

The Origins of Contemporary Conflict
A Comparison of Violence in Three World Regions

P.S. Douma

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The Netherlands Institute of International Relations *Clingendael* is an independent institute for research, training and public information on international affairs. It publishes the results of its own research projects and the monthly 'Internationale Spectator' and offers a broad range of courses and conferences covering a wide variety of international issues. It also maintains a library and documentation centre.

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The research was conducted by the Conflict Research Unit of the Netherlands Institute of International Relations 'Clingendael', together with four counterpart research institutes: the Centre for Advanced Social Science (CASS) in Port Harcourt, Nigeria; the Council for the Advancement of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA) based in Dakar, Senegal; the International Centre for Ethnic Studies (ICES) in Kandy, Sri Lanka; and the Arias Foundation for Peace and Human Progress, based in San José, Costa Rica.

Throughout the project, various scholars worked in regional teams headed by team. Kingsley de Silva was in charge of overall coordination of the team on South Asia. He also contributed a study on the Sinhala-Tamil conflict. Gerry Peiris wrote on the JVP uprisings and Sam Samarasinghe provided insights into the Sri Lankan Tamil issue. Mohammad Waseem was responsible for part of the studies on Pakistan, in particular the MQM and the sectarian violence between Sunni and Shi'ite Muslims in Pakistan. Rasul Bakhsh Rais wrote on the Kashmir issue from a Pakistani perspective. He also contributed a study on

the Afghan imbroglio. The study on the Chittagong Hill Tracts in Bangladesh was provided by Aftab Ahmed. Several scholars contributed to the study on conflicts in India. Partha Ghosh wrote on the Hindu-Muslim controversy and also provided an Indian perspective on Kashmir. Mahendra Lama dealt with the ethnic insurgency movements in the north-east of India and the Punjab issue, and Ajay K. Mehra wrote on Naxalite and peasant movements on the Indian subcontinent.

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I Introduction, Aim and Scope of the Study into Causes of Conflict

This book results from the research project ‘Causes of Conflict in the Third World’ by the Netherlands Institute of International Relations ‘Clingendael’, which analyses conflict in so-called developing countries. The rationale of this publication is to reach a better understanding of the causes that lead to the emergence of violent conflict in a number of countries and regions.

In general, most people use labels when they try to designate specific conflicts and how they have originated. Such labels mostly refer to characteristics of the protagonists involved, and, more precisely, the major differences between them. As a result, labels such as tribal, ethnic, racial, religious or linguistic have been used to designate specific conflicts. Labels are a rather easy way to categorize and identify specific conflicts. However, it is probable that no single conflict can satisfactorily be summarized by stressing the importance of only one factor. Hence, a so-called ethnic conflict may conceal existing socio-economic inequality among different ethnic communities, or lack of access to political decision-making in the setting of a state.

This book tries to unravel some of the underlying and hidden factors, notably combinations of factors, that contribute to the emergence of violent large-scale conflict. Moreover, it aims to highlight similarities and differences between conflicts in different regions and countries based on a number of empirical studies. For the time being, there is no satisfactory and plausible

theory that identifies the various factors that lead to the outbreak of violent conflicts, yet this book seeks to contribute to the knowledge about the emergence of major violent conflicts and does so by investigating some 22 cases of conflict, located in fourteen countries in three different regions of the world.

The three regions are South Asia, West Africa, and Central America. In South Asia, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka were selected. In West Africa two francophone countries (Niger and Senegal) and two anglophone countries (Ghana and Nigeria) were selected. Finally, in Central America nearly all of the countries on the Isthmus were involved: Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua.

The investigation focuses primarily on the period 1960-1995. Within this timeframe and geographical delimitation, the research attempts to investigate all of the major violent conflicts. Thus in Central America, the intrastate war between Honduras and El Salvador (the so-called Soccer War), the Sandinista-contra war between the incumbent revolutionary regime of Nicaragua and the armed opposition (based largely in Honduras and aided by the United States), as well as three internal wars in the region, between revolutionary movements and incumbent regimes in Guatemala, El Salvador and Nicaragua, were analysed. In West Africa, the secessionist war between Biafra and the other Nigerian states, the internal war between the nomadic Touareg and the government forces of Niger, and the struggle between the government of Senegal and a secessionist movement in the Casamance region were investigated. In South Asia, a great number of conflicts were studied, including some long-standing social conflicts that time and again erupt in violent skirmishes but that have the potential to explode into major violent political crises. The long-standing conflict between India and Pakistan about the contested state of Jammu-Kashmir, which has resulted so far in three major wars, stands out as one of the most prominent violent conflict cases in the region. A short-lived border conflict between India and China, the conflict in the Punjab between Sikhs and the federal government of India, as well as a large number of conflicts between the state of India and various ethnolinguistic communities in the north-eastern states (Naga, Mizoram, and Assam) were investigated. The internal war in Sri Lanka between the Tamil Tiger movement and government forces and the insurrections of a revolutionary youth movement (*Janatha Vimukthi Peramma*, the People's Liberation Army) were studied. In Pakistan, the Mohajir conflict involving a migrant community, the autonomous population and the state in Karachi was an important case. In Bangladesh, the war between the Bengali state and the people inhabiting the Chittagong Hill Tracts was investigated. Finally, the civil war in Afghanistan stands out as an example of a proxy conflict in the framework of the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union. As a result, Afghanistan nearly collapsed as a state, and it continues to destabilize the entire sub-region because of ongoing violent confrontations between various sub-state protagonist groups.

Simultaneously, a number of persistent but 'low-profile' conflicts have been investigated. In India, the effects of migration in border areas of Bangladesh and India (the Assam conflict), caste conflicts between various social groups, the so-called 'Naxalite' conflicts between landless peasants and high castes, notably in West Bengal and Bihar states, and the Hindu-Muslim confrontation received special attention. In Pakistan, the sectarian conflict between Shia and Sunni Muslim communities was studied. Finally, the case of the Tamil plantation workers in Sri Lanka, stuck between the Sinhala majority and the island's Tamil population, was analysed.

The term conflict has been largely limited to the following preconditions in this study: first, conflict deals with violent armed conflict in particular. Second, two types of conflict are observed: the first is interstate; the second is intrastate. In general we tried to establish whether a relationship exists between government behaviour and action, and the origins or causes of conflict, even though the state may not be a primary actor in a certain conflict. Third, conflict has some form of organized combat and a planned, systematic strategy. Finally, fighting concerns (fairly) continuous rather than spontaneous and sporadic action. Spontaneous uprisings of short duration and unique or singular skirmishes such as sporadic food riots, *coups d'état* and all types of violence as a result of incidental, non-political or criminal activity have not been included in this research.

Objective and Phasing of the Research

This study aims to contribute to knowledge on the causes and origins of violent conflicts. The prevailing lack of a general theory on the causes of conflict required an empirical search among a significant number of conflicts in various countries, regions and cultural settings.

In analysing the nature and course of those conflicts, a number of tentative working hypotheses were addressed. These are questions regarding specific mechanisms that may have caused such conflicts, or have moved them to a next stage with higher levels of armed violence, or, alternatively, have helped to de-escalate them.

General Research Questions

The general research questions for the project were as follows:

- 1 Which conflict histories can be identified in the countries under study and how can the course of these conflicts be described?
- 2 Which actors were involved in the conflict and how can their behaviour be explained?

- 3 Which factors or clusters of interrelated factors and circumstances (political-military, socio-economic and external) account for the origin and development of violent conflict in those countries or the absence or de-escalation thereof?

These three questions were dealt with at three levels of analysis: per country (cross-conflict), per region (cross-country) and in general (cross-region). For Central America and West Africa, the conflicts could be integrated in the country studies. For the South Asian region, separate case studies were written on each individual conflict.

At a more general level of analysis, it was furthermore aimed to establish to what extent:

- Causal factors were universally or widely applicable, or limited to the individual conflict; and
- To what degree (relative) weight can be attributed to single factors or to clusters of factors accounting for the outcomes of the research.

It is also important to note here that in this investigation the role of social actors, whether acting on their own or as members or representatives of groups or other social configurations, was emphasized. The behaviour and response of the (major) actors involved therefore had to be addressed in the explanation of the outbreak and course of conflicts, that is:

- The response/behaviour of the state with regard to (non-) escalatory conflict situations;
- The response/behaviour of sub/non-state actors with regard to (non-) escalatory conflict situations;
- The response/behaviour of other (neighbouring) states with regard to (non-)escalatory conflict situations.

Tentatively, three separate clusters of potentially causal factors were identified: political-military; socio-economic; and external. These clusters reflect broadly accepted and applied clusters, but one needs to bear in mind that there is a large degree of overlap among these clusters or between separate factors conveniently arranged within these clusters. Hence, these clusters are theoretical ‘container concepts’, and merely represent useful devices to analyse the complexity of interlinked causation.

- *Political-military factors:*
The processes involved in the formation of states and nations and the role therein of ‘good governance’, democratization, human rights, the position of minorities and the role of ethnic-cultural factors. Other important factors were the centralization/monopolization of state power, mechanisms

of power transition, the role of the armed forces and bureaucracy, and the proliferation of weapons within the state.

– *Socio-economic factors:*

Poverty and socio-economic inequality, the (territorial/ethnic, etc.) distribution of economic growth, employment and income, performance on human indicators, the (non-) discriminatory nature of socio-economic government policies.

– *External factors:*

The regional security setting, external military assistance (including international arms trade), financial aid to insurgents, external economic interventions, external debt, structural adjustment programmes, IMF lending conditions and other multilateral or bilateral donors' conditions.

Formulation of Working Hypothesis

This section presents the argumentation and theoretical justification of the working hypotheses that have guided this research. For each of the three thematic clusters, a number of three working hypotheses were elaborated.

Working Hypothesis for Political Factors

In this short overview of some contemporary conflict literature, the importance of political factors with regard to the possible outbreak of violent conflicts was often stressed but the analysis remained rather vague, treating the political dimension as a kind of black box. Sometimes a typology was entertained that tried to rank the various political systems on a gliding scale, ranging from repressive and coercive to democratic and inclusive regimes. Sometimes nominal categories were used, as with Michael Brown's typology¹ on bad leaders and bad neighbourhoods. Notwithstanding the fact that such categories are useful in order to characterize political regimes as such, for an in-depth analysis of the precise role of political factors it seems more useful to probe into the systemic properties of states and the ways in which dominant political elite groups entertain relations with subservient groups within their polity.

Institutional Capacity

Provided that states are able to sustain a sufficient level of institutional capacity to prevent state collapse, this analysis will subsequently test a number of

1) Michael E. Brown (ed.), *The International Dimension of Internal Conflict* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1996), p. 579.

criteria developed by Holsti² (see annexe VIII) in order to ascertain the extent to which a state's strength can be classified qualitatively. First, the most important criterion to measure 'legitimate' institutional capacity relates to the nature of the social contract between power elite groups and their subjects. Second is the presence or absence of consensus on basic characteristics of a given state. For heterogeneous states a general awareness and acceptance of equal rights for all constituent groups, as well as a willingness to arrive at pragmatic policy choices, are vital for systemic durability. Third, effective internal sovereignty must prevail. States should enhance the rule of law and provide for the protection of basic human rights. Impunity and a lack of public order will ultimately lead to state failure. Identifying states according to their degree of legitimacy may provide insight into specific causes that account for the outbreak or the absence of violent conflict, and this subsequently led to the formulation of the first working hypothesis:

If the institutional capacity of a regime increases, the likelihood of conflict will diminish (if it decreases, the reverse will happen).

Power-Sharing

By relating institutional capacity to legitimacy, the analysis is closely related to the variable of power-sharing. Clientelist policies or policies of co-optation and exclusion have often been mentioned as important causes of violent conflicts. As can be inferred from Holsti's criteria, institutional capacity relates to the *systemic properties* of a state, whereas power-sharing – among sub-state actors and in relationship to the state – points to the rules, procedures and implementation of state policies, that is, to *the performance of the state apparatus*.

The power-sharing arrangements are mostly anchored in the constitution of a given state. It is therefore highly illuminating to review constitutional arrangements in the countries under scrutiny and compare to what degree sub-groups are formally recognized and empowered. The total absence of such 'rules of the game' in heterogeneous states is likely to have important consequences for the conflict-proneness of a state. Therefore, as a first analytical step, power-sharing is interpreted in a narrow sense, limited to formal power-sharing arrangements between the state and various constituting sub-state entities, based on distinct ethnic, religious and /or regional features.

Power-sharing ultimately revolves around issues of access to political decision-making and distribution of resources among constituent units of a polity. The second working hypothesis dwells on modalities of political decision-making and more precisely on group access and group leverage in national and local decision-making (Holsti's sixth criteria – see annexe VIII):

2) K.J. Holsti, *The State, War and the State of War* (CambridgeUK: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

If a regime is inclined to apply mechanisms of power-sharing, the likelihood of conflict will diminish (if this mechanism is not applied, the reverse will happen).

Power Transitions

This variable focuses on power relations. Power relations within societies can have a social, economic or a political nature. Changes in these fields can open possibilities for fundamental changes in the distribution of power. Holsti³ more or less refers to this aspect by pointing at changes in the rules of the political game. The distribution of power might change as a result of, for example, the rapid population growth of one group (naturally or as a result of migration) or the rise of a specific (new) economic sector (resulting in the rise of a new [ethnically based] economic class as well). Such a change in the distribution of power is always linked with the erosion of other groups' power. Such a shift in power relations can be dealt with simply by adapting to the new situation and changing the power-sharing arrangements. The capacity of states to deal with such changes therefore becomes a critical variable in maintaining the existing order.

If such (swift) alterations are not dealt with adequately, the newcomers to power might opt for a grab for leadership. In such cases the elite groups in power are directly challenged by a specific political contender. In most cases these contenders vie for political power and the ousting of the incumbent regime. Such threatening and rapid power transitions mostly lead to political turmoil and subsequently violent conflict. Periods of power transition are therefore 'hotbeds' of conflict, as Tilly⁴ has already indicated. This leads to the third working hypothesis:

If there is a rapid power transition between socio-economic, religious or ethnic groups, the likelihood of conflict will increase (while an unchallenged hierarchy will create stability).

Working Hypothesis for Socio-Economic Factors

In order to analyse the socio-economic dimension of internal conflicts, a limited number of factors have been retained. In many contemporary studies the role of poverty and socio-economic inequality have been forwarded as important underlying structural factors that possibly account for violent

3) Ibid, Holsti, 1996.

4) See Rule, J.B., 'From Collective Behavior to Collective Action: Charles Tilly and Political Theories of Civil Violence' in Rule, J.B., *Theories of Civil Violence*, University of California Press, Berkeley 1988, pp. 170-199, quoted on pp. 185-186.

confrontations within societies. Furthermore, the dynamics of growth, stagnation or decline of the national economy, defined as the sum of all productive activities within a state, has been forwarded as an important additional factor with regard to the outbreak of conflicts. The starting point of this analysis therefore reviews these factors at face value, implying testing simple assumptions related to poverty, inequality and the economic dynamics within states. A second level of analysis is based on the distinction of relative and perceived levels of poverty and inequality, as well as on detailed intrastate patterns of economic growth and decline.

Poverty

For the purpose of this project, poverty is defined as a standard of living below which individuals or collectives cannot satisfy basic caloric intake or obtain basic services such as health care and access to clean drinking water. On a first level, whether absolute levels of poverty of specific sub-groups in society can be related directly to the outbreak of violent conflict is analysed. Theories such as frustration-aggression theory suggest a direct relationship between poverty and violent conflict through mass mobilization based on material motives.

On the second level of analysis, the availability of and access to natural resources enters the equation. Furthermore, the self-image of people is taken as a point of reference. If people perceive their situation as unjust and think that they are worse off than their immediate neighbours, there is a strong incentive towards change. Group entitlements seem to be crucial in this regard. The attitudes of state elites and state policies regarding group entitlements seem to determine the propensity for group action:

If poverty increases, violent conflict will become likely and vice versa.

