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The Root Causes of Conflict: Some Conclusions¹

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This paper analyses the ‘root’ causes of complex humanitarian emergencies (CHEs) on the basis of studies conducted in a UNU/WIDER project on social and economic causes of CHEs; and identifies policies that appear relevant to the prevention of conflict. The paper regards horizontal inequality (i.e. inequality among groups, in contrast to vertical inequality which measures inequality among individuals) as the fundamental source of organised conflict. Such horizontal inequality may have political, economic or social dimensions. The case studies indicate that CHEs occur where group identity coincides with horizontal inequality that is consistent, and often widening, over a number of dimensions. Preventative policies need to be addressed towards correcting horizontal inequality along the relevant dimensions. Where conflicts are already underway, it is also necessary to introduce policies to change the private incentives of those who carry it out towards alternative peaceful occupations. Preventative policies thus require inclusive government, politically, economically and socially. Such policies do not form part of the current political or economic conditionality exercised by the international community, and may sometimes contradict this conditionality.

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I. Introduction

Our aim in this project has been to identify the ‘root causes’ of complex humanitarian emergencies. To attempt to answer this difficult question, we have adopted a multidimensional approach encompassing theoretical considerations backed up by empirical evidence from political scientists, anthropologists, historians and economists, together with a number of case studies of particular conflicts. This paper attempts to draw some conclusions from the analysis presented, and to identify some policies that appear relevant to the prevention of conflict derived from these conclusions.

It is apparent from the case studies (presented in Volume 2), and also evidence published elsewhere, that no simple generalisations are plausible. Cases include state instigated violence combined with international economic sanctions (Iraq and Haiti); those where power-seeking interacting with ethnicity has played a key role (e.g. Burundi and Rwanda); those where power-seeking cliques (even gangs) with broadly homogeneous ethnicity have initiated and perpetuated conflict leading to a situation of near anarchy (Somalia, Sierra Leone); to those where deep class inequalities have constituted the underlying cause (Central America, Cambodia). Moreover, there are countries which, until the conflict broke out, were middle income countries (Iraq, El Salvador, Bosnia), and others among the poorest in the world (Somalia, Uganda). In some countries, the conflict was preceded by a period of economic growth (Rwanda, Iraq) while elsewhere conflict followed prolonged economic stagnation.

The econometric evidence appears to point to some more definitive conclusions. Using a data set from 1980 to 1995, Auvinen and Nafziger identify some conditions that are likely to increase country vulnerability to humanitarian emergencies - notably low incomes and low growth in incomes and food output, high inequality, inflation, military expenditure and a tradition of conflict. Yet while these do appear to be predisposing conditions, the small amount of the variance explained by all these factors put together - from 10 -15% - indicates that we have by no means captured the whole story. Moreover, the data covers just 1980-1995. The data cannot capture the causal processes leading to those emergencies which broke out in 1980 (nine out of the twenty four - Auvinen and Nafziger, table 2). Some reverse

causality is also present, as Auvinen and Nafziger indicate.² It is well established that large scale conflict leads to decline in incomes and growth, and especially food production per capita (see e.g. Stewart et al., 1997).

The combination of the case studies and econometric analysis thus help to identify some predisposing conditions, but do not allow simple generalisations. This itself is an important conclusion. After this study it should not be possible to state - as many do - that conflict is inevitable because of primordial ethnic divisions, nor that it is the outcome of underdevelopment and that policies to combat low incomes and poverty will also automatically reduce the risk of conflict. The lessons from this study are more complex: the causes are to be found in the interactions of power-seeking with group identity and inequalities. There are important policy implications, but not of the rather simple variety which typically form part of international discourse. To elucidate these conclusions, this paper is organised as follows:

Section II will briefly consider the definition of the topic, i.e. 'Complex humanitarian emergencies' and its interpretation in the rest of the chapter. Section III presents a simple framework for understanding and analysing motives for conflict among groups and groups, with a particular focus on economic motivation. A major conclusion from this analysis is that horizontal inequality forms a key element in understanding motives for group violence. Section IV elucidates the distinction between this type of inequality (defined as horizontal) and vertical inequality, which is the measure normally used to identify inequality in society. Section V draws on the evidence in the case studies following the analysis of Section III to assess the importance of the various elements in the major CHEs explored in the country studies. Section VI puts forward policy conclusions.

II: Definitions of the topic

The topic appears not to need much attention to definitions. We are discussing situations in

² Auvinen and Nafziger test for causality and find that 'the relationship is stronger from GDP growth to emergencies than vice-versa'.

which physical fighting between people, typically inhabitants of the same country, leads to a huge amount of human suffering, associated with large numbers of deaths both from the fighting and from indirect effects of the conflict on food supplies and health. Hence in looking for root causes we should investigate the fundamental causes of such fighting. There are two ways to proceed from this starting point. One is to adopt a simple definition of conflict and investigate the causes of any war which leads to significant numbers of deaths, with a rather arbitrary cut-off point, e.g. more than 1,000 in a year (Wallensteen's definition of a civil war³). But this could be argued to be unsatisfactory from two perspectives: first, there may be a major difference in causality according to the size of the conflict which could be missed if all are grouped together in this way. Secondly, there does not seem to be anything very 'complex' about this definition, though, of course, any situation leading to deaths of 1,000 or more would be likely to have both complex causes and complex effects.

Vayrynen and Voutira adopt different approaches to the question of definition of CHEs . Voutira follows Foucault's strategy towards language and discourse and searches for a definition of a CHE by analysing the language and norms of the international community and seeking the hidden political agendas. With this approach complexity is seen to arise not from the situation per se, but from the 'changing nature of international responses, including the proliferation and multiplicity of actors, interests and political agendas which contribute to the perception of crises as increasingly more 'complex' (Voutira, summary). As she shows different agencies have adopted different definitions: probably the nearest to a standard definition is that of the DHA which defines a complex humanitarian emergency as:

A humanitarian crisis in a country, region, or society where there is a total or considerable breakdown of authority resulting from internal or external conflict *which requires an international response that goes beyond the mandate or capacity of any single agency and/or ongoing UN country programme* (47th Session of the General Assembly, 1994).[My italics]

Others have included a check list of 'events' associated with CHEs. For example, an

³ See e.g. Wallensteen and Sollenberg, 1997.

international Task Force included the following elements: domestic or inter-state armed conflict; long-lasting duration; forced migration; political or military constraints on logistics; security risks for relief workers; requirements for high degrees of political will and negotiation; necessity for peace-making or peace-keeping; and difficult ethical dilemmas (Mohonk Criteria developed by a Task Force on Ethical and Legal Issues in Humanitarian Assistance).

If CHEs are defined, as they evidently are by the international community, at least partly in terms of the response of that community, then analysis of root causes has to investigate why some crises lead to a strong international response while others are ignored. This would take us into the geo-political significance of the country, the activities of the media etc. Such causal analysis would be a valid and important activity. But it is not the prime intention of this study, which fundamentally aims to understand the causes of conflict-related human suffering. Hence we need a definition which includes all such conflicts, and not only those defined as CHEs by the international community.

Vayrynen is concerned to identify a comprehensive definition of conflict-related suffering. He defines a CHE as ‘a profound social crisis in which a large number of people die and suffer from war, disease, hunger and displacement owing to man-made and natural disasters’ (p 16). Such a definition appropriately describes a *humanitarian* emergency, given the human suffering arising from all four aspects, while the *complexity* of the emergency emanates from the multidimensionality of the concept as well as ‘the politicised nature and persistence of the crisis’ (p13). Relatively ‘objective’ indicators of the four elements - i.e. numbers killed and/or wounded for war, numbers affected by diseases and/or high or rising mortality for the incidence of disease, food availability and/or malnutrition for hunger, and numbers of refugees or internally displaced persons for displacement - may then be used to signify the presence of a CHE. This leaves three key issues: whether a combination of all four factors must be present to constitute a CHE, and if so whether there is any particular weight each element must take; the ‘cut-off’ point for a situation to ‘count’ as a CHE; and how the elements are to be measured.

Vayrynen answers the first question by arguing that all four elements must be present for

‘strong’ emergencies, but ‘limited’ (or ‘partial’) emergencies include cases where either war deaths and refugees are present but not hunger and disease, or hunger and disease but not war deaths or refugees. The latter type of ‘partial’ emergency basically characterises underdevelopment and while it is obviously of central interest to those exploring how underdevelopment can lead to human suffering, it is not the subject of this study which has civil war as a central feature. Consequently, it is not explored further by him or others in the study, except as a possible precondition or cause of a strong CHE. Vayrynen’s ‘cut-off’ points are as follows: for wars, deaths of 2,000 or more for 1992-4; for displacement; that the total of refugees and displaced people exceeded 385,000 in 1995; for disease countries are included when the child mortality rate in 1995 was 145 or over; hunger is defined as occurring where the proportion of underweight children exceeded 30% in 1992. In each case, identification of the cut-off rate does not take into account whether the situation had been improving or worsening despite the requirement that for a CHE the level of suffering should depart ‘significantly from the prevailing standard’ (Vayrynen p19).

Unavoidably, these cut-off points are arbitrary. Moreover, none of the indicators is straightforward to assess in practice in conflict-ridden societies. Estimates of numbers killed or wounded vary hugely, as shown for example even in the case of the high-tech and well-monitored case of the Gulf war (see Alnasrawi) and internal displacement, in particular, can rarely be more than guessed at; data on child mortality and nutrition are also notoriously weak, especially in war zones, and are themselves strongly correlated. Child malnutrition is typically indicative of the presence of disease and lack of preventative health measures as much or more than food availability.

Nonetheless, Vayrynen’s approach undoubtedly identifies the cases which would come up in most people’s lists of the civil conflicts which cause major human suffering.⁴ However, large CHEs, as defined by Vayrynen, usually develop from relatively small conflicts characterised by war deaths alone and often without the presence of the other three elements in significant quantities. Hence for analysis of root causes and preventative measures, it is important to

⁴ As he shows comparing his list with a list of countries identified by the CIA as ‘simmering emergencies’.

include such cases as well. For this reason the analysis below will adopt a simple definition of conflict, with deaths from deliberate and organised physical violence as being the defining characteristic. Usually, the remaining trio of Vayrynen's characteristics will also be present, sometimes as cause, sometimes as effect and often both.⁵ But in searching for root causes, the analysis will focus on the causes of significant organised violence.

III. Motivation, mobilisation and conflict: a framework

The human motivation of the actors involved is clearly at the heart of any conflict situation. If a conflict is to be avoided or stopped, this motivation must be understood, and the conditions leading to a predisposition to conflict reduced or eliminated. This section aims to sketch elements that determine such motivation. While the focus is on economic motivation, other factors (political, cultural) are also obviously of importance. They are incorporated in the analysis that follows in a fundamental way since it is such factors (themselves influenced and sometimes determined by economic factors) which decide the way people view themselves, and are viewed (i.e. the groups they form), as well as playing a large role in the distribution of resources. In fact, it is rarely possible to disentangle political, cultural and economic elements, as each is embedded in the other.

The type of conflicts with which we are concerned are *organised group* conflicts: that is to say they are not exclusively a matter of individuals randomly committing violence against others. What is involved is *group mobilisation*, and we need to understand the underlying motivation for such mobilisation. Groups are here defined as collections of people who identify with each other, for certain purposes, as against those outside the group, normally also identifying some other group with whom they are in conflict. Group organisation may be quite informal, but it exists, implying that there is some agreement (perhaps implicit) on purposes and activities within the group. This means that normally there are those within any group instigating conflict who lead or orchestrate the conflict, including constructing or enhancing the perception of group identity in order to achieve group mobilisation; and those who actively carry out the

⁵ Auvinen and Nafziger find a strong correlation of 0.57 between battle deaths and displacement, but weaker correlations with their indicators of hunger and disease.

fighting, or give it some support - for shorthand, we shall call these two leaders and followers, though there can be considerable overlap between the two categories. The violence is not, at least purportedly, the objective, rather it is *instrumental*, used in order to achieve other ends. Usually, the declared objective is political - to secure or sustain power - while power is wanted for the advantages it offers, especially the possibilities of economic gains. However, as Keen points out, sometimes, especially as wars persist, political motivation may disappear or become less important, and the wars are then pursued for the economic advantage conferred directly on those involved, the possibilities of looting etc. But even then conflicts remain predominantly group activities. The group element, and the fact that the conflicts are instrumental usually with political objectives, differentiate them from crime, though in the extreme case where fighting parties have disintegrated into gangs whose efforts are devoted to maximising their short run economic gains (see Keen on Liberia, for example), the distinction between crime and conflict becomes blurred.

Accepting that groups are central, the question is why and how groups are mobilised. In order to mobilise a group there must be some way that they are differentiated one from another. The case studies show a number of different ways groups have been differentiated and mobilised in contemporary CHEs. In central Africa, ethnic identity is the major source of group definition and mobilisation; in Central America, group identification and organisation is along class lines; the case of the Iraq/Iran war, the Gulf War and subsequent sanctions, is largely of one nation against the world, though of course the Kurds present an ethnically defined opposition within Iraq; in Northern Ireland, religion forms the differentiating principle; in Somalia, it is clans (different lineages within broadly the same ethnic group). Another source of differentiation may be regional location, which can, but does not always, coincide with ethnic or language divisions - for example in Biafra, Eritrea and E.Pakistan (Bangladesh).

The question of how groups are formed and when they become salient is complex and contested, and cannot be treated adequately here. This issue, considered in relation to groups defined by ethnicity, forms the central theme of the chapter by Alexander et al. The view adopted in the present chapter is that group identity is 'constructed' by political leaders, who find group cohesion and mobilisation a powerful mechanism in their competition for power and

resources, adopting a strategy of ‘reworking of historical memories’ to engender group identity. Numerous examples presented in Alexander et al., as well as by Cohen, Turton and others have shown how ‘ethnicity was used by political and intellectual elites prior to, or in the course of , wars’ (Alexander et al. P 5). Yet, as Turton points out, ‘neither the constructedness nor the instrumentality of ethnicity [or other similar sources of identity which are used to make groups cohere such as religion or class] can be explained unless we are prepared to see it as an independent as well as a dependent variable in human affairs’ (Turton, 1997, p84; and see Smith, 1988). Some shared circumstances are needed for group construction - e.g. speaking the same language, sharing cultural traditions, living in the same place, or facing similar sources of hardship or exploitation. Past group formation, although possibly constructed for political purposes at the time, also contributes to present differences. Hence what was a dependent variable at one point in history can act as an independent variable in contributing to current perceptions.⁶

For the emergence of group conflict, a degree of similarity of circumstance among potential members of a group is not by itself enough to bring about group mobilisation. Several other conditions must be present. Leaders must see the creation or enhancement of group identity as helpful to the realisation of their political ambitions and work actively to achieve this, using a variety of strategies, including education, propaganda etc. In many cases, it has been shown that political leaders set out to create group consciousness in order to achieve a basis for power. Lonsdale points out that in Kenya “conflict between political elites for state (and hence economic) power led to the emergence of ‘political tribalism’” (quote from Alexander et al, p5). Government policies, particularly towards education, frequently play a role by discriminating in favour of some category and against others. The story of how differences between the Hutu and Tutsi were possibly created and certainly strongly enhanced by Colonial and post-colonial governments is powerfully illustrated by the Burundi and Rwanda studies. In the Rwanda case, the interhamwe - the extremist leaders of the Hutu massacre of the Tutsi - deliberately and efficiently cultivated Hutu consciousness and fear of Tutsi for several years before the disaster. Some group mobilisation occurs as a defensive reaction, in response to

⁶ Smith has argued that “the [past] acts as a constraint on invention. Though the past can be ‘read’ in different ways, it is not any past” (Smith, 1991, pp357-358, quoted in Turton, 1997).

discrimination against members of the group and attacks by others. Often people don't recognise themselves as members of a group until this is 'pointed out' by outsiders. Differences in actual underlying conditions with respect to political control and economic conditions, facilitate the development of group identity and mobilisation. Without any differences in these factors, group identification is likely to be weak and remain a cultural rather than political or conflict-creating phenomenon.

The hypothesis is that in any society there are some differences in individuals' circumstances - including cultural, geographic, economic - which provide the potential for the construction of group identity as a source of political mobilisation. Political leaders, in government or outside, may use this potential in their competition for power and resources, in the course of which they enhance group identification by reworking history, introducing new symbols etc. However, cultural differences alone are not sufficient to bring about violent group mobilisation. As Cohen points out "Men may and do certainly joke about or ridicule the strange and bizarre customs of men from other ethnic groups, because these customs are different from their own. But they do not fight over such differences alone. When men *do*, on the other hand, fight across ethnic lines it is nearly always the case that they fight over some fundamental issues concerning the distribution and exercise of power, whether economic, political, or both" (Cohen, 1974, p94).

Economic and political differentiation among groups is then of fundamental importance to group mobilisation. This is the reason that *relative* position rather than absolute is more often observed to be the underlying determinant of conflict (see Gurr; Nafziger Vol 2) . If a whole society is uniformly impoverished, there may be despair, but there is no motivation for group organisation. Even if political leaders hoped to use group mobilisation as a source of power, they would find it difficult to secure sufficient response among followers without some underlying economic differences among the people they hoped to mobilise. Hence in general if there is group conflict, *we should expect sharp economic differences between conflicting groups associated (or believed to be associated) with differences in political control.* Relevant economic differences vary according to the nature of the economy (e.g. land may be irrelevant in modern urban societies and employment relevant, but the converse could be true in rural-

based economies). Nonetheless, the absolute situation may also be relevant, since an absolute deterioration in conditions may force attention onto the relative situation (e.g. when water becomes a scarce resource people may fight over it, but not when its plentiful), while, conversely, when incomes/resources are increasing generally people may mind less about their relative position. The latter situation obtained in Kenya in the 1960s and 1970s and was argued to be one reason why despite persistent relative inequality among tribal groups large scale conflict did not result (see Klugman). But in some contexts, improvements in conditions, if regarded as being unfairly shared can give rise to conflict, as in Nigeria in the late 1960s.

Political power is an important instrument of economic power, setting the rules and determining allocation of employment, of government economic and social investments and incentives for private investment. In general one would expect that political power would be a more compelling means of securing (or conversely being deprived of) economic resources, the greater the role of government in the economy, and especially the more its discretionary power. It is plausible to argue that the role of the state relative to the market, and the discretionary decisions of government, may initially increase and are then likely to fall as development proceeds. I.e. in very underdeveloped societies, government expenditure and employment is low; this increases as does government' discretionary economic power as countries industrialise; but in the later stages of industrialisation, the market tends to take a larger role and government decisions are less discretionary and more rule-based. This would suggest that struggles to control state power might be greatest in the middle stages of development.

It should be noted that it is not necessarily the relatively deprived who instigate violence. The privileged may do so, fearing loss of position. For example, the prospect of possible loss of political power can act as a powerful motive for state-sponsored violence which occurs with the aim of suppressing opposition and maintaining power. Since the government has access to an organised force (police/army) and to finance, state terrorism is sometimes an important source of humanitarian emergencies. This was the case, for example, in most of the major episodes of violence in Uganda, in Haiti, in Iraq's suppression of the Kurds. Holsti points out that state violence is more often than not the initiating cause in recent conflicts.

In many societies organised violence persists at some level over very long periods. Given underlying conditions that are conducive to conflict, there may be low-level conflict for certain periods, and then periods of violence on a greater scale (civil war), sometimes culminating in major catastrophes - CHEs. The past history of violence then contributes to group identification, animosities and mobilisation increasing the likelihood of future conflict. This was shown statistically by Auvinen and Nafziger. Such a long history of violence of fluctuating strength appears to have occurred in many of the cases studied here - e.g. Somalia, Rwanda, Burundi. Hence a full understanding of causes must include an explanation both of the underlying vulnerability to conflict and the particular triggers that led to a sharp escalation. Preventative policies should address both the underlying causes and the 'trigger'. The trigger necessarily involves some change - including changes in relative deprivation or the activities of a particular political leader.

Dimensions of differentiation in the political, economic and social position of groups

Leaders often seize on, change and exaggerate, some cultural or religious differences - or symbolic systems⁷ - as a mechanism of group mobilisation. But it is suggested here that to make these symbolic systems 'work' effectively, it is necessary that there are parallel differences in political and/or economic dimensions. For simplification, we can categorise the latter into four areas: political participation; economic assets; incomes and employment; and social aspects. Each of these categories contains a number of elements. For example, political participation can occur at the level of the cabinet, the bureaucracy, the army and so on; economic assets comprise land, livestock, machinery etc.

The four categories and the main elements are presented in the table below, with a column for each category. Each of the four categories is important in itself, but most are also instrumental for achieving others. For example, political power is both an ends and a means; control over economic assets is primarily a means to secure income but it is also an end. Clearly as noted earlier, the relevance of a particular element varies according to whether it forms an important source of incomes or well-being in a particular society. The allocation of housing, for example,

⁷ 'Symbolic systems' are the values, myths, rituals and ceremonials which are used to organise and unite groups. (See Cohen, 1974).

is generally more relevant in industrialised countries, while land is of huge importance where agriculture accounts for most output and employment, but gets less important as development proceeds. Water, as a productive resource, can be very important in parts of the world where rainwater is inadequate, as Swain points out. Access to minerals can be a source of great wealth, and gaining such access an important source of conflict in countries with mineral resources, as powerfully shown in the papers by Fairhead (this volume) and Reno (Volume 2).

Table 1: Sources of differentiation among groups

Dimensions of differentiation	Political participation	Economic Assets	Employment and incomes	Social access and situation
Elements of categories	political parties	land	government	education
	government ministers, senior	human capital	private	health services
	government ministers, junior	communal resources, inc. water	'elite' employment	safe water
	army	minerals	'rents'	housing
	parliament	privately owned capital/credit	skilled	unemployment
	local government	govt. infrastructure	unskilled	poverty
	respect for human rights	security against theft	informal sector opportunities	personal and household security

A trigger event causing the initiation of conflict, or its escalation, may arise from a *change* in

relative access to any important resource in the table. This might occur because of some political event (as in Afghanistan with the Russian invasion), or because of endogenous or policy changes.

Endogenous (or semi-endogenous) developments include growing population/land pressures; environmental changes (e.g. desertification); or changes brought about by success or failure of the development model resulting in changing absolute and relative access to employment and incomes.

Policy changes may include:

- *Institutional*: property rights; water regulations; commons access.
- *Adjustment/stabilisation policies*: terms of trade (devaluation; price deregulation); employment and incomes; changes in state benefits..
- *Political*: changes in the distribution of state benefits for political reasons.

External developments can also trigger changes in the relative access of different groups. Such changes include market access; the international terms of trade; debt and interest payments; and capital flows (including aid). Our studies give examples - the Iraq emergency was caused by a combination of an aggressive state and a near complete cutoff from external markets, capital flows and aid. In contrast, the Rwanda study suggests that the failed development model, heavily aid-financed, contributed to the crisis.

Main elements to be considered in an analysis of the causes of conflict

In exploring the causes of conflict we need to differentiate the following:

- a. The *reality* or actual conditions of the situation of the various conflicting groups, *absolutely* and *relatively* to others in the dimensions shown in Table 1.
- b. The *private* benefits and costs of conflict to members of a group. Individual action is taken partly (the extreme neo-classical position would argue entirely) as a result of a calculus of individual or private costs and benefits of action. Of course, especially at times of high tension,

group gains or losses also become a consideration. In some situations, people have been observed to take action which is completely counter to their private interests - for example, rioters have burned down factories in Sri Lanka where they themselves work, thereby destroying their own employment.⁸ The role of leaders (see below) is to see that group considerations override private ones, for which they may use propaganda, incentives and force.

Individuals and groups may *gain* from conflict - e.g. by looting, use of forced labour, changes in the terms of trade in their favour, the creation of new economic opportunities, controlling emergency aid. Keen has analysed such gains in the Sudan and elsewhere (Keen, 1994 and this volume). However, many people lose from the physical violence, disrupted markets, reduced state benefits, theft and looting. The private calculus of costs and benefits also depends on the gains from avoiding conflict in terms of potential state benefits and economic rewards from development in a peaceful environment. Hence the general prospects for economic development and the extent to which the individual and the group to which (s)he belongs is likely to share in development gains is an important consideration. If these are low, the calculation is more likely to come out in favour of conflict. The costs and benefits may be differentiated by gender (and by group).

The cost/ benefit calculation may be different for leaders and followers and also between those actively involved and the rest of the population.

c. Leadership and organisation of groups. The conflicts considered in this study are organised. There are typically 'leaders' (those who organise/employ armies etc.) and 'followers' (who make up the armies; provide food, finance etc.) For conflict, both leaders and followers (whose interests can diverge) must be convinced of the advantage of fighting. But their calculus can be rather different. Leaders are generally seeking to form a government, control resources, secure high office and so on. But leaders can do little without followers. However, if the followers - ie those providing the manpower and other resources - are strongly supportive of conflict, against the views of their existing leaders, new leaders may emerge.

⁸ M. O'Sullivan, personal communication.

Any long run 'solution' must try and change the calculus of both leaders and followers with respect to individual and group calculations. Individuals (leaders and followers) can be offered 'bribes' to stop fighting - e.g. power and status for leaders, finance and jobs for followers. But unless the group differences that formed the underlying causes are also addressed, new leaders and followers are likely to emerge, if not immediately in the medium term.

d.. The *perceptions* of reality and of the private costs/benefits of conflict are decisive rather than the actual situation. The actual situation is filtered by education, the media, political argument and propaganda. All are more effective in influencing perceptions if there is consonance between the picture of reality people are presented with by the various channels and actual conditions.

e. *Constraints*: Even with strong motives for conflict on the basis of individual and group calculations, a strong state (or other authority) can prevent, eliminate or reduce conflict, while a weak authority may not be able to constrain violence. Some of the conflicts in the former Soviet Union can be seen as primarily due to the weakening of state authority and its ability to suppress conflicts so that old conflicts may again be openly expressed, rather than to new motives for conflict. In some of the African conflicts, too, the weakening of the state - for example in Somalia and Sierra Leone - has permitted conflicts to erupt and enlarge, which might have been suppressed with a stronger state. In Kenya, in contrast, a relatively strong state has kept violent conflict to a fairly small level (Klugman). But, as noted earlier, the state can also deliberately foster violence to undermine opposition groups, often provoking violent reactions by its actions. State violence was a key instigating cause in Uganda under both Obote and Amin (see Stewart et al., 1997). In the studies here, the state has instigated violence by attacking opposition groups in a number of cases, including Haiti, Rwanda and Burundi.

f. *Opportunities*: conflicts need resources, including arms, soldiers and food. Some can be seized from the local territory - more easily if the conflict is popular locally, which again depends on whether the group involved regards itself as being seriously disadvantaged. Fighting groups can survive without outside resources, but the availability of support from outside - credit, food, technical advice, and arms - clearly helps the resource situation and thus

'feeds' the conflict. The Cold War conflicts were largely financed from outside: since the Cold War, external support has continued to be important - from governments (outside and within the region), from NGOs and from the private sector. External resources played a role in Central America (still a Cold War event), in Afghanistan (from the US, Pakistan and Russia during the Cold War era, and subsequently from Pakistan and NGOs); in Sierra Leone and the Congo (mainly private sector). The genocide in Rwanda, however, was mostly self-financed, as has been the persistent conflict in Somalia - showing that external resources are not essential.

The same *reality* - (a) above - i.e. the relative and absolute position of groups in political and economic terms, may have different effects in terms of conflict-occurrence according to the other dimensions, (b) to (f), just discussed. A poor 'objective' situation in terms of group inequality may not translate itself into conflict if there is a strong state which suppresses it, or if ideological elements are such that the inequalities are not widely perceived. A new conflict may emerge either if objective conditions change or if some of the other elements change - e.g. the state weakens, new sources of external support for conflict develop, or leaders emerge who powerfully and effectively communicate the actual inequalities to the members of the group.

According to this view, the underlying reality about the absolute and, especially, the relative position of the group is of paramount importance. This is because the other factors are all permissive, but would not succeed in bringing about a conflict in the absence of these inequalities. Section V will draw on the case studies to provide support for this conclusion. The conclusion has important lessons for conflict prevention policies, which will be considered in the last section.

IV. Horizontal versus vertical inequality

The analysis of the causes of conflict presented above places overriding emphasis on inequality among groups, along a number of dimensions. Yet this is not invariably associated with conflict; for example, high inequality has been present in Kenya, Thailand, Pakistan and Brazil without leading to large scale conflict. This is partly because other factors mentioned above

may prevent the high inequality causing conflict, e.g. because absolute conditions improve, or a strong state is able to suppress potential conflict. But it is also because of the way inequality is assessed and measured - that is it is normally assessed in relation to the distribution of *income* only and measured as *vertical* rather than *horizontal* inequality.

In the analysis above, a matrix of 28 potentially relevant aspects of inequality were presented, made up of four broad categories, consisting of P (political), A (assets), Y (incomes/employment) and S (social) dimensions. Each category consists of a vector of different elements, i.e. $P = P_i, P_{ii}, P_{iii}, \dots$; $A = A_i, A_{ii}, \dots$ Etc. where $P_i, P_{ii}, \dots, A_i, A_{ii}$ are different kinds of political participation and economic assets. Table 1 picked out seven in each category, but is it possible to extend them and indeed to imagine additional categories that might be relevant in some societies.

Inequality in income distribution - economists' normal space for measuring inequality - is a summary measure of the incomes/employment dimension but fails to capture, or gives only a partial indicator of, the others. Moreover, income distribution is a vertical measure, i.e. it takes everyone in society from 'top' to 'bottom' and measures their incomes and the consequent inequality. What is needed for our analysis is a horizontal measure of inequality which measures inequality between groups, where groups are defined by region/ethnicity/class/religion, according to the most appropriate type of group identification in the particular society.

It is possible to have sharp vertical inequality in any dimension without any horizontal inequality - for example if the average income of all groups were the same and distribution within each group was highly unequal (with the same inequality within each group). Conversely, it is possible to have considerable inter-group inequality, while overall societal vertical inequality is small because intra-group inequality is small. However, there is necessarily some connection between vertical and horizontal inequality since any overall measure of societal inequality of income distribution (like the Gini or the Theil coefficients) (i.e. vertical measures) can be decomposed into the weighted sum of two elements - inter-group inequality

and intra-group inequality.⁹

Like vertical inequality, there can be a number of alternative measures of horizontal inequality. It is possible to use the same measures as for vertical inequality, where the population consists of groups rather than individuals. These are more complex measures (especially as there are usually only a few groups) than seems necessary. A simpler summary measure is the coefficient of variation. The ratio of the worst performing group to the average and to the best performance are other useful measures. From the perspective of causing resentment and ultimately conflict, consistent relative deprivation over a number of dimensions may as relevant as the actual coefficient of variation with respect to any one dimension. This may be measured by looking at rankings in performance on different dimensions (elements) and averaging them. Persistence in the same horizontal inequalities over time is another relevant factor. If gaps between groups narrow or reverse this reduces their potential to cause conflict.

Conversely, widening gaps are more likely to provoke conflict.

Whether high levels of horizontal inequality are likely to cause serious conflict also depends on the importance of the various groups. Where groups are very small, even if discriminated against consistently, their potential to cause conflict on a substantial scale, i.e. enough to constitute a CHE, is limited.

In practice, data may not be available to measure horizontal inequality, since most concern to date has been with vertical inequality (and even measures of this are often lacking). Moreover, in politically tense societies, governments are not likely to want to publicise horizontal inequalities. Nonetheless, it is important to collect such data, since it is essential for identification of potential problems and possible solutions. Measurement may be relatively easy for some elements (e.g. some aspects of political participation); while for others rough estimates may be made, or proxies used, such as taking regional data to represent differences among ethnicities, or distribution of land as a proxy for distribution of agricultural incomes. .

Identifying the appropriate groups for measuring horizontal inequality presents some rather

⁹ For a decomposition of the Gini of this kind see Fei, Ranis and Kuo; and for a decomposition of the Theil see Anand.

fundamental difficulties. In conflicts, group differentiation is not based on some obvious objective differences between people (e.g. all people over 6' tall versus all those below 6' in height), but is constructed or created in order to mobilise people for political purposes, as discussed earlier. Group construction is dynamic and fluid, changing with circumstances. In some situations, group identification may nonetheless be obvious (e.g. where a conflict has been ongoing for many years and the lines of differentiation are clearly drawn), but in others groups may split or new groups may emerge in response to the developing situation. Then identification of groups for the purpose of measuring horizontal inequality may not only be difficult but may actually change the on-the-ground situation, either by reinforcing distinctions, or by creating some perceived political advantages in new alliances and groupings. Moreover, the announcement of the existence of a large degree of horizontal inequality may act as an incentive to group mobilisation and violence. It is clearly of the greatest importance that the act of measurement, and the subsequent policies, should avoid worsening a conflict situation. But to avoid any assessment of horizontal inequality altogether for these reasons would be to lose an important tool for analysis of causes and prevention of conflict. My conclusion is that measurement of horizontal inequality and the uses to which it is put, should be conducted with great sensitivity.

V. Some evidence from the case studies

The development of the general approach to analysing causes of conflict laid out in Section III was greatly influenced by the case studies, from which some examples were drawn. This section uses the case studies, presented in schematic form in Table A (appended to the chapter), to provide some more systematic evidence on the role of the factors picked out in Section III as being likely to lead to conflict.

Some of the major findings are:

1. *Group categorisation*: The categorisation of relevant groups differed across cases.
 - Cambodia and the two American cases, El Salvador and Haiti, came closest to classic

class conflicts. In Cambodia, the Khmer Rouge represented the impoverished peasants and attacked the urban elite. In the case of El Salvador it was mainly a case of landed interests versus peasants; this was also true of Nicaragua and Guatemala (not covered here). In Haiti, the division was between the elite (largely dependent on the President and state) and the masses (mainly peasants).

- Ethnicity was important as a differentiating element in Burundi, Rwanda, as the conflict proceeded in Zimbabwe, and potentially in Kenya. Elements were present in Afghanistan and also Cambodia, but not as the most important factor.
- Clans were the source of group differentiation in Somalia and Afghanistan.
- Warlords created groups (by force and financial incentives) in Sierra Leone and Liberia. In Liberia, the distinction between the American-Liberian elite and local origin Africans also played a small role.

This sample suggests that the popular image of modern civil wars as being ethnically motivated is only true in a minority of cases.

2. Dimensions of inequality between groups: This too differed among the cases.

Differential political access and control was virtually universal, but to a much lesser extent in the two cases which have not developed into CHEs - Kenya and the Congo. In both these cases, political patronage had been widely though unevenly shared, albeit some important groups were left out. In all the other cases, political power and the benefits it confers were monopolised by one group. In some countries this was the majority (the Hutu in Rwanda; the Shona in Zimbabwe; the peasant class in Cambodia); on others, minorities, such as the Tutsi in Burundi, the dictatorships in Central America, the various strongmen in Liberia and Sierra Leone.

An invariable consequence of unequal access to political power was unequal benefits from

state resources. In some countries, the President and a small coterie took a massive share for their own private accumulation - e.g. the Duvaliers in Haiti; Mobutu in the Congo. In others, a broader elite benefited - the elite Hutu in Rwanda, the Tutsi in Burundi, in Kenya the Kikuyu disproportionately under Kenyatta and the Kalenjin and allied tribes under Moi. Half of government investment in Burundi went to Bujumbura and its vicinity, from where the elite Tutsi came.

Unequal access to land was important in El Salvador and for some clans in Somalia but does not seem to have been so relevant elsewhere. However, land pressure leading to rising land-related conflicts is believed to have been an important factor in Rwanda, while competition for use of land between cattleherding and pastoralists has occurred elsewhere (e.g. Kenya).

Education was an important element differentiating groups in Rwanda, Burundi, Cambodia, Kenya, El Salvador and Haiti. In Burundi and Rwanda privileged access to education goes back to Colonial times. In Burundi it has continued with deliberate attempts to limit access to Hutu. Differential access to education both reflects differences in incomes and causes it, so it is key to the perpetuation in inequalities, as recognised in Burundi, where educated Hutu were targeted for killing in the 1970s.

Where minerals resources were in evidence, access to the revenues tended to be dominated by whoever was in control, denying others access - e.g Sierra Leone, the Congo. This greatly increased the economic advantages to be secured by political control.

The matrix in table 1 provided a categorisation of potential elements that might differentiate groups. Although there is not enough detailed evidence in many of the studies to permit a full analysis of all the elements in the matrix, some broad conclusions emerge. There was differentiation in almost all cases along the vector of *political participation*. In the vector of *economic assets*, land was the most important source of differentiation in Central America but less so elsewhere, minerals in some African countries, and the reduction of communal resources appears to have been a factor in Somalia. But this sample gives strong supports to Fairhead's view that it is environmental *riches* rather than impoverishment which causes

conflict, although many people, often the majority, may be impoverished in a context of environmental riches at a country level; the gross inequalities then become a source of conflict. However, the worsening economic situation of the rural masses in Rwanda and Cambodia - which had some environmental causes in both cases - undoubtedly contributed to the support they gave to the genocidal activities. Biassed regional distribution of government infrastructure was observed in Kenya (and also in Uganda) and featured in the Congo and Zimbabwe. Water did not turn out to be an important element in these cases. Swain's review shows that this is a near-universal finding. Water access has often been a cause of serious disputes, even violent disputes on a relatively minor scale, but ultimately the disputes have normally been solved by negotiation and not full scale war. However, Swain anticipates that water disputes may increasingly cause violent conflicts as shortages become more acute.

In the dimension of *employment and incomes*, government employment, elite jobs and the ability to earn rents were heavily biased in favour of the group in power. The desire to preserve these privileges was a clear motive for the frequent occurrence of state-sponsored violence directed at suppressing opposition. Where the state was not strong enough to suppress opposition but attempted to do so, violence from opposition groups was aimed at securing state control so as to generate these privileges for themselves. However, although it is evident that groups in power were able to enrich themselves, relatively and absolutely, considerable within group inequality remained so that not all members of the ruling group gained. This was notable among the Hutu in Rwanda where there was substantial impoverishment, and one reason why the Hutu elite resorted to provoking ethnic animosities was probably to prevent political expression of this economic impoverishment - which in turn partly explained the massive response. Sharp within group inequalities also occurred in Kenya, especially among the Kikuyu, making the elite among them less prone to violent opposition since they had much to lose economically. The Kikuyu elite were able to maintain much of their economic privileges because they depended in part not on state but on private activities so that control over the state was less essential to sustain high incomes. In countries where the private sector is very small - which is true of many of the countries studied - control over the state may present almost the only source of enrichment. In the absence of an effective state, private control over natural resources (Liberia and Sierra Leone) or of the drug trade

(Afghanistan) essentially duplicates state control and battling for control can become a source of violent conflict.

Systematic evidence on the social access vector was rather thin in many of these studies. Biases in the provision of education and government infrastructure (noted above) are indicative of unequal provision. Evidence for Kenya and Uganda shows severe inequalities in social access and social indicators. Strong inequities are also shown dating from the colonial era in Rwanda, Burundi and Cambodia. These were carried forward in the post-colonial era in Burundi and until the Khmer revolution in Cambodia, while efforts were made to reverse them with Hutu control in Rwanda and under the Khmer Rouge - in the latter case by minimal education for all. In Haiti and El Salvador the peasants suffered from relatively (and absolutely) poor access to health and education, with high unemployment rates in Haiti. High rates of poverty outside the elite governing group were to be seen in almost all cases.

3. *Perceptions*: as noted in Section III, it is not enough that groups are ‘objectively’ unequal. Group identity, sufficient to bring about violence, requires strong perceptions of group identity and of injustice in the group’s position. These perceptions are created historically and may be enhanced by deliberate actions by potential leaders who want to use group mobilisation to attain or retain power. Thus in Somalia “Militia leaders manipulated and used clan identities and lineage alliances as an important resource which could be mobilised” (Auvinen and Kivimäki, p3). In most cases, except in the most ‘privatised’ and commercial conflicts, leaders took similar actions.

In both Burundi and Rwanda, the colonial powers had strongly differentiated between Tutsi and Hutu, despite the fact that the people share language, religion, dress, diet, housing and territory, treating Tutsi as superior. (The Tutsi were regarded as ‘natural aristocrats and the Hutu as servile peasant folk’ Gaffney, p10) Thus historical perceptions of differences were entrenched. They were enhanced by new histories and propaganda. For Burundi, the Hutu in exile developed a history of their country in which the Hutu claimed ‘rightful moral and historical precedence over the Tutsi’ (Malkki, 1995, p59, quoted in Gaffney p4). In Rwanda, “profoundly engrained, widely shared images treat Hutu and Tutsi as radically and unchangeably

different, in their history as well as in their characterial (sic), intellectual, social and moral attributes....transmitted by a multitude of proverbs, stories and myths”, Uvin p18). Colonial ethnic distinctions were also introduced in the Congo ‘inventing’ the Ngala and issuing ethnic identity cards; but ethnic divisions were not enhanced under Mobutu who was able to retain power through extensive use of patronage.¹⁰ In Zimbabwe, the conflict was started as a political one, but gained an ethnic dimension as the killings occurred. In Somalia, a similar type of discourse was used to promote clan solidarity, emphasising the superiority of particular clans. “We are Darod - we are wealthy, religious and educated.. Whereas the mental capacity of the Hawiye is limited..” (Quoted in Auvinen and Kivimäki).

In contrast, ideology was used to promote group consciousness in El Salvador, Haiti and Cambodia. In both El Salvador and Haiti populist ideology was used by opposition leaders to raise group consciousness and cement support. In Cambodia, revolutionary rhetoric concerning the need for total revolution to end injustice and oppression was combined with strict party discipline.

In other conflicts, alliances were short-lived and changing (Sierra Leone and Liberia) and deep seated perceptions of group solidarity or superiority were absent. Groups were cemented together by short-term interests - money, force and fear. Afghanistan is an intermediate case in which religion and ideology (communism versus Islam), ethnicity and clan solidarity played some role, but financial self-interest and force were also present especially as the conflict proceeded.

4. Private costs and benefits

For leaders the potential benefits from gaining power were huge, in states where there were few checks and balances and rulers and their immediate allies could accumulate massive fortunes. In Cambodia, the situation was summarised by Prud’homme “Power provided access

¹⁰ ‘Ethnic conflict and regional polarisation did not emerge or become salient in the 1970s and 1980s because of the stability and durability of the patronage system Mobutu institutionalised in Congo’ (Emizet, p 22).

to wealth rather than wealth provided access to power” (quoted in Bakker and Le Billon, p 18). These gains were more attractive where there were few alternative opportunities - when without power exclusion from state benefits was near total and the private sector was small and undynamic.

The lesson that conflict was intended as means of private accumulation by leaders, with ethnicity - or other cementing ideology - an instrument to gain support, is repeated in many of the studies. Reno summarises this conclusion in his paper on Sierra Leone and Liberia - the most venal of the conflicts: “War is an intensification of competition for the resources of the patronage system”(Reno p6). But the extent to which this applied varied across the cases. In the class-based populist movements - El Salvador, Haiti, Cambodia - private accumulation was undoubtedly a major motive of the pre-revolutionary governments seeking to retain power, but not among the populist leaders. In many other cases, the retention (or attaining) of political power was the prime objective, the possibilities of personal enrichment this power permitted providing strong motivation. In this type of dispute, ethnicity was used as an instrument (most notably Rwanda and Burundi). In conflicts where the state had disintegrated, there was a more direct connection between force and enrichment as control of particular areas permitted warlords access to the resources of the region without acquiring political power.

Absence of attractive alternative sources of income increased the strength of the accumulation motive. To the extent that there are other sources of wealth which would be threatened by war, as in the private sector in Kenya, violence appears less appealing from a private cost benefit perspective. In Cambodia, the lack of opportunities for the newly educated provided potential leadership for the revolutionary movement.

The followers also benefited from some trickle down if their group achieved power. More immediately, their role as soldiers offered an alternative to unemployment or very low income earning opportunities, less for the pay (often non-existent) and more for the possibilities of theft, looting etc. At a quite petty level, the economic gains that conflict can offer to young men with few alternatives may be enough to make them wish to perpetuate the conflict as a profitable way of life (see Keen in this volume). In such a situation, a political ‘solution’ may

not end the violence. Force and fear are another motive for followers to carry out a war - undoubtedly present in some cases, e.g. Cambodia.

5. Constraints, resources and external action

A strong state can suppress potential violent opposition. However, in several of the cases, the state was undermined by a combination of corruption and private profiteering, a deteriorating economic situation, economic policy reforms which diminished the size of the state and the success of opposing groups. Radical weakening of the state occurred notably in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Somalia. In such contexts, quite small factions were unconstrained in their military activities, whereas a strong state could prevent such violence erupting on any scale. On the other hand, in many cases it was the state itself which was responsible for much of the violence, a common situation as noted by Holsti. In such cases - like Cambodia, Zimbabwe, and Haiti - the presence of a relatively strong state does not prevent violence but even causes it.

Resourcing these conflicts was not a problem: frequently, governments were receiving generous aid and military assistance which sustained them and directly or indirectly financed the conflict. The US financed the El Salvador conflict and supported Duvalier in Haiti for many years. Substantial international aid supported Rwanda shortly before the genocide, Liberia during the Cold War, and Somalia in the 1980s, as well as the two more peaceful cases, Kenya and the Congo (both subject to intermittent and threatened violence - see Emizet and Klugman). Foreign resources of various kinds flowed into Afghanistan (from the USSR, from the West, from Islamic states, from NGOs and from drug money) much of which went to finance the war. Similarly, Cambodia has received substantial external support from the West (which supported the Sihanouk regime and then Khmer Rouge in the 1980s), China and Vietnam.

International support for peace has been less in total, and also less effective, than the war-financing. UN intervention was on balance probably effective in peace-making in Cambodia and in El Salvador, but notably unsuccessful in Somalia. The international community stood by,

without intervention, in the worst cases - Cambodia and Rwanda. Moreover, the massive aid flows to many of the countries in the pre-conflict years did nothing to prevent a conflict situation and may have contributed to it.

The contribution of aid to international conflict arose in two ways: first, aid resources were a major source of enrichment for rulers, and consequently high aid flows became a motive to retain or secure political power; secondly, the aid projects themselves did not contribute to reducing horizontal inequality but often had the opposite effect, with the benefits being strongly biased in favour of particular groups (as in Rwanda). If the large aid flows had succeeded in promoting broadly based development - as perhaps occurred in Kenya in the 1970s - they would have had a peace-promoting effect to counterbalance these conflict-prone effects. But the aid failed to do so for this group of countries - which by its nature is a biased sample with a disproportionate representation of weak and corrupt governments leading to aid diversion, poor projects and generally weak economic performance.

IMF and World Bank conditionality is another source of international influence which is sometimes thought likely to promote conflict because of its harsh effects on vulnerable groups. For this set of cases, such conditionality was largely irrelevant as programmes were rarely properly carried out since political events intervened. From an a priori perspective one would expect IFI conditionality to have both positive and negative effects on conditions making countries vulnerable to conflict. On the positive side, removing discretionary power from governments should reduce the strong private incentive to acquire power, since it should reduce the opportunities for private enrichment. In addition, if the programmes succeed in promoting a strong private sector, they would improve the economic opportunities outside the government. On the negative side, reducing the size of the state reduces the gains from peace and adherence to law and order. As access to social services, food subsidies etc. is reduced, the social compact has less to offer. In addition, the short term changes resulting from economic policy reform can hurt particular groups in ways that may act as triggers to violence if the underlying situation predisposes to it. Auvinen and Nafziger, however, find that IMF programmes are *negatively* associated with CHEs (i.e. more likely in the absence of IMF programmes), though this could be, as the authors note, because few countries that are in a

violent situation are able to reach agreements with the IMF. In his careful review of these issues, Morrison finds that while IMF programmes often lead to civil protests even involving some deaths, they cannot be blamed for the massive conflict of CHEs.

VI Policy Conclusions

The analysis of the sources of conflict contained above has some strong implications for policy formulation aimed at preventing, or ending, conflict. Policy needs to address the underlying causes systematically - other permissive elements (resources for conflict, for example) are relevant too, but action on these aspects would not have lasting effects unless the root causes are tackled. As a first priority, policy formulation needs to consider both the issues of horizontal inequality among groups and that of the private incentives to leaders and followers. The two sets of issues, the conditions of groups and the private incentives, overlap but are not the same.

Policy change is particularly difficult to achieve in the context of a country prone to violence, perhaps currently experiencing it, and having a recent and longer history of violence. In this context there are inherited memories and grievances, and entrenched group identity and inter-group animosities. The government is rarely broad based and normally represents only a subset of the groups potentially involved in conflict. It would often be naive to think that the government even wants to promote peace, given the prevalence of state-instigated violence. Hence the policies to be suggested below may fall on hostile ears as far as the government is concerned. The same may be true of the international community which has its own reasons for pursuing the actions it has taken, which, too, have often been conflict-provoking. Hence the context for introducing policy change must be recognised as structurally unfavourable. Nonetheless, it is worth elucidating policies liable to reduce vulnerability to conflict since some governments may wish to pursue them as would some international donors, at least judged by their rhetoric; and for others, these policies can act as a standard against which actual policies may be judged.

Group (or horizontal) inequality

The general direction of policy change must be to reduce group inequalities. To achieve this it is essential to have *inclusive government, politically, economically and socially*. Inclusive government politically means that all major groups in a society participate in political power, the administration, the army and the police. Inclusive government economically implies that horizontal inequality in economic aspects (assets, employment and incomes) is moderate; and inclusive government socially that horizontal inequality in social participation and achieved well-being is also moderate. 'Moderate' is a loose term. Group equality would be the ideal. Differences of more than two in average achievements between groups would normally constitute severe inequality. The importance of any measure of inequality is increased if it occurs systematically over a number of dimensions and grows over time. Hence such consistency (or otherwise) and developments over time should be considerations in determining what is an acceptable degree of horizontal inequality. Horizontal equity describes an acceptable degree of horizontal inequality.

The general objective of inclusivity and moderate horizontal inequality will translate differently into specific policy recommendations in particular cases depending on the relevant groups in the society, the dimensions of importance in the particular society and those in which there is substantial horizontal inequality.

The most universal requirement is for political inclusivity because it is monopolisation of political power by one group or other that is normally responsible for many of the other inequalities. Yet achieving political inclusivity is among the most changes to bring about. It is not just a matter of democracy defined as rule with the support of the majority as majority rule can be consistent with abuse of minorities, as was seen in the cases of Rwanda, Cambodia, and Zimbabwe. In a politically inclusive democratic system, particular types of proportional representation are needed to ensure participation by all major groups in the elected bodies. For inclusive government, representation of all such groups is also essential at the level of the cabinet and other organs of government. For political inclusivity members of major groups also need to be included at all levels of the civil service, the army and the police.

Since every case of conflict we have observed lacks such political inclusivity, this requirement can be regarded as a universal prescription for conflict-prone societies. Such politically inclusive policies have been adopted by well-known peace-making regimes, e.g. the post-Pinochet Chilean government, Museveni in Uganda, South Africa under Mandela.

These political requirements for conflict-prone countries do not currently form part of the dialogue of political conditionality adopted by some bilateral donors - as noted above, at times the requirement of political inclusivity may even be inconsistent with the normal political conditionality. At other times, it may be a matter of adding requirements to the set of political conditions. The usual political conditionality includes rule with the consent of the majority, multiparty democracy and respect for human rights. Political conditions for avoiding conflict would certainly include the requirement of respect for human rights. But the requirement for majority rule is not a sufficient condition for conflict-avoidance, as noted above, while multiparty democracy may not be consistent with conflict prevention since political parties are often formed on ethnic (or other group) lines and can encourage group animosity (see Stewart and O'Sullivan, forthcoming).

Some of the economic and social recommendations appropriate are likely to differ among countries. Those concerning government expenditure and jobs, however, are universal:

1. To ensure balance in group benefits from government expenditure and aid (including the distribution of investment, and jobs).
2. To ensure balance in group access to education at all levels; health services; water and sanitation; housing and consumer subsidies (if relevant). Equality of access in education is particularly important since this contributes to equity in income earning potential.

The private sector can be an important source of group differentiation. It is a less explosive source politically than an inequitable state sector as it is less directly under political control. Nonetheless, in societies where the private sector forms a major source of group inequality in jobs, incomes and assets, this could be conducive to conflict and in such a situation it would be necessary to follow policies to reduce the horizontal inequality present in the private sector. The situation in South Africa represents an example where a huge amount of horizontal

inequality stems from private sector activity. The particular policies to be followed to deal with private sector sources of horizontal inequality differ across countries, but may include:

3. Land reform so as to ensure fair access to land by different groups. This policy would only be relevant where differential access to land is an important aspect of horizontal inequality. In our cases, El Salvador was a clear example.
4. Policies to ensure balanced participation in education and the acquisition of skills at all levels. This has been an important and effective policy measure in Malaysia.
5. Policies to promote balanced access to industrial assets and employment. This is more difficult to achieve than reform of public sector policies and need only be attempted where the private sector is a major source of group inequality - which was not the case in most of the countries studied here. Private sector firms may be required to have an equal opportunities policy; they should be monitored and where horizontal inequality is high may be required to provide a certain proportion of jobs at every level to members of the main groups. Similarly, banks may be required to spread their lending across groups. Asset redistribution across groups can be achieved by government purchase of assets and redistribution to disadvantaged groups.

These sort of policies were introduced by the Malaysian government in its New Economic Policy (NEP) which effectively narrowed the gap in incomes, employment and assets among the major groups.

While the detailed policy requirements would differ according to the situation in a particular country, the important recommendation is the general requirement to follow inclusive policies, offsetting major elements of horizontal inequality.

Since, as noted, many governments are pursuing precisely the opposite policies, it is critically important that such policies are built into the requirements of the international community in its dealings with conflict-prone countries. In fact at present they are not - certainly not explicitly. Aid allocation within a country depends on efficiency considerations and sometimes vertical equity but not horizontal equity. Pursuing horizontal equity may sometimes conflict with efficiency or even with vertical equity. These are trade-offs that may have to be accepted. In the long-term both growth and poverty would benefit more from the avoidance of conflict than

is lost from any short-term output reduction that the new policy might involve. Mostly, there would not be a significant trade-off with poverty reduction as balanced policies are also likely to be poverty-reducing, while extending education to the deprived would be likely to contribute to economic growth. Malaysia, for example, has been remarkably successful in achieving economic growth and poverty reduction as well horizontal equity through the NEP.

IMF and World Bank policy conditionality is 'blind' to these issues, i.e. they take no account of horizontal equity in their policy prescriptions (and also pay little attention to vertical inequality), nor do they allow for the possible undermining of the state resulting from excessive cutbacks following their recommendations. As lead institutions, it is essential that they incorporate these considerations into their conditionality, not only with respect to project allocation but also in the policy conditionality applied to government economic interventions and expenditures. This would require a quite marked change in their programmes for conflict-prone countries.

Private incentives

The policies just sketched were all addressed to the need for inclusivity and group equity. When applied to a situation not yet affected by conflict, these policies, if effective, might be sufficient to eliminate the underlying causes of conflict, although an additional requirement is that there is a sufficiently strong state to avoid violence erupting for private benefit in a near-anarchical situation. If these conditions are met, then it may not be necessary to introduce policies to tackle the private incentives to violence of leaders or followers. But when conflict is ongoing, policies to tackle the root causes may need to be accompanied by policies to encourage particular individuals involved to stop fighting and enter more peaceful occupations, i.e. to change the private incentives.

The private incentives of leaders of major groups may best be turned round by offering them positions in government. Lower level leaders may be offered jobs in the state army or civil service, or money. This proposal may often fall on death ears, for political reasons - as with other policy proposal suggested here, only governments seriously intending to end violence and enhance national unity will follow the recommendation. Yet post-conflict governments have

done so - for example, Museveni's government (and army) incorporated many of those who had been fighting against him; the first post-apartheid government in S.Africa likewise. Those who had previously been active soldiers (the 'followers') need income-earning employment - finance or jobs in works schemes can be offered in exchange for arms, or, where appropriate land or agricultural credit. In some contexts the offer of a lump sum on demobilisation appears to have been quite effective (e.g. after the Ugandan and Mozambique wars - see Collier; Dolan and Schafer). Such policies can be expensive and need international support. Moreover, they are difficult to apply in less organised conflicts where large numbers move in and out of a conflict, and there is no clear demarcation between those who fought in the conflict and those who did not. Improving the income earning opportunities for the young generally, especially for males, is needed in such contexts. To some extent this would happen by itself if peace were restored, as farms can again be worked on, and other private sector activities may resume (though some other war-related activities would cease). But in most cases there is likely to be an interval when special employment schemes or financial handouts may be needed.

As with the earlier policies, what is appropriate inevitably differs among countries. The general requirement is that these issues are explicitly considered when conflict is ending.

General development policies

Both general analysis and some of the econometric evidence suggests a connection between predisposition to conflict and levels and growth of per capita incomes, although the correlation is not strong (see Auvinen and Nafziger; Fitzgerald; Stewart et al). Economic growth would be likely to reduce the propensity to conflict, if it is equitably distributed. Equitable and poverty reducing growth would normally be likely to reduce horizontal inequality, and might make persisting inequalities more tolerable. Hence policies that succeed in promoting such growth should form part of any pro-peace policy package. But it should be stressed that the growth must be widely shared. Inequitably distributed growth can re-enforce horizontal inequality and thus be conflict-promoting, as for example occurred in Rwanda..

A great deal of policy analysis has been devoted to delineating the conditions for widely shared growth. Policies include measures to promote human development especially through the

spread of education; measures to increase savings and investment; price and technology policies to encourage labour-intensive technologies; new credit institutions to extend credit to the low-income; measures to encourage the informal sector; land reform and support for small farmers; international policies to improve market access and terms of trade and reduce debt burdens. Many of these policies can be designed specifically to reduce horizontal inequality as well as to promote growth and reduce poverty. There is no question that a successful development strategy of this kind would reduce conflict-proneness. However, it is difficult to envisage the success of such policies in countries with the major structural divisions which bring about a CHE. Hence, while successful development would undoubtedly contribute to our objective, it seems likely that the more specific policies discussed above concerning group differentials and individual incentives will be needed not only for themselves but also as preconditions for general development success.

This section of the chapter has referred to conflict-prone countries as being the targets of the preventative policies discussed above. This implies the need for some definition of 'conflict-proneness'. Conflict proneness may be identified by the following characteristics: (a) serious past conflict at some time over the previous twenty years; (b) evidence of a considerable degree of horizontal inequality; (c) low-incomes; and (d) economic stagnation. Condition (a) by itself is a serious sign, especially when one of the other three conditions is present. The analysis above suggests that the presence of (b) together with either (c) or (d) should be taken as indicating conflict-proneness even if there is no history of conflict. This is also the conclusion of Stavenhagen.¹¹ The delineation of conflict-proneness is important because it would be more effective to focus conflict-prevention policies on the subset of most vulnerable countries, and also to channel aid and/or debt relief to these countries if necessary. Special care should also be taken in conflict-prone countries to avoid providing resources (in the form of aid or military assistance) which is likely to help finance conflict. This might seem an obvious point, yet the case studies show that international resources have poured into countries on the brink or in the process of conflict.

¹¹ Writing of ethnic conflict, he concluded: 'When regional and social disparities in the distribution of economic resources also reflect differences between identified ethnic groups, then conflicts over social and economic issues readily turns into ethnic conflict'. Stavenhagen, 1996, p 294. But I believe this holds more widely to any form of differentiation among groups - religious, class, clan - not merely ethnic.

Conclusion

The subject of this study is a large and evolving one, covering a huge range of countries and situations. Obviously, one research programme cannot achieve definitive conclusions. The findings of this chapter must in one sense be regarded as tentative. Yet because of the ongoing nature of these crises, it is important that action is taken on the basis of current knowledge, without waiting for further confirmation. It is in this spirit that the policy conclusions have been presented above as a set of definitive recommendations.

One conclusion stands out: in every CHE there is an interaction between factors, with group perceptions and identity (normally historically formed), being enhanced by sharp group differentiation in political participation, economic assets and income and social access and well-being. Action on any one front alone is not likely to work - e.g. addressing economic inequalities without political, or conversely; or attempting to 'educate' people to change their views of their identity and their imaginary communities without changing the underlying inequalities among groups.

Appendix

Table A: The case studies summarised

Case	Relevant groups	Source of horizontal inequality	Perceptions	Economic development prior to conflict	State role	Resources	Comment
El Salvador	land lords peasants [landlords minority]	Political; land distribution highly unequal; communal property abolished 1882	FMLN (leading violent opposition), communist inspired. US characterised conflict as 'textbook case of armed aggression by communist powers'.	healthy growth prior to conflict, slowed down as tensions mounted.	violent repression	US supported state with finance; equipment	As importance of business class increased and that of landed elite reduced there was pressure for peace.
Haiti	Elite surrounding President versus others (mainly peasants; also black middle class)	Control over state resources among 19 th C. Cliques; education; language; land; econ. opportunities.	Latin American liberation theology.. Populist movement, anti- dictatorial and corrupt regime.	Downward trend, worsened by international sanctions, 1991-4.	Duvalier strong state repressed all opposition. Aristide attacked corruption and privilege, provoking military coup.	International community supported Duvalier dictatorship; sanctions v. 1991 military, and eventually UN invasion to restore democracy.	Similar to Central America; privileged and corrupt elite versus masses.

<p>Burundi</p>	<p>Hutu;Tutsi;, (and Twa - small and irrelevant) [Tutsi minority]</p>	<p>Political; distinction between farming (Hutu) and cattle rearing (Tutsi); severe imbalances favouring Tutsi in land; education; govt. jobs; army; govt. investment; privatisation</p>	<p>Hutu in exile developed new history claiming Hutu 'rightful moral and historical precedence'</p>	<p>moderate growth 1960s -1980s; stagnation 1990s in context of worsening international environment</p>	<p>Tutsi dominate govt. State sponsored selective killing of Hutu, 1972; and 1990s</p>	<p>Human rights violations by state ignored by international community - aid to govt.</p>	<p>Complex interactions between Burundi and Rwanda, on perceptions and fears</p>
<p>Rwanda</p>	<p>Hutu; Tutsi; Twa- v. small [Tutsi minority]</p>	<p>Political; Colonial era: sharp inequalities favouring Tutsi - in education, employment, political participation. Post-colonial Hutu gained power. Privileged class of Tutsi remained. But all policies - employment, aid projects etc., army, diplomatic service, parliament reserved for Hutu. Access of Tutsi to higher education and state jobs limited by quota. Ethnic IDs</p>	<p>Ideology of Hutu power : 'Rwanda belongs to the Hutu, who were its true inhabitants, but had been subjugated brutally for centuries by ...the Tutsi (Uvin, p 14). Ethnic images supported by proverbs, stories and myths from colonial times.</p>	<p>Sustained growth in per capita incomes, 1965-88</p>	<p>State sponsored violence against Tutsi, culminating in genocidal attack, 1995.</p>	<p>Generous aid, (among highest in world) used in highly discriminating way. Govt. praised for development orientation and appropriate objectives by World Bank Report 1989..</p>	<p>High levels of poverty and illiteracy among Hutu. Majority did not benefit from aid. Govt. used violence against Hutu as way of maintaining support.</p>

Liberia	Strongmen and factions; Americo-Liberians; locals	Political; control over state resources; natural resources	War essentially commercial operation; little ideology on any side	Economic decline	State drastically undermined as aid fell and NGO share rose; patronage reduced; could no longer maintain control	Massive aid provided during Cold War including arms. As aid was reduced, support for particular factions from international companies including supplies for armies. (resource based). Intervention by Economic Community of West African States	Struggle for control over natural resources - "war is an intensification of competition for resources of the patronage systems"; 'leaders' sought power to make money; for armed followers opportunity to use force to exploit economic opportunities
Sierra Leone	Strongmen; factions	Political; control over state resources; natural resources	As Liberia	Economic decline	State undermined by loss of control over diamond revenue as taken by illicit consortia; aid increasingly directed to projects, not available for patronage; IMF reforms reducing size of state	Diminished state revenue; turned to private sources of finance and private security firm (Executive Outcomes); rebels controlled some natural resources	Neither ethnic, class, region or ideology - war as a means of private accumulative, supported by foreign firms as they saw their interests.
Zimbabwe (Matabeleland)	Political, geographic and ethnic	Political power	Political overtly: state argued that violent rebellion threatened. Labelled as ethnic by foreign observers. Ethnic perceptions enhanced by conflict	Moderate economic progress	Majority democratic govt. led violence in order to suppress opposition	Govt. resources abundantly funded by taxation etc.	Conflict aimed at political opposition but became ethnic in practice. No strong economic basis apparent

<p>Somalia</p>	<p>Clans (key); Classes (state dependent modern petite bourgeoisie/bureaucrats and ordinary Somali); agriculturalists/pastoralists.</p>	<p>Control over state resources; agriculturalists favoured relative to pastoralists, Land - land reform favoured modern elites against traditional agriculturalists.</p>	<p>Clan distinctions emphasised for political ends. (E.g. "We are Darod - we are wealthy, religious and educated..whereas the mental capacity of the Hawiye is limited: they come from the bush" (Kivimkaki, p13 from interview)</p>	<p>Economic stagnation and decline 1980s and 1990s</p>	<p>State sponsored violence under Barre (1969-91); Barre followed divide and rule policy among clans. Post-Barre state power almost non-existent.</p>	<p>1980s ODA v. high. Important source of state resources. Source of elite rivalry. US military support to Barre up to 1989. 1992 Operation Restore Hope achieved little.</p>	<p>Clans divisions used by elites to fight to control resources in context of weak state. Situation made worse by generous aid resources. Use of traditional dispute resolution mechanisms beginning to work.</p>
<p>Kenya</p>	<p>Ethnic groups</p>	<p>Political; and economic, social differentiation. Economically and socially favoured group (Kikuyu), not in Moi alliance; not favoured for investment or patronage etc..</p>	<p>Ethnic dimension not explicit in govt. statements or opposition but voting largely on ethnic lines</p>	<p>Economic growth, fairly widely shared across ethnicities, 1960s - 80s. Stagnation in 1990s.</p>	<p>Some state sponsored violence, not large scale. Fairly strong state repression of opposition</p>	<p>International support for regime strong for most of period. Some wavering in 1990s with attacks on corruption and democratic conditionality.</p>	<p>Broad ethnic alliance of Moi, with exceptions of Kikuyu. But Kikuyu benefited from market economy. Danger with economic stagnation</p>

Congo	Power-holder versus others	Ethnic divisions created by Colonial state, but became less important in post-colonial era. Some regionalism, but ‘ethnic conflict and regional polarisation did not emerge ...because of the stability and durability of the patronage system Mobutu institutionalised’ (Emizet, p22).	Little ideology	Stagnation as rents used to enrich ruling class	Repressive state. End-1989 security apparatus employed 45,000. Mobutu state instigated violence, but on relatively small scale.	International support for Mobutu. Post Cold war withdrawn. Kabila received support from Uganda, resource hungry MNCs, and subsequently aid donors	Potentially conditions seemed ripe for CHE, but Mobutu patronage system operated with regional bias but not ethnic; and strong repressive state prevented emergence of warlord economy.
Afghanistan	Ideological (Communism v. Islam); ethnic (Pashtun v. non-Pashtun); factional	Control over external resources	Initially some ideological element - Islam v. communism; but increasingly became ethnic/factional; “the actors formed new alliances based on ethnic and regional considerations and purely opportunistical tactical criteria” (Rubin, p 36). Alliances shifting.	Poor economy, but stable, pre-conflict	Weak state pre-1979. Destabilisation through Soviet invasion. Post 1986 (soviet withdrawal) state disintegrated	Resources supplied by USSR (up to 1986); US, Pakistan. Later unofficial flows from drug money; Islamic support; MNCs for pipelines. Heavy role of NGO on humanitarian side.	War not caused by ethnic divisions, but they were one consequence. Main divisions ‘local solidarity groups’. War acquired own logic. What kept it going not same as initial impetus. Society transformed from largely self-supporting peasant one to dependency on international donors and drug dealers.

Cambodia	Peasants; elite (some overlapping ethnic dimension - peasants Khmer and some newly educated; elite Sino-Khmer and Vietnamese; also Muslim Cham targeted by Khmer Rouge)	Location - urban/rural; Occupation - elite and salaried versus peasants; education; All associated with large differences in incomes.	Communist ideology of Khmer Rouge: “total revolution”.. To redress injustice and remove the causes of oppression” (Bakker and Le Billon p24) , including radical egalitarian collectivism.	Economic stagnation from mid-1960s; high inequality and unemployment; even many of urban elite suffered.	Weak state, 70-75, state (and US) violence against opposition (large casualties); !975-79 Khmer Rouge massive killings of elite and urban pop.	Resources for Khmer Rep. (70-75) provided largely by US; aid and direct military support; Chinese support for Khmer Rouge; Soviet and Vietnam support for overthrow of Khmer Rouge and subsequent regime; West, China supported Khmer Rouge in civil war that followed.	Political mismanagement (corruption/factionalism) combined with extreme impoverishment of peasants led to take-over by murderous left wing regime.
Iraq	Chiefly Iraq nation versus world; plus Kurds	not applicable	Nationalistic rhetoric of Hussein	High growth until the launch of attack against Iran, 1980. Negative subsequently	State initiated violence against Iran, Kuwait and Kurds.	Enormous human suffering caused by international sanctions	Internal opposition suppressed by strong state.

Source: country studies

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