclude that "civil war is overwhelmingly a phenomenon of low income countries".⁴³ As regards natural resources, the authors concluded that "the possession of natural resources initially increases the duration and the risk of civil war but then reduces it". This is interpreted as being "due to the taxable base of the economy constituting an attraction for rebels wishing to capture the state". On the other hand, a high level of natural resources diminishes the probability of war due to the enhanced financial capability of the government and hence "its ability to defend itself through military expenditure".⁴⁴ In terms of population size, the authors found that "countries with larger populations have higher risks of war and these wars last longer". Nevertheless, while in large population countries the risk may be a function of a desire for secession, one should bear in mind that according to the model, population size also affects rebel movements' coordination costs. Therefore the effect of population size is said to be "ambiguous".⁴⁵ Finally, as concerns ethno-linguistic fractionalisation, Collier and Hoeffler found "perhaps our most interesting result".⁴⁶ Contrary to popular and academic perceptions, the effect of ethno-linguistic fractionalisation is said not to be necessarily conflict enhancing in that "highly fractionalised societies are no more prone to war than highly homogeneous ones". In fact, the risk of civil war "arises when the society is polarised into two groups" because polarised societies have around a 50% higher probability of civil war than either homogeneous or highly fractionalised societies.⁴⁷ In conclusion, Collier and Hoeffler claim that "between them, these four variables make a substantial difference to the chances of civil war" and that they "investigated several other variables but found the above formulation to be robust".⁴⁸

These conclusions were crystallised by Collier into the 'greed hypothesis' put forward in a later paper entitled 'Doing well out of war',

"... discussion of civil conflict is dominated by the narrative of grievance ... The evidence on the causes of conflict does not really support this interpretation. The objective factors which might contribute to grievance, such as income and asset inequality, ethnic and religious divisions, and political repression do not seem to increase the risks of conflict the evidence on the causes of conflict points to economic factors as the main drivers of conflict. The combination of large exports

of primary commodities, low education, a high proportion of young men and economic decline between them drastically increase risks. Greed seems more important than grievance ...”⁴⁹

With these words, the ‘greed versus grievance’ debate began. The possible effects of ‘grievance’ were statistically put to the test. Grievance was tested through the following independent variables: rapid economic decline, inequality, political repression, political transition and finally ethnic and religious fractionalisation. Collier found that a “prior period of rapid economic decline increases the risk of conflict” in that “growth gives hope, while rapid decline may galvanise people into action”. A significant finding was that “inequality, whether measured in terms of income or land ownership, has no effect on the risk of conflict”.⁵⁰ As concerns political repression, the results were ambiguous. Collier found that a fully democratic society is safer than a partial democracy but that these effects are moderate and only slightly significant. However, political transitions increase the risk of conflict. As regards ethnic and religious fractionalisation, the same results as above were confirmed. Collier’s conclusions were as ground breaking as they were controversial. In his words,

*“... the grievance theory of conflict thus finds surprisingly little empirical support. Inequality does not seem to matter, while political repression and ethnic and religious divisions have precisely the opposite of their predicted effects ... rebellions based purely on grievance face such severe collective action problems that the basic theories of social science would predict that they are unlikely to occur ... [my emphasis].”*⁵¹

In terms of measuring a ‘greed’ factor, Collier considers that it must entail more than just asking belligerents their reasons for fighting because “those rebel organisations which are sufficiently successful to get noticed are unlikely to be so naive as to admit to greed as a motive”.⁵² This is due to the fact that “narratives of grievance play much better with this [the international] community than narratives of greed”. Nevertheless, a narrative of grievance by itself can serve a rebel organisation in attracting more people and new recruits. This leads to the conclusion that “even where the rationale at the top of the organisation is essentially greed, the actual discourse may be entirely dominated by grievance”. Because of this, the approach taken to measure ‘grievance’ relies not on public statements by rebel leaders (for example) but on the inference of “motivations from patterns of observed behaviour” in order to “determine patterns in the origins of civil war, distinguishing between those causal factors which are broadly consistent with an economic motivation, and those which are more consistent with grievance”.

The measurement of ‘greed’ is then refined to include the weight of primary commodity exports in a country’s gross domestic product as an

independent variable in its own right. Collier found that the “presence of primary commodity exports massively increases the risks of civil conflict”.⁵³ In addition, the cost of attracting recruits to rebellion are measured in terms of both the “proportion of young men in the society” as well as the ‘endowment of education’.⁵⁴ In this regard, while a high proportion of young men increases the risk of conflict, “if we double the proportion of young men its effect can be offset by increasing the average educational endowment by around two months”. In fact, “each year of education reduces the risk of conflict by around 20%”.⁵⁵ This leads to the conclusion that,

“... the greed-based approach to conflict would argue that it is the underlying economic conditions which create the risk of conflict. Some societies will have repeated conflicts, not because of the cumulative legacy of the desire for vengeance, but because war is profitable for some groups.”⁵⁶

In fact, although the costs of civil wars on an economy are particularly high (on average as much as a 2.2% decline in growth per annum), there are a number of possibilities for enrichment and profit allowing “various identifiable groups [to] do well out of war”.⁵⁷ There are several cases where this may happen: war enhances the opportunistic character in business affecting business practices; it increases criminality, affecting ‘asset-holding’ and forcing people to send their assets abroad; finally, because in civil wars markets become disrupted, information is unreliable and costly and as a result competition breaks down, leaving only a small number of economic agents to monopolise entire sectors of the economy usually in a predatory fashion. There is also the problem of increased rent-seeking predation on trade both from rebels and government officials.

Expected-utility theory as applied to this particular focus of research stems from the proposition that rebels will conduct a civil war if the perceived benefits outweigh the costs of rebellion as was previously mentioned. First, it should be emphasised that this is not the first time that expected-utility has been used in the field of conflict research.⁵⁸ The extensive literature on the evaluation of expected-utility theory as regards armed conflict and war provides powerful arguments against over reliance on this theory.⁵⁹ A strong argument against it is that at the root of expected-utility theory is the rational-choice model of decision making. As was demonstrated by Thomas Schelling in his seminal book *Strategy of Conflict*, rationality is a very ambiguous concept, something which can easily be attested in such game-theory exercises as ‘chicken’ or the ‘prisoners dilemma’, where conditions of uncertainty and incomplete information abound.⁶⁰ Recognising the limits of the rationality assumption, the majority of empirical research in the study of conflict has adopted a ‘modified rational actor model’. According to Vivienne Jabri,

“... it is ‘modified’ since it incorporates subjective expected utilities, recognising the potential diversity of conflict goals which may range from the economic to the ideological, and of subjective probabilities influenced by misperceptions, information distortion and ideological biases ... Such factors as misunderstood signals, perceived changes in the balance of advantage between the protagonists, prior relationships, and the input of allies and interested others could, either singly or in combination, influence the course of a conflict and behaviour therein.”⁶¹

A ‘cognitive rationality’ approach would seem to be more adequate to the analysis of violent conflicts in that it incorporates “the nature of preferences that parties in conflict express, the dynamic processes involved in changes of preference orderings and the interactive nature of the life cycle of a conflict” taking the complexity of conflict situations into account.⁶² Michael Nicholson provides an extensive discussion of the concept of rationality as applied in conflict situations.⁶³ The following quote adequately describes the ‘*paradoxes of rationality*’,

“... in much of the analysis of international conflict, particularly that which looks at it as the rational pursuit of goals, violence is viewed as a means to achieve particular ends: it is regarded purely instrumentally...the use of violence is considered a cost, but one which might reasonably be borne in order to attain particular ends ... the cool Clausewitzian view of human motivation is a useful first approximation for the analysis of international behaviour, somewhat akin to the economists’ assumption of profit maximisation as a device for explaining business behaviour. However, as a more general approach to human motivation, in particular when violence is relevant, it is *seriously flawed* [my emphasis]. People’s attitudes to the use of violence are often ambiguous, ambivalent and complex, and one cannot treat violence simply as an unambiguous cost.”⁶⁴

Collective action theory is explained in the work of Charles Tilly, in particular as regards the onset of revolutions.⁶⁵ Political elements are central to Tilly’s approach: it is the continuous power struggle between those who have decision-making power, and those who have not, that is at the base of political action. Tilly considers that “the passage from individual interests to collective decisions” involves a confluence of shared interests that must be organised and mobilised, in possession and use of adequate resources. Collective political action, including collective violence, will occur if there is sufficient opportunity for it – yet, not solely economic opportunity.

A further criticism of the ‘greed theory’ is of a methodological nature. Nicholson terms this “sin number 2”, part of “six of the commonest objections to the social-scientific approach to the analysis of conflict”.⁶⁶ This sin

refers to the fact that “the social scientist forgets that statistics require the oversimplification of data, and the forcing of events into common classifications, when it is the differences which are most conspicuous”.⁶⁷ While this is a problem that frequently arises in the social sciences, in the particular case of the proposition of a ‘greed theory’ of conflict, oversimplification may lead to misleading results, for example, the non-incorporation of data relative to distributional aspects within the case studies analysed. The unavailability of such data prompted Collier and Hoeffler to rely on per capita income as one of the independent variables. As mentioned above, this leads to the conclusion that higher per capita income reduces the duration of civil war as well as the probability of its occurrence and that as a result civil war is overwhelmingly a phenomenon of low-income countries. Yet, by excluding distributional aspects in their analysis these authors are neglecting the fundamental role that the distribution of resources (hence inequality) within countries and between individuals and groups plays as a source of grievance. This goes against a substantial body of literature that focuses on so-called relative deprivation approaches as well as rank disequilibrium and status inconsistency approaches as causes of armed conflict.

The relative deprivation approach was developed by James Davies⁶⁸, the Feierabends (1966), and Ted Robert Gurr⁶⁹ to explain individual and group violence. This approach places the relative sense of deprivation as the most important factor in creating grievances and mobilising people for conflict behaviour. At the heart of individual and groups’ grievances is the idea of unrealised expectations.⁷⁰ In Davies’ view, political violence results from an intolerable gap between what people want and what they get: the difference between expectations and gratifications.⁷¹ This discrepancy is a frustrating experience sufficiently intense and focused to result in either rebellion or revolution.⁷² Additional causal variables are introduced by Gurr because aggression “must be politicised if it is to appear as collective political violence”. These causal variables are the belief in the utilitarian justifiability of violence and protest (attitudes and beliefs that justify aggressive action, because it is expected to help people achieve their political goals, provide utilitarian motivational incentives), and the belief in their normative justifiability (attitudes and beliefs that justify aggressive political actions, because it is intrinsically right or proper, provide motivational incentive for such behaviour).⁷³

The point here is not to concur with the relative deprivation approaches’ claim of having uncovered the critical causal factor at the root of collective violence. In fact, deprivation, either absolute⁷⁴ or relative, is no guarantee that groups will pursue their goals using violent behaviour. Nevertheless, while the evidence on relative deprivation’s role is by no means decisive,⁷⁵ its focus on distributional aspects provides an additional and plausible explanation as regards triggering mechanisms of violence. Similar to the absolute deprivation approach is the so-called resource-scarcity approach. In diametric opposition

to the 'greed theory', this approach views resource wars as a "violent expression of a distributional conflict associated with the paucity of resources", not as the expression of greed-motivated groups.⁷⁶ To this respect, Michael T Klare points out that,

"... all of these phenomena – increased competition over access to major sources of oil and gas, growing friction over the allocation of shared water supplies, and internal warfare over valuable export commodities – have produced a new geography of conflict, a reconfigured cartography in which resource flows rather than political and ideological divisions constitute the major fault lines."⁷⁷

The reductionist nature of the 'greed theory' is noted by Cilliers in the following words:

"... although war may have both *intended* (i.e. planned) and *unintended* economic consequences, any analysis that seeks to reduce the study of extensive social conflict to a single determinant should be treated with care. War profiteering, or the economic benefits that may arise during a conflict, is not a new phenomenon but as old as war itself. Historically, economic considerations have been an important *cause* of wars, commercial agendas (the profits made during war) have often served to *perpetuate* conflict, and motivations to prosecute war also *change* over time. But economic considerations have not always predominated and can seldom be used as single-factor explanations."⁷⁸

Therefore the resource-war type, product of 'greed theory', does not seem to allow for a comprehensive understanding of contemporary ongoing armed conflicts.⁷⁹ It does point to crucial aspects concerning the probable role that a number of variables may have in the onset of armed conflicts and therefore should be taken into account by the analyst. In this sense, while not sufficient for a comprehensive understanding of contemporary armed conflicts, it does highlight conditions that may facilitate or constrain the choices that groups make in the pursuit of their goals. Vivienne Jabri reinforces this when she says that,