Socio-Economic Inequality

On the first level of analysis, socio-economic inequality has been measured in income per capita for specific regions or groups if compared with each other within states. In this way trends in inequality can be measured, as diminishing or deteriorating inequality reveals its dynamics. Such statistical analyses are highly relevant, as income differentials can be monitored in an impartial manner with regard to, for example, distinct social classes within a society. On the second analysis level, patterns of government service allocation have been reviewed, notably from a regional and group perspective. It is postulated that impartial distribution of social services throughout states for all citizens notably leads to the improvement of livelihood conditions for weak groups in society, and hence diminishes the propensity towards violent conflict. Additionally, the notion of perceived inequality among different groups in society has been investigated, and the theory on relative deprivation has been applied to the various conflict cases.

The inequality factor has therefore been tested in different ways. Such a broad approach gives room for the various interpretations that are attributed to this factor by the contributing authors, as inequality as such does not have the same significance in different cultural settings. Inequality measured by so-called objective indicators sometimes tends to obscure the impact of different cultural practices. The fifth working hypothesis is thus:

If inequality increases, the likelihood of conflict will increase and vice versa.

Economic Growth

On the first level of analysis, economic growth has been measured by using changes in the Gross Domestic Product curve for individual states, albeit that in some cases adequate statistics were lacking. Most of the states figuring in this study have economies that depend to a large extent on the export of one or more commodities, thus reflecting the overall vulnerability of Third World economies. One has to allow for some degree of differentiation for India, as it represents a subcontinent in itself and its economy reflects all sectors. The assessment of economic growth therefore follows available growth indicators and gives a rough picture of its evolution over time.

On the second level of analysis, the focus was on regional and group performance as opposed to the general trend. Theories on regional differences, such as the core-periphery theory, were related to intrastate differences in many so-called 'Southern'⁵ states. Relatively small core areas, mostly comprising the political capital and some important industrial sites and major seaports, contain the bulk of the so-called formal economy as well as the benefits from resource allocation in such states. The usually underdeveloped rural hinterland is often scarcely provided with resources from the centre and forms the periphery. Such highly skewed special patterns are illustrative of concomitant differentials between these areas regarding socio-economic indicators at large, reflecting the existing cleavage between rich and poor states on a global scale.

Furthermore, state policies regarding resource extraction and resource allocation have a profound impact on regional and group economic growth perspectives. In fact, such patterns might coincide with broader patterns of exclusion of specific sub-groups or regions inside states, and provide insights into structural causes of dissent between contending groups inside states as well as between such groups and the state. This leads to the sixth working hypothesis:

5) The term Southern countries is currently widely used and has replaced normative denominations such as Developing Countries or Third World countries in contemporary literature. In this publication these terms are used indiscriminately, without any normative connotation.

If economic growth increases, the likelihood of conflict will diminish and vice versa.

The Working Hypothesis for External Factors

External factors have often been forwarded as important causal factors for the outbreak of internal violent conflicts. Brown⁶ contends that so-called ‘bad neighbours’ and ‘bad neighbourhoods’ have been underexposed as important causal factors. Other studies have emphasized the contingency or spillover effects of conflicts in neighbouring countries as important contributors to domestic conflicts (namely, *Carnegie Commission on the Prevention of Deadly Conflict Final Report*). Furthermore, conspiracy theories regarding the decisive impact of superpowers in their own ‘backyard’ have consistently been forwarded regarding internal conflicts inside their respective spheres of influence, as with the United States in Central and South America, the Soviet Union in the Caucasus and Central Asian republics, and France in sub-Saharan Africa. Moreover, many internal conflicts have been widely perceived as so-called ‘proxy wars’ between contesting superpowers. Hence, the impact of external political, economic but foremost military meddling in the internal affairs of nominally independent states has generally been regarded as far reaching and of overwhelming importance when compared to domestic factors. Consequently, emphasis in this study has been on some of these external actors and their strategies regarding individual countries.

When reviewing external factors, one needs to tackle quite a broad range of issues: the regional security setting, external military assistance (including the international arms trade), financial aid to insurgents, external economic interventions, external debt, structural adjustment programmes, IMF lending conditions and other multilateral or bilateral donors’ conditions. Focus in this research has been on the political/military activities of third parties leading to the first working hypothesis. Quantitative evidence was mostly rather scant and statistical material either unreliable or too general in nature. As a result, the emphasis was on qualitative assessments of external meddling, focusing notably on major external actors and major external influence, as expressed in the available evidence of general military aid, and leading to the following hypothesis:

If external military assistance (for example, arms deliveries) increases, conflict will be more likely to break out and vice versa.

6) Michael E. Brown (ed.), *The International Dimension of Internal Conflict* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1996), p. 23.

Furthermore, the effects of macroeconomic developments, notably on the way in which important multilateral institutions and major donors have tried to steer developments inside the regions and countries, was studied. In many cases economic support largely outweighs military assistance, and such aid may well be used to coerce incumbent regimes or rebel groups into compliance with political projects from external actors. Such external actors mostly have strategic interests in the country, either because of natural resources, investments, or strategic location in specific world regions. The eighth working hypothesis is thus:

If there is growing external economic intervention (for example, in the form of structural adjustment programmes), conflict may break out more easily and vice versa.

Additionally, the effects of unstable regional security settings were highlighted in order to provide some possible insights into spillover effects. Conflict situations may have so-called spillover effects to adjoining regions in neighbouring countries. This contagious effect may result from a transfer of weapons from one conflict theatre to another, to the migration of armed forces to other conflict scenes, or to other forms of direct meddling by protagonists involved in one conflict but expanding into other potential conflict situations. Thus, in all of the conflicts analysed, support to one or more armed factions by friendly rebel groups or regimes was viewed as a destabilizing phenomenon, leading to the final hypothesis:

If the regional security setting becomes unstable, conflict is more likely to break out and vice versa.

Dynamic conflict model

In order to grasp the dynamic character of conflicts, as well as the interplay between different factors, a 'life cycle of conflict model' has been used to describe and analyse the different phases in a conflict. With regard to the life cycle of conflicts, several stages were identified. The first phase represents the *tensing* of the conflict, where parties threaten to use force. The conflict nonetheless remains non-violent. In the *escalating phase*, the use of violence is introduced. The conflict thus moves into the phase where the parties involved become organized and begin to use force systematically. In the *de-escalating phase*, the fighting is over the worst and conflict termination is required. This stage may end with a peaceful *settlement*. The formulation of the settlement conditions and the putting into practice of these conditions are decisive for success.

Within each phase, certain factors interact in such a way as to influence the further movement of the conflict towards or away from violence. It is

assumed that there are qualitative differences between the various factors at work, and categorizing these factors enables a better understanding of the way in which they work and their relative importance regarding their respective roles in the various phases of violent conflicts. With regard to these factors, the following distinction was applied:

- *Triggers* are single events that can trigger off a conflict, but that are neither necessary nor sufficient to explain the conflict. Triggers usually do not assume the same shape in another stage of the conflict's life cycle.
- *Pivotal factors* refer to single or (most likely) configurations of factors that show up in (almost) all the stages of the life cycle of the conflict. They lie at the root of the conflict and as such are most important with regard to policy-making, as they need to be addressed in order to solve the conflict.
- *Mobilizing factors* refer to issues or processes around which actors in the conflict are rallied. In each stage of the conflict the mobilization of the groups involved can take a different shape. The same set of pivotal factors can be used in different ways by the 'entrepreneurs' involved. For instance, an identity-related conflict can express itself around issues of language, religion, territory, etc. The mobilizing factors can change with each phase of the conflict. With regard to the research, it is useful to find out how mobilizing factors relate to the pivotal factors, and where they differ from the aggravating factors.
- *Aggravating factors* can add to the weight of the mobilizing and/or pivotal factors. They, too, can differ with each phase of the conflict. They are often important with regard to the (de-) escalation of a conflict. For example, the uncontrolled proliferation of small arms in an unstable political system can tilt the balance towards violent solutions instead of political debate. Aggravating factors can also be found in the economic, political or cultural domain. They are furthermore often related to the policies of the government or external actors involved.

Resource Documents

This book is largely based on the following studies and reports:

In South Asia the International Centre for Ethnic Studies (ICES) publicized a large number of individual conflict case studies that were presented during an international workshop held in March 1997 in Kandy, Sri Lanka. Second, the ICES wrote a regional synthesis report, entitled *South Asia: Regional Report*, part I and part II.

The Arias Foundation, based in San José, Costa Rica, coordinated the research and publications for Central America. This resulted in the publication of the *Central America: Regional Report*.

In West Africa, both the Centre for Advanced Social Science (CASS) and CODESRIA were responsible for the project. The research documents and the authors involved are mentioned in Annexe VII.

All of these documents have been used in writing this book and the author is greatly indebted to all participating scholars and institutes. The opinions expressed are clearly those of the author and are not necessarily supported by the commanding institute or any of the contributing counterpart institutes and authors involved.

II Overview of Conflicts

This study on causes of conflict in the Third World has been carried out in South Asia, West Africa and Central America. In this way a certain degree of variety was reached, namely:

- Each region shows different stages in the life cycle of conflict. West Africa seems to be at the start of a conflict cycle; Central America seems to have arrived at the end of a long conflict cycle; and South Asia is characterized by protracted conflicts that have lasted for several decades.
- The regions also have different colonial histories.

The countries that were studied in each of the regions are shown below:

South Asia	West Africa	Central America
Afghanistan	Ghana	Costa Rica
Bangladesh	Niger	El Salvador
India	Nigeria	Guatemala
Pakistan	Senegal	Honduras
Sri Lanka		Nicaragua

Some general characteristics of the different regions are presented below, as well as a brief overview of the history of each. A final section of this chapter is devoted to the conflicts in each region.

Some General Characteristics¹

All three regions have a history of colonial rule. Independence came most recently to the West African region in the late 1950s and 1960s, while South Asia's independence is 50 years old. The Central American region became independent between 150 and 175 years ago. South Asia formed part of the British Raj (Bangladesh, India and Pakistan) and British Empire (Sri Lanka), while the Central American region was part of the Spanish colonial empire. In West Africa we see a mixture of British, French and Portuguese colonial rule. Afghanistan is an example of a classic buffer state between the expanding British and Russian colonial systems. The Central American region came under the influence of the growing power of the United States throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries – a type of imperialism that was as pervasive as direct colonial rule. As a result the area felt the effects of the Cold War to an even greater extent than the other two regions.

South Asia is the home to two of the oldest religions in the world – Hinduism and Buddhism – and has been an important centre of Islamic civilization for about 900 years. There is also the influence of both the Roman Catholic and Protestant Churches (especially in Sri Lanka). The political and cultural influences of these religions have a contemporary significance, and still form a matter of contention, if not conflict, in the states of South Asia. The Central American region is relatively homogenous concerning religion, as most inhabitants adhere to the Roman Catholic Church. Finally, in West Africa, a north-south division can be found, whereby most northern areas of the coastal states and the desert countries of Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger largely consist of Muslims, and the coastal zones are inhabited by people adhering to various Christian sects. Meanwhile, old animist traditions prevail for many Africans and in some areas this still remains the dominant religion.

South Asia is by far the largest of the three regions in surface area: almost twice as large as the West African region and about ten times as large as the Central American. Its current population of over one billion people is eight to nine times larger than that of the West African region and nearly 50 times as large as that of the Central American. Despite the huge populations of cities in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, South Asia is more rural than either West Africa or Central America. Development indicators place South Asia below

1) This section is an abbreviated version of part of chapter 1, 'Methodology', by K.M. de Silva, *South Asia: Regional Report*, (Kandy (Sri Lanka): ICES; and The Hague: International Institute of International Relations 'Clingendael', 1998).

Central America but above West Africa. The South Asian and West African regions are clearly behind Central America with regard to social indicators, with the exception of Sri Lanka. South Asia has about 60 per cent of the world's illiterates and its population ranks among the world's poorest with a per capita income of about one-tenth of the world's average.

Central America has the highest number of armed services as a percentage of the total population. With regard to defence expenditure as a percentage of GNP and per capita, Central America and South Asia show higher figures than West Africa.

History

The analysis of the conflicts in the three regions may benefit from a historical perspective. Although contemporaneous events or incidents may have triggered the escalation of conflicts into a violent phase, there are frequently underlying causes that have a long history, often reaching far into the colonial epoch. Shortage of space evidently does not allow justice to be done in this study to the histories of the regions and countries involved and to the data provided by experts in the different regional and country reports. Yet an attempt to indicate some major relevant historical issues by way of background information will be made.

South Asia²

South Asia has two layers of conflict: international (including regional), and intrastate. India is central to the first of these, and not without influence on the intrastate problems of its neighbours. Few regions in any part of the world are dominated by a single state in population, in armed might and in the size of the economy as India dominates South Asia. India accounts for 72 per cent of South Asia's territory, and over 75 per cent of its GNP and population. In addition, it has nearly 60 per cent of its total international trade. Thus the very vastness of India is a central feature of any study of conflict in South Asia. Moreover, each of India's neighbours has minority groups with linguistic, religious or cultural ties with groups in India. India has been and is in a position to exploit these links to its advantage, or the disadvantage of its neighbours, whenever it wants.

All South Asian states have inherited border problems from the Raj, which bring them into conflict with neighbouring states (India and China and, to a lesser extent, Pakistan and Afghanistan) or with each other (India and Pakistan, and Bangladesh and Burma).

2) This section is an abbreviated version of part of chapter 2, 'Conflicts in South Asia: A General Historical Overview', in *South Asia: Regional Report* by K.M. de Silva.

The post-independence state in all parts of South Asia bears the marks of its colonial origins (except in the case of Afghanistan). The state was won from the colonial power after protracted agitation in the case of India, inherited through Partition in the case of Pakistan, seized through successful rebellion in Bangladesh, and in Sri Lanka alone was obtained through a process of peaceful negotiation. The processes of post-colonial consolidation and state-building by the new rulers have much in common in all of these instances. Language, culture, religion and ethnicity have often been disregarded. As a result, the successor states confront separatist forces. Separatism in South Asia is as much a colonial legacy as it is a re-emergence of powerful pre-colonial forces seeking a political identity based on language, culture or religion in a post-colonial setting. Ethnicity became linked to language as well. This already often happened within one decade of independence when the first euphoria started to wane and the deficiencies of the new power structures became obvious. The political establishments of the newly independent states became embroiled in protracted conflicts with ethnic and religious minorities that sought to resist the expanding powers and demands of the state. In Bangladesh language and culture became points of identity in a state – the original Pakistan – that was constructed on the basis of religion. There were several other examples of such conflicts in parts of South Asia: the Punjab, Jammu Kashmir, and Assam in India; Sind and Baluchistan in Pakistan; and in Sri Lanka. The principal separatist trouble spots are all border areas, and this adds to the volatility of the situation and implies a potential for cross-border tensions. Afghanistan is an example of long-term ethnic, tribal and religious divisions.

While separatism appears to be endemic in South Asia and is a powerful destabilizing force, it has generally been held at bay by an even more powerful force: nationalism. Because practically every state is vulnerable to different forms of separatism, it was seen to be in all the states' interest to resist threats to their integrity from indigenous and external separatist forces. The Partition created two hostile states: India, which inherited the bulk of the Raj; and Pakistan, a political oddity whose two wings were separated by over 1,400 kilometres of Indian territory. The Raj as an economic and fiscal unit had been constructed over 150 years. The new territorial boundaries imposed their own restrictions on road and rail systems, on the river systems, and cut across the complex system of head-works and canals in the irrigation network of the Punjab.

