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THE ROOT CAUSES OF HUMANITARIAN EMERGENCIES¹

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1 INTRODUCTION

Complex humanitarian emergencies (CHEs) have caused widespread death and suffering over the last two decades. Over the twentieth century an estimated 169 million people were killed in large-scale collective violence, including seventeen individual episodes where more than one million people were killed (Rummel 1997). While the number of deaths in contemporary armed conflicts may not be as large as those instigated by Hitler and Stalin, protracted warfare subjects civilian populations to continuing suffering. Not only do complex emergencies cause an immediate tragic toll in greatly increased deaths and forced displacement, but they are also one of the most important causes of prolonged underdevelopment and impoverishment. While recent tragedies in Kosovo, Bosnia, Rwanda, and Angola have made the world more aware of the terrible human toll involved, the international community has yet to develop effective policy responses to prevent such crises erupting.

The formulation of strategies for tackling the underlying causes of complex emergencies is one of the most important challenges facing policymakers, nationally, regionally and internationally. For this reason, UNU/WIDER (Helsinki) and Queen Elizabeth House

(Oxford) initiated a research programme devoted to understanding the root causes of CHEs and identifying appropriate policies. The research programme comprised 40 papers, including a dozen country studies. This two volume study presents the main results of this project. The present volume contains general analysis of the characteristics and fundamental economic, political and environmental causes of CHEs, while the second volume, *Weak States and Vulnerable Economies: Humanitarian Emergencies in Developing Countries*, includes thirteen case studies and two summary articles.²

The aim of the project as a whole was 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 chapter presents an overview of the study, drawing conclusions from the analysis presented and the evidence contained in the case studies, and identifying some policies that appear relevant to the prevention of conflict derived from these conclusions.³

It is apparent from the case studies (presented in Volume II), and also from evidence published elsewhere, that no simple generalizations 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 (for example, Burundi and Rwanda); those where power-seeking cliques (even gangs) with broadly homogeneous ethnicity have initiated and perpetuated conflict leading to situations of near anarchy (for example, Liberia, 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). 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 dataset from 1980 to 1995, in Chapter 3 Nafziger and Auvinen 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 15-19 per cent—indicates that we have by no means captured the whole story. Moreover, the data cover just 1980-95. The data cannot capture the causal processes leading to those emergencies which broke out in 1980 (nine out of the twenty four—see Nafziger and Auvinen 1999: 274 [Table 1]). Some reverse causality is also present, as they indicate.⁴ It is well established that large-scale conflict leads to decline in incomes and growth, and especially food production per capita (see, for example, Stewart, Humphrey and Lee 1997).

The combination of the case studies and econometric analysis thus help to identify some predisposing conditions, but do not allow simple generalizations. This itself is an important conclusion, also emphasized by Holsti in his analysis of the political causes of complex emergencies in Chapter 7 of this volume. 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 chapter is organized as follows: Section 2 will briefly consider the definition of the topic, that is, 'complex humanitarian emergencies' and its interpretation in the rest of the chapter. Section 3 presents a simple framework for understanding and analysing motives for conflict among and between 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 4 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 5 draws on the evidence in the case studies following the framework presented in Section 3 to assess the importance of the various elements in the major CHEs explored in the country studies. Section 6 puts forward policy conclusions.

2 DEFINITIONS OF THE TOPIC

The topic appears not to need much attention to definitions. We are discussing situations in 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 arising both from the fighting and from the 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, for example, more than 1,000 in a year (Wallensteen's definition of a civil war).⁵ 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.

One approach to the definition of complex humanitarian emergencies is that of Voutira who follows Foucault's strategy towards language and discourse and searches for a definition by analysing the language and norms of the international community, while seeking for hidden political agendas (Voutira 1998). With this approach, complexity is seen to arise not so much 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 Voutira shows, different agencies have adopted different definitions: probably the nearest to a standard definition is that of the United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs (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 (in 47th Session of the General Assembly 1994; see IASC 1994) [emphasis by author].

Others have included a checklist of 'events' associated with CHEs. For example, a United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force included the following elements: domestic or interstate 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 an Inter-Agency Task Force on Ethical and Legal Issues in Humanitarian Assistance, see Mohonk 1994).