"... war is (a) a multicausal phenomenon, where different causal sequences may apply to different conflict situations, and (b) a result of decision-making paths which, far from suggesting rationality as defined by strict criteria of consistency, point to the view that rationality is bounded by institutional roles and established norms which impact upon the informational and analytic loops which actors may go through prior to the onset of war."⁸⁰

The general claim that 'greed' is the prime cause of war must be rejected. And in fact, this conclusion seems to be confirmed in Collier and Hoeffler's

latest article on this issue. 'Greed and grievance in civil war' contains an interesting development pointing to the incorporation of both 'greed' and 'grievance' in a combined model.⁸¹ The authors move away from both concepts of 'greed' and 'grievance' introducing the less controversial notions of preferences and constraints.⁸² The concept of preferences and constraints drastically changes the nature of the 'greed versus grievance' debate.⁸³ Nevertheless, the authors maintain their focus on 'the economic' rationale of civil war implied in expected-utility: "both a greed theory and a universal grievance theory predict that the risk of rebellion is increasing in the opportunities for rebel finance." While constraints-based theory is referred to in the shorthand of 'greed', the authors recognise that, in contrast to preference-based theories, "they do not necessarily literally imply that the motivation for rebellion is exclusively, or even primarily, financial".⁸⁴

For our purposes, a number of important conclusions stem from this. A focus on the constraints that rebel organisations face to mount a credible and effective rebellion is critical for the understanding of the onset and maintenance of rebellion. By looking at the effects that changes in the levels of different types of constraints have on the probability of war occurrence, a clearer understanding of conflict life cycles may be achieved. The first constraint considered refers to the size of rebel organisations in that "only large rebel organisations generate casualties on the scale which defines civil war".⁸⁵ For this, rebel groups must mobilise people, as well as secure a large number of weapons. They must raise finance either through extortion, donations from diasporas or support from hostile governments. Following Collier's earlier work, rebel groups' extortion is said to happen primarily through the plundering of primary commodity exports, for the same reasons defined above.⁸⁶ Furthermore, rebel organisations face coordination costs quite different from those that governments face.⁸⁷

Turning to 'grievance rebellion', the authors focus now on preferences to inquire the extent to which "the initiation of rebellion [is] determined by differences in objective grievances". Here the authors look at inter-group hatred, political exclusion and vengeance. The authors did not find that inter-group hatred is greater in fractured societies than in homogenous ones. As before, the crucial variable is polarisation.⁸⁸ Regarding political exclusion, the authors used Ted Gurr's Polity III data set and concluded that "there is a very large difference in the extent of democracy between conflict societies and peaceful societies: on average, conflict episodes are preceded by a democracy score less than half that which precedes peace episodes".⁸⁹ They also investigate on the role of ethnic dominance (when one ethnic group constitutes a majority, but not an overwhelming majority), where they found insignificant results. Marginalisation of the poor, which may be inferred by a high degree of economic inequality, also showed no significant results in that a survey of 15 violent civil conflicts concludes that "wars today are rarely

started by the poor and marginalised people united in battle as an expression of their deep-seated striving for a just society".⁹⁰

In conclusion, confirming the importance of both 'constraints-based theory' and 'preferences-based theory' as regards the 'greed versus grievance hypothesis', Collier and Hoeffler posit that the "aim of our econometric tests is to arrive at an *integrated model which gives an account of conflict risk in terms of all those constraints and preferences which are significant* [my emphasis]".⁹¹ They conclude that "while the greed model is superior, some elements of the grievance model are likely to add to its explanatory power" and that therefore they propose to "investigate the combination of the two models". In fact, the authors actually find that statistically, the combined model is superior although several variables are completely insignificant.⁹²

The statistical findings discussed above are certainly important as regards understanding some of the factors that affect the probability of the occurrence of armed conflict. The role of income, natural resource endowment, population characteristics, ethnic and religious fractionalisation, education levels, geography, as well as previous conflict are all factors that, either as preferences or constraints, affect the likelihood of war. In particular, natural resources can strongly affect the probability of armed conflicts, their duration, course and impact. While this has been historically the case, it is particularly relevant at present, due to reduction in foreign assistance to governments and rebel groups as a result of the ending of the Cold War. Philippe Le Billon points out that "belligerents have become more dependent upon mobilising tradable commodities, such as minerals, timber or drugs, to sustain their military and political activities".⁹³

This has important tactical consequences in the conduct of hostilities in the sense that resource-rich areas become increasingly more important and therefore the focus of both incumbent authorities and rebel movements tends to be there centred. It changes traditional guerrilla tactics, from relying on mobility, to the establishment of strong-holds. It also affects the economies of the countries where resources play an important part in armed conflict through the criminalisation of resource exploitation, the development of extensive war economy networks and therefore the possibility that armed conflicts in some countries become strongly intertwined with the control and maintenance of these exploitation networks. Economic interests may in this way overcome political ones, sustaining conflicts that may be profitable for some individuals and groups. As Billon rightly puts it, it may even "involve accommodation between opposing factions who find a mutual benefit in a 'comfortable military stalemate', leaving the territory and its population under a no-war-no-peace situation".⁹⁴ As a consequence, resource exploitation by groups in conflict strongly affects the chances for resolution.

The Multi-Level Nature and Dynamic Life Cycles of Armed Conflicts – Towards an Analytical Framework

While all of the above are important factors in the analysis of contemporary armed conflicts, they are not the only variables involved in the vast majority of ongoing civil wars. The role of resources and therefore of a resource-war type must be properly equated with the very many other factors that characterise and affect contemporary armed conflicts.

Within the field of international relations, discussion of the causes of war has generally tended to follow what is termed a 'level-of-analysis' orientation.⁹⁵ 'Levels-of analysis' were originally proposed by Kenneth Waltz in his very influential *Man, the state and war*.⁹⁶ Waltz suggested that an appropriate way to discuss and critically evaluate the multitude of approaches and theories on the causes of war was to divide them in terms of where along the social spectrum they locate the fundamental nexus of war causality. Within the vast literature on the causes of war, Waltz identified three main orientations as regards what for each of the authors discussed was the critical cause of war. Terming these orientations "images of international relations", Waltz divided the extensive literature under discussion into three headings: the "individual image", the "nation-state image" and finally the "state-system image".⁹⁷

The critical contribution of *Man, the state and war* concerns Waltz's proposition that all three images are crucial for an understanding of the causes of war. In his own words, "some combination of our three images, rather than any one of them, may be required for an accurate understanding of international relations ... in other words, understanding the likely consequences of any one cause may depend on understanding its relation to other causes".⁹⁸ That a consideration of all three images is of critical importance is clearly revealed by the following passage: "so fundamental are man, the state, and the state system in any attempt to understand international relations that seldom does an analyst, however wedded to one image, entirely overlook the other two". In fact, he says that "the vogue of an image varies with time and place, but no single image is ever adequate" and that the result of a focus on a single image may "distort one's interpretation of the others".⁹⁹ Waltz recognised the fact that war and armed conflict have more than one cause and that "causes can be found in more than one type of location".¹⁰⁰ While the analyst may start from one of the levels identified, the need for taking into account all three images is critical in that "the prescriptions directly derived from a single image are incomplete because they are based upon partial analyses. The partial quality of each image sets up a tension that drives one toward inclusion of the others".¹⁰¹

Dennis J D Sandole recently attempted to develop an 'empirical version of Waltz' in his ground-breaking book entitled *Capturing the complexity of*

conflict.¹⁰² Sandole's multi-level, multidimensional framework includes "the *decision-making, societal, and trans-societal levels*", corresponding to Waltz's individual, state and international (and inclusive of North's, 1990, global ecological) levels.¹⁰³ Such framework is developed "in response to the fragmented, bivariate nature of quantitative studies of war" as "a multi-level map and pre-theory of variables operative at the trans-societal, societal, and decision-making levels that may be relevant to the initiation and escalation of violent conflict and war".¹⁰⁴

Sandole investigated the role of variables located in different levels throughout the life cycle of conflicts, which he divided into three successive periods: early, intermediate and late stages of a conflict systems' development.¹⁰⁵ Furthermore, Sandole found that it is critical to distinguish between *conflict-as-startup conditions* and *conflict-as-process*. The trend found across the three stages of conflict systems' development of self-stimulating/self-perpetuating conflict processes is extremely important in evaluating the relationship between different variables located at different levels through time. 'Conflict-as-startup conditions' is seen to generate 'conflict-as-process', and "once process comes to characterise conflict, it does not matter how (or when) the conflict started". As a result, "different start-up-conditions can lead to the same process (initiation, escalation, controlled maintenance)".¹⁰⁶ Conflict-as-process means that after some point in the conflict cycle, conflict itself may become the main source of its own continuation and protractedness.

Lund refers to this in the following terms: "*once some level of significant violence has begun* [sic], it is prone to escalate because an interactive process of attack and retaliation leads to a self-perpetuating cycle."¹⁰⁷ In this respect, Christopher Mitchell posits that,

"... conflict behaviour itself can also be an important influence in affecting the other two components, especially if it involves high levels of violence, and damage or loss of participants. Such behaviour will, almost inevitably, involve an increase in the levels of anger, hatred, resentment, fear or desire for revenge on the part of those suffering damage. Over time, the behaviour of the opposing party may appear to become, in itself, sufficient reason for continuing and intensifying one's own conflict behaviour, often producing an analogous impact on the attitudes and subsequent behaviour of the adversary ... Conflict behaviour therefore may become the source of future conflict attitudes and behaviour, irrespective of any future development of mutually incompatible goals."¹⁰⁸

If factors besides 'start-up conditions' become part of conflict cycles, it is necessary to probe the dynamic processes of conflicts themselves. Vivienne Jabri talks about the 'war mood' that takes hold when conflicts escalate towards violence,

“... once violent destruction of the enemy and its valued resources comes to define a relationship, the rules of the game or the rules of ‘everyday life’ change. Behaviour that is unacceptable in peacetime becomes legitimate in times of war. Specifically killing, torture, rape, mass expulsions, ethnic cleansing and the creation of concentration camps are explained by such terms which essentially state that while war goes on we must expect such occurrences, or simply not be surprised by them.”¹⁰⁹

This distinction is critical in the sense that over time ‘conflict-as-process’ may be more important than ‘conflict-as-startup conditions’. Therefore, it is not sufficient to statically identify operating variables worth looking at (what Sandole termed conflict-as-startup conditions) but also, and perhaps equally crucial, to identify the dynamic processes that may overtake these static start-up conditions (conflict-as-process).¹¹⁰ That the identification of a conflict’s ‘start-up conditions’ is critical is evidenced by the gradual incorporation into mainstream conflict analysis of what are variously termed ‘underlying causes’¹¹¹, ‘structural dimensions or sources of latent/open conflict’¹¹², ‘structural components’¹¹³ and ‘structural factors or root causes’ as will be seen below.¹¹⁴ This has been particularly the case in the field of conflict early-warning systems, confirming our assertion that single-cause explanations of violent conflict and war should be avoided.¹¹⁵ In fact, contemporary conflict analysis has found that conflicts tend to develop in environments characterised by structural factors, which “form the pre-conditions of crisis situations, such as systemic political exclusion, shifts in demographic balance, entrenched economic inequities, economic decline and ecological deterioration”.¹¹⁶

If, following Waltz, Scott, Levy and Sandole, explanations located at different levels should be added together and assigned relative weights in relation to any given analysis (bearing in mind that the relative weight of any level is strongly related to the particular developmental phase of any particular armed conflict), the choice of an initial analytical level seems to be related primarily with whether that particular level, in the words of Buzan, tells the analyst more about any given event or phenomenon.¹¹⁷ More importantly, while the analyst may start from one of the levels identified, it is crucial to take into account all other levels. This is what Waltz meant when he said that “the partial quality of each image sets up a tension that drives one toward inclusion of the others”

We will now turn to ‘new wars’, ‘wars of the third kind’, ‘intra-state wars’, ‘societal wars’ and ‘non-international wars’. We have seen that actors in these conflicts range from conventional armies to para-military units, local warlords, mercenary groups and even criminal gangs. As was previously highlighted, in order to understand these conflicts, analysts are increasingly turning to the state level, in particular to the groups in conflict and their claims.