Externally, four sets of political problems emerged from the colonial history and Partition. The border between India and China in the north-west and north-east along the Himalayas became a matter of contention and, later on, of conflict. Second, the accession of Jammu Kashmir to the Indian union has been a matter of the deepest controversy between India and Pakistan. They went to war over these territories in 1947, 1965 and 1971. Third, Pakistan and Afghanistan differ on the Durand line, which was imposed by the British on Afghanistan in 1893; and Bangladesh inherited minor problems relating to the porous border with Burma. The fourth political problem is the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT). Why the CHT should have been awarded to Pakistan in 1947 at the Partition of the Raj remains a mystery. By religion and culture the population of that region had a greater affinity

with the people of north-east India, or of neighbouring Burma, than they did with the people of East Pakistan.

Population migration, some of it voluntary and some of it involuntary, has contributed and still contributes to tensions among and within the states of South Asia, and among their neighbours. Some demographic shifts go back to colonial times and others are post-independence. The British treated the Raj as a vast reservoir of labour. For example, in Sri Lanka the British imported Indian Tamils to work on their tea plantations. The Partition led to a huge influx of persons to India as well as to Pakistan. At the present time, voluntary population shifts within India generate more tensions than issues relating to the political status of the Indian community abroad. In the north-east of India, for instance, Bengali-speaking groups, both Hindu and Muslim, have moved from densely populated parts of eastern India and from the former East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) into relatively underpopulated Assam and neighbouring regions. The involuntary movements of population – refugees or displaced persons – are associated with cataclysmic political events in the region such as the crisis in Afghanistan.

*West Africa*³

With the exception of Liberia, every single state in West Africa was once colonized by a European power. These fifteen states all acceded to sovereignty in a seventeen-year period stretching from 1957 to 1974. Nine of these states were once the sprawling French West Africa administered from Dakar and, as such, remain active participants in the francophone bloc. Four came under British dominance and still maintain close political and cultural links with the British Commonwealth, while two others were, until as recently as 1974, overseas provinces of Portugal.

The British were the first to embark on the process of decolonization in Africa. Ghana achieved sovereignty in March 1957. Also in 1957, both the eastern and western regions of Nigeria attained the status of self-government, while the country as a whole achieved full sovereignty in 1960. The French were more reluctant than the British to decolonize; and the Portuguese foreclosed that option altogether. The reasons for this divergence lay in the differing colonial projects of the European powers. The introduction of Indirect Rule as a colonial policy by the British was dictated both by necessity and by deliberate choice. It was cost-effective, but also signalled an early acceptance by the British that these colonies would have to go their separate ways eventually.

The French did not share this reasoning. Two major considerations underpinned the French attitude: the first was the strategic value of the colonies in Africa, as the people and territories under France had played vital roles in the Free

3) This section is an abbreviated version of part of chapter 2, 'Perspectives on Armed Conflicts in West Africa', by E. Nwokedi, *West Africa: Regional Report* (Port Harcourt (Nigeria): CASS; and The Hague: International Institute of International Relations 'Clingendael', 1998).

French Movement and in the Allied powers' campaigns in the course of the Second World War; second, control of the colonies in sub-Saharan Africa was important for France's Great Power status in international politics. Independence for these colonies was conceived at best as an internal arrangement within the Franco-African Community that was proposed in the 1958 Fifth French Republican Constitution. Guinea's refusal to endorse this framework was the reason for its independence. When independence came in 1960 to the other states, it was both a recognition of the genuine aspirations of the people and an acceptance of the shortcomings of this new Franco-African Community. France then sought to preserve its influence in these countries through other arrangements, such as the signing of bilateral and multilateral treaties.

Colonialism has impacted upon West Africa in a number of ways. First, contemporary West African states are the creations of European powers. Indeed, they are the outcome of the scramble for Africa. The boundaries of these states were entirely defined (negotiated) and delimited by the colonial powers. They are not the outcome of indigenous processes of state formation. The second point concerns the forced incorporation of diverse nations and cultures into single political entities. In the post-colonial setting, the resulting frictions and ethnic antagonisms have persisted in the absence of a meaningful strategy of political management and nation-building. Third, colonialism has left a legacy of cultural orientations and vertical economic and political linkages between West African states and their former colonizing powers that have so far proved difficult to surmount in the quest for regional cooperation.

In the early years of independence during the 1960s, most states were content with treading carefully on the international scene. Ghana, Guinea and Mali adopted anti-imperialist stances. The sometimes radical and pan-African quest for unions between independent West African states was a manifestation of a willingness to build continental unity by transcending colonial territories. In 1959 Senegal, French Sudan (Mali), Upper-Volta (Burkina Faso) and Dahomey (Benin) decided to establish the Mali Federation, which undermined the Franco-African Community. In reacting to this projected Federation, Felix Houphouët-Boigny (1960-1993), the first President of Ivory Coast, set up the *Conseil de l'Entente* with French support. This brought together Ivory Coast, Benin, Burkina Faso and Niger (Togo joined in 1966), thus short-circuiting the Mali Federation, which was eventually made up of Senegal and French Sudan (Mali).

There were thus two contradictory tendencies in inter-West African relations in the immediate post-colonial period: the dismantling of links existing from colonial times on the one hand; and the reinforcement of these on the other. Ghana (formerly Gold Coast) moved quickly to dissociate itself from the common British institutions and services. The French-speaking states were engaged in reinforcing their own common institutions such as the franc zone (*Union Monétaire Ouest Africaine*) and in creating fresh ones to respond to emerging needs and challenges. Examples were the *Union Duoanière des États de l'Afrique de l'Ouest* (UDEAO), transformed into the *Communauté Economique de l'Afrique de l'Ouest* (CEAO), and the now defunct *Organisation Commune Africaine et*

Malgache/Mauricienne (OCAM). The salient point, however, was that until the creation of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in 1975, which theoretically bridged the linguistic divide in the region, the most important state in the area – Nigeria – was excluded from the multilateral framework for cooperation and diplomacy. This was partly the consequence of deliberate political choices by the key players in the region. In weaving a network of functional cooperation, the French-speaking West African states as well as France were motivated by the necessity to check the real and potential influence of Nigeria in the region. France's support to the secessionist province of Biafra during the course of civil war in Nigeria was part of the same strategy. At another level, the establishment of these networks was also motivated by Cold War calculations. Military technical cooperation agreements and secret defence treaties were part of Franco-African Cooperation Accords, on whose basis French troops were, and still are, stationed in Senegal and Ivory Coast, for example.

At another level, Ghana and Nigeria were perceived as rivals for influence in the region in the immediate post-colonial period, while there have also been tensions between Ivory Coast and Senegal and between Ivory Coast and Guinea and Ghana.

As a result of continuing economic and political dependency on the erstwhile colonial powers, the elites of the post-colonial states developed clientelist relationships. In most francophone states, a strong centralized state system was implemented through authoritarian rule. Elites in the post-colonial setting were strongly socialized into Western cultural values and standards, yet they maintained a paternalistic attitude towards the majority of mostly illiterate poor peasants. Simultaneously, these groups maintained the pre-colonial patron-client relationships with their ethnic constituencies. The integration of the various ethno-linguistic communities into a national framework failed. The incomplete process of nation-building and the failure to deliver social services to the population at large resulted in demands for greater autonomy and in regional and ethnic secessionist tendencies. The ensuing reactions from the state bureaucracies and power elites invariably involved internal repression of some kind, leading in turn to military *coups* and power transfer from civilian to military rule with a few notable exceptions (Senegal and Ivory Coast). In some states, lack of legitimacy and the disintegration of state institutions led to a process of state failure, which was provoked by large-scale internal conflict (Liberia and Sierra Leone). In the aftermath of the ending of the Cold War, democratization slowly appeared on the political agenda of a number of states, leading to more popular participation in the decision-making process and the weakening of authoritarianism. However, the recent history of the region shows cases of success and failure, indicating that democratization in its present appearance does not provide a solution for all problems of governance.

*Central America*⁴

Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua and Costa Rica were originally the five provinces of the Captaincy General of Guatemala, the administrative unit representing the colonial government of Spain. The process of building modern states began with independence in the early nineteenth century. Independence from Spain occurred without any type of direct confrontation. The Central America Republic, also known as the United Provinces of Central America, was established in 1821 and fell apart in 1838. The new states were based on a liberal, republican constitutional regime that in principle established the conditions for gradual democratic development under the rule of law. Frequent amendments and new constitutions, however, reflected the whims of the leaders. National territories were increasingly better defined and controlled by a central authority, although certain areas, such as the Caribbean and border areas, remained virtually outside the state system. The state-society relationship in practice reflected an authoritarian political regime and forceful forms of social control.

The Central American economies were controlled by the land-owning elite and were dependent on the exportation of a limited group of primary products. Submission of the masses and their enforced labour were the keys to production. The coercion necessary to supply such a labour force gave armies a repressive task. Landowners began to emerge as local leaders, or *caudillos*, who co-opted the local masses through patronage and violence. In turn, the *caudillos* were linked through clientelism to the head of state. This style of autocratic government considered central power as personal, almost family, property, and political struggles, whether peaceful or violent, therefore broke out among members of the same oligarchic class.

The main elements of the emerging political culture included: constitutionalism; a weak sense of rights; *caudillismo* and then presidentialism (or an emphasis on the executive); populism generated through patronage and clientelistic loyalties; patrimonialism; centralism; and intolerance. Because of all this, political competition for central power was something distant for the great majority of the population.

The republics fairly rapidly adopted some of the characteristics commonly associated with 'strong states', such as the constitutional organization of a defined governmental structure with specific territorial control, but they lacked their own functional autonomy *vis-à-vis* the oligarchy. In fact, state strength was associated more with its monopoly on organized violence and territorial control than with the gradual creation of generalized mechanisms of social consensus.

4) This section is an abbreviated version of part of the chapter on 'General Historical Overview', in *Central America: Regional Report* (San José (Costa Rica): Arias Foundation for Peace and Reconciliation, 1998).

By the end of the 1920s, populist political parties, mass movements and trade unions had emerged with radical socialist and communist ideologies. At the same time, a profound crisis began to affect the agro-export model as a result of its increasing vulnerability to changes in the international economy and global market prices. With only the important exception of Costa Rica, the immediate response was the implantation of military dictatorships that repressed popular demands. The United States backed all of these dictators. This dictatorial period was a transition towards the modernization that would occur following the Second World War. Although the communist and radical groups had been temporarily eradicated, the demands for economic and political reforms continued to grow, particularly among the expanding professional middle class. Modernization was also understood as democratization of the state and of politics.

None of the Central American countries made it through the post-war modernization period without acute domestic conflict. Revolutions took place in Guatemala (1944) and El Salvador (1948), initiated by alliances of the middle class with progressive, young military officers who attempted to create a popular base so as to implement democratic programmes of economic and social reform. The revolution in Guatemala confronted the traditional oligarchy and the conservative Catholic Church more openly, but its social democrat and anti-United States profile proved to be its downfall. In 1954, a military invasion took place backed by the US government. In El Salvador, initial clashes with the traditional, conservative sectors forced the revolutionaries to moderate their economic and social reforms. In the other two countries with a dictatorial tradition – Honduras and Nicaragua – modernization was much slower in the economic and social spheres and almost non-existent in the political realm. In Honduras, change towards a more democratic regime came in the second half of the 1950s; and in Nicaragua the Somoza family was ousted only in 1979. In both countries the governments were in full control of the armies and counted on strong support from the Catholic Church and the US government. In Costa Rica, popular tensions led to a civil war in 1948. The new Costa Rican government gradually recovered its democratic institutionalism, broadening the benefits of the welfare state. In the rest of the region, authoritarianism prevailed well into the 1970s under distinct forms of association between the military and civilians. It operated as institutionalized autocracy (the best examples being the family dictatorship of the Somozas in Nicaragua and the majority of Guatemalan military governments after 1954), or as a populist state with a significant repressive component, as in El Salvador and Honduras.

Conflict History

South Asia

Border Disputes

India and China

The Sino-Indian border dispute provides us with an example of a prolonged international conflict. The central feature of British India's defence plan was the Himalayas. Although the Himalayas were more distinctive geographically than politically, any ambiguity was settled in favour of the Raj by the exercise of military power, clever diplomacy and sheer bluff. The defence thinking of the Raj lives on in Delhi. Since 1959 and until very recently, relations between China and India had been seriously affected by conflicting interpretations on the 'true frontiers' of the Raj in the Himalayan region. The conflict with China was a direct result of India's public posture as the heir of the British in regard to the borders demarcated by the Raj and the Chinese Empire of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These borders had been imposed on a weak China despite its protests and refusal to acknowledge them. Needless to say, the much stronger post-war China was hardly likely to accept them either.

Pakistan

After Partition, Pakistan's two component units were separated from each other by over 1,400 kilometres. Power lay with the western wing, while the eastern wing had over half the population of the new state. The new state was constructed on the simple proposition that a common religion would bind its peoples together, in the face of distinct ethnic identities and of a multiplicity of languages. The Bengali-speaking population of East Pakistan had the great advantage of India's intervention on its behalf, which sought to exploit separatist agitation there to its own strategic advantage. Apart from inheriting the less developed parts of the Raj, Pakistan had the disadvantage of inheriting two unfriendly neighbours, one of which was India, against whom the new state had many grievances, especially the absorption of a large section of Kashmir.

Afghanistan

It was almost inevitable that Pakistan would inherit the suspicion if not hostility of the rulers of Afghanistan because of the Durand line, which the British had imposed in 1893, and which divided the Baluchi and Pathans between Afghanistan and the British Raj. Disputes over this boundary have remained a source of discord between Afghanistan and Pakistan since 1947, and that discord became part of the global Cold War virtually from the time of Pakistan's creation. Indeed, on a few occasions the two countries were on the verge of a military conflict, and although this was averted, there was no resolution of the issues in the conflict. There were a number of diplomatic incidents and demonstrations against Pakistan in Afghanistan, to which Pakistan responded by closing consulates and

trade missions and stopping transit. The Afghani-Pakistani conflict was kept alive by the compulsions of the Cold War, but these same Cold War compulsions prevented it from erupting into violence through adventurist initiatives on the part of either of the two states.

Jammu-Kashmir

The roots of the Kashmir conflict between Pakistan and India date back to the imperial conflicts of the nineteenth century when the Raj wanted to build a buffer zone between British India and the Tsarist Empire. Although the British established control over Kashmir, they did not make it part of British India and the boundaries with China and with Afghanistan in the Kashmir region were never clearly or fully demarcated. The manner in which the state of Jammu-Kashmir acceded to India violated the principles that guided the Partition of the Raj in 1947. In the first two wars with India on the Kashmir issue, in 1947 and 1965, Pakistan sought to challenge if not reverse the decision to convert Jammu-Kashmir into a state of the Indian Union. The first of these wars brought approximately one-third of Jammu-Kashmir under Pakistani control. The second war gave Pakistan no advantage at all. The third war in 1971 took place against the background of India's successful intervention in support of the Bengali separatist movement and the emergence of Bangladesh as an independent state. This time, the diplomatic and political advantages were unmistakably with India, as evidenced by the Simla Accord of 1972. Mediation and conflict management in this dispute were attempted on three levels, beginning first with the United Nations. Since 1947-48 there have been numerous UN Security Council Resolutions on Kashmir, and even today the UN maintains a peacekeeping presence on the ceasefire line. There have also been third-party mediations, especially by the former Soviet Union in 1965, as well as bilateral negotiations between the two countries since 1971-72. But none of these have brought the conflict anywhere near resolution. For Pakistan, Kashmir is part of the unfinished business of the Partition of the Raj. For India, control over Jammu-Kashmir is an assertion of the secularity of the Indian state.