If CHEs are defined, as they evidently are by the international community, at least partly in terms of the response of the international 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 geopolitical 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.

Väyrynen presents a comprehensive definition of conflict-related suffering in Chapter 2. He defines a complex humanitarian emergency as 'a profound social crisis in which a large number of people unequally die and suffer from war, disease, hunger, and displacement owing to human-made and natural disasters'. 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 politicized nature and persistence of the crisis'. Relatively 'objective' indicators of the four elements—that is, 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.

Väyrynen answers the first question by arguing that all four elements must be present for 'strong' emergencies, but 'limited' 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 characterizes underdevelopment; although it is obviously of central interest to those exploring how underdevelopment can lead to human suffering, it is not the subject of this volume 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. Väyrynen's 'cut-off' points in the data pertaining the mid-1990s are as follows: for wars, deaths of 2,000 or more; for displacement, that the total of refugees and displaced people exceeded 385,000; for disease, countries are included when the child mortality rate was 145 or over; hunger is defined as occurring where the proportion of underweight children exceeded 30 per cent. The rationale for these cut-off points is that they single out roughly the 25 worst cases on each of the four dimensions covered.

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 in Volume II) 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.⁶

Child malnutrition is typically indicative of the presence of disease and lack of preventative health measures as much or more than food availability. However, it is often proposed as an indicator of hunger in the absence of alternative indicators such as measures of adult body mass index (see, for example, Dasgupta 1993).

Nonetheless, Väyrynen's approach undoubtedly identifies the cases which would come up in most people's lists of the civil conflicts which cause major human suffering.⁷ Major CHEs, as defined by Väyrynen, usually develop from relatively small conflicts characterized by war deaths alone, often without the presence of the other three elements in significant quantities. Hence, for the analysis of root causes and preventative measures, it is important to include such cases as well. For this reason, the analysis below will adopt a simple definition of conflict, with deaths from deliberate and organized physical violence as being the defining characteristic. Usually, the remaining trio of Väyrynen's characteristics will also be present, sometimes as cause, sometimes as effect, and often both.⁸ But in searching for root causes, the analysis will focus on the causes of *significant organized violence*.

3 MOTIVATION, MOBILIZATION AND CONFLICT: A FRAMEWORK

The human motivation of the actors involved is clearly at the centre 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 of this chapter sketches the 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 (that is, 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 *organized group* conflicts: that is to say, they are not exclusively a matter of individuals randomly committing violence against others. What is involved is, therefore, *group mobilization*, and we need to understand the underlying motivation for such mobilization. Groups are here defined as collections of people who identify with each other, for certain purposes, as against those outside the group; such groups often also identify with characteristics of some other group(s) with whom they are in conflict. Group organization may be quite informal, but it exists, implying that there is some agreement (frequently 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 mobilization; and those who actively carry out the fighting, or give it some support (active or passive)—for shorthand,

we shall describe these two categories as leaders and followers, though there can be considerable overlap between the two. 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 in Chapter 8, 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.⁹ 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 maximizing their short-run economic gains (see Keen, Chapter 8 and 1998), the distinction between crime and conflict becomes blurred.

Accepting that groups are central to violent organized conflict, the question is why and how groups are mobilized. For group mobilization, there must be some way that group members perceive themselves as differentiated from others. The case studies show a number of different ways groups have been differentiated and mobilized in contemporary emergencies. In central Africa, ethnic identity is the major source of group definition and mobilization; in Central America, group identification and organization 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 East 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, McGregor and Ranger. The view adopted in the present chapter is that group identity is constructed by political leaders, who find group cohesion and mobilization 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 Chapter 9, as well as by Cohen, Turton, and others have shown how 'ethnicity was used by political and intellectual élites prior to, or in the course of, wars' (Alexander, McGregor and Ranger). 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: 84; and see Smith 1988). Some shared circumstances are needed for group construction—for example, 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.¹⁰

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 mobilization.

Several other conditions must be present. Leaders must see the creation or enhancement of group identity as helpful to the realization 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 élites for state (and hence economic) power led to the emergence of "political tribalism" ' (quote from Alexander, McGregor and Ranger). 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 (Gaffney on Burundi, and Uvin on Rwanda in Volume II). In the Rwanda case, the *interhammwe*—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 mobilization occurs as a defensive reaction, in response to discrimination against them and attacks by others. Often people do not recognize 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 mobilization. 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 mobilization. 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 mobilization. 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: 94).

Economic and political differentiation among groups is then of fundamental importance to group mobilization. This is the reason that *relative* position rather than absolute is more often observed to be the underlying determinant of conflict (see Gurr 1993; Nafziger and Auvinen, Chapter 3 of this volume). If a whole society is uniformly impoverished, there may be despair, but there is no motivation for group organization. Even if political leaders hoped to use group mobilization 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 wished to mobilize. 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 (for example, 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 (for example, when water becomes a scarce resource people may fight over it, but not when it is plentiful), while, conversely, when incomes/resources are generally increasing

people may mind less about their relative position. The latter situation occurred 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, Volume II). But in some contexts, improving conditions, if regarded as being unfairly shared, can give rise to conflict, as in Nigeria in the late 1960s (Nafziger and Auvinen, Chapter 3).

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. That is, in very underdeveloped societies, government expenditure and employment are low; this increases as does governments' discretionary economic power as countries industrialize; but in the later stages of industrialization, 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 organized 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, and in Iraq's suppression of the Kurds. Holsti (Chapter 7) points out that in recent conflicts, state violence was more often than not the initiating cause.

In many societies organized 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. The past history of violence then contributes to group identification, animosities and mobilization increasing the likelihood of future conflict. This is shown statistically by Nafziger and Auvinen in Chapter 3. Such a long history of violence of fluctuating strength appears to have occurred in many of the cases studied here—for example, Somalia, Sudan, 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—which may include a sudden change in relative deprivation, or a political event such as a coup.

3.1 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 systems¹¹—as a mechanism of group mobilization. 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 categorize 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, is generally more relevant in industrialized countries, while land is of huge importance where agriculture accounts for most output and employment, but becomes 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 (Chapter 5) 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 chapters by Fairhead (Chapter 4) and Reno (Volume II).

-- Insert Table 1.1 about here --

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 or from some political

development which gives rise to expectations about such a change. Such changes may be associated with some political event (as in Afghanistan with the Russian invasion), or because of endogenous or policy changes. Holsti (Chapter 7) defines a 'tipping event' as some discrete political development, as do Gurr and Harff (1995). Such events clearly often do act as triggers, and would be included here too, but other structural and policy changes may also act as triggers in vulnerable societies. For example, trigger-events may include:

Endogenous (or semi-endogenous) developments include growing population/land pressures; environmental changes (for example, 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 including *institutional changes*: property rights; water regulations; commons access; *adjustment/stabilization* policies involving changes in the terms of trade (devaluation; price deregulation); employment and incomes; changes in state benefits; and *politically* inspired changes in the distribution of state benefits.

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 failure of the development model, heavily aid-financed, contributed to the crisis.

3.2 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:

- i) The *reality* or actual conditions of the situation of the various conflicting groups, *absolutely* and *relatively* to others in the dimensions shown in Table 1.1.
- ii) The *private* benefits and costs of conflict to members of a group. Individual action is taken partly (the extreme neoclassical 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.¹² 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—for example, by looting, use of forced labour, changes in the terms of trade in their favour, the creation of new economic opportunities, controlling emergency aid. Both de Waal (1989) and Keen (1994, 1998 and in this volume) have analysed such gains in Sudan and elsewhere; Väyrynen's analysis of the conflicts in Angola, Colombia, Serbia, Tajikistan, and Northern Iraq in Volume II shows how the search for material gains drives both group politics and violence.

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.

- iii) *Leadership and organization of groups.* The conflicts considered in this volume are organized. There are typically 'leaders' (those who organize/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—i.e., those providing the manpower and other resources—are strongly supportive of conflict, against the views of their existing leaders, new leaders may emerge.

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—for example, 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.

- iv) 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.

- v) *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, Humphrey and Lee 1997). In the studies here, the state has instigated violence by

attacking opposition groups in a number of cases, including Haiti, Rwanda, and Burundi.

- vi) *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 and the conflicts in Burundi, showing that external resources are not essential.

The same *reality*—(i) above—that is, 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, (ii) to (vi), just discussed. A poor 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—for example, 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 be extremely unlikely to result in a conflict in the absence of these inequalities

Section 5 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.

4 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 high levels of inequality, as normally assessed, are not invariably associated with conflict; for example, high inequality has been present in Kenya, Thailand, and Brazil without leading to large-scale conflict. This is partly because other factors mentioned above may prevent the high inequality causing conflict, for example, because absolute conditions improve, or a strong state is able to suppress potential conflict. But it is also because of the way inequality is normally assessed and measured. Most measures of inequality relate to the distribution of *income*

only and measure it as *vertical* rather than *horizontal* inequality. This is not the relevant way to assess inequality for understanding conflict.

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, that is, $P = P_i, P_{ii}, P_{iii}, \dots$; $A = A_i, A_{ii}, \dots$ etc. where P_i, P_{ii}, \dots A_i, A_{ii} are different kinds of political participation and economic assets. Table 1.1 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 generally defined as a *vertical* measure, that is, it takes every individual or household 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 source 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. Conversely, it is possible to have considerable inter-group inequality, while overall societal vertical inequality is small because intragroup 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) (that is, vertical measures) can be decomposed into the weighted sum of two elements—inter-group inequality and intragroup inequality.¹³ Moreover, where group differentiation is according to economic class—for example, peasants and landlords, as in Central America—then horizontal inequality (that is, between these groups or classes) also involves vertical inequality as between individuals. Even then there remains an important distinction between the two types of inequality: it is the inequality between the groups (landlords versus peasants) which is potentially politically explosive because it may give rise to group struggle, rather than the vertical inequality among individuals.

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, for example, the Gini coefficient or Theil index. Generally, these are more complex measures (especially where there are only a few salient 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, it is possible that *consistent relative deprivation* over a number of dimensions may be as significant as the actual coefficient of variation with respect to any one dimension. Consistent deprivation over a number of dimensions may be measured by looking at rankings in performance on different dimensions and averaging them. *Persistence* in the horizontal inequalities between groups 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 numerical importance of the various groups. Where groups are very small, even if discriminated against consistently, their potential to cause conflict on a substantial scale, that is, 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 publicize 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 (for example, 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 fundamental difficulties. In conflicts, group differentiation is not based on some obvious objective differences between people (for example, all people over 6 foot tall versus all those below 6 foot in height), but, as pointed out above, is constructed or created in order to mobilize 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 (for example, 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 re-enforcing 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 actually provoke conflict. It is clearly of the greatest importance that the act of measurement, and the subsequent policies, 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 sensitively.

5 SOME EVIDENCE FROM THE CASE STUDIES

The development of the general approach to analysing causes of conflict laid out in Section 3 was influenced by the case studies, from which some examples were drawn. This section uses the case studies, presented in schematic form in Appendix Table A1.1, to provide some more systematic evidence on the role of the factors picked out in Section 3 as being likely to lead to conflict.

Some of the major findings are given below.

5.1 Group categorization: The categorization 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 élite. In the case of El Salvador, it was mainly a case of landed interests versus peasants; this was also true of Nicaragua and Guatemala. In Haiti, the division was between the élite (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 Matabeleland (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 and in South Caucasus where kinship relations and clans are an important part of social fabric (although they were modified in the Soviet era).

Warlords created groups (by force and financial incentives) in Sierra Leone and Liberia. In Liberia, the distinction between the American-Liberian élite and local origin Africans also played a small role. This also appears to be an element of the situation in Somalia.

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

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

Differential political access and control were virtually universal, but to a lesser extent in the one case studied which had not developed into a complex humanitarian emergency—Kenya. Congo under Mobutu also distributed his patronage fairly broadly, for the most

part. In both these cases, political patronage was widely though unevenly shared, albeit some important groups were left out. In all the other cases, political power and the benefits it confers were monopolized by one group. In some countries this was the majority (the Hutu in Rwanda; the Shona in Zimbabwe; the peasant class in Cambodia). In 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, for example, the Duvaliers in Haiti; Mobutu in the Congo. In others, a broader élite benefited—the élite Hutu in Rwanda, the Tutsi in Burundi, and 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 élite 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 cattle-herding and pastoralists has occurred elsewhere (for example, 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, an important instrument in the perpetuation of inequalities, as recognized 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—for example, Sierra Leone and Iraq. This greatly increased the economic advantages to be secured by political control.

The matrix in Table 1.1 provides a categorization 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 support to Fairhead's view that environmental *riches* rather than impoverishment often causes conflict, although many people, often the majority, may be impoverished in the context of environmental riches at a country level; the gross inequalities then become a source of conflict. For example, environmental riches were at issue in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Iraq, and South Caucasus (oil in Azerbaijan, cultivable land in Georgia). However, the worsening economic situation of the rural masses in Rwanda, Cambodia, Afghanistan, Burundi, Haiti, Somalia, Central America, and Armenia—which in each case was partly due to a worsening environmental situation—undoubtedly contributed to the support they gave to the violence. Biased 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 generally 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. The main humanitarian effect of various water policies (dams, diversion of rivers, etc.) is displacement, not violent conflict.

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 of the Hutu peasantry. 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 providing only 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 élite governing group were to be seen in almost all cases.

5.3 Perceptions

As noted in Section 3, it is not enough that groups actually have unequal opportunities. Group identity, sufficient to bring about violence, also 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 mobilization 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 mobilized' (Auvinen and Kivimäki, Volume II). In most cases, except in the most 'privatized' 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, Volume II]). 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: 59, quoted in Gaffney). In Rwanda, 'For decades, anti-Tutsi racism had served as a deliberately-maintained strategy of legitimization of the powers-that-be, and was kept alive through a systematic public structure of differentiation and discrimination, in which the "Tutsi problem" was never allowed to be forgotten' (Uvin, Volume II). The Belgians also introduced ethnic distinctions 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 (Emizet, Chapter 9, Volume II). In Zimbabwe, the conflict 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, emphasizing 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, Volume II).

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 about 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 also developed as the conflict proceeded.

5.4 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 summarized by Prud'homme, 'Power provided access to wealth rather than wealth provided access to power' (quoted in Le Billon and Bakker, Volume II). These gains were more attractive where there were few alternative opportunities—when without political power, exclusion from state benefits was near total and the private sector was small and undynamic.

The lesson that conflict was intended as a means of private accumulation by leaders, with ethnicity—or other cementing ideology—an instrument to gain support, is repeated in many of the chapters. Reno summarizes this conclusion in his chapter 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, Volume II). 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 to gain access to the resources of the region without acquiring formal political power.

Absence of attractive alternative sources of income increased the strength of the accumulation motive. To the extent that there are other 'legitimate' 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, for example, Cambodia.

5.5 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: a radical weakening of the state occurred most notably 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 actually 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, and the Congo, intermittently, as well as the more peaceful case of Kenya. 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. Indeed, there were some UN troops in Rwanda prior to the massacres, but they were withdrawn just before the massacre. 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 (international financial institutions) conditionality to have both positive and negative effects on conditions liable to make 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 benefits conferred by the state and therefore 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 (that is, 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, Morrisson (Chapter 6) finds that while IMF programmes often lead to civil protests even involving some deaths, they cannot be blamed for the massive conflict of CHEs.

6 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, entrenched group identity and inter-group animosities. The government is rarely broad based, normally representing 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 recognized 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.

6.1 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 implies that horizontal inequality in social participation and achieved well-being is also moderate. It is necessary to determine what will count as a moderate degree of group inequality. If one group is more than twice as well off as another one, horizontal inequality might be taken to be quite severe. But the significance of any degree of inequality is increased if it occurs systematically over a number of dimensions and grows over time. Hence the extent of consistency over different dimensions, and developments over time, should be considerations in determining what is an acceptable degree of horizontal inequality. *Horizontal equity* is used to describe 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 monopolization 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 difficult 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, for example, 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 usual set of political conditions. This set 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 1999).

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

- i) To ensure balance in group benefits from government expenditure and aid (including the distribution of investment, and jobs).
- ii) 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:

- iii) 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.

- iv) 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.

- v) 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 sorts 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 as horizontal equity through the NEP.

IMF and World Bank policy conditionality is 'blind' to these issues, that is, 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.

6.2 Private incentives to violence

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 deaf ears, for political reasons—as with other policy proposals 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 South Africa likewise. Those who had previously been active soldiers (the 'followers') need income-earning employment—finance or jobs in works schemes, or, where appropriate land or agricultural credit, can be offered in exchange for arms. In some contexts the offer of a lump sum on demobilization appears to have been quite effective (for example, after the Ugandan and Mozambique wars—see Collier 1994; Dolan and Schafer 1997). Such policies can be expensive and need international support.

Moreover, they are difficult to apply in less organized 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 then needed. 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.

6.3 General development policies

Both general analysis and some of the econometric evidence suggest a connection between predisposition to conflict and levels and growth of per capita incomes, although the correlation is not strong (see Nafziger and Auvinen, Chapter 3; FitzGerald, forthcoming; Stewart, Humphrey and Lee 1997). 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 occurred, for example, 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.

Preventative policies are obviously especially needed in 'conflict-prone' countries. It is therefore necessary to determine which countries are 'conflict-prone'. Conflict proneness may be identified by the following characteristics: (i) serious past conflict at some time over the previous twenty years; (ii) evidence of a considerable degree of horizontal inequality; (iii) low incomes; (iv) economic stagnation, and (v) political conditions, including exclusionary political systems and arbitrary rule.

Condition (i) by itself is a serious sign, especially when one of the other four conditions is present. The analysis above suggests that the presence of (ii) together with either (iii), (iv)

or (v) should be taken as indicating conflict-proneness even if there is no history of conflict. This is also broadly the conclusion of Stavenhagen.¹⁴ 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. 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.

The subject of this volume 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 complex humanitarian emergency 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—for example, 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.

-- Insert Appendix Table A1.1 about here --

NOTES

¹ I am grateful for very helpful comments on a previous draft from E. Wayne Nafziger, Meghan O'Sullivan and Raimo Väyrynen.

² A third volume focussed on preventative policies is also to be published, edited by E. Wayne Nafziger and Raimo Väyrynen, *War and Destitution: The Prevention of Humanitarian Emergencies*, London: Macmillan (forthcoming).

³ This chapter uses the thirteen case studies investigated in the project as the sample from which evidence is drawn. The sample was selected so as to obtain a broad range of examples of different types of CHE. The set of case studies overlaps with, but is not identical to, the CHEs identified by Väyrynen (Chapter 2), nor the 18 cases identified by Holsti (Chapter 7).

⁴ Nafziger and Auvinen test for causality and find that 'the relationship is stronger from GDP growth to emergencies than vice-versa'.

⁵ See, for example, Wallensteen and Sollenberg (1997).

⁶ Nafziger and Auvinen (Chapter 3), however, find almost no correlation between average changes in calorie supply and infant mortality, which is probably indicative of the fact that child malnutrition has less to do with aggregate food supplies and more with its distribution and infant health.

⁷ As he shows comparing his list with a list of countries identified by the CIA as 'simmering emergencies'.

⁸ Nafziger and Auvinen (Chapter 3) find a strong correlation of 0.57 between battle deaths and displacement, but weaker correlations with their indicators of hunger and disease.

⁹ The central role of 'groups' in ethnic has been emphasised by a number of political scientists in recent analysis such as Posen (1993); Lake and Rothschild (eds.) (1998). These scholars see the fear and insecurity of groups leading to stronger intragroup cohesion and the escalation of inter-group hostilities.

¹⁰ 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: 357-358, quoted in Turton 1997).

¹¹ 'Symbolic systems' are the values, myths, rituals and ceremonials which are used to organize and unite groups (see Cohen 1974).

¹² M. O'Sullivan, personal communication.

¹³ For a decomposition of the Gini of this kind, see Fei, Ranis and Kuo (1978); and for a decomposition of the Theil, see Anand (1983).

¹⁴ 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: 294). But I believe this holds more widely to any form of differentiation among groups—religious, class, clan—not merely ethnic.

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