That analysis of these wars should begin at unit level by looking at conflict groups themselves is clear.¹¹⁸ Because for the majority of groups involved in the increasing number of ‘new wars’ or ‘wars of the third kind’, identity is presented as the basis for struggles for self-determination, this suggests that, following Edward Azar, “the most useful unit of analysis in PSC [protracted social conflict] situations is the identity group – racial, religious, ethnic, cultural and others”.¹¹⁹ In fact, in sharp contrast to Collier et al’s ‘greed’ theory of conflict discussed above, Azar hypothesises that,

“... the source of protracted social conflict is the denial of those elements required in the development of all peoples and societies, and whose pursuit is a compelling need in all. These are security, distinctive identity, social recognition of identity, and effective participation in the processes that determine conditions of security and identity, and other such developmental requirements. The real source of conflict is the denial of those human needs that are common to all and whose pursuit is an ontological drive in all.”¹²⁰

Following John Burton’s approach to the centrality of ‘basic human needs’ in conflict theory,¹²¹ Azar considers basic needs such as security, communal recognition and distributive justice as primordial and therefore non-negotiable, emphasising the fact that these needs are expressed around religious, cultural or ethnic communal identity. He clearly recognises that the problem resides in framing contemporary conflicts in terms of material interests, such as commercial advantages or resource acquisition, while empirical evidence suggests that “they are not just that”. It is crucial to understand the way in which groups or quasi-groups organise themselves as they become aware that they are in opposition to another group or groups. This self-awareness as collectivity-in-opposition relies on contact between individual members of groups. In this sense, a group is not defined by common interest alone. It must rest on communication and interaction. In order to understand the processes by which groups form some sort of collective entity and become conscious of that through sharing a measure of grievance and dissatisfaction,¹²² a behavioural or interactional approach to conflict dynamics is needed. As Mitchell points out,

“... conflicts are not static phenomena, and hence the dynamic aspects of conflict which alter both structure and interplay relationships over time, are essential aspects of any satisfactory analysis.”¹²³

In this respect, the now classic work by Louis Kriesberg titled *Social Conflicts*,¹²⁴ introduces a behavioural perspective by looking at “social conflicts as social relationships”:

“... at every stage of conflict the parties interact socially; each party affects the way the others act, not only as each responds to the others

but also as each may *anticipate* [sic] the responses of the others. Even the ends each party seeks are constructed in interaction with adversaries.”¹²⁵

Furthermore, Kriesberg emphasises that any particular conflict situation will be the result of many interlocking conflicts. The existence of multiple interlocking conflicts produces the interconnections between different stages in the sense that each conflict is part of a larger one and each one is accompanied by several others, so that every conflict unit may be at a particular stage in the main conflict, but at a different stage in other related non-focal conflicts. For example, processes of anticipation and feedback affect each conflict stage, creating interconnection and interdependence between stages.

Processes of anticipation and feedback in conflict cycles are the vehicles for what Sandole termed self-stimulating/self-perpetuating conflict processes. In this way, defensive actions may be interpreted as a threat (so-called ‘security dilemma’), which helps create counteractions and conflict spirals.¹²⁶ Furthermore, a permanent characteristic of conflict processes is what is known as ‘misperception’, particularly regarding, as Levy points out, “misperceptions of the capabilities and intentions of adversaries and third states”.¹²⁷ Misperception also affects the way parties view themselves. As Mitchell points out, “in many situations, people are convinced by leaders (or manage to convince themselves), that their group or nation’s reputation as a strong-but-wise, tough-but-peace loving entity is at stake and that this, rather than the actual details of any current problem, is what matters”.¹²⁸

The size, composition and in particular ideological outlook of conflict groups are critical, helping explain their choice of a particular approach to conflict. A group’s size, its norms of participation and its experience in previous efforts at redressing grievances are important characteristics. Conflict groups exhibit different degrees of organisation and boundary clarity. In this sense, while a state will have clear and demarcated boundaries, an ideological or ethnic group may present a lesser degree of boundary clarity. This is relevant in terms of understanding how and on what basis participants in different conflict groups are mobilised and organised for conflict behaviour. The same applies for the degree of organisation, which varies immensely from one group or potential conflict party to the next. In fact, the degree of organisation of a conflict group also helps explain recruitment, both actual and potential, as well as variations in the position of leaders.¹²⁹ It is therefore critical to understand how conflict groups are formed, what their perceived grievances, how they formulate their goals and finally how they pursue their goals.

In this regard it is critical to look at the decisions and actions of elites. Brown considers that “although many internal conflicts are triggered by internal, mass-level factors, the vast majority are triggered by internal, elite-level

factors” adding that “in short, bad leaders are the biggest problem”.¹³⁰ Whether leaders based their actions on ideological beliefs (concerning the organisation of political, economic, and social affairs in a country); whether their actions are essentially a result of power struggles that may or may not result in assaults to state sovereignty, the role that individual leaders and elite groups play on the onset and escalation of disputes is undeniable. This line of reasoning looks at the ways in which political elites often promote conflict “in times of political and economic trouble in order to fend-off domestic challengers”.¹³¹ Analysing patterns of contemporary African politics, Patrick Chabal and Jean-Pascal Daloz term this the “instrumentalisation of disorder”, which:

“... in brief, it refers to the process by which political actors in Africa seek to maximise their returns on the state of confusion, uncertainty and sometimes even chaos which characterises most African polities. Although there are obviously vast differences between countries in this respect, we would argue that what all African states share is a generalised system of patrimonialism and acute degree of apparent disorder, as evidenced by a high level of governmental and administrative inefficiency, a lack of institutionalisation, a general disregard for the rules of the formal political and economic sectors, and a universal resort to personal(ised) and vertical solutions to societal problems.”¹³²

Likewise, issues in contention also partly explain the *complexity* of armed conflicts, in that they may be perceived as being realistic or unrealistic by the parties involved. For example, a notable feature of many armed conflicts is that “parties involved often disagree on what the conflict is ‘really’ about, one side defining the issues as being a set of (to them) salient problems, the other claiming the actual core issues as something completely different”.¹³³ Nevertheless, groups in conflict have varying degrees of integration between them in that they might have a close relationship or not communicate at all. Within existing relationships, conflicting issues may constitute only a fraction of the overall issues present, but they may also constitute the core of the relationship. Interdependence, for example, opens channels of communication allowing parties to more openly debate their differences and influence one another. All conflict situations have therefore a mix of conflicting interests and cooperative ones and it is very rare to find a pure zero-sum conflict. Even conflicts which may seem zero-sum can be “transformed when the issue in contention is fractioned; that is, the disputed matter is broken up into many components”.¹³⁴

Differences in the way parties perceive their power in relation to their adversary as well as the resources they have available strongly affect their relationship and may in some instances be themselves the basis for a potential conflict situation.¹³⁵ Differences in power affect the way parties formulate

goals, anticipate consequences of their actions and eventually conceptualise possible outcomes of their actions and interactions with other parties in conflict. Conflict groups also vary immensely in the resources they have at their disposal to use coercive, rewarding, or persuasive inducements.

Finally, another major variant in the relations between conflict groups is the social system that they constitute or to which they belong. The social context in which the parties to a conflict exist is not only a source of their discontent but also helps provide the criteria for evaluating conditions and possible changes. The formulation of goals is channelled by the contexts within which the contending parties exist. Within the group's context, an important aspect characterising relations between antagonists is the degree to which conflict regulation is institutionalised. Kriesberg highlights this in the following way:

“... if there are generally supported and well-understood procedure for handling disputes, matters of possible contention tend to be viewed as competitive, and not conflicting, or as part of a larger exchange relationship, and not simply as a zero-sum relationship.”¹³⁶

If the social context in which the parties to a conflict exist is both a source of their discontent as well as the channel for their actions, it is important to move up one level from the conflict group's level. Azar's “protracted social conflict” concept emphasises that its sources lay predominantly within states with four clusters of variables identified as preconditions for their transformation to high levels of intensity: communal content, deprivation of human needs, governance and the state's role, and finally, international linkages.¹³⁷ The need to consider various causes located at multiple levels of analysis is clearly evident. While analysis focused in the first instance on identity groups, moving a level up to the role of the state is necessary for “it is the relationship between identity groups and states which is at the core of the problem”.¹³⁸

We must now turn to the state level in order to understand both the underlying as well as the proximate conditions underlying conflict occurrence.¹³⁹ Consequently, the analysis of the conditions underlying conflict which are variously termed in the literature as ‘underlying causes’¹⁴⁰, Sandole's ‘conflict-as-startup conditions’, Goodhand et al's ‘structural dimensions or sources of latent/open conflict’¹⁴¹, Charles King's ‘structural components’¹⁴² or Waltz's ‘permissive or underlying causes of war’, must be considered jointly with the ‘permissive’ or ‘proximate’ causes and triggers causing conflict emergence, that is, the stage when parties become aware that they have incompatible goals, thereby transforming what were underlying factors into manifest issues. This is importance for while cleavages are at the basis of group awareness and group formation, manifest conflict issues are fundamentally a product of group interaction and inter-group relations. Because

our focus is now at the level of the state, Michael Brown's approach to 'underlying conditions' and 'proximate causes' of 'internal conflict' seems appropriate as a general framework for looking at these conditions. This framework is presented in the figure below.

Figure: Underlying causes of internal conflict¹⁴³

Underlying causes	Proximate causes
Structural <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weak states • Intra-state security concerns • Ethnic geography 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collapsing states • Changing intra-state military balances • Changing demographic patterns
Political factors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discriminatory political institutions • Exclusionary national ideologies • Inter-group politics • Elite politics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political transitions • Increasingly exclusionary ideologies • Growing inter-group competition • Intensifying leadership struggles
Economic/social factors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic problems • Discriminatory economic systems • Modernisation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mounting economic problems • Growing economic inequities • Fast-paced development and modernisation
Cultural/perceptual factors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patterns of cultural discrimination • Problematic group histories 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intensifying patterns of cultural discrimination • Ethnic bashing and propagandising

As was discussed previously, the vast majority of contemporary armed conflicts occur in underdeveloped countries that may be undergoing rapid modernisation processes or political transitions as well as in countries characterised by state weakness and state decay. Many analysts of internal conflicts have pointed to state weakness as a main source of contemporary conflict.¹⁴⁴ The problem of weak and failed states should be looked at from the perspective of political legitimacy as well as whether they possess institutions of government capable of exercising control over the population and totality of the territory under their jurisdiction.¹⁴⁵ The question of legitimacy and efficiency are particularly acute. As pointed out by Van de Goor, Rupesinghe and Sciarone, "the phenomena of weak or failed states in the 'Third World' should thus be related to the intra-state relations and the capacity of the state – the central government – to keep to the path of state-formation".¹⁴⁶ In addition, problems of state weakness seem to be endemic to underdeveloped, former colonial countries. Countries with colonial backgrounds, arbitrary setting of boundaries by

external powers, lack of social cohesion, recent emergence into juridical statehood and underdevelopment are potentially vulnerable to conflict. In such situations, processes of state building are inevitably conflictual and the potential for conflict is furthermore exacerbated by attempts at nation building. Comparing contemporary processes of state making and nation building with the modern European experience, Mohammed Ayoob points out that “national states that have performed successfully over a long period of time and therefore knit their people together in terms of historical memories, legal codes, language, religion, etc., may evolve into nation-states or at least provide the necessary conditions for the emergence of nation-states, but they are not synonymous with the latter”.¹⁴⁷

Situations characterised by colonial legacy and what Azar termed “weak societies” (disarticulation between state and society), are viewed by Miall et al as “associated with the prevalence of conflict, particularly in heterogeneous states where no overarching tradition of common and juridically egalitarian citizenship prevails”.¹⁴⁸ Explanations focusing on colonial legacies highlight that the post-colonial predicament, as expressed by attempts at post-independence nation building, is among the main causes of contemporary warfare. This predicament would for example include power structures devised by former colonial rulers, usually reliant on unified structures controlling a diversity of regional peoples or ethnic and tribal groups; situations where the former colonial power actively supported a particular ethnic group; or the power vacuum created after hasty decolonisation leading to competition for power, control of natural resources and territory amongst rival parties, peoples or ethnic groups.¹⁴⁹ To this respect Rupesinghe et al point out that,

“... in Africa particularly the struggle for independence, dominated by the mixed urban population, concentrated on the black-white divide. Inter-tribal differences, were, in effect, overlooked as people joined forces in the fight against colonialism. But colonial systems of governance relied on a unified central structure controlling a diversity of regional tribal groups. As colonial power ebbed away, competition for central state power amongst rival tribes intensified. Democratisation and individual freedoms were never allowed to flourish so long as the power of regional native authorities and national politics was split along tribal lines. In effect, strong patron-client relations, akin to traditional power structures, developed at the national level ...”¹⁵⁰

In situations where state structures are unable to provide for the satisfaction of basic needs (physical security, access to political, economic and social institutions, acceptance of communal identity), individuals tend to revert to alternative means in the fulfilment of their needs. We have seen above that self-awareness as a collectivity, a pre-determinant of group formation,

depends on the existence of cleavages that serve as the basis for collective self-identification and organisation. In addition we discussed how these cleavages and divisions may be based on nationality, ethnicity, ideology, class, religion, age or gender, and so on. Jack Snyder, for example, relates the development of ethnic nationalism to situations “when institutions collapse, when existing institutions are not fulfilling people’s basic needs and when satisfactory alternative structures are not readily available”.¹⁵¹ State weakness and state collapse compel individuals and groups to provide for their own needs. As Brown points out,

“... if the state in question is very weak or if it is expected to become weaker with time, the incentives for groups to make independent military preparations grow. The problem is that, in taking steps to defend themselves, groups often threaten the security of others.”¹⁵²

Whether or not a conflict escalates to the point where violence is used is more related to the political system, and in particular to the degree to which institutions of government are discriminatory or based on exclusionary ideologies. As Edward Azar points out, “... most states in protracted social conflict-laden countries are hardly neutral” in that “political authority tends to be monopolised by a dominant identity group or a coalition of identity groups” and “these groups tend to use the state as an instrument for maximising their interests at the expense of others ... the means to satisfy basic human needs are unevenly shared and the potential for PSC increases.”¹⁵³

An analysis of the political system is therefore crucial if a complete understanding of a conflict situation is to be achieved. The type of regime and political system, its ideological underpinnings, the legitimacy and representativeness it enjoys, strongly affect patterns and types of relations with other societal actors. Authoritarian, repressive, exclusionary regimes are naturally more likely to create dissent and therefore increase the propensity for conflict. The ideological underpinnings of a regime affect the way in which it relates to the various societal groups as well as the way in which conflicts are resolved. Exclusionary regime ideologies based on ethnic, religious, political and class distinctions contribute to the discrimination of sectors of society, by preventing the “state from responding to, and meeting, the needs of various constituents”.¹⁵⁴ and therefore increase discontent. To this respect, Mitchell points out that,

“... social structures are thus likely to be created which, given the values of those involved and the inability of that society to produce more of either the material or positional goods in dispute, lead to frequent, repetitive and often intense conflicts across permanent cleavages within the social structure, as parties pursue goal incompatibilities that (in a very basic sense) arise from that structure or set of values.”¹⁵⁵

Economic factors are also crucial, underlying and proximate causes of contemporary armed conflict. We have referred to theories of relative deprivation, 'greed'-motivated rebellions, and the role of rising expectations above. As Miall et al rightly point out, "in the economic sphere, once again few would dispute Azar's contention that PSC tends to be associated with patterns of underdevelopment or uneven development".¹⁵⁶ Rapid transitions amid poverty and social exclusion, high unemployment and at times heavy dependence on single-commodity exports, potentialise vulnerability to armed conflict. In addition to distributional conflicts within societies associated with resource scarcity, the existence of natural resources that may be easily extracted and traded (timber, minerals, oil) may potentialise the vulnerability to conflict. As Michael Brown points out,

"... unemployment, inflation, and resource competitions, especially for land, contribute to societal frustrations and tensions, and can provide the breeding ground for conflict. Economic reforms do not always help and can contribute to the problem in the short term, especially if economic shocks are severe and state subsidies for food and other basic goods, services, and social welfare are cut."¹⁵⁷

Economic factors are particularly acute when they are associated with patterns of discrimination between groups. The perception by some groups that there are strong unequal economic opportunities and access to resources, as well as vast differences in standards of living between groups, will contribute to a sense of grievance. In addition, rapid modernisation processes may increase the conflict vulnerability of a particular society by causing profound structural changes, migration and urbanisation, among others.¹⁵⁸ These patterns of discrimination also affect groups culturally and socially. Access to education, recognition of minority languages and costumes, social stereotyping and scapegoating based on cultural and social characteristics of groups all contribute to deteriorating the relations between different social groups and increase the propensity for conflict.

Finally, conflict analysis must also take into account the regional as well as international levels and the ways in which they affect particular conflicts. This is what Edward Azar called "international linkages", one of the four main clusters of variables contributing to the occurrence of protracted social conflicts.¹⁵⁹ As Michael Brown points out, "although neighbouring states and developments in neighbouring countries rarely trigger all-out civil wars, almost all internal conflicts involve neighbouring states in one way or another".¹⁶⁰ Third-party involvement towards the escalation or de-escalation is therefore critical as regards the analysis of the vast majority of contemporary armed conflicts. In this way, third parties may escalate a fight by supporting contending parties, or de-escalate a fight through attempts at a peaceful or cooperative resolution of the situation. In this sense,

“... outside parties are not merely potential and then actual partisans. Their intervention and active involvement is much more complex than making a simple choice of sides. Their intervention changes the dimensions of the conflict and the possible pay-offs for all parties ... outside parties have their own interests and these affect their conduct in any given conflict. If the outside party is sufficiently powerful relative to the contestants, it may be able to impose its terms upon the contending parties ...”¹⁶¹

It should be noted that the effects of the regional level on the occurrence and development of a particular armed conflict should be looked both from the perspective of the possible impact that a conflict has in its neighbourhood, through processes of ‘spillover’ and ‘contagion’, as well as the actions and policies that neighbouring states have in regard to the conflict. In this sense, an analysis that takes both processes into account seems the best way forward. On the one hand, the effects that conflicts have on neighbouring states may include refugee problems, economic problems (disruption of regional trade, communications, and production networks), military problems (the use of a neighbouring state’s territory for the trans-shipment of arms and supplies; the use of a neighbour’s territory by rebel groups as bases of operations and sanctuaries; the launch of attacks from neighbouring states) and therefore contribute to regional instability. On the other hand, neighbouring states also may intervene in these conflicts through defensive and protective interventions, opportunistic interventions, as well as more benign involvement such as humanitarian intervention and peace making interventions.¹⁶²

Ecological Sources of Conflict

The six chapters of this book focus broadly on two volatile regions in sub-Saharan Africa: the Greater Horn of Africa, including Somalia, Ethiopia and Sudan, and the Great Lakes region, with Burundi, Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo. The geographical boundaries of these conflicts span a much wider reach and include a broader constellation of actors with diverse interests, than is typically appreciated. Hence, the interfaces between different conflicts in these regions are identified. At the same time, case studies in each chapter provide a narrower and more nuanced perspective.

A number of linkages bind different conflicts in the Great Lakes and Greater Horn to national, regional and international contexts. For example, conflict between herders and farmers in the Awash Valley in Ethiopia and in the Nile flood plain in the Equatoria province of Sudan have linkages to wider regional conflicts involving Sudan, Ethiopia, and Egypt. These conflicts involve the sharing of the Nile waters, but include other important sources of conflict, as well.

Similarly, conflict involving local communities in eastern Congo over access to and control over natural resources are linked to the national conflict involving the governments of the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda, Angola, Namibia and Zimbabwe, as well as rebel movements and militia groups such as the Mai Mai. At the level of regional conflict, the governments of Rwanda, Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo have established a number of alliances with local Congolese communities, rebel movements and local militias for political expediency. A key strategy of these alliances is to gain leverage in the struggle to control the extraction, marketing and export of the country's abundant natural resource wealth.

Jean Bigagaza, Carolyne Abong and Cecile Mukarubuga's chapter on "Land scarcity, unequal land distribution and conflict in Rwanda" provides a constructivist approach to a conflict that has hitherto been portrayed as a textbook case of ethnic conflict. In so doing, the authors reveal how ethnic mobilisation by elite groups served an underlying competition for scarce resources. The authors focus on land scarcity and unequal land distribution as one of the fundamental causes of competition between Rwanda's elite groups. More importantly, they argue that Rwandan elites are largely responsible for characterising as an 'ethnic conflict' the more complex struggle for the control of the state. This study highlights the need to deconstruct definitions such as 'ethnic conflict', emphasising the need for greater focus on the underlying motivations of groups in conflict. This issue remains at the centre of current efforts at peace building in Rwanda, which must necessarily deal with the issues of land and access to resources if an adequate response is to be developed in the aftermath of the conflict. The following words by Michael Brown may be considered relevant,

"... many internal conflicts are not driven by ethnic grievances at all, but by power struggles, ideological crusades, and criminal agendas. In short, the 'ancient hatreds' explanation for the causes of internal conflict cannot account for significant variation in the incidence and intensity of such conflict... the problem with 'ancient hatreds' theorising is not that historical grievances are irrelevant but that a single factor is said to be responsible for a wide range of developments. To put it in more formal methodological terms, a single independent variable is said to govern a wide range of dependent variables. This is asking a lot of any one variable of factor."¹⁶³

Johnstone Summit Oketch and Tara Polzer explore similar themes of land scarcity and inequality to unpack the oft-cited 'ethnic conflict' in neighbouring Burundi. They focus on coffee production, which accounts for 80% of Burundi's foreign exchange receipts. Over-reliance on a single cash crop leaves this small country extremely vulnerable to volatile global markets, but

also puts pressure on subsistence farmers in conditions of land scarcity. A predatory state-dominated system links the production and marketing of coffee to the country's long running civil war. Northern consumers commonly pay in excess of US\$ 10 per kilo of premium *arabica* blend Burundian coffee. Hutu peasants who produce *arabica* coffee beans are paid a painfully small fraction of this. The Tutsi dominated *Office des Cultures Industrielles du Burundi* (OCIBU) regulates the coffee sector and maintains a monopoly over coffee export and marketing. The OCIBU consistently fixes low producer prices paid to coffee farmers. The OCIBU exports the coffee to international coffee boards in New York and London who sell the coffee beans to corporate coffeehouses. Coffeehouses grade and process the coffee beans into the final product for sell to commercial outlets. This hierarchy of intermediaries greatly disadvantages primary producers, and is a potent linkage coupling the production and marketing of coffee to civil war to control the state.

This kind of exploitation is a feature of coltan mining in the Democratic Republic of Congo, as described by Celine Moyroud and John Katunga in Chapter 4. Coltan is a mineral used in the production of high technologies including mobile telephones and laptop computers. The authors describe how extraction of coltan in North and South Kivu provinces involves an intricate network of individual extractors and their superiors, rebel authorities, regional governments, regional and international air transporters, and transnational corporations. They argue that the extraction of coltan in the Kivus is linked to the conflict through a particularly illicit and profiteering set-up involving regional and international transnational corporations and governments. They also expose the severe damage being done to the ecology of these areas, described by international observers as "ecocide".

The long-standing conflict in Sudan has also been complicated and protracted by the recent discovery of a valuable natural resource: oil. In Chapter 5, Paul Goldsmith, Lydia A. Abura and Jason Switzer show how oil exploration has given new impetus to the government of Sudan's determination to forestall a lasting *rapprochement* with southern demands for autonomy.

Their case studies show how oil exploration is displacing Dinka, Nuer and other southern communities from their homes, while at the same time polluting the ecological base upon which subsistence livelihoods are based. Oil production in Sudan generates revenue that is used to sustain armed conflict. The effect has been to strengthen the position of the government of Sudan against the southern rebel movements. The authors describe how ongoing peace initiatives have been frustrated as the position of the government of Sudan hardens in the light of expanding oil production and increasing government revenue.

Land and natural resource use systems are a powerful linkage between overall natural resource scarcity and 'low intensity' conflict in the Horn of Africa, including Sudan, Ethiopia and Somalia. The structure of natural

resources in the region is uneven: pockets of comparatively abundant natural resources along watercourses and in higher elevations are embedded in a highly stressed overall ecological region where natural resource scarcity is common. Interacting groups of livestock herders in the Horn of Africa have adapted to persistent limitations through frequent movements between different macro-ecological zones, and through reciprocal resource sharing agreements between different groups. However, increasing ecological scarcity and the expansion of agricultural production into key resource environments undermines the sustainability of pastoralist resource use systems in the Horn.

The ecological structure of land and natural resources is conditioned to a large degree by uncertain variations in rainfall, cloud cover and temperature. Stress and limitation are common features of environments in Africa, and, furthermore, in many cases drive ecological systems. Consequently, an increase or decrease in the supply or quality of critical natural resources over short periods is common.

The second part of Chapter 5 on Sudan, and Chapter 6 on Ethiopia, examines how access to and control over the allocation of Nile waters has been a source of conflict between the Nile Basin countries. Egypt and Sudan were allocated the entire flow of the Nile under the Nile Waters Agreement of 1959. The agreement excluded upstream riparian states, including Ethiopia. Under the agreement, changes in the allocation of water rights are permissible only in cases where Sudan and Egypt consent. Official Ethiopian policy does not recognise earlier agreements, which the government of Ethiopia claims do not affect its rights to use Nile waters within its territory to pursue its own development objectives. At the same time, Egypt and Sudan policy opposes any changes to the allocation of water rights as they currently stand.

Civil war in Sudan features strongly in basin-level competition to control Nile waters as well. Egypt, in particular, is deeply concerned at the possible implications for existing allocations of Nile waters were south Sudan to gain independence. The allocation of Nile waters is an important underlying issue complicating ongoing peace negotiations for Sudan, in which both the governments of Egypt and Sudan are actively participating.

Ethiopia's predicament is analysed in detail by Fiona Flintan and Imeru Tamrat in Chapter 6. They trace cycles of drought and famine that have plagued Ethiopia for many decades, leading to recurrent humanitarian crises. They predict that food insecurity will worsen in Ethiopia as the population expands. This concern underlies the government of Ethiopia's claim to make better use of their relatively abundant access to the Nile waters. The expansion of irrigated agriculture in the Ethiopian plateau is a critical part of Ethiopia's agricultural policy in order to increase food production to meet growing needs. This chapter examines the implications of this policy, both for regional politics in the Horn of Africa, and for local pastoralist communities displaced from the Awash Valley by such developments.

The importance of decentralisation of decision making for pastoralists in Somalia is emphasised in Chapter 7. Ibrahim Farah, Abdirashid Hussein and Jeremy Lind show that *deegaan*, or a land base and its resources, is significant to understand the conflict in Somalia. The Somali conflict involves many clans and sub-clans. Shifting alliances were formed between different clans and sub-clans to gain leverage in the conflict and to stake stronger claims to particular *deegaan*. In particular, the ecological conditions of the Jubbaland region in southern Somalia are rich compared with the rest of the former democratic republic, and they provide a major source of income and sustenance to Somalis. Control of these resources is a major source of the conflict in Jubbaland, as this chapter shows.

From the foregoing, it is certain that there is no generic ecological conflict factor in sub-Saharan Africa. Instead, there is a tremendous variety of ecological issues that are relevant to conflict analysis. These include scarcity or abundance of natural resources, environmental change, production and marketing of natural resources, and the sharing of benefits from natural resource exploitation.

Three lessons are important to consider in relation to the design and implementation of conflict prevention and management policies. One, conflict in sub-Saharan Africa is structurally and functionally open. Conflicts in sub-Saharan Africa operate within broader regional and international systems. Apparently isolated conflicts are in reality intimately linked to broader political and economic contexts involving multiple, and often times, competing individuals and group actors, and interests. The institutions, policies and legal regimes governing these, moreover, are overlapping and mixed. Policy makers, therefore, must explicitly recognise the role of external engagers, and incorporate their involvement in policy formulation and interventions.

Two, conflict systems in sub-Saharan Africa are operationally complex. The levels of engagement and the number of variables underlying conflict are many; and more often than not the operation of conflict is uncertain. Tracing the role of different conflict variables, including ecological, demands scrupulous policy attention to such operational vagaries.

Three, the ecological variable is clearly an important factor in conflict. It is critical that policies consider how the ecological variable triggers and sustains conflict, as well as how it generates conflict. Moreover, it is also important that policy research and analysis trace the relationship of ecology to conflict through different pathways. Policies will vary depending on how the ecological variable is linked to conflict. Identifying and assessing linkages is critical to targetting effective policy interventions that have lasting impact.

Endnotes

- 1 K Holsti, Ecological and Clausewitzian approaches to the study of war: Assessing the possibilities, Paper presented at the 30th Anniversary Convention of the International Studies Association, London, 1989.
- 2 Forum on Early Warning and Early Response (FEWER), *Conflict Analysis and Response Definition* (Abridged) Methodology, London, April 2001, p 7. < www.fewer.org/research/index.htm>
- 3 T R Cusak, On the theoretical deficit in the study of war, *The process of war. Advancing the scientific study of war*, S A Bremer & T R Cusak (eds), Gordon and Breach Publishers, Amsterdam, 1995, p 191.
- 4 In this regard see, *inter alia*, J Vasquez's assessment of quantitative international relations research in Statistical findings in international politics: A data-based assessment, *International Studies Quarterly*, vol 20, no 2, 1976, pp 171–218 as well as The steps to war: Toward a scientific explanation of correlates of war findings, *World Politics*, no 40, 1987, pp 108–145. Also K Holsti, op cit, as well as Mirror, mirror on the wall, which are the fairest theories of all?, *International Studies Quarterly*, vol 33, no 3, 1989, pp 255–61 and *Peace and war: Armed conflicts and international order 1648–1989*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1991.
- 5 H Morgenthau, *Scientific man vs power politics*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, p 95 cited in D J. D. Sandole, *Capturing the complexity of conflict. Dealing with violent ethnic conflicts of the post-cold war era*. Pinter, London & New York, 1999, p 7.
- 6 To paraphrase the title of a fascinating volume dedicated to the topic, Big Wars, Little Wars – A Single Theory?, *International Interactions*, R M Siverson (ed) & M I Midlarski (guest ed), vol 16, no 3, 1990.
- 7 J Levy, Big wars, little wars, and theory construction, *ibid*, p 219. Yet, as A Thompson points out, “Many of these analyses offer something missing from the earlier passing fancies of international relations. Not only are they theoretically grounded, they are also historically grounded. Indeed, they represent reinterpretations of the past several hundred years of structural change and the ensuing disputes among the system's major actors.” W R Thompson, The size of war, structural and geopolitical contexts, and theory building/testing, R M. Siverson (ed) et al, op cit, p 186.
- 8 In this respect see *inter alia* the excellent collection of essays on interstate war in S A Bremer et al, op cit. A good example regarding the causes of interstate war can be found in J A Vasquez, *The war puzzle*, Cambridge Studies in International Relations, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1993.
- 9 T R Gurr & M G Marshall with D Khosla, *Peace and conflict 2001: A global survey of armed conflicts, self-determination movements, and democracy*, Center for International Development and Conflict Management (CIDCM), University of Maryland, 2000. < www.bsos.umd.edu/cidcm/peace.htm>
- 10 These trends and comparisons were constructed from a catalogue of every major episode of violent conflict from 1946 to 2000. Magnitudes were determined by rating each conflict on a 10 point scale that takes into account its deaths, dislocations, and physical damage. *Ibid*, p 8. < www.bsos.umd.edu/cidcm/peace.htm>

- 11 J D Singer, Armed conflict in the former colonial regions: From classification to explanation, *Between development and destruction. An enquiry into the causes of conflict in post-colonial states*. L Van de Goor with K Rupesinghe & P Sciarone (eds), The MacMillan Press Ltd, London & New York, 1996, p 35.
- 12 Center for Systemic Peace. op cit, pp 3–4. Singer corroborates this assertion by saying that these tendencies have “been with us for nearly half a century” and that they went unnoticed because “most of us living in the ‘First’ and ‘Second’ worlds were too preoccupied with the senselessness of our own confrontation to notice the death and destruction going on elsewhere”. Singer, op cit, p 35.
- 13 The former Yugoslavia erupted in a vicious civil war, still reverberating in Kosovo and Macedonia; conflict erupted between Moscow and the former Soviet republics of Azerbaijan and Tajikistan; and between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh; and within the Russian republic over Chechnya.
- 14 K Rupesinghe with S Ni Anderlini, *Civil wars, civil peace. An introduction to conflict resolution*. Pluto Press, London 1998, p 8.
- 15 A J Longman, *Downward trend in armed conflicts reversed*, p 4. < www.fsw.leidenuniv.nl/www/w3_liswo/Newsletter81/in_its_search_for_root_causes_of.htm > . See also P Wallensteen and M.Sollenberg, Armed conflict, 1989–1998, *Journal of Peace Research*, vol 36, no 5, 1999, pp 593–606.
- 16 H Miall with O Ramsbotham & T Woodhouse, *Contemporary conflict resolution*, Polity Press, Cambridge & Oxford, 1999, p 66.
- 17 In this regard see Van Creveld, *The transformation of war*, Free Press, 1991; K J Holsti. *The state, war, and the state of war*. Cambridge Studies in International Relations, Cambridge University Press, 1996 and M Kaldor. *New & old wars. Organized violence in a global era*. Polity Press, Cambridge & Oxford, 1999. The concept of ‘Wars of the Third Kind’ was originally developed by Edward Rice in his *Wars of the third kind: Conflict in underdeveloped countries*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1988.
- 18 M Van Creveld, op cit, p 20. Furthermore, contemporary wars are tactically fought with a mixture of guerilla warfare, terrorism and counter-insurgency. They are not fought for the capture or control of territory as in conventional or regular war, in that “the aim is to control the population by getting rid of everyone of a different identity (and indeed of a different opinion)” through the use of means such as mass killings, forcible resettlement, as well as political, psychological and economic techniques of intimidation. M Kaldor, op cit, p 8.
- 19 As was previously pointed out, the small units characteristic of contemporary armed conflict deliberately target civilians, use terror and intimidation to harness popular support, and attrition and/or hit-and-run attacks. The perceived structural change in warfare has led many authors to attempt to predict how warfare will be characterised in the future. For instance, Kumar Rupesinghe et al proposed five broad trends for the future of warfare, namely, the privatisation of state armies, the growth of militias and local warlords, the deliberate targeting of civilians and children, narco-guerillas and criminality and finally the re-emergence of mercenary soldiers. Rupesinghe et al, op cit, p 51.
- 20 As pointed out by Le Billon, “With the end of the Cold War and the resulting sharp drop in foreign assistance to many governments and rebel groups, belligerents have

become more dependent upon mobilising tradable commodities, such as minerals, timber or drugs, to sustain their military and political activities. As local resources gain importance for belligerents, so the focus of military activities becomes centred on areas of economic significance. This has a critical effect on the location of conflicts, prompting rebel groups in particular to establish permanent strongholds wherever resources and transport routes are located ... war economies, including commercial activities tend to shift from an economy of proximity, to an economy of networks [which] involve mostly private groups (including international organised crime groups, transnational corporations, and diasporas) ... beyond financing a conflict, the exploitation and commercialisation of natural resources can also help armed groups to develop an extensive and diversified support network, which integrates all people having an economic stake in the exploitation of resources." P le Billon, *The political economy of resource wars, Angola's war economy. The role of oil and diamonds*, J Cilliers & C Dietrich (eds), Institute for Security Studies, South Africa, 2000, p 30.

- 21 Defining identity politics as claims to power on the basis of particular identities, national, clan, religious or linguistic, Kaldor considers that 'identity politics' differs because although all wars have involved in one way or another a clash of identities. "Earlier identities were either linked to a notion of state interest or to some forward looking project ideas about how society should be organised." Kaldor, *op cit*, p 6.
- 22 T R Gurr, Minorities, nationalists and ethno-political conflict, *Managing global chaos: Sources of and responses to international conflict*, C A Crocker & F O Hampson with P Hall (eds), U.S. Institute of Peace, Washington DC, 1996. Three years earlier, in 1993, Ted Gurr had identified 5 000 distinct ethnic groups and uncovered around 80 significant and ongoing ethnic conflicts, 35 of which are in an incipient or active stage of civil war. T R Gurr, *Minorities at risk: A global view of ethno-political conflicts*. United States Institute of Peace Press, Washington, D.C., 1993.
- 23 In fact, in many countries the weakening of state structures has involved among others: economic and social decline; decline in state revenues; the spread of criminality, corruption and inefficiency; growing of organised crime and the privatisation of security as well as the emergence of para-military groups. *Ibid.* p 4. See the excellent study by R Jackson, *Quasi-states: Sovereignty, international relations, and the third world*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge & London, 1990.
- 24 Holsti, *op cit*, pp 16–18.
- 25 *Ibid.*, pp xi–x. Centring on the aetiology as well as the internal character of contemporary warfare, Christopher Clapham for example developed a typology of insurgency to reflect the evolution of these mostly internal conflict types over time and in different circumstances. He referred to *liberation insurgencies* (the goal is the achievement of independence from colonial or minority rule); *separatist insurgencies* (representing the aspirations and identities of particular ethnic groups or regions within an existing state, either by seceding or pressing for an autonomous status); *reform insurgencies* (seeking radical reform of the national government) and finally *warlord insurgencies* (directed toward a change in leadership and control of

- the resources available to the state and not so much to a change in policy, ideology or patterns of patronage). C Clapham. Introduction: Analysing African insurgencies, *African guerrillas*, C Clapham (ed), James Currey, Oxford, 1998, pp 6–7.
- 26 It should be pointed out that the need for explanation is not merely academic. As Shehadi points out, “government officials and international civil servants worldwide are seeking to respond to the challenges posed by these claims, while international organisations are trying to mediate an end to these conflicts and alleviate the humanitarian disasters they create”. K S Shehadi, *Ethnic self-determination and the break-up of states*, International Institute for Strategic Studies, Adelphi Paper 283, London, 1993, p 3.
- 27 Singer, *Armed conflict in the former colonial regions: From classification to explanation*, op cit, p 38.
- 28 D Jung with K Schlite & J Siegelberg, *Ongoing wars and their explanation*, Luc Van de Goor et al, op cit, p 61. To this respect, Dietrich Jung et al point out that “since the end of the Cold War, the slogan ‘ethnic conflict’ does not only appear more and more often in the media, but also in the discourse of social science”. Ibid, pp 60–61.
- 29 See *inter alia*, P van den Berghe, *The ethnic phenomenon*, Elsevier, New York, 1981.
- 30 D Lake & D Rothchild, *Ethnic fears and global engagement: The international spread and management of global conflict*, op cit. The instrumentalist approach is used by, *inter alia*, N Glazer & D P Moynihan, *Ethnicity: Theory and experience*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1975; D Rothchild, *Interethnic conflict and policy analysis in Africa*, in *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, vol 9, no 1, January 1986 and P Brass (ed), *Ethnic groups and the state*, Croom-Helm, London, 1985.
- 31 T D Sisk. *Power sharing and international mediation in ethnic conflicts*, Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict, United States Institute of Peace, Washington DC, 1996, p 12.
- 32 Ibid., p 13.
- 33 Ibid.
- 34 Lake & Rothchild, op cit. For a discussion of the relational approach see, among others, M Esman, *Ethnic politics*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1994.
- 35 Sisk, op cit. p 13.
- 36 Gurr, *Minorities, nationalists and ethnopolitical conflict*, op cit, p 63. In this regard Peter Worsley considers that “cultural traits are not absolutes or simply intellectual categories, but are invoked to provide identities which legitimise claims to rights. They are strategies or weapons in competitions over scarce social goods”. As cited in T H Eriksen, *Ethnicity and nationalism: Anthropological perspectives*. Pluto Press, London, 1993. This is also the position of the instrumentalists, as defined by Timothy Sisk: “Instrumentalists often view ethnic conflict as less a matter of incompatible identities and more a consequence of (a) differential rates and patterns of modernisation between groups and (b) competition over economic and environmental resources in situations where relations among groups vary according to wealth and social status. In other words, ethnicity is often a guise for the pursuit of essentially economic interests’. Sisk, op cit, p 12.

This conclusion had been reached by Robert Park and his associates during the 1920s and 30s. These authors stressed that ethnicity and ethnic conflict were caused by threats, real or imaginary, to an existing ecological pattern of mutual adjustment highlighting the fluid character of ethnic categorisations and their negotiable imprint, a result of the variance in their situational importance. Such approaches opened the way for a critical analysis of primordial approaches to ethnicity and the realisation that these can be consciously manipulated.

- 37 J Cilliers, Resource wars – a new type of insurgency, Cilliers et al (eds), op cit, p 2.
- 38 Rupesinghe et al, op cit, pp 32–33.
- 39 For an in-depth discussion of the correlation mentioned please refer to Gurr & Marshall with Khosla, op cit, p 12.
- 40 For a collection of Paul Collier's articles, as well as access to the World Bank's Policy Research Project entitled The causes of civil war, crime and violence refer to < www.worldbank.org/research/conflict/civil.htm> . See the very interesting collection of essays in M Berdal and D Malone (eds), *Greed and grievance: Economic agendas in civil wars*, Lynne Rienner, Boulder CO, 2000 in particular I de Soysa's article, The resource curse: Are civil wars driven by rapacity or paucity? See also M Berdal and D Keen, Violence and economic agendas in civil wars: Some policy implications, *Millenium: Journal of International Studies*, vol 26, no 3, pp 795–818. Another interesting perspective on 'resource wars' can be found in J Fairhead, The conflict over natural and environmental resources, *The origins of humanitarian emergencies: War and displacement in developing countries*, E W Wayne, F Stewart and R Vayrynen (eds), Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2000. Also D Keen, Economic functions of violence in civil wars, *International Institute for Strategic Studies Adelphi Paper no 320*, Oxford University Press, 1998. Also see the already quoted D Jung with K Schlite & J Siegelberg, Ongoing wars the their expanlation, L Van de Goor et al (eds), op cit, pp 50–63.
- 41 P Collier, *Doing well out of war*, Paper prepared for Conference on Economic Agendas in Civil Wars, London 26–27 April 1999. The World Bank, The Economics of Crime and Violence Project, Washington DC, 10 April, 1999, p 1. < www.worldbank.org/research/conflict/papers/econagenda.htm>
- 42 Not dissimilar to Bruce Bueno de Mesquita's expected-utility theory. Methodologically, as was previously pointed out, the authors use statistical and probabilistic analysis (mainly probit and tobit regressions) and claim that the results obtained through these methods support and confirm the assertion that economic agendas are central to the origins and continuance of many civil wars. P Collier & A Hoeffler, *On economic causes of civil war*, The World Bank, The Economics of Crime and Violence Project, Washington DC, January 1998. < www.worldbank.org/research/conflict/papers/cw-cause.htm> . Also published in *Oxford Economic Papers*, 50, 1998, pp 563–73..
- 43 In this sense, "the higher is per capita income on an internationally comparable measure, the lower is the risk of civil war". The authors interpret this "as being due to the effect of higher income on the opportunity cost of rebellion". Ibid, pp 7 & 9.
- 44 Ibid.

- 45 Ibid.
- 46 The authors measure ethnic diversity through the index of ethno-linguistic fractionalisation which measures the probability of two randomly drawn people being from different ethnic groups developed originally in the *Atlas Narodov Mira*, Department of Geodesy and Cartography of the State Geological Committee of the USSR, Moscow, 1964.
- 47 Collier & Hoeffler, op cit, pp 7–8.
- 48 Ibid, pp 8–9.
- 49 Collier, op cit, p 14.
- 50 Nevertheless, the author points out that inequality is obviously related to economic growth and therefore an indicator to bear in mind. Ibid, p 5.
- 51 Ibid, pp 6 & 11.
- 52 Ibid, pp 1–2.
- 53 For example, “a country which is heavily dependent upon primary commodity exports, with a quarter of its national income coming from them, has a risk of conflict four times greater than one without primary commodity exports”. Ibid, p 5.
- 54 Ibid.
- 55 Ibid.
- 56 Ibid, pp 6 & 11.
- 57 Ibid, p 6.
- 58 The earlier expression of expected-utility analysis stems from Von Neumann and Morgenstern in their *Theory of Games and Economic Behaviour*, Princeton University Press, 1944. As pointed out by M Nicholson in The conceptual bases of the war trap, *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, vol 13, no 2, June 1987, p 357, “These authors demonstrated a set of postulates about behaviour which if followed would mean that actors behave in circumstances of risk as if they were maximising the expected value of some defined concept of utility”. Expected-utility theory as regards the occurrence of war was developed by B de Mesquita in his *The war trap*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1981.
- 59 See *inter alia*, M Nicholson, *Rationality and the analysis of international conflict*. Cambridge Studies in International Relations, Cambridge University Press, 1992; S J Majeski with D J Sylvan, Simple choices and complex calculations: A critique of the war trap’, *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, vol 28, no 2, June 1984, pp 316–340.
- 60 T Schelling, *The strategy of conflict*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge Mass, 1960. See also V Jabri. *Discourses on violence*, Manchester University Press, 1996, pp 62–65.
- 61 V Jabri, op cit, p 14. In fact, as Charles King points out, “in prolonged armed conflicts, belligerents analyse costs and benefits according to two rather different sets of criteria. The potential benefits of continuing to fight tend to be analysed prospectively, while the potential costs are normally viewed retrospectively”. C King. *Ending civil wars*, International Institute for Strategic Studies, Adelphi Paper 308, London, 1997, p 43.
- 62 For a discussion of this approach see V Jabri, op cit, pp 57–58 as well as O Holsti, Crisis Management, *Psychological dimensions of conflict*, B Glad (ed), Sage, London, 1990.

- 63 Nicholson, op cit, particularly Chapters 3 to 7.
- 64 Ibid, pp 104–105. Jabri also questions the rationality assumption in her application of structuration theory to the phenomena of violent conflict. She specifically assumes that “our understanding of violent human behaviour cannot simply be based on instrumental rationality but must situate the agent, or acting subject, in relation to the structural properties which render war a continuity in social systems”. Jabri., op cit, p 3.
- 65 C Tilly, *From mobilisation to revolution*, Reading Mass, Addison-Wesley, 1978. As Collier et al, albeit 20 years earlier, Tilly also conceptualised violent political action as a matter of tactical and strategic choice, dependent on cost-efficiency calculations by groups intended on pursuing violent tactics in the achievement of their goals.
- 66 Nicholson, op cit, p 227.
- 67 Ibid, p 228.
- 68 J Davies, Toward a theory of revolution, *American Sociological Review*, 27, 1962, pp 5–19. See also J C Davies, Aggression, violence, revolution and war, *Handbook of political psychology: Contemporary problems and issues*, J N Knutson (ed), Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, 1973.
- 69 T Gurr, *Why men rebel*, Princeton, N.J., Princeton University Press, 1970. See also A.R Oberschall, Rising expectations and political turmoil, *Journal of Development Studies*, 1969, pp 5–23. For a case study application, D Birrel, Relative deprivation as a factor in conflict in Northern Ireland, *Sociological Review*, 1972, pp 317–343.
- 70 Relative deprivation implies that people become dissatisfied if they feel they have less than they should and could have. There are many different ways this can happen: members of a society or organisation have decreasing amounts of what they previously possessed; improving conditions which then deteriorate; rising expectations, where people raise their expectations about what they could and should have. Furthermore it should also be pointed out that relative deprivation theories do not only refer to economic deprivation. Crucially, several political scientists writing of relative deprivation locate it at the political level. Among them Vilfredo Pareto places deprivation at the political level: a sort of political relative deprivation based on the insufficient co-optation of competing members of the non-elite, ultimately causing the decline of status quo elites. Gaetano Mosca and Emile Durkheim also tackled the problem of relative deprivation situated at the political level. Samuel Huntington, for example, locates violent political action and revolution at the level of the political sphere: within a context of rapid socio-economic modernisation, people are mobilised and induced to enter the political arena, and if their demands are not properly channelled, aggressive modes of behaviour may be taken.
- 71 Gurr, *Why men rebel*, op cit, p 24. Gurr states that “the greater the deprivation an individual perceives relative to his expectations the greater his discontent; the more widespread and intense is discontent among the members of a society, the more likely and severe is civil strife”.
- 72 According to Dennis J D Sandole, James Davies modifies the ‘hierarchy of needs’ developed by Abraham Maslow considering that it is the frustration of substantive (physical, social-affectional, self-esteem and self-actualisation) or implemental

needs (security, knowledge, and power) that can facilitate the transition from manifest conflict processes to aggressive manifest conflict processes. D J D Sandole, Paradigms, theories, and metaphors in conflict and conflict resolution: coherence or confusion?, *Conflict resolution theory and practice. integration and application*, D J D Sandole and H van der Merwe (eds), Manchester University Press, 1993, p 14.

- 73 In this sense Gurr was aware that “deprivation exists in the remote background, waiting to be converted”. Political mobilisation will ensure that individual aggression is channelled as collective violence, through normative and utilitarian justifications for the adoption of such course of action. Harry Eckstein posits in this respect as well as in regard to the rational-actor discussion that “the implication is that the role of tactical variables diminishes as the more fundamental factor of frustration grows: desperate, impassioned people will not act coolly or be much governed by tactical calculations, even about coercive balances. This is the only logical way to combine rationalistic with essentially arational motivation. Arationality also implies that a major role be assigned to cultural-variable learning. This too occurs in Gurr’s theory, the cultural variable being the extent to which a culture of violence rooted in the past exists”. H Eckstein, ‘Theoretical approaches to explaining collective political violence, *Handbook of political conflict, theory and research*, T R Gurr (ed), New York, Free Press, 1980, pp 144–5.
- 74 Absolute deprivation approach considers the effects of the absolute magnitude of deprivation on the occurrence of conflict. The work of Dahrendorf, for example, emphasises that absolute deprivation in several dimensions of groups’ existence leads to homogeneity and facilitates group interaction and the likelihood that deprived communities view themselves as a collective entity. Yet, as pointed out by several authors, absolute deprivation is not automatically related to the occurrence of violent conflict. Among these authors, Cantril highlighted that absolute deprivation forces people to concentrate on their daily survival rather than revolt. As Kriesberg points out, “severe deprivation may make people despair of changing the conditions, and, as accommodation to such despair, even the self-recognition of collective discontent may not occur”. L Kriesberg, *Social conflicts*. 2nd Edition, Prentice-Hall Inc, 1973, 1982.
- 75 See for example Cantril’s (1965) experiments with a ten-step ladder scale to measure discrepancy between expectations and actual achievements. Also Bowen’s (1968) test of Cantril’s ladder and his conclusion that there is no relationship between present or future standing on the ladder and a measure of protest orientation. Also Muller’s and McPhail’s experiences as well as Walter Korpi’s. Korpi for example stresses the importance of the capability or relative power of the parties involved in that “the process of acquiring control over power resources is seen as a necessary condition for the capacity to contend for privileges”. In this sense, the relative deprivation hypothesis is not capable by itself of explaining violent conflict behaviour. In fact, important variables such as prevalent policies in the social system, legitimacy of the elites, power capabilities of the parties involved, alienation, external interference and support for one of the contending parties, historical factors and trends must be considered. W Korpi, Conflict, power, and relative deprivation, *American Political Science Review*, 1974, pp 1569–1578.

- 76 P le Billon, The political economy of resource wars, Cillier et al (eds), op cit, p 23. So-called scarcity-of-resources approaches consider poverty as a fundamental cause of contemporary conflict. Global and local economic inequality is at a high point when for example one knows that the world's 50 poorest nations (20% of the world's entire population) account for less than 2% of global income and there is stagnation and protracted decline in income due to years of stagnant economic growth. Furthermore, soil impoverishment, land scarcity and overuse, overpopulation and deforestation also contribute as potential causes of conflict.
- 77 M T Klare, The new geography of conflict, *Foreign Affairs*, May/ June 2001, p 52. This author adds that "Just as a map showing the world's tectonic faults is a useful guide to likely earth-quake zones, viewing the international system in terms of unsettled resource deposits – contested oil and gas fields, shared water systems, embattled diamond mines – provides a guide to likely conflict zones in the twenty-first century ... A better analysis of stresses in the new international system, and a better predictor of conflict, would view international relations through the lens of the world's contested resources and focus on those areas where conflict is likely to erupt over access to or the possession of vital materials" (pp 52–53).
- 78 Cilliers, op cit, p 2.
- 79 In this regard, the words of Chris Mitchell come to mind: "if certain conflicts within a society are regarded as stemming from ineradicable human qualities such as greed or envy then they are defined as sins, crimes or social deviance, and are 'managed' by coercion or punishment and the imposition of law-and-order policies through deterrent police forces". C R Mitchell, *The structure of international conflict*, The MacMillan Press Ltd, 1981, p 33.
- 80 Jabri, op cit, p 65.
- 81 Collier & Hoeffler, *Greed and grievance in civil war*, op cit, < www.worldbank.org/research/conflict/papers/greedandgrievance.htm>
- 82 On this occasion the authors actually say that "the assumption that rebellions are motivated by greed is merely a special case of the focus upon constraints" in that "an alternative constraints-based theory is that of universal grievance: all countries might have groups with a sufficiently strong sense of grievance to wish to launch a rebellion". Collier & Hoeffler, op cit, p 3.
- 83 There are important differences in both a constraints-based theory and a preferences-based theory of conflict. For example, if we take the universal grievance approach (defined here as a constraint) one will inevitably conclude that the extortion of primary commodity exports offers the best way for rebel organisations to grow to achieve the size and scale they need to undertake a civil war. Extortion than becomes a vehicle, a means to an end. On the other hand, if we take the 'literal greed interpretation', "the extortion of primary commodity exports will occur where it is profitable" and "the organisations which perpetrate this extortion will need to take the form of a rebellion". Ibid.
- 84 Ibid.
- 85 Please note that the authors are still using Singer and Small's 1982 definition of civil war referred to above. In this respect see J D Singer and M Small, *Resort to arms: International and civil wars: 1816–1980*, Sage, Beverly Hills, 1982. And also J D Singer and M Small, *Correlates of war project: International and civil war*

- data, 1816–1992* (Computer file), Ann Arbor, Michigan, Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research, 1994.
- 86 The dependence on extortion of primary commodity exports by rebel groups also affects their size in the sense that because “primary commodities need defence of a large physical space best suited to an army”, “a viable extortion racket itself needs considerable military power”. However, the authors point out that “the threshold of rebel force required for survival is increasing in the government’s military expenditure. As a result, the viability of rebellion need not be continuously increasing in the endowment of primary commodity exports. Beyond some point, the increment in potential rebel revenue may be more than offset by the increased rebel expenditure needed to survive against augmented government forces”. *Ibid*, p 4. The descriptive statistical investigation that preceded regression analysis confirmed previous results on the role of primary commodity exports in the occurrence of civil war as well as regarding the structure of income. Applying regression methods to these variables in order to test their validity as regards a ‘greed-model’ they found a similar non-linear result as to the effect of primary commodity exports.
- 87 As Collier and Hoeffler posit, “the government army has two advantages over a rebellion. It can spend many years building a sense of unity, whereas if a rebel force fails to achieve unity quickly it will presumably perish. Additionally, the government can use the powerful rhetoric of nationalism: with this imagined identity already occupied, a rebellion cannot afford diversity”. Collier & Hoeffler, *op cit*, p 7.
- 88 In line with J M. Esteban and D Ray, On the measurement of polarisation, *Econometrica*, vol 62, no 4, pp 819–851 and M Reynal-Querol, *Religious conflict and growth: Theory and evidence*, London School of Economics and Political Science, mimeo, 2000. A non-monotonic result was found leading to the conclusion that “highly fractionalised societies are no more prone to war than highly homogeneous ones” while polarised societies have around a 50% higher probability of civil war than either homogeneous or highly fractionalised societies. P Collier & A Hoeffler, *On economic causes of civil war*, pp 7–8.
- 89 *Ibid*, p 9.
- 90 Based on M B Anderson, *Do no harm*, Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1999. Collier & Hoeffler. *Greedy and grievance in civil war*, *op cit*, p 10.
- 91 *Ibid*.
- 92 *Ibid*, p 15.
- 93 Le Billon, *op cit*, p 28.
- 94 *Ibid*, p 30.
- 95 For an in-depth discussion of the development of the level-of-analysis problem in international relations refer to *inter alia*, B Buzan, The level of analysis problem in international relations reconsidered, *International relations theory today*, K Booth & S Smith (eds), Polity Press, Cambridge, 1995. Also J D Singer, The level of analysis problem in international relations, *The international system. Theoretical essays*. K Knorr & S Verba (eds), Princeton University Press, 1961. Reprinted by Greenwood Press Publishers, 1982; W B Moul, The level of analysis problem revisited, *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, vol 61, no 1, 1973, pp 494–513. For an application of this framework in the discussion of the leading

theories of international conflict refer to among others, J S Levy. Contending theories of international conflict: a level-of-analysis approach, *Managing global chaos: Sources of and responses to international conflict*, op cit; and also D J D Sandole, Paradigms, theories, and metaphors in conflict and conflict resolution: coherence or confusion?, Sandole & van der Merwe (eds), op cit.

- 96 K Waltz, *Man, the state and war: a theoretical analysis*. Columbia University Press, New York & London, 1959. After the publication of *Man, the state and war*, the shift from 'images of international relations' to 'levels of analysis' was essentially a result of two authors: J D Singer, International conflict. three levels of analysis, *World Politics Review Article*, vol 12, Issue 3, April 1960, pp 453–461 where Singer replaces the term 'images' with 'levels'. In the first page of this review article this authors conflates both terms by saying that "the treatise under review is a commendable exception to our tendency to 'bootleg' assumptions, consciously or otherwise, into our research and teaching; as such, it is a welcome and valuable addition to the literature of what many of us view as a nascent discipline. But Prof. Waltz's book is more than that; it is, in effect an examination of these assumptions, which find their way inevitably into every piece of description, analysis, or prescription in international political relations. These assumptions lead into, and flow from, the level of social organisation, which the observer selects as his point of entry into any study of the subject. For Waltz, there are three such levels of analysis: the individual, the state and the state system". Op cit, p 453.
- 97 In Waltz's own words, "Where are the major causes of war to be found? The answers are bewildering in their variety and in their contradictory qualities. To make this variety manageable, the answers can be ordered under the following three headings: within man, within the structure of the separate states, within the state system." Ibid, p 12.
- 98 Waltz, op cit, p 14.
- 99 Ibid, pp 160 & 225. A focus on one single image does in fact affect the way the other images are perceived. In this respect the author points out that "the firmness with which a person is wedded to one image colors his interpretation of the others" (p 226). He gives the example of Woodrow Wilson's "emphasis upon the second image [that] led him to particular interpretations of the first and third, rather than to a complete ignoring of them" (p 227). In effect, "in each image a cause is identified in terms of which all others are to be understood" (p 228). Manus Midlarsky provides us with insights into this problem: "Whether consciously or unconsciously, investigators generally focus on one level or another as a necessary demarcation of research boundaries. I will take no position on the utility of one or another of these levels of analysis because, as we shall see, all have a major contribution to make, but in different ways." M I Midlarsky, Introduction, *Handbook of war studies*, pp xiii–xiv, M I Midlarsky (ed), The University of Michigan Press, 1993, originally published by Unwin Hyman, 1989.
- 100 B Buzan, The level of analysis problem in international relations reconsidered, *International relations theory today*, K Booth and S Smith (eds), Polity Press, Cambridge, 1995, p 198.
- 101 Ibid, p 230. He also says that "with the first image the direction of change ... is from men to societies and states. The second image catches up both elements.

Men make states, and states make men; but this is still a limited view. One is led to a search for the more inclusive nexus of causes, for states are shaped by the international environment as are men by both the national and international environments". This concern with including the insights of all three images in an adequate understanding of the causes of war is repeatedly voiced throughout *Man, the state and war*. For example, in the opening of Chapter IV on the second image (internal structure of states) he says that "the conclusion is obvious: to understand war and peace political analysis must be used to *supplement* [my emphasis] and order the findings of psychology and sociology [first image]' (p 186). Waltz also says that "the first perspective without the second is misleading" and that "it has by now become apparent that there is a considerable interdependence among the three images" K Waltz, op cit, p 186.

- 102 D J D Sandole, *Capturing the complexity of conflict. Dealing with violent ethnic conflicts of the post-Cold War era*. Pinter, London & New York, 1999.
- 103 Ibid, p 18. This framework also includes Snyder et al's (1962, pp 62–74): (a) decision-making process, (b) internal setting of decision-making/social structure and behaviour of the decision-making state, and (c) external setting of decision making.
- 104 Sandole, op cit, p 178.
- 105 In Sandole's words: "The stepwise procedure was then used to develop models for each of the dependent variables for each of the three developmental stages ... in addition to exploring possible differences between the aggregated and disaggregated models, one objective here was to test Waltz at different levels of development: when systems were relatively youthful, when they were into their 'middle years', and when they were mature ...' Ibid, p 74–75.
- 106 Ibid, p 129. Furthermore, the author says that "what is important to realise here is that, although parties to conflict may wind up killing each other, they may have come to that point from different 'startup conditions' (equifinality)". Ibid, p 112.
- 107 M S Lund, *Preventing violent conflicts: A strategy for preventive diplomacy*, U S Institute of Peace Press, Washington DC, 1996, p 133–34 as cited in D J D Sandole, *Capturing the complexity of conflict. Dealing with violent ethnic conflicts of the post-Cold War era*. op cit, p 130.
- 108 Mitchell, op cit, p 52.
- 109 Jabri, op cit, p 6.
- 110 In this regard we discussed how psychological variables operating at the individual decision-making level contribute to the development of self-stimulating/self-perpetuating conflict processes in their own right, becoming an important source for the continuation and protractedness of any given conflict.
- 111 See for example, M E Brown, Introduction, *The international dimensions of internal conflict*. CSIA Studies in International Security, The MIT Press, Cambridge Massachusetts & London, 1996, p 1–33. As well as his The causes and regional dimensions of internal conflict, *The international dimensions of internal conflict*, CSIA Studies in International Security, The MIT Press, Cambridge Massachusetts & London, 1996, pp 571–603.
- 112 J Goodhand, with T Vaux & R Walker, Guide to conflict assessment, United Nations Development Programme, Department for International Development, Third Draft, Unpublished, September 2001, p 11. For these authors, structural analysis entails looking at the long-term factors underlying violent conflict.

- 113 See King, op cit, p 29.
- 114 Forum on Early Warning and Early Response (FEWER), op cit, p 3. < www.fewer.org/research/index.htm> . See also The Norman Paterson School of International Affairs *Country indicators for foreign policy risk assessment indicator definition*, November 2001, p 4. < www.fewer.org/research/index.htm>
- 115 Among others, see for example the work developed by the Forum on Early Warning and Early Response (FEWER), FAST (Swiss Peace Foundation), the Clingendael Institute or the Centre for International Development and Conflict Management (CIDCM) at the University of Maryland. For a useful comparison of the methodologies used by these projects refer to The Norman Paterson School of International Affairs, *Country indicators for foreign policy methodology, data descriptions, data sources*. November 2001. < www.fewer.org/research/index.htm>
- 116 See S Ampleford with D Carment, G Conway & A Ospina. *Country indicators for foreign policy: Risk assessment template*. Draft version, The Norman Paterson School of International Affairs, FEWER, August 2001, p 4. < www.fewer.org/research/index.htm>
- 117 Supra 523.
- 118 In this respect Ronald Fisher posits that “it follows that the central unit of analysis in protracted social conflict is the *identity group* [sic], defined in ethnic, racial, religious, linguistic, or other terms, for it is through the identity group that compelling human needs are expressed in social and often in political terms. Furthermore, communal identity itself is dependent upon the satisfaction of basic needs for security, recognition, and distributive justice”. R Fisher, *Interactive conflict resolution*, Syracuse University Press, Syracuse New York, 1997, p 5.
- 119 E E Azar, Protracted international conflicts: Ten propositions, *Conflict: Readings in management and resolution*, J Burton & F Dukes (eds), MacMillan Press Ltd, 1990, pp 147–148 from E E. Azar, Protracted international conflicts: Ten propositions, *International conflict resolution: Theory and practice*, E Azar & J Burton (eds), Lynne Rienner Publishers, England, Boulder, CO, 1986.
- 120 Ibid, p 146
- 121 In this respect see *inter alia* J W Burton, *Resolving deep-rooted conflict, a handbook*. University Press of America, Boston, 1987. At the root of John Burton’s ‘facilitative problem-solving’ approach to resolving conflicts is human needs theory. In his words, “The theory of human needs, which was built on the work of Maslow and others, stressed values that could not be curbed, socialised or negotiated, contrary to earlier assumptions ... as these needs of security, identity and human development are universal, and because their fulfillment is not dependent on limited resources, it follows that conflict resolution with win-win outcomes is possible.” Op cit, p 16.
- 122 Kriesberg, op cit, p 68. This author adds that “we are primarily concerned with understanding how conflict groups become conscious of themselves as groups, come to perceive that they have grievances, and formulate goals that would lessen their dissatisfaction at the apparent expense of another party”.
- 123 Mitchell, op cit, p 33.
- 124 An up-dated version of this book is entitled L Kriesberg, *Constructive conflicts. From escalation to resolution*, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, New York, 1998.

- 125 Ibid, p 21. This author considers that social conflicts are ubiquitous and manifest themselves at every level of the social spectrum, from interpersonal disputes to community conflicts, from industrial struggles to international war. Nevertheless, not every social relationship is characterised by conflict at all times. More importantly, not every conflict is expressed in a violent or hostile way. Moreover, looking at conflict as relationship makes possible the assumption that different conflicts have common elements. The fact that every violent conflict is in a sense unique should not undermine the search for among other things, dynamic and behavioural similarities in conflict processes and in the several dimensions along which conflicts vary. As was previously pointed out, one of the most important contributions of conflict research has been that it searches for the similarities and differences among many different kinds of conflicts such as class conflicts, community conflicts, industrial conflicts, and international conflicts. An analysis which adequately balances the particularities of a specific conflict with its general characteristics and dynamics as a process seems a fruitful way forward.
- 126 To this respect, see *inter alia*, Vasquez, op cit, Chapter 5.
- 127 J S Levy, Contending theories of international conflict: a level-of-analysis approach, Crocker et al (eds), op cit, p 5. For an in-depth discussion of this issue refer to R Jervis, *Perception and misperception in international politics*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, N.J., 1976. Also M Nicholson, *Rationality and the analysis of international conflict*, op cit. Commenting on Edward Azar's work, Miall et al say in this respect that "anatomistic group histories, exclusionist myths, demonising propaganda and dehumanising ideologies serve to justify discriminatory policies and legitimise atrocities. In these circumstances, in a dynamic familiar to students of international relations as the 'security dilemma', actions are mutually interpreted in the most threatening light, the 'worst motivations tend to be attributed to the other side', the space for compromise and accommodation shrinks and 'proposals for political solutions become rare, and tend to be perceived on all sides as mechanisms for gaining power and control'". Miall et al, op cit, p 75.
- 128 Mitchell, op cit, p 101.
- 129 As Kriesberg points out, "continuously organised conflict groups enjoy a mobilisation advantage over emergent conflict parties, as is the case between governments and protesters or revolutionaries". Kriesberg, op cit, p 92. This had been pointed out by Collier et al in Chapter 3.
- 130 Brown, The causes and regional dimensions of internal conflict, op cit, p 575.
- 131 Brown, Introduction, op cit, p 18.
- 132 P Chabal & J-P Daloz, *Africa works. Disorder as a political instrument*, The International African Institute, James Currey, Oxford, 1999, pp xiii, xix. In this respect see also J-F Bayart, *The state in Africa. The politics of the belly*, Longman, London & New York, 1993.
- 133 Mitchell, op cit, p 44. Furthermore, Mitchell adds that "the existence of opposing definitions of 'what the conflict is about' implies that one way of gaining one's own goal in such conflict is to influence the other party so that the latter accepts one's own way of regarding what issues are in conflict. Hence, a common tactic for gaining an advantage in a dispute is to have one's own way of regarding what issues are in conflict". Ibid, p 44.

- 134 Kriesberg, op cit, p 8.
- 135 Large power differences, for instance, can be in themselves a source of grievance to the less powerful. At the same time, they can deter overt expression of the grievance. Yet, if power differences are small suggesting that perhaps the distribution of valued resources is fair, one of the parties may misjudge its power and think a marginal advantage can be obtained with only a little effort.
- 136 Kriesberg, op cit, p 105.
- 137 In this respect see H Miall with O Ramsbotham & T Woodhouse, op cit, p 70. Also the original development of this in E E Azar, *The management of protracted social conflict. Theory and cases*, Darmouth Publishing Company, 1990, pp 7–12.
- 138 Miall with Ramsbotham & Woodhouse, op cit, p 73.
- 139 As Edward Azar points out, “deprivation or satisfaction of human needs for physical security, access to political and social institutions, and acceptance of communal identity (i.e. political pluralism) is largely a result of social, political and economic interactions. In the modern world, the regulation of such interactions, and thus the satisfaction of these basic needs, is undertaken by the political authority called the state”. Azar, op cit, p 10. Miall et al add that “at whatever level the main sources of contemporary conflict may be seen to reside, it is at the level of the state that the critical struggle is, in the end, played out”. Miall et al, op cit, p 84.
- 140 See for example, Brown, Introduction, op cit, pp 1–33. As well as Brown, The causes and regional dimensions of internal conflict, op cit, pp 571–603.
- 141 Goodhand with Vaux & Walker, op cit, p 11. For these authors, structural analysis entails looking at the long-term factors underlying violent conflict.
- 142 See King, op cit, p 29.
- 143 Adapted from Brown. Introduction, op cit, p 14.
- 144 In this respect see *inter alia* I W Zartman, *Collapsed states: The disintegration and restoration of legitimate authority*, Lynne Rienner, Boulder, Colo., 1995.
- 145 In fact, as Joel Migdal points out, “it is impossible to understand states – whether we want to look at international or domestic relations – without placing them in the contexts of the societies within which they interact with other social organisations, for it is from these interactions that states draw their strength and find their limitations. The myth of sovereignty assumes the freedom of states to pursue their own interests in the international arena, and the myth of state autonomy takes the coherence of states for granted, as it does the distance from other societal forces. In fact, whether states are sovereign or autonomous is a historical question that cannot be decided a priori. A more fruitful approach is to examine the state in the context of those forces impinging upon its ability to act unfettered”. J S. Migdal, *Integration and disintegration: An approach to society formation, Between development and destruction. An enquiry into the causes of conflict in post-colonial states*, op cit, p 92. Using the definition of state making proposed by Cohen, Brown and Organski (as ‘primitive central power accumulation’), Mohammed Ayoob posits that “state-making must include the following: (1) the expansion and consolidation of the territorial and demographic domain under a political authority including the imposition of order on contested territorial and demographic space (war); (2) the maintenance of order in the territory where, and over the population

- on whom, such order has already been imposed (policing); and (3) the extraction of resources from the territory and the population under the control of the state essential to support not only war-making and policing activities undertaken by the state but also for the maintenance of state appliances necessary to carry on routine administration, deepen the state's penetration of society and serve symbolic purposes (taxation)'. M Ayoob, State-making, state-breaking and state failure, Van de Goor et al, op cit, p 69. In this respect see Y Cohen, B R Brown and A F K Organski, The paradoxical nature of state-making: The violent creation of order, *American Political Science Review*, vol 75, no 4, 1981. Also C Tilly in War-making and state-making as organised crime, *Bringing the state back in*, P B Evans, D Rueschemeyer & T Skocpol, Cambridge University Press, 1985.
- 146 Van de Goor et al (eds), op cit, p 9. See also R Jackson, *Quasi-states, sovereignty, international relations and the third world*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1990.
- 147 Ayoob, op cit, p 70. For an in-depth discussion of this issue see K.J. Holsti, *The state, war, and the state of war*, op cit, in particular Chapters 3 and 4.
- 148 Miall with Ramsbotham & Woodhouse, op cit, p 86.
- 149 See Holsti, *The state, war, and the state of war*, op cit, Chapter 4, pp 61–81.
- 150 Ibid, p 9.
- 151 In this respect see J Snyder, Nationalism and the crisis of the post-Soviet state, *Survival*, vol 35, no 1, Spring 1993, p 12. As Michael Brown points out, "when state structures weaken, violent conflict often follows. Power struggles between politicians and would-be leaders intensify. Regional leaders become increasingly independent, and, if they consolidate control over military assets, virtual warlords. Ethnic groups which had been oppressed by central authorities are more able to assert themselves politically, perhaps by seeking more administrative autonomy or their own states". Brown, op cit, p 14.
- 152 Brown, Introduction, op cit, p 15.
- 152 Azar, *The management of protracted social conflict. Theory and cases*, op cit, p 10.
- 154 Ibid, p 11.
- 155 Mitchell, op cit, p 20.
- 156 Miall with Ramsbotham & Woodhouse, op cit, p 86.
- 157 Brown, Introduction, op cit, p 19.
- 158 Ibid, p 18–20. As regards the vast topic of conflict and development see, *inter alia* and as an introduction, S P Huntington, *Political order in changing societies*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1968 as well as 'Civil violence and the process of development, *Civil violence and the international system*, Adelphi Paper no 83, London, IISS, 1971. Also the classic *Why men rebel* by Gurr, op cit, and S Newman, Does modernisation breed ethnic conflict?', *World Politics*, vol 43, no 3, April 1991.
- 159 Edward Azar considered two main models of international linkage: economic dependency (limiting the autonomy of the state; distorting the patterns of economic development and therefore exacerbating denial of the access needs of communal groups) and political military client relationships with strong states (where patrons provide protection for the client state in return for the latter's loyalty which may result in the client state pursuing both domestic and foreign

policies that are disjointed from or contradictory to the needs of its own public). In this respect see Azar, *The management of protracted social conflict. Theory and cases*, op cit, pp 11–12.

160 Brown, The causes and regional dimensions of internal conflict, op cit, p 590.

161 Kriesberg, op cit, p 244.

162 For an in-depth discussion of the regional dimension, see the excellent chapter by Brown, The causes and regional dimensions of internal conflict, *The international dimensions of internal conflict*, op cit, p 575.

163 Ibid, pp 572–573.