Intrastate Conflicts

Afghanistan

The ethnic, religious and linguistic diversity in Afghanistan has always presented an enormous political difficulty in developing a coherent sense of nationhood. Even within ethnic tribes there are many layers and sub-layers. This all had a strong bearing on the making and unmaking of military alliances in the different wars that Afghanistan has faced. Internally, Afghanistan remained a weak state with underdeveloped state institutions. The state was ruled by a king, relying on a coalition of traditional tribal and religious leaders. Territorial and tribal affiliation were the only bases for legitimacy of political power. When Dardar Daoud ousted the monarchy in 1973, he contested the Durand line which had

been imposed on Afghanistan by the English in the eighteenth century. This, however, strained relations with the Pahlavi dynasty in Iran and the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Ali Bhutto. Iran expelled over one million Afghans and Pakistan launched a modernization programme in the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) to counter the overthrow of the monarchy. Although this prompted a more modest stance by Daoud's regime, the contours of future conflict were already visible. Daoud was killed in a violent *coup d'état* that took place in 1978, which was the result of contradictory reforms that he had undertaken whereby the army was reinforced and trained by the Soviets as opposed to religious leaders who received training in Egypt and intellectuals who were oriented towards Western Europe. Because the intellectuals were excluded from power, some sections joined radical Marxist groups. The Parcham organization eventually spearheaded the movement, but internal rivalries led to power shifts with another Marxist faction, the Khalq movement. In 1979 the Soviets feared destabilization of this emerging Marxist regime and decided to invade, as US interests had suffered a major setback in the ousting of Shah Pahlavi from Iran. The Soviet occupation developed into all-out war between the Soviet-backed Marxist regime and the opposition forces backed by Pakistan and the US, mainly operating from Pakistan. This broad so-called mujahidin movement eventually succeeded in defeating the Soviets, leading to their withdrawal in 1989. However, the resistance movement was highly diversified and could not agree on a power-sharing arrangement. The various factions split according to territorial origins and ethnic lines. Afghanistan was virtually divided into a number of ethnic regions, especially when the Taliban emerged as the leading Pashtun movement after years of internal strife among tribal leaders. During the Soviet occupation each group was supported by kin groups residing in neighbouring countries. As a consequence, the major political antagonists had direct connections with regional powers. The Hazara Shi'ite group received support from Iran, the Pathans were backed by Pakistan, and finally the Uzbeks and Tajiks were supported by the former Soviet Central Asian States. During the Soviet occupation, the United States heavily supported the Pakistan-based resistance groups. During the Reagan administration, notably after 1985, this support reached an average of US\$ 600 million per year. Thus the Afghanistan conflict can be viewed as the last proxy war in Asia, fought between the superpowers in the framework of the Cold War. However, when the Soviets were defeated and left Afghanistan, the interest of both rivals suddenly declined, leaving a power vacuum that gave local powers an opportunity to meddle in the affairs of this collapsed state.

Afghanistan has had five types of conflict. The first was related to efforts of the various kings to assert or extend their authority over rebellious ethnic and tribal groups, especially minorities such as the Uzbeks, Hazarans and Tajiks. A second type refers to inter-tribal warfare, mainly about territorial claims, but also related to murders, revenge killings and disputes about women. Armed conflicts among different mujahidin forces also have to be seen as motivated by a struggle for political power or territorial claims. The fourth type of conflict is sectarian

between the Shia and the Sunni and occurred at different times in Afghan history. It continues in present-day Afghanistan as the struggle between the orthodox Sunni Taliban and the Shi'ite Hazarans, who are supported by Iran. Finally, the civil war has acquired an ethnic dimension: of Pathans against an alliance of non-Pathan ethnic minorities. The last three conflicts have also some regional or international dimensions, as nearly all neighbouring states are involved and support one of the parties in one way or another, the main reason being that the same ethnic or sectarian groups live on each side of Afghanistan's borders.

Bangladesh

Bangladesh has seen quite different types of conflict. First, there have been civil-military feuds finally leading to a bloody *coup* in 1975 as well as a series of *coups* and counter-*coups* since then. A tumultuous and violent political scene accompanied the militarization of society and the administration. Also after the coming to power of democratic governments, these violent political feuds and agitation continued, especially during election campaigns and the elections themselves. The violent political culture has not yet been mastered sufficiently by the government, as illustrated by the phenomenon of campus violence, in which extremist student fractions confront each other violently. Political agitation in the process has become mixed with elements of crime and terrorism. In the south and south-west of Bangladesh, armed gangs resort to acts of ransom, threat, dacoity and robbery. Begun as left-wing ideological guerrilla movements, they are now devoid of any ideological content and simply commit crimes and terrorize common people. The government is apparently not able to counteract or arrest these gangs and is even accused of harassing people instead of protecting them. The political process in Bangladesh continues even today to be strongly agitated and polarized between different political parties. This situation partly results from the position and role that different actors played during the war of independence. The cleavage between right-wing and left-wing independence fighters divides the security forces and fuels armed confrontation.

The insurgency in the Chittagong Hill Tracts was an ethnic separatist struggle partly explained by the colonial decision to make the CHT a part of Pakistan, but also by the exclusionist policies of Pakistan and later Bangladesh. When the military regimes started counter-insurgency operations and settling Bengali migrants on lands in the region, the Hill people's threat perception increased further and finally propelled them into full-fledged insurgency. The conflict also had a regional aspect as the Indian state of Tripura hosted as many as 50,000 refugees from the area, while the insurgents not only took shelter in India, but were also trained and armed there. Only as recently as 1997 had some settlement been reached, although not all involved parties are in full agreement with the provisions of that settlement. Another important conflict situation facing Bangladesh is the Rohingya refugee problem. The Muslim Rohingyas fled the Arakan province of Burma as a consequence of their independence struggle and the repressive measures by the Burmese army since the 1970s. This escalated in

the 1990s when the total number of refugees amounted to 270,000. Bangladesh is not prepared to sustain them and is also reluctant to allow Rohingya activism on its soil in view of repeated incursions by Burma's security forces.

India

India's intrastate conflicts have their roots in society. There are several types in this category: communal; ethno-linguistic; and class- and caste-oriented tensions. There are also conflicts related to political instability, and as a consequence of institutional failures against overall poverty and underdevelopment.

Some of the intrastate conflicts have significant international linkages, especially the ethnic and religious movements in Kashmir, Punjab and the north-east. In the Hindu-Muslim or communal conflict, there have been spells of serious clashes interspersed with periods of relative peace. The conflict has seen peak periods in 1947, 1964 and 1992-1993, but the situation seriously worsened in the 1980s when communal politicization took place and mutual mistrust increased. In general the Muslim community suffered from insecurity on account of political under-representation and economic marginalization after independence, as many educated and well-placed members of their community had gone to Pakistan. During those days, however, the Congress Party followed a secular line and identified with both Hindu and Muslim interests. Congress later came to play the more explicit role as the patron of Hinduism in view of populist, electoral motives and competition from Hindu radical parties. This, in combination with Indira Gandhi's emergency measures, led the Muslims to vote against the party in 1977. During the 1980s Hindu nationalism grew steadily and a Hindu vote bank emerged. Congress was also seen as moving towards an even more explicit Hindu point of view. Tensions increased because of the controversy about the Babri Mosque and finally its destruction, triggering widespread communal violence. The situation remains very sensitive, especially as a consequence of Hindu extremism.

Caste conflict in India has its origin in the system of traditional social stratification and socio-economic inequity. Caste violence was originally comprised of Brahmin-led violence against the Harijans, but now it is more related to issues of political and economic domination. Lower castes started to mobilize on the basis of their identity and wanted to fulfil their aspirations for recognition as equal citizens with equal rights. There are no hard data on caste conflicts, but there are serious incidents nearly every year. The number of incidents and killings seems to be on the increase according to figures of the Indian Ministry of Home Affairs.

Another type of conflict involves (left-wing) peasant movements. Among those movements the Naxalite movement has been the most prominent, typifying a kind of armed struggle on the basis of Marxist-Leninist and Maoist ideology. The movements have been directed against the domination of the tax collectors, landlords and usurers over sharecroppers and labourers. This type of struggle could be seen in several Indian states from the late 1950s to 1970. In the Naxalbari revolt of 1967, over one hundred violent incidents took place between

the movement and the police. Some improvements were finally promised and certain aspects of land reform implemented.

Separatist and regional movements have emerged in various parts of India over the last fifty years. Most were restricted to small areas and small groups, and most of those movements are now dormant. Most prominent has been the armed political turbulence in the north-east and the Punjab. In the north-east, India faced serious challenges to its territorial integrity in the form of the Mizo, Naga and other separatist insurgencies. Most political movements were based on ethnicity, but also had strong economic demands. The groups also perceived a threat to their identity, sometimes as a consequence of central state policies or because of the influx of migrants from elsewhere. Most movements were fairly parochial and not only directed against India but also towards other contending movements locally. Many had a large following among the youth. In all of these conflicts there have been attempts at negotiated settlements, but these generally failed, as again more radical and aggressive movements emerged. Today there are several (factionalized) insurgent groups active, some allegedly supported by governments in the region.

Separatism in the Punjab started on the basis of a number of grievances that were not addressed by the government as they were seen as going against the unity and integrity of the nation. Partly as a consequence of this type of political mismanagement, as well as on account of the 'green' revolution, which caused landlessness, displacement and poverty, and because of deep-seated ethnic and religious animosities, the Sikhs started to demand an independent Sikh state comprising Punjab and some adjacent areas. The root causes of the conflict lay in rural-urban inequality coinciding with Sikh-Hindu domination of the rural and urban economic sectors respectively, which were soon distorted in a communal schism. The conflict culminated in Operation Blue Star, when the Indian army intervened militarily to crush the Sikh's militant movement.

Pakistan

Sources of conflict in Pakistan are predominantly ethnic and sectarian. There have been ethnic nationalist movements in the North-West Frontier Province (Pashtu nationalism), Baluchistan and Sind (Sindhi and *mohajir* nationalism) and in East Bengal before the independence of Bangladesh. The sectarian anti-Ahmadiya movement and the Shia-Sunni strife are mainly located in the Punjab.

Pakhtun nationalist leadership faced oppression by a domineering centre. However, integrationist policies gradually weakened Pashtu nationalism and the conflict never took a violent form. East Bengali nationalism had to do with language discrimination and lack of access to government funds, jobs and services. It finally resulted in a bloody civil war, followed by Pakistan's defeat by Indian forces. Baluchi nationalism has had different moments of rise and fall. There was a guerrilla war against the state from 1973-1977, but a decline followed and the political scene has been quiet for more than a decade now. Sindhi nationalism has to be seen as a reaction to the federal government and the so-called Punjabi-*mohajir* imperialism that thwarted cultural and linguistic aspirations. Sindhis

continue to feel seriously under-represented and discriminated in their own area, a sentiment fuelled by the influx of migrants from the north as well as the prospect of the repatriation of large groups of Biharis from Bangladesh. The *mohajir*⁵ movement is different in the sense that *mohajirs* were initially dominant in the state system although they lacked a common identity in ethnic, linguistic, sectarian or other sense and were even relatively unstructured and atomized. They progressively lost their grip on power and essentially as a result of this started to organize a movement and acquire a nationalist character. The most important party, the MQM, initially operated as a pressure group but gradually developed into a terrorist group. In 1992 the army cracked down on the MQM, but the lack of adequate state performance in response to *mohajir* demands and their declining role in public life and political representation continue to fuel *mohajir* ethno-nationalism.

The sectarian conflict related to the anti-Ahmadiya movement led to martial law being imposed in Lahore in 1953. Ever since, governments have attempted to outlaw the Ahmadiyas despite international protests and human rights campaigns. There have been many instances of social ostracism, killings and attacks on Ahmadiyas and their places of worship.

The centuries-old division between the Shia and Sunni sects has worsened during the last decade or so because of developments in Iran (the 1978 revolution), Afghanistan and Pakistan itself (Zia's Islamization programme). The contradictions took an increasingly violent shape and at present the conflict is characterized by widespread terrorism in the Punjab and the inability of the government to stop the deterioration of sectarian relations.

Sri Lanka

Since the mid-1950s Sri Lanka has provided examples of a variety of conflicts with varying levels of intensity. Although there have been some minor clashes between Buddhists and Roman Catholics regarding educational issues, the two main sets of violent conflicts are episodes of ethnic conflict between Sinhalese and Tamils and the insurgencies by the *Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna* (JVP), a Marxist-Sinhalese nationalist group. Ethnic conflict saw two early violent periods in 1956 and 1958, mainly precipitated by changes in the government's language policy. The JVP's armed attempt to overthrow the government in 1971 was largely inspired by the then government's failure to satisfy aspirations among militant and articulate unemployed educated youth, mainly from rural areas in the south of the country. Equally important in this insurgency were the ideological and organizational factors that gave shape to the JVP movement. In the 1970s there were also spells of ethnic violence, mainly as a result of changes in the rules and quotas for university admission. Now, however, there was a change from demands for minority rights and forms of regional autonomy towards advocacy of separatism,

5) The *Mahajir* community consist of Muslim immigrants originating from Muslim minority provinces in India, who immigrated to Pakistan after the Partition in 1949.

because the more radical and younger Tamil groups had pushed the traditional and moderate Tamil parties to the periphery. After the anti-Tamil riots in 1983, the conflict assumed proportions of a near civil war fought between the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and government forces. The Indian intervention (IPKF) from 1987-1991 internationalized and worsened the conflict. During the same period the JVP launched another attack on the government from 1987-88, exploiting the Sinhalese population's resistance against Indian involvement in the ethnic conflict. The JVP killed well over 2,500 persons, especially prominent members and supporters of the ruling party, yet the army finally crushed the JVP movement in a harsh anti-terrorist campaign. Violence and terror on both sides, resulting in large numbers of casualties, accompanied this conflict.

West Africa

Nigeria

The first major conflict that shook West Africa was the Nigerian civil war, which pitched Nigeria's federal government against its secessionist eastern region, Biafra. The civil war that raged between 1967 and 1970 was the culmination of political and ethnically motivated strife that had taken centre stage in the country during the first few years of independence. Shifts in the locus of central power in the federation among elites of the competing ethnic groups – Hausa, Fulani, Igbo and Yoruba – acting in alliance or separately, were politically destabilizing to the country. Two consecutive coups heralded the outbreak of civil war. The first coup was perceived as a power seizure by the eastern – that is, Igbo-led – elite, whereas the second coup clearly represented the response by the predominant northern – that is, Fulani- and Hausa-led – elite. Massive killings of Igbos residing in the northern parts of the federation, as well as the promulgation of further administrative splits of the eastern region by the federal authorities, provoked the civil war. However, the major issue at stake was control of the federal government. Control over the allocation of federal funds was widely perceived as the ultimate prerequisite for political domination and power. Although the Nigerian civil war was an intrastate conflict, its relevance for West Africa lay in the type of external intervention and shifts in West African alliances that it occasioned. The British government and the Soviet Union served as the major arms' suppliers to the Nigerian government. France and Portugal were the main backers of the Biafran secessionist bid. As colonial rivals in West Africa, Britain sought to preserve the territorial integrity of its erstwhile star colony and prized market in West Africa, while France saw an opportunity to eliminate the threat that this huge anglophone federation constituted to its predominance in the region by encouraging the latter's dismemberment. Also within West Africa itself, the Nigerian civil war generated conflicting responses, varying from attempts at reconciliation, recognition of Biafra and humanitarian operations.

The regional security setting was perturbed in the 1970s by a number of other incidents. In 1971, Portugal invaded Guinea to stem the tide of the anti-

colonial war against it by the liberation movement in Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde from bases in Guinea. In 1974, a short confrontation erupted between Mali and Burkina Faso over the precise limits of their borders. In the late 1970s the protracted civil war in Chad provided Libya with opportunities to meddle in Chad's internal affairs, after which Libya attempted to annex parts of Chad and Niger. The civil wars or domestic upheavals were mainly due to processes of state formation, to the nature of the post-colonial state and to personalized (authoritarian) political rule. In the beginning of the 1980s West Africa saw a soft variety of state collapse, exemplified by Ghana and Guinea whose economic misfortunes led to massive emigration or disengagement of their nationals from the political process.

Senegal

By 1982, the seething discontent in the Casamance was openly articulated as a political demand on the Senegalese authorities with the reactivation of the *Mouvement des Forces Démocratiques de Casamance* (MFDC). The relative remoteness of Casamance province from Dakar and the widely perceived economic and political domination of the northern Wolof elite over local ethnic groups, intermingled with other cultural and historical factors, exploded into a violent and secessionist challenge to the Senegalese state. The Jola-dominated uprising of the MFDC movement against the Senegalese state seems to be largely based on a process of economic development that marginalizes the indigenous population by exploiting regional resources, while modern economic relations dominate over local modes of production. The ensuing violent conflict has evolved over some concrete issues stemming from this structural setting. The obvious manipulation of land allocation in the early 1980s led to an outburst of popular protest that was severely repressed by the Senegalese government. This in turn led to the creation of an armed opposition movement. The quiet period from 1982-89 can be considered as an 'incubation period' for the MFDC to get support and to gain strength. Tensions between Senegal and neighbouring states during 1989, which resulted in various clashes and tensions but never evolved into full-scale war, provided an excellent strategic momentum for the MFDC to take on the Senegalese state. From then on, the conflict became a full-scale military confrontation that has gradually evolved into a military stalemate. At present the conflict can be characterized as a guerrilla war, and a political solution has not yet been reached.

The 1980s were particularly violent for West Africa. The general economic decline of the region's states was *inter alia* attributed to external dependence, poor management, corruption and debt. Austerity measures in line with the conditionalities demanded by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank were implemented. From Mauritania to Nigeria, the implementation of an economic structural adjustment programme raised poverty levels and, therefore, exacerbated social tensions. Three categories of conflicts and of protest movements were discernible during this period. In the first place, Mali and Burkina Faso re-engaged in another short-lived war over their disputed border in

1985; and a dispute between Mauritania and Senegal in 1989 over grazing and farming rights along the banks of the River Senegal degenerated into mutual killings and mass expulsion of their nationals living in each other's territory, thereby creating unprecedented refugee problems. Second, mass discontent in many parts of the region led to persistent demands for an end to military rule and the one-party state authoritarianism prevalent in many of these states. The latter was part of an unprecedented wave of protests in sub-Saharan Africa that sought a democratic solution to the crisis of the state in the region. Third, and finally, there was an upsurge in insurgency activities and other forms of armed conflict within some states. In Nigeria, for example, the first half of the 1980s was marked by a repeated outbreak of religious violence in several cities in northern Nigeria, during which hundreds (thousands by some estimates) of lives were lost. These religious upheavals were followed by ethnic-induced and inter-communal uprisings in, especially, the oil-producing Niger Delta area, which was inhabited by *inter alia* the Ijo, Ogoni and the Itsekiri.

Niger

Insurgency movements racked Niger, where the Touareg and Toubou rebellions exploded in the early 1990s. Consecutive droughts in the early 1970s and 1980s heralded an ecological crisis for the Sahel zone in sub-Saharan Africa, aggravated by progressive demographic growth and a stagnation of traditional modes of production. This in turn led to a profound crisis in the livelihood systems of farmers and herdsman and provoked massive migration to neighbouring regions as well as the disruption of the prevailing subsistence economy. Herdsman communities were particularly affected. When the situation gradually improved, these refugees were repatriated from Libya, Algeria and Mauretania to their areas of origin in Niger and Mali. Unfortunately, the governments of these countries failed to absorb these displaced and impoverished returnees, which led to protest among the herdsman. The erstwhile powerful Tamajaq requested state assistance for reintegration and the build-up of new herds, but they were frustrated and humiliated by the government of Niger. Violent incidents led ultimately to an open declaration of rebellion by specific Tamajaq factions in Niger in 1990. The rebellion resulted in extensive unrest in large areas of the desert and in the northernmost parts of both Niger and Mali, resulting in a military stalemate between the insurgents and the national armies. The rebellion was finally ended by a negotiated settlement, which was facilitated by neighbouring governments and France.

Ghana

Three of the countries included in this study – Niger, Nigeria and Senegal – have undergone, or are still undergoing, intrastate armed conflict. Ghana, which shares similar neo-colonial features with these states, appears to have a low level of violence. Although there has been violent conflict, these conflicts did not escalate into full civil wars, also because there was no full and direct involvement by the

military apparatus of the state. First, Ashanti separatism was dealt with by Nkrumah's Convention People's Party (CPP) before independence, and this was consolidated by the electoral triumph in 1956. Also the Ewe and Ga separatist initiatives were defeated without exercising major military power.

Central America

The 1979 Sandinista revolution had a profound effect on the whole Central American region. Comprehension of the dynamics of that conflict helps to understand the conflicts in El Salvador and Guatemala as well. Although there were similar conditions in Honduras and a significant military presence, there was no conflict. Costa Rica not only lacks many characteristics shared by the other four countries, but is also demilitarized and is therefore in a unique situation in the region.

Nicaragua

The Nicaraguan conflict should be seen as two separate conflicts that follow upon one another. The first conflict consisted of a multi-class revolutionary alliance to overthrow the Somoza dynasty. Protests and armed actions by guerrilla groups had begun in Nicaragua as early as the 1920s under the now mythical nationalist leader, Augusto César Sandino, and a less coherent guerrilla struggle occurred between 1957 and 1967, when the movement was temporarily defeated. As the Somoza dictatorship worsened, taking absolute control not only of government, state institutions and resources but also monopolizing significant sectors of the national economy, the guerrilla movement picked up again, particularly as of 1977. This time the insurgents had the growing support of the rest of society, including the private sector and the Catholic Church, until eventually all of society had united against the dictatorship. The strength of that movement was enough to send Somoza fleeing into exile. Members of the National Guard laid down their arms or also fled, resulting in the immediate de-escalation of the conflict. The *Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional* (FSLN) and the economic elite had previously agreed to rule the country together, but the ideological gap between these two opposing poles of leadership proved too wide. The power struggle that rapidly evolved sent Nicaragua into a new period of conflict.

The second conflict lasted one full decade. Although this conflict involved most of the same actors, there had been shifts in alliances between them. The FSLN's monopolization of power and its effort to implement socialist measures alienated the more conservative sectors. While the FSLN fought to defend the revolution, the conservative anti-Somoza economic elite realigned itself with the former National Guard members who had formed a counter-revolutionary guerrilla force known as the *contras*. They received substantial financial and logistical support as well as military training from the United States. As of 1982, contra armed actions against the Sandinistas escalated and the contra-Sandinista struggle in many ways came to represent a proxy war between the

United States and the Nicaraguan government. Despite US insistence on the military defeat of the Sandinistas, by 1987 the contras seemed to have little chance of victory against the national army. Moreover, the regional peace process had begun and was to a great extent founded on the pacification and democratization of Nicaragua, as the situation in Nicaragua had come to be an elemental factor in the other regional conflicts. The Sandinistas were the only insurgency that had actually won an armed struggle and come to power, and they helped to feed the guerrilla movements in El Salvador and Guatemala, often channelling aid and equipment from Cuba and the Soviets. Elections in 1990 removed the Sandinistas from power, initiating not only a transition to democratically elected government but also an effort at national reconciliation and peace-building.

El Salvador

The conflict in El Salvador had a much slower beginning. After the 1969 war with Honduras, thousands of Salvadoreans were forced to return home from Honduras, and the already difficult land tenure situation made it difficult to absorb the returnees. Second, the migrant population brought with it popular organizational skills gained working on the Honduran banana plantations. This coincided with the appearance of a guerrilla movement, which was based in the border area that had been demilitarized as part of the ceasefire between the two countries. Over the course of the next ten years the situation in El Salvador deteriorated as the government became increasingly authoritarian, causing growing numbers of the population to defect to the armed struggle. The guerrilla movement *Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional* (FMLN) not only gained in strength and numbers but also got a political leadership through the *Frente Democrático Revolucionario* (the FDR), which earned international recognition and diplomatic backing for the movement.

In 1981, the guerrillas launched their final offensive. Rather than ending the conflict, this attack catapulted the country into open civil war, with the government backed by the United States and the guerrillas by Nicaragua (and indirectly by Cuba). By this time, efforts were under way to initiate a transition back to an elected government, but while negotiations, both on behalf of the government and the guerrillas, were genuine, each side continued to pursue a military victory. The safeguards that the regional agreement provided for democratization, however, did prompt the FDR to abandon the armed struggle and to participate in the upcoming elections, which were scheduled for 1989. Although the FMLN planned another final offensive, it only demonstrated to both sides the futility of continuing with an armed struggle that was in a hopeless stalemate. From then on, both sides engaged earnestly in negotiations, which were mediated by the United Nations. These finally led to a peace accord in 1992.

Guatemala

Guatemala experienced a conflict that was distinct in two regards: first, because of the relative absence of US military influence; and second, because of both sides' manipulation of Guatemala's ethnic population. A period of reform came to an end in Guatemala in 1954 through a *coup* sponsored by the United States. From then on, military governments tried to repress popular demands. A guerrilla movement was born out of a failed *coup* in the early 1960s, but was quickly disrupted. By the mid-1970s, however, the levels of violence had begun to increase, as both the military and the guerrillas sought new bases of support in the peasant and indigenous populations. The military unleashed a large-scale counter-insurgency campaign when the guerrillas established autonomous independent self-governing units in parts of the country in the early 1980s. This military campaign led to the massive destruction of a large number of indigenous villages and into an exercise of ethnic cleansing. This in turn provoked the displacement of some two million people, who partly fled to neighbouring Mexico. The guerrilla movement as a result lost much of its credibility, as it proved incapable of resisting the military onslaught successfully. The opposition movement was repeatedly defeated in the period 1982-1984 and was forced to return to guerrilla tactics as opposed to controlling and maintaining a fixed base in the country itself. The ensuing stalemate between the guerrillas and the military paved the way for negotiations. Similarly, a return to civilian elected governments in 1984 helped to ease the political tensions. Between 1986 and 1990, dialogue between the government and the *Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca* (URNG) was hampered by the military's desire to see the guerrillas surrender, in contrast with the URNG's vision of dialogue as a desirable form of negotiation. Although Guatemala was host to the first major steps of the regional peace process, the effects of the Esquipulas II Accord on the Guatemalan conflict were less immediate. By 1990, however, the conditions were in place for a negotiated solution to the crisis, which then required six years of discussion on various themes that lay at the heart of the crisis. Finally, in 1996, the Guatemalan peace accord was signed.

Honduras

Honduras has avoided conflict with the exception of the 1969 war with El Salvador. Although that conflict served a domestic purpose by uniting the national population against a common enemy, it did not resolve the many social and economic ills facing Honduras. Once the war ended and the problems persisted, the government was forced to take action or risk the reaction of the population. Because it tried to avoid an insurgent revolutionary movement like those in neighbouring countries, the conservative military Honduras governments tended to implement the minimal reforms necessary to keep the masses appeased, with doses of repression used only against the most radical opposition. Guaranteed participation through the traditional political parties, unions and peasant organizations, fairly successful agrarian reform

(relatively speaking in the Central American context), and a preventive transition back to civilian and democratically-elected presidents were among the measures that helped Honduras to contain conflict, despite being located literally in the middle of the region. Indeed, even the US quasi-occupation of the country, accompanied by the presence of contras, the FMLN and Salvadorean troops operating clandestinely or overtly, was not enough to counter the positive influence of reforms taken by the government. Despite sharing all of the structural conditions present in Nicaragua, El Salvador and Guatemala, and despite the influence of most of the same external and temporal factors, Honduras succeeded in implementing a system of conflict management that steered the country clear of open armed conflict.

Costa Rica

Costa Rica avoided conflict by adopting a political and socio-economic system that was completely distinct from that of its neighbours. Stable, elected democracies were in place in Costa Rica as of 1948, and soon thereafter government policy began to focus on distributive policies and social measures that benefited the entire population. Costa Rica had the advantage of starting out with structural conditions that were considerably less unequal and embedded than those in other countries, largely due to its somewhat distinct colonial heritage and post-colonial evolution. Finally, Costa Rica is the only country in the region that has abolished its army. Clearly, the lack of a repressive force with the ability to overrule the legitimate government favoured the healthy development of democracy in Costa Rica. Moreover, it helped to keep Costa Rica further out of the fray of the Central American conflict, unlike Honduras which saw its national military co-opted to serve as a first line of defence for US geostrategic interests.

III Socio-Economic Factors: A Socio-Economic Perspective on the Emergence of Internal Conflicts

Introduction

A socio-economic perspective will be presented in this chapter based on the various conflict case studies that have been elaborated in West Africa, South Asia and Central America. This chapter thus deals with an analysis of socio-economic factors that may lead to violent conflict. Within academic circles, as well as within policy circles, there is a strong conviction that poverty and socio-economic inequality are so-called root causes leading to the emergence of violent conflicts. It is imperative to understand the way in which resources are generated and shared among and between groups of people in order to be able to understand the nature of political interaction within and between communities. This basic assumption underlies the structure of this chapter. Therefore, studying the degree of poverty, the absolute number of poor people as well as the degree of inequality may reveal important incentives and grievances of specific communities within states. It is assumed that this may in turn lead to a better understanding of the genesis of violent conflicts. This chapter hence dwells upon a number of general assumptions deduced from the empirical material, and sometimes provides punctual examples presented in separate text boxes.

It is widely assumed that identity and culture are important in understanding the dynamics of group mobilization into violent collective action. This study tries to

relate cultural diversity to patterns of group mobilization and to the emergence of violent conflict. The analysis focuses on socio-economic processes affecting specific sub-state actors, defined either as specific peoples inhabiting a distinct region or as particular ethno-linguistic communities living among other cultures. Nevertheless, this study does not claim to have investigated culture and identity-related factors beyond immediate linkages with patterns of socio-economic development.

In this section the three working hypotheses related to socio-economic factors¹ have been tested empirically in three separate sections in order to try to establish causal relations between poverty, socio-economic inequality and economic dynamics respectively and the emergence of violent conflict. Within each section the analysis is taken beyond testing simple straightforward relationships. Consequently, in the section on poverty, next to an analysis of absolute trends, the issue of cultural inhibition and poverty has been reviewed. In the section on socio-economic inequality, apart from absolute differences, resource-related conflicts largely related to land, relative and perceived patterns of socio-economic inequality, the impact of resource extraction by the central state authorities as well as competition among groups for government resources and services have been analysed. The section on economic dynamics dwells on a regional perspective and on a country-by-country overview of developments. Some pertinent cases have been highlighted in separate text boxes to support the salience of specific findings.

During the analysis in the three sections, working hypotheses (see chapter I) were sometimes adapted and reformulated and subsequently tested anew.

A) Poverty and Conflict

The basic assumption underlying this analysis links poverty directly to the possible outbreak of conflict, supposing that if poverty increases, violent conflict will become likely and vice versa.

The analysis initially focused on the statistics of poverty, defined as the lowest income groups, and on the incidence of conflict. In general, the long-term trends for poverty reveal different patterns for the various regions analysed.² From the statistical evidence available in South Asia, for example, we witness a long-term trend of at least marginally declining poverty. In fact, the relative share of absolute poor, expressed as a percentage of total population, has steadily declined, but in absolute numbers the poor have become more numerous.³ For West Africa, when

1) See chapter I.

2) As has been the case in many empirical studies executed in Southern countries, data were sometimes hard to obtain and not always comparable from country to country.

3) These figures, however, have been hotly contested by various government commissions in India. See *South Asia: Regional Report*, Part I, chapter 4 on India, section on socio-economic dimensions

defined in terms of income statistics, a long-term trend demonstrates increasing poverty for the majority of people, as pre-independence incomes are nominally higher than present-day income levels.⁴ In Central America the overall trend reveals a dynamic pattern of growth towards the 1970s, a sharp increase in poverty levels in the 1980s, followed by improved income statistics, to arrive at a contemporary stalemate of marginal income decline for the poor.⁵

From a bird's eye perspective overlooking the entire research, these long-term trends do not necessarily seem to correlate with the incidence of violent conflict in the regions, nor can a consistent pattern be identified in which deteriorating poverty rates can directly be related to the outbreak of violent conflicts in separate countries.⁶

When looking at detailed figures for the Central American countries, a mixed image emerges. In Nicaragua the proportion of the population living in a state of poverty remained stable during the last decade of Somoza's rule, but deteriorated during the Sandinista period. The number of people living in extreme poverty grew from 34.7 per cent of the total population in 1980 to 37.7 per cent in 1985.⁷ The peak of violent internal conflict directed by the Sandinista movement at the Somoza regime did not correlate with a trend of deteriorating poverty. During the Sandinista regime, poverty grew and violent conflict with the contras escalated, suggesting covariance between both phenomena. In El Salvador the share of the national income for the poorest 20 per cent of the population steadily declined from 5.5 per cent in 1961 to 2 per cent in 1980.⁸ In the early 1980s the conflict escalated into a full-fledged civil war, again suggesting a correlation between growing poverty and the emergence of violent conflict. Between 1970 and 1980, the decade preceding the large-scale counter-insurgency campaign in the highlands of Guatemala, the poorest half of that country saw its percentage share in national income distribution grow from 17.4 per cent to 19.8 per cent. In the aftermath of the devastating military campaign, however, levels of extreme poverty rose from 39.6 per cent in 1980 to 64 per cent in 1986.⁹ Hence, in the case of Central America no consistent correlation

(Kandy (Sri Lanka): International Centre for Ethnic Studies; and The Hague: Netherlands Institute of International Relations 'Clingendael', 1998), p. 121.

4) *West Africa: Regional Report* (Port Harcourt (Nigeria): Centre for Advanced Social Science; and The Hague: Netherlands Institute of International Relations 'Clingendael', 1998).

5) *Central America: Regional Report* (San Jose (Costa Rica): Arias Foundation for Peace and Reconciliation; and The Hague: Netherlands Institute of International Relations 'Clingendael', 1998).

6) Changes in levels of poverty enable some degree of analysis and testing of the poverty hypothesis. The hypothesis refers to changes in the levels of poverty, rather than any absolute level of poverty per se.

7) See Annexe I, Poverty Statistics for Central America.

8) See Annexe I, Poverty Statistics for Central America.

9) See Annexe I, Poverty Statistics for Central America.

between deteriorating levels of poverty and the outbreak of violent conflict can be inferred from the available empirical data.

For the West African region only the case of Nigeria can be illustrated with some data. During the decade from 1960 to 1970, which witnessed the brutal civil war between the secessionist Igbos and the dominant Hausa/Fulani ethnic groups, the data indicate a steady growth in proportional share of national income for the lowest 20 per cent of the population. Between 1960 and 1970 their share increased from 7 per cent to 8.5 per cent and even to 9.5 per cent in 1980.¹⁰

Finally, the Southern Asian region presents a clearer picture. Poverty is a widespread phenomenon in South Asia despite slow and gradual improvement in income per capita throughout recent decades. In India, despite an overall decline in rural poverty from 56 per cent to 37 per cent from 1973 to 1993,¹¹ the rate of decline varied widely from one state to another. From the detailed data on poverty rates per union state,¹² it becomes clear that there is no clear co-variance between the incidence of poverty and the persistence or intensity of violent conflict.¹³ Violence within India occurs in both poverty-stricken areas (Bihar and the north-eastern states) but also in advanced areas (Punjab).¹⁴ More importantly, even within states that witnessed major political unrest – such as Punjab, Bihar, West Bengal and Assam – the intensity varied from one part to another:

What appears incongruent in the search for a poverty-unrest link is that some of the most violence-prone areas are not featured by the most intense forms of poverty and deprivation, at least in a relative sense. On Bihar, for example, it has been noted that both the northern part of the state (seventeen districts north of the Ganges) as well as in parts of the tribal belt extending into the Chota Nagpur plateau (twelve districts), where poverty is as intense as in central Bihar, political conditions have remained relatively calm.¹⁵

In Sri Lanka, between 1963 and 1973 the poorest half of the population witnessed a relative improvement with regard to their overall share in the national income from 18.3 per cent to 22.2 per cent. From 1973 to 1979 their share deteriorated to 18.1 per cent, implying a return to the early 1960s.¹⁶ The stagnation of the Sri Lankan economy is reflected in these data. However, the first political uprising of the JVP movement in 1971 coincided with the relative improvement in income of the poorest citizens.

10) Annexe II, Poverty Statistics for West Africa.

11) Annexe III, Poverty Statistics for South Asia.

12) See Annexe III, Poverty Statistics for South Asia.

13) Quoted from Jerry Peiris, in *South Asia: Regional Report*, part I, chapter 4 on India, p. 122.

14) *South Asia: Regional Report*, Part I, chapter 4 on India, pp. 121-125.

15) *South Asia: Regional Report*, quoted from Gerry Peiris, p. 124.

16) Annexe III, Poverty Statistics for South Asia.

From the South Asian country studies, therefore, a picture emerges in which the co-variance of poverty and conflict on the intrastate level shows no persistent pattern, and hence cannot be consistently labelled as a causal factor.

Social and Cultural Inhibitions

Poverty is an all-pervasive feature for the majority of the populations in the various case study countries. What the examples presented quite clearly indicate is that the significance of poverty and economic stagnation as causes for political violence vary widely from one conflict situation to another. Moreover, the response to persistent deprivation could well be one of apathy rather than anger and revolt.¹⁷ In many countries the concept of absolute poverty fails to acknowledge prevailing social and cultural coping mechanisms of the local society that accompany certain material levels of development. In many cases, different peoples still adhere to distinct cultural practices within largely traditional societies such as in the indigenous areas in India, Pakistan, Niger or Guatemala. Cultural practice and religious inhibitions have hitherto created a relatively stable social environment in which such groups have almost consistently endured poverty, apparently reluctant or failing to perceive deprivation as the end result of deliberate actions by leading elite groups or resulting from deficient distributive mechanisms controlled by central authorities.

South Asia

To some extent, it seems that material poverty is perceived as the 'normal point of reference' by many civilians. Instead of an increasing incidence of collective actions against injustice and poverty, clientelist policies of local strongmen and elites seem to have successfully downplayed the emergence of systematic violent dissent in a number of cases. The existence of cultural practices combined with religious dogmas has apparently helped to contain dissent and to avoid violent resistance against the prevailing societal order. For example, the poverty in various traditional Afghan communities did not result in violent opposition towards elite groups. In terms of poverty it is estimated that Afghanistan is one of the poorest countries in the world, ranking one hundred and sixty-ninth on the UN Development Programme's (UNDP) Human Development Index, with an income of US\$ 197 per capita in 1981.¹⁸ Afghanistan remained feudal until the Saur revolution of 1978. Relationships between local elites and their followers were largely based on close kinship ties as well as on social and religious networks.¹⁹ Placed in a broader

17) Quoted from Gerry Peiris, *South Asia: Regional Report*, Part I, p. 124.

18) *Human Development Report* (New York: United Nations Development Programme, 1996).

19) Chapter on Afghanistan, *South Asia: Regional Report*, vol. 2, p. 461.

perspective, Muslim peasant societies in Afghanistan have so far tended to accept poverty, famine and infant mortality more as a matter of fate than as an act of man.²⁰ Religious dogmas therefore continue to impact upon people's perceptions of poverty, as can be inferred from the persistent impact of the Hindu caste system in India.

West Africa

In the West African context, poverty has traditionally been related to climatic hazards and environmental hardships. Living conditions for the majority of people are harsh and largely dependant on climatic, physical natural conditions and a complex pattern of on- and off-farm activities involving different members of extended families seasonally employed in a whole range of activities. Furthermore, the prevailing agricultural techniques and livelihood strategies have remained virtually unchanged in West Africa for a substantial period. Poverty in absolute terms therefore relates to the predominant livelihood strategies of population groups and reflects the current state of development in rural areas. However, also in urban areas a large pool of impoverished people has emerged because of unchecked and fast urbanization. Urban constituencies largely depend on imported goods, as the domestic industry is rather embryonic and ill equipped to provide sufficient output. Moreover, price subsidies have been consistently used by incumbent national elites to co-opt these constituencies into political compliance. Such examples of widely prevalent clientelist practices, both in rural and urban settings, have hitherto resulted in subservient behaviour by beneficiary groups. In the West African setting, poverty also seems to be somewhat mitigated by extended family structures and solidarity bonds. In the countryside, land ownership of the majority of the people and access to land and thus to a livelihood is traditionally regulated by clan elders and community leaders. Within the precarious context of rain-fed agriculture, a number of traditional coping strategies mitigate the impact of food crises and poverty. In urban settings extended families also manage to some extent to absorb newcomers and to support large numbers of relatives on meagre resources. However, there are signs that the solidarity of the extended family system is eroding, especially in the large and sprawling urban centres of the region.

Central America

Finally, the Central American region demonstrates the impact of identity on poverty issues, exemplified by the position of the Mayan population in Guatemala. Despite

20) Rasul Bakhsh Rais, *Afghanistan*, country paper (Islamabad and Kandy: ICES; and The Hague: Netherlands Institute of International Relations 'Clingendael', 1998), p. 25.

a history of almost five centuries of political, cultural and economic deprivation, they did not rise to fight the dominant power structure. Lack of internal group cohesion to some extent accounts for this lack of resistance. Only when external actors succeeded in penetrating local culture through learning Indian languages did Mayans start to join the political opposition. In the case of the Mayans of Guatemala, the issue of land seems to be crucial. Prior to the 1970s, indigenous communities owned most of the central highland areas, on which the Indian population lived. Once a process of market penetration and progressive partition forced Indians into seasonal wage labour, external political mobilization became more successful.²¹

Conclusions about Poverty and Conflict

To conclude, it can be tentatively inferred that statistics demonstrating increases in levels of poverty do not consistently correlate with the emergence or intensification of violent conflict. In and by itself changes in poverty levels, as expressed in statistical figures related to income per capita, cannot sufficiently account for the presence or absence of violent conflict. Additional factors need to be identified in order to explain the contradictory outcome of the analysis. In some cases the empirical data pointed at a clear co-variance (such as the Sandinista period in Nicaragua, or El Salvador), whereas in others no such co-variance could be established (such as the Somoza period in Nicaragua, or Guatemala, Nigeria, Sri Lanka and India). Caution therefore needs to be observed with regard to the issue of poverty and income statistics for the lower ranks of society. In some cases, the existence of cultural perceptions on poverty seems to have precluded the outbreak of violent collective action. In many countries, shared values and specific mechanisms, such as clientelist practices, seem to have mitigated against the potential for group mobilization in order to change existing patterns of resource access and distribution.

B) Socio-Economic Inequality and Conflict

Inequality and poverty are closely related phenomena, as in many cases inequality often reflects regional and group patterns of poverty within states. Various levels can be distinguished with regard to inequality, such as between the individual and the collective levels, between different regional entities, between different ethno-linguistic communities and between different socio-economic strata (classes) in society. This analysis focuses mainly on inequality between socio-economic strata,

21) *Central America: Regional Report*, chapter on Guatemala, pp. 201-203.

on inter-regional inequality, and where sufficient data were available on inter-group inequality. A linear relationship was assumed in the analysis between inequality and conflict, namely that if inequality increases, the likelihood of conflict would increase and vice versa.

In order to be able to analyse inequality between different socio-economic strata and in view of the scarcity of reliable statistics, inequality has been measured between so-called quintiles (20 per cent fractions) of the overall population in order to reveal aggregate patterns of socio-economic inequality inside states. As in the section on poverty, average income per capita was used as the basic indicator for section B-I.

Furthermore, in section B-II resource related conflicts, notably land ownership, scarcity and distribution, are reviewed. In section B-III resource extraction by central states, competition for government resources between constituent population groups and regional pricing mechanisms are analysed.

Section B-I-A Income Inequality between Rich and Poor

Inequality is a persistent feature of all the societies studied, but the degree of inequality varies widely over countries, regions and cases examined. When looking at the income per capita data,²² it becomes clear that inequality between the richest and poorest quintiles of total population has remained fairly constant over time in all the regions and countries for which data were available. Consequently, in general the proportional share of wealth between rich and poor has not changed in a significant way over recent decades, although in some countries deviations from this general pattern can be observed.

In Bangladesh, for example, inequality seems to have become less exacerbated over a period of fifteen years. Scant data demonstrate that the highest quintile earned roughly six times the amount earned by the lowest quintile of the population in 1973, but that this proportion had dwindled to 3.7 times the amount earned by the poorest quintile by 1991.²³

In Honduras, data on income distribution on the national level show a slight reduction of inequality between 1970 and 1980 as the share of national income earned by the lowest quintile grew modestly from 3 per cent to 4.3 per cent.²⁴ For the urban population in Honduras, a longer time span was monitored, revealing a gradual process of income redistribution from the highest quintiles to the lowest quintiles in the urban setting between 1967 and 1990. Most of the 'loss of income'

22) See Annexes I-III.

23) See Annexe III, Poverty Statistics for South Asia, a table of socio-economic inequality in Bangladesh.

24) See Annexe I, Poverty Statistics for Central America, tables for socio-economic inequality in Honduras.

of the highest income groups was absorbed by the lowest quintiles (lowest 40 per cent earned 6.6 per cent in 1967 and 12.2 per cent of the national income in 1990; and the highest income-earning quintile went from a 69.7 per cent share in 1967 to 55 per cent in 1990).²⁵ Such aggregate data unfortunately do not adequately reflect the relative position of specific groups within the low-income quintiles, so it is impossible to distinguish the income share of distinct ethno-linguistic groups within the poorer quintiles of the urban population in the case of Honduras.

Nevertheless, the income situation for poor citizens seems to have only marginally improved as opposed to other wealthier groups in society. This tendency of marginally declining inequality should ideally have had a conflict-containing effect, thereby confirming the working hypothesis. However, regardless of this long-term trend of declining inequality, violent conflicts have emerged in these countries.

A few cases found statistical support for the possible relationship between inequality and violent conflict only in the case of Central America. In most countries on the Central American isthmus, income distribution has been and remains highly skewed. However, in the most stable country of the sub-region – Costa Rica – the percentage share of national income earned by the poorest quintile rose from a mere 3.3 per cent in 1971 to 5.8 per cent of GDP in 1994, whereas the richest quintile saw its share diminish from respectively 54.8 per cent to 43.5 per cent over the same period.²⁶ By contrast, as can be inferred from the data presented in the section on poverty in this chapter, inequality in El Salvador between poor and rich became exacerbated during the decades preceding the civil war.²⁷

To conclude, absolute levels of income inequality between rich and poor remained high, regardless of the individual country setting. Overall, with the exception of Central America, general trends in income inequality between poor and rich segments of the population could not be directly related to the incidence of violent conflicts in the majority of the countries figuring in our research sample.

Section B-I-B Inter-Regional Inequality and Conflict

On the inter-regional level, one might conclude that the inequality between specific administrative units within states has hitherto been viewed in terms of simple dichotomies, either between urban and rural, between industrialized and agricultural, or in terms of central versus peripheral states. Such distinctions, although useful in order to understand the unequal workings of the prevalent political economies, inadequately reflect the impact of existing juxtapositions

25) Annexe I, Poverty Statistics for Central America, tables for socio-economic inequality in Honduras.

26) Annexe I, Poverty Statistics for Central America, table on socio-economic inequality in Costa Rica.

27) Annexe 1, Poverty Statistics for Central America, table on poverty in El Salvador.

between regions and the central state as well as between privileged and backward regions.

Patterns of regional inequality in Asia demonstrate the preponderance of urban development poles, the location of central governments, the clustering of industrial activities and the impact of major growth sectors. Scant statistical evidence points to minimal differences in standards of living between constituent administrative regional units in Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, but the capital cities enjoy a slightly higher rate of development. There has been a consistent trend of diminishing inter-regional differences in Sri Lanka, albeit that the north-western regions have progressively been less well served in terms of government services because of the unfolding war. In India there is an enormous discrepancy between some affluent states such as the Punjab and the poorer ones. When the Indian states are compared with regard to absolute levels of poverty, despite the overall tendency of declining poverty over a period of twenty years, it becomes obvious that differences among these states remain fairly constant over time.²⁸ In the cases of Assam, Bihar and Orissa the rate of poverty decline is also markedly lower than that of relatively more affluent states, such as Punjab and Haryana, which already initially enjoyed lower levels of poverty. This indicates that for a number of poor states the inter-union inequality of states in India deteriorated between 1973 and 1993.²⁹ Nevertheless, as has already been mentioned in the poverty section, despite the existence of a glaring divide between more affluent states and poor states in India no straightforward correlation can be determined between relative backwardness and violent conflict.

In many cases there was a clear overlap between inter-regional and inter-group inequality, as boundaries of geographic areas overlapped with identity-related features of people inhabiting such areas. It has proven useful to make a nationwide comparison based on the existing socio-economic stratification of these societies and the spread of distinct ethno-linguistic communities. In many cases identity-related features overlap significantly with specific socio-economic classes in society, highlighting the importance of multiple-factor analysis with regard to the inequality issue. The empirical findings have resulted in adaptation of the initial hypotheses. Does the overlap of inequality between specific geographic areas lead to the outbreak of violent conflict when the less deserved areas are inhabited by distinct ethno-linguistic communities other than those inhabiting the more affluent areas?

28) Annexe III, Poverty Statistics for South Asia, tables on India.

29) Annexe III, Poverty Statistics for South Asia, tables on India.

South Asia

The poor state of development in the north-eastern states of India suggests that the central state has hitherto proven unable to reverse the relative backward position of these states. In this region, consisting of seven separate union states, the political economy that emerged after independence created an artificial backwardness. The emergence of the eastern wing of Pakistan (later Bangladesh) severed the traditional commercial networks for the majority of the people inhabiting this region and the coast. This led to the post-colonial aberration that transport from Tripura, a mere 160 km away from the seaport of Chittagong had to bypass Bangladesh (formerly known as East Pakistan) over a 2,200 km circuitous route, resulting in an enormous increase in freight and travel costs.³⁰ Moreover, the gradual emergence of violent resistance movements during the post-colonial era coincided with a gradual demographic shift operating in these states. Despite professed efforts by the Union government to uplift the region, many project proposals were abandoned as a result of cost-recovery considerations.³¹ The repeated appeals to regulate unlimited and mostly illegal immigration of outsiders to this region created enormous tensions between the original ethnically distinct communities and the newcomers. Therefore, inequality in itself between these states and other states does not provide a sound argument for the explanation of the violent conflicts that erupted. The assumption that inequality regarding an ethnically distinct region would lead to violent conflict does not hold for all cases. For instance, in the north-eastern region, the state of Arunachal Pradesh remained aloof of conflict whereas Tripura, Nagaland, Mizoram and Assam experienced ethno-political violence. Additional factors therefore need to be identified that may explain the different outcomes in the north-eastern states of India.

The contemporary history of the secession of Bangladesh from Pakistan provides another interesting example of the centrifugal forces of inter-regional inequality combined with identity-related factors. Although Pakistan presently demonstrates a highly skewed political economy in which Karachi and the Punjab remain by far the most developed areas, centrifugal forces have been contained during recent decades. The unequal treatment of the former eastern wing of Pakistan and the subsequent struggle for independence of the Bengali people was ultimately based on political mobilization.³² The socio-economic factors provided, however, a useful rallying ground. Right from the inception of the state of Pakistan, the ethnically and linguistically distinct Bengalis demanded greater autonomy. The persistent policy of discrimination through selective resource allocation, uneven

30) Gerry Peiris, report on India, in *South Asia: Regional Report*, vol. 1, p. 134.

31) Gerry Peiris' report on India, *South Asia: Regional Report*, vol. 1, p. 135.

32) See also the chapter on political factors, the section on state formation and federal political projects.

inter-sectoral (agriculture-industry) terms of trade and an explicit policy in favour of Western Pakistanis (mostly Punjabis) for senior positions in the army and the administration sharpened the lingering controversy between both wings of post-partition Pakistan.³³ In this case inter-regional inequality was artificially maintained and was widely perceived by the Bengalis as the deliberate outcome of central government policies. In that situation the policy agenda of the Awami League, the Bengali opposition movement, used socio-economic grievances to mobilize its political constituency. This process fed on the unequal resource allocation, which was structurally biased in favour of the western wing. Clearly, socio-economic and political factors in this case interacted strongly to produce conditions that were sufficient to create violent resistance. The overlap of identity and geography produced strong centrifugal forces.

West Africa

Following this lead, similar examples were sought in the other regions studied. Inter-regional inequality in the West African context can to some extent be calculated from patterns of government expenditure. Such allocation patterns mostly highlight the existence of a dichotomy between central core areas and other regions. When ethnic identity overlaps with regional divisions, the mobilizing potential clearly increases. This situation prevails in Ghana, where the Ga have attained higher levels of development followed by the Fante-Akim, Ashante, other Akan groups, Ewe and the northern ethnic groups. This can be related to a rank order of various regions with regard to government investment. The Accra core area ranks first followed by Central, Western, Eastern, Ashanti, Volta, Brong-Ahafo, Northern and Upper regions.³⁴

Nigeria has shown a contrary development. The uneven distribution of federal resources for the three constituent regions of that country has been reduced in the course of the last thirty years. After independence the Western and Northern regions received 35 per cent each, and the Eastern region the remaining 30 per cent. Nowadays, in line with their proportional share of population, the North receives 53 per cent and the Western and Eastern regions 24 per cent and 23 per cent respectively.³⁵ The Hausa and Fulani ethnic groups mainly inhabit the Northern region whereas in the Western region the Yoruba predominate and in the Eastern region Igbos are the predominant ethnic group. Although there have been many statutory reshufflings, resulting in an ever-growing number of states, this basic

33) Abdur Rob Khan, report on Bangladesh, *South Asia: Regional Report*, vol. 1, p. 202.

34) Okwudiba Nnoli, 'The Conflict Process in Ghana, 1960-1990', *West Africa: Regional Report*, p. 49.

35) Emeka Nwokedi, 'The Dynamics of Conflicts in Nigeria', *West Africa: Regional Report*, p. 161.

feature of Nigeria remains (see the chapter on political factors, the section on state formation: federal political projects).

In Niger, the region comprising the capital Niamey and the adjoining region of Tillabéry, inhabited by 23.9 per cent of the total population, received 48.9 per cent of all government investments between 1976 and 1990.³⁶ As these regions form the western part of Niger and are inhabited by the politically dominant minority of the Songrai-Zarma, which has ruled the country almost uninterruptedly since independence, a pattern of regional inequality and ethno-linguistic rivalry can be substantiated.

In all of the West African countries in our sample, regional divisions overlap with specific ethno-linguistic identities to a large extent, creating structural categories with a strong mobilizing potential. Inequality mostly exists between core regions and peripheral regions. Among the peripheral regions themselves, patterns of inequality are more difficult to distinguish. For example, regions that have been characterized by violent conflict both in Niger and in Senegal seem to be relatively well off if compared to other peripheral regions in those countries. In Niger, similar to the case of the Casamance region in Senegal, the Agadez region receives a fair share of central government allocation, if the demographic weight is compared to its proportional share in total government investments.³⁷ These findings seem to indicate that complaints voiced by certain groups about the uneven resource allocation of federal funds are not always corroborated by the available statistical evidence. It is therefore important to monitor such indicators of socio-economic inequality with some restraint. One has to bear in mind that national governments in these states are stretched for cash and that it is tempting to invest in industrial core areas where most economic development has materialized, to the detriment of poor and backward rural areas.

Central America

In Central America the issue of regional inequality can be analysed from a spatial point of view, focusing on the issue of different agro-ecological zones. In the relatively small Central American region, except in the case of El Salvador, all of the countries have three distinct agro-ecological zones. The Pacific coastal areas, the central highlands and the Atlantic coastal plains all have distinct features in terms of population composition, dominant production methods, patterns of land distribution, the historic developments of centre-periphery relations and climatic characteristics. The importance of the spatial cleavages between the various zones in relation to violent conflict lies in the fact that certain structural relations between

36) Arouna Hamidou Sidikou, 'Les causes des Conflits au Niger', *West Africa: Regional Report*, p. 120.

37) See Annexe II, Poverty Statistics for West Africa, table on socio-economic inequality in Niger.

these zones have impacted upon the propensity towards conflict. The Atlantic coast, for instance, has long remained a peripheral region, in which most of the foreign-owned fruit plantations are located and where many minority population groups reside. In some areas an indigenous minority survived, such as the Misquito Indians of Nicaragua and Honduras. Elsewhere, people descending from run-away African slaves live in the Atlantic coastal zones of these countries. The fight for control over these zones initially took place between the Spanish and the British and subsequently between the ruling Creole elite and the black Caribbean and indigenous population groups. The plantation economy that evolved in this zone after Creole domination was established was based on economic extraction, from which the benefits accrued to foreign companies in close alliance with the Creole elite. As a result, centre-periphery relations became closely linked to differences in race and identity. When in the 1980s the Sandinista government tried to incorporate the Misquito Indians in a collective agricultural system dominated by state farms, the Indians revolted and joined the ranks of the Contra movement. Until the mid-1950s, people from the Talamanca coast in Costa Rica were not allowed beyond a certain inland town, exemplifying the rather racist policies against the Atlantic minorities. Hence, an overlap between specific socio-economic inequality and the geographic location of ethnic minorities can be observed in this region.

This structural inequality continues to motivate strong resentment among population groups living in the Atlantic coastal zone, invariably contesting central government policies and demanding more local resource control and more equitable resource distribution.

Conclusions section B-I

Sufficient data were only available for South Asia to test inequality between rich and poor regions. This did not generate sufficient proof either to confirm or refute the assumption that growing inequality leads to conflict. The qualitative empirical findings indicated that inequality becomes more conflict-prone if identity overlaps with geography. In a large number of cases across the three regions, such an overlap could indeed be substantiated, but because of the enormous variety of cases and backgrounds it seemed plausible that other factors would have to be identified to explain the origin of conflicts in those regions. Moreover, in many cases where similar overlap exists between geography and ethnography no conflicts arose.

It therefore seems that other socio-economic factors are necessary to unravel conflict-prone developments within specific regions. From the study of the north-eastern states in India, a picture emerges in which the interaction between migration, local communities with a distinct ethno-linguistic identity and local resources, notably land, is extremely important. Patterns of government service allocation may help to explain the origin of some of the conflicts in Africa and Central America. Therefore, the following sections will take a closer look at these

issues. They need to be analysed in conjunction with existing patterns of regional and group inequality. This leads to the formulation of the following additional research questions:

- If unequal access to land and resources increases in a region that is inhabited by a specific ethno-linguistic community, the likelihood of conflict increases and vice versa.
- If government policies lead to increasing socio-economic inequality in specific regions that stand out because of distinct cultural features, the likelihood of conflict increases and vice versa.

In the following sections, the analysis focuses on these additional working hypotheses.

Section B-II

Section B-II-A Resource-Related Conflicts: Mass Mobilization as a Result of Loss of Resources and the De-escalating Impact of Resource Distribution among Destitute Groups

The fruits of important natural resources, such as land, forests, fishing waters and grazing areas, determined largely by access and user rights, remain by far the most important sources of income for the majority of people inhabiting the regions and countries involved in this study. In fact, many ethno-linguistic groups define themselves primarily in relationship to predominant modes of production, and (group) possession of resources determines relative levels of autonomy vis-à-vis other user groups and levels of material well-being. The persistence of largely traditional modes of production, although under increasing pressure, provide ample proof. The existing practice of slash-and-burn cultivation among the ethnic minorities inhabiting the north-eastern states of India and the semi-nomadic lifestyle of the Tamajaq in West Africa illustrate the predominance and historic continuity of such socio-economic practices.

It is therefore vital to highlight contemporary trends regarding resource access and distribution among various groups in society, as it has become obvious that relative changes in such patterns are notably conflict-prone and serve as important mobilizing factors among affected population groups. Resource possession, no matter how marginal, seems to have become a crucial determinant for the sustenance of collective livelihood and the prospects for future development.

Section B-II-B Land Ownership and Conflict

Unequal access to land is a prominent indicator to measure poverty and patterns of poverty-related inequality. In South Asia and Central America alike, unequal patterns of land distribution are omnipresent. In Central American states this pattern results directly from the colonial political economy. In South Asia such patterns were already prevalent in pre-colonial times. From country to country, the actual degree of inequality – as can be inferred from patterns of land distribution – varies widely. In countries with high population densities, such as Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and El Salvador, these patterns are structurally reinforced, as there are no uncultivated lands to be colonized by landless peasants as a safety-valve option.

The Central American and Asian patterns of land distribution resemble each other, as in both regions unequal land distribution is the predominant socio-economic expression of the prevailing social stratification between different classes in society. In South Asia such distinctions have been culturally embedded in the existing caste system. The system of sharecropping, widely prevalent in the South Asian region, has strong cultural overtones, as high-caste groups are mostly landholding elite groups whereas the poor peasants belong to low-caste strata in society. In Central America the stratification between different population groups is based on racial characteristics and has strong racist overtones, because black people can consistently be found at the bottom of the social stratification. In most countries in the region the landed elite are light coloured and belong to the so-called Creole group. The mestizo (those of mixed blood) make up the middle group and the indigenous groups and descendants of slaves are at the bottom of the social hierarchy.³⁸

By contrast, in West Africa most peasants possess land, inherited through family and clan ties. Recognized land entitlements in this region do not in and by themselves therefore measure collective poverty trends adequately. Nonetheless, the ongoing process commonly referred to as ‘land pressure’, owing to steady growth of population and cattle, has led to increased scarcity and has shifted attention to competition between user groups in the rural context. The struggle for access to natural resources – notably land, grazing areas and water – has gradually emerged as a crucial livelihood issue in various parts of the sub-Saharan region. Various stakeholders are involved in these struggles, including ‘absentee’³⁹ owners of land and cattle, who compete with local user groups for these scarce resources. If local users are confronted with powerful outsider elite groups closely linked to the state,

38) See Annexe IV, Landholdings in Central America.

39) The group of so-called absentee landowners and cattlemen mainly consists of urban elite groups, mostly politicians and army officers.

local elites will try to mobilize their constituencies into organized resistance movements, and the likelihood of violent conflicts may increase.

Section B-II-C Land Scarcity and Conflict

The issue of access to and possession of land has played and continues to play an important mobilizing role for many deprived and landless peasant groups. The peasant uprisings in India and Bangladesh were intimately related to the land issue (Naxalite and Techabna movements) and the broad opposition among peasants against the Somoza regime in Nicaragua was provoked by the forced eviction of smallholders. No attempts were made in Nicaragua at agrarian reform, and by the year 1971 a mere 0.7 per cent of all farms occupied 35.8 per cent of all arable lands whereas some 43.8 per cent of all farms occupied a mere 2.2 per cent of all arable lands.⁴⁰ Analysis of the available statistics suggests that patterns moving towards greater inequality in landholdings seem to lead to increasing resistance among affected groups and facilitate political mobilization.

This process can be inferred from the Punjab (see Box 3.4) and Nicaraguan cases (notably the Somoza period). Deteriorating circumstances for a broad segment of the peasantry triggers such a mobilizing process. Further evidence stems from the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) case study in Bangladesh and the tribal states in the north-east of India, where massive immigration and subsequent loss of land has sparked off resistance by indigenous peoples. The CHT case demonstrates how various socio-economic factors are linked and can merge to become an explosive background in a given geographical area inhabited by a distinct ethno-linguistic group. Resource deprivation by the central state (flooding a substantial part of the agricultural heartland of the Chakma tribe), intrusion by immigrant communities (lowland Bengalis) and a gradual process of alienation and marginalization of the traditional inhabitants of the CHT region ultimately provided the necessary conditions for group mobilization (see Box 3.1 on the Chittagong Hill Tracts' case study).

40) Annexe IV, Landholdings in Central America, tables on Nicaragua.

*Box 3.1 The Chittagong Hill Tracts' Case Study*⁴¹

Against the backdrop of the highly explosive internal security setting of Bangladesh as a whole, the crisis in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) emerged gradually. Structurally, the CHT has been used as a reservoir of agricultural lands for Bangladesh, exemplified by successive waves of Bengali immigrants to the region. The CHT region constitutes the only available internal safety valve for the absorption of peasants from the overcrowded plains. The CHT is furthermore well endowed with natural resources: it is Bangladesh's only wood-producing area and it provides electricity through its dam scheme. In addition, the area is strategically important, straddling the borders with India and Myanmar.

At independence, part of the indigenous population favoured incorporation into India, but the region was awarded by an English border commission to Pakistan, which quickly took military control of the region. In the early 1960s Pakistan implemented some important measures that contributed to the escalation of the conflict. In 1962 an important hydroelectric dam was constructed in the productive heartland of the predominant Chakma tribe, permanently flooding 40 per cent of that district's total available arable land and uprooting some 100,000 Chakmas. The Chakmas were never compensated and eventually resettled in neighbouring India (Arunachal Pradesh). The special status that the CHT enjoyed under the British (Totally Excluded Area) was lifted in 1964 and a first wave of immigrants arrived. At the time of the Bangladeshi independence war (1971), the Pahadee community was profoundly divided. Many sided with Pakistan, as they feared further encroachment from the Bengalis as well as from the Indian people. After the military defeat of Pakistan, Indian forces, together with victorious Bengali freedom fighters, swept the region in search of collaborators of the defeated Pakistani army and insurgents from the rebelling tribal peoples in the north-east of India (Nagaland, Mizoram, Assam and Tripura). This reinforced the negative perception among the Pahadee community about the newly emerging state of Bangladesh. After independence, the 'father' of the Bangladeshi nation, Najib, refused to acknowledge a special status for the indigenous peoples of the CHT and bluntly advised them to become Bengalis. This attitude was translated in a number of political and economic programmes for the CHT, further affecting the traditional lifestyles of the indigenous people and leading to escalation into violent conflict.

41) This case study has been based on Aftab Ahmed, *Ethnic Turmoil in the Chittagong Hill Tracts Region of Bangladesh*, paper presented at the International Workshop on Causes of Conflict, held at Hotel Tourmaline, 3-5 March 1997, Kandy, Sri Lanka.

On the economic side, an ambitious Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board (CHTDB) was set up in 1976 to coordinate all development programmes for the region. Forest exploitation, the development of infrastructure, eradication of malaria, provision of drinking water and the transformation of traditional slash-and-burn agriculture to a rotational system based on ploughing were its main objectives. Under General Rahman's regime, Tribal Cultural Institutes were erected giving preferential treatment to Pahadee students. Over recent decades the Bangladeshi government has invested substantial amounts of scarce financial resources in the CHT. The CHTDB was set up to counter the increasing military escalation between the national army and the Shanti Bahini, the armed Pahadee resistance movement. In 1979 the government implemented an immigration scheme, attributing land and agricultural inputs to some 30,000 Bengali farmers.

The subsequent military governments from 1975 to 1989 maintained a two-pronged approach, characterized by counter-insurgency operations and settlement of Bengali farmers. These migratory waves and the above-mentioned socio-economic programmes have not softened the opposition of the Pahadee hardliners to the state.

In their opinion Bangladesh is an oppressor state, which penetrates the CHT area with various means, including development programmes and policy instruments, without taking into account the wishes and cultural aspirations of the Pahadee people. In fact, many economic programmes are perceived as detrimental to the interests of the Pahadee population, and the investments are viewed by some observers as external capitalist extraction of scarce resources. During the Ershad period in 1988, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the contending parties, with the exception of some hardliners, in which some degree of autonomy was established, as well as the creation of local district government councils, elected by and for the various hill tracts' people. This MoU still holds for the moderate majority within the Pahadee community and the contending parties went on to sign a peace agreement in 1998. However, the issue of immigration to the CHT still figures prominently and has not been resolved.

In the case of the CHT conflict, it becomes clear that the Bangladeshi state, acting in a high-handed manner by expropriating a significant proportion of the arable lands of the Chakma tribe, has directly contributed to the genesis of violent conflict. This becomes even more obvious when the disputed legitimacy of Bangladeshi sovereignty over the area is taken into account (see also the chapter on political factors, the section on Institutional Capacity: Secessionist Movements), and when the marginal status of the mongoloid tribal communities in the Bangladeshi constitution is considered. From the point of view of the resident groups, state policies continue to infringe upon their livelihood resources to the point of threatening cultural survival. Forced displacement of indigenous people because of loss of land, migration of Bengali farmers to the region and the encroachment of

market-oriented modern production systems in forestry and agriculture have strongly impacted on the traditional livelihood strategies of the Pahadee and stand out as the most important socio-economic factors contributing to the armed dispute. Hence, the current policies impacting upon the CHT area inevitably put the state on a collision course with indigenous communities.

Section B-II-D Land Reform and Conflict

Land appropriation, as has been demonstrated time and again, has provoked intense conflicts between local user groups and outside competitors. By contrast, the reversal of existing patterns of unequal land distribution is generally viewed as a de-escalating factor.

Bangladesh

In quite a number of countries, governments aim to reverse highly skewed patterns of land distribution. The underlying socio-economic structure in Bangladesh continues to operate in favour of a small landed and industrial elite. The government has promoted land distribution among poor peasants to offset the existing imbalance in land ownership, without questioning the existing pattern of landholdings. Therefore, a substantial programme for the distribution of newly emerging lands to landless peasants has been initiated. However, this programme has met with considerable resistance from the landed elite, who have engaged armed cronies in those areas to intimidate the new owners and establish their farms on these so-called Khash lands. Land-grabbing by powerful landed elites has already occurred on a significant scale elsewhere in Bangladesh, but gained momentum when market incentives stimulated the proliferation of shrimp farms, notably in the coastal areas. Shrimp farming currently stands for 8 per cent of overall export earnings and has become an important source for foreign currency. However, this commercial activity is dominated by a small group of entrepreneurs, to the detriment of local farmers' and fishermen's livelihoods. The land reform scheme has consequently been hijacked by powerful interest groups to the detriment of poor and destitute groups, increasing the conflict potential of the land issue within the Bangladeshi setting.⁴²

Central America

A number of agrarian reform laws have been formulated and partially implemented in Central America. In El Salvador and Honduras a rather limited reform

42) Abdur Rob Khan, chapter on Bangladesh, *South Asia: Regional Report*, Part I, pp. 223-228.

programme was executed. In Nicaragua, during the short period of the Sandinista reign, attempts at structural reform were executed, but later reversed by the succeeding liberal government under Violetta Chamorro.

Honduras

Although Honduras did not experience a civil war or any other type of major internal conflict, it shares most of the structural features with its neighbours. In order to attempt to account for this deviation from the regional pattern, some differences need to be highlighted. After a civilian liberal government led by Ramon Villeda Morales (1958-1963) had initiated an expensive reform programme, a military counter coup materialized headed by Oswaldo Lopez Arellano (1963-1971). Although the new government was reluctant to bow to popular demands, it implemented the discriminatory Agrarian Reform Law that selectively evicted Salvadorean immigrants from their lands, thus appeasing the indigenous campesino demands while simultaneously permitting the landholding elite and foreign companies to hold on to their lands. In fact, the land crisis was transferred to the immigrant communities. Although this law eventually helped to set the stage for the short interstate war with El Salvador – the so-called Soccer War (see the chapter on external factors, interventions by neighbouring countries) – it proved to be a skilful manoeuvre by the Honduran leadership to avoid domestic conflict. Lopez Arellano assumed power in a second coup in 1972 and initiated a new land reform programme.

The modest land reform programme that was put in place by the Arellano military regime has gradually assigned some 3,000 square km of cultivable lands to roughly 60,000 landless peasants over a period of 30 years.⁴³ However, reform did not affect the existing social and economic structure of the country and most of the land distributed was either public land, land previously exploited by the fruit companies or land unjustly seized by landholding elites earlier on. This land distribution programme, although relatively successful, stagnated in the 1990s and the goals of the 1975 law have only partially been fulfilled (some 20 per cent).⁴⁴ Moreover, the distribution of lands has not been accompanied by technical training or by a substantial credit programme. Simultaneously, a gradual process of rural-urban migration and abandonment of land took place, reinforced by high birth rates, leading to a rapid fragmentation of the landholdings. Although the land distribution issue never subsided and has emerged time and again during recent decades, successive governments were able to fend off real reform, as they combined modest reform with the repression of popular mass organizations (see the

43) See Annexe IV, Landholdings in Central America, table on Honduras.

44) Chapter on Honduras, *Central America: Regional Report*, pp. 253, 275 and 280.

chapter on political factors, the section on power-sharing, the application of repression and reform, and the cases of Honduras and Ghana). Nevertheless, the public at large has perceived the modest efforts by the political system to change the prevailing uneven distribution of land as genuine. They subsequently supported the system, lending some degree of legitimacy to its political leaders. This is one of the key factors that has put Honduras aside from its neighbours.

Nicaragua

After the Sandinista takeover in 1979, the revolutionary leadership imposed a mixed economy, whereby several sectors of the economy were nationalized. The Sandinistas also initiated the implementation of agrarian reform. The emphasis on popular access to means of production, albeit in a collective socialist format, proved successful, to the extent that the land accumulation trend of the previous decades was reversed. The Sandinista revolution led to significant changes in land ownership. Large holdings went down from 36.2 per cent of total arable land owned by the landed elite in 1978 to 11.9 per cent in 1985.⁴⁵ The large group of medium-sized holdings was left almost untouched, but a significant proportion of smallholdings disappeared simultaneously, from 17.5 per cent to 9.5 per cent over the same period.⁴⁶ Meanwhile, during this time state farms appeared, as well as credit and service cooperatives, covering a total of 17 per cent and 11.2 per cent of arable land respectively.⁴⁷ The revolution therefore brought significant changes and acquired legitimacy in the eyes of the population. The Sandinista regime confiscated thousands of hectares on behalf of rural cooperatives and incorporated them into the national production, providing credits, technical assistance and inputs on a level hitherto inaccessible for the majority of peasants. However, these structural changes did not contribute to the reduction of dissent among important sectors of society. By imposing collective forms of land property, the leaders of the FSLN did not take into account the specific characteristics of the farmers' campesino culture, in which private land titles are of utmost importance and related to identity. Thus an important number of campesinos from the central and northern parts became alienated from the Sandinista regime and filled the ranks of the contra movement. Moreover, the economic elite felt excluded from the benefits of the revolution, as confiscation of property was arbitrary and there was no effort to incorporate the interests of the industrial and commercial elites into the government's development programmes for a mixed economy. Thus the relative deprivation of the economic elite provided an important incentive for these groups to join the contra movement

45) See Annexe IV, Landholdings in Central America, tables on Nicaragua.

46) See Annexe IV, Landholdings in Central America, tables on Nicaragua.

47) See Annexe IV, Landholdings in Central America, tables on Nicaragua.

(see the chapter on political factors, the section on power transitions resulting from economic transformation, Box 4.2).

The alienation of part of the productive sector and the major part of the economic elite led to a deterioration in economic performance. The conflict between the FSLN and the conservative economic elite coincided with the US trade embargo in 1984, and put enormous pressure on the Sandinista regime. Within this context it became extremely difficult for the Sandinista government to fulfil the objectives of their Economic Reactivation Plan (1980). During the eleven years of Sandinista government, the economy slowly degraded after an initial recovery and even experienced decline after the imposition of the trade embargo. Agricultural production was threatened by war, unemployment indicators increased and the informal sector expanded, the shortage of supplies became chronic and inflation reached unmanageable levels. Despite the fact that the Sandinista leadership diminished inequality through land reform programmes, they were held accountable for the poor economic performance. This finally led to the ousting of the Sandinistas through the ballot box.

Concluding Remarks section B-II

Land possession is an important 'proxy' socio-economic indicator for poverty. Relative changes in patterns of landholding are mostly strongly opposed by affected groups and easily lead to violent reactions against illicit or forceful transfer of property rights.

Land reform, even when applied modestly, can deter groups from collective actions against oppressor groups or against the dominant groups at the top of the social stratification. However, there is no uniform prescription for a successful de-escalating inception of agrarian reform, as powerful intervening political factors, mostly related to the legitimacy of the incumbent elites and adequate power-sharing formulae (see the chapter on political factors) may profoundly alter the outcome of the process.

The examples presented in this section point to the importance of resources in general and land in particular when looking at socio-economic inequality between regions and groups. The major findings of this section provide some credibility to the assumption that if land scarcity operates in a specific context (such as specific ethno-linguistic communities inhabiting a region) a critical mass of socio-economic grievances materializes, providing necessary but not sufficient preconditions for the genesis of violent conflict.

Section B-III The State Versus Sub-State Actors: The Effects of Socio-Economic Policies on Inter-Group Competition and Violent Conflict

Section B-III-A Resource Extraction by the Central State

Resource extraction by the central state to the detriment of local groups without concomitant redistribution mostly has a strong mobilizing capacity. In many such cases the groups inhabiting resource-rich areas expect to benefit from the marketing and sale of such resources and are highly sensitive regarding central government distribution.

In the Casamance region in south Senegal, the selective procedures of land expropriation by the state to the benefit of tourist resort development combined with the exploitation of deep-sea fishing, operated through non-indigenous groups in order to boost hard currency earnings for the state, is a good example of how such developments take place (see Box 3.2: The Casamance Case Study). The indigenous people, the Diola, claim that they are systematically exploited by the dominant Wolof ethno-linguistic group through the policies of the state apparatus, which the latter group controls. Service provision to the various regions of Senegal has been erratic and rather marginal, although statistically the provision of public goods by the central government does not disfavour the region in comparison to other regions in Senegal. The region also receives a substantial amount of foreign donor money.⁴⁸ However, because of relatively low levels of income, if compared to the core region of Senegal – the Cap Vert region⁴⁹ – there is a widespread perception among the Diola of a central state failing to deliver services and failing to invest in the economic potential of the region.

*Box 3.2 The Casamance Case Study*⁵⁰

In the Casamance area of Senegal a long-standing dispute between the Diola and the Senegalese state has resulted in a protracted internal violent conflict that has lasted for over ten years. Structural factors underlying the conflict seem to be the nature of mechanisms employed by the central state to penetrate local society and exercise political control.

48) Ferdinand de Jong, 'Causes of the Casamance Rebellion in Senegal', chapter 6, *West Africa: Regional Report*, p. 227.

49) In 1994 the average annual per capita income for the Casamance region was 48,000 CFA, whereas inhabitants of the Cap Vert region earned 253,000 CFA yearly; data from Makhtar Diouf, *Sénégal: les Ethnies et la Nation* (Paris: Editions Harmattan, 1994), p. 136.

50) This case study is based on Ferdinand de Jong, 'Causes of the Casamance Rebellion in Senegal'.

As the nature of political allegiance in Senegal was traditionally brokered through a hierarchy of formal and informal (mostly Muslim Marabouts) elites, the Diola, who stand out as a rather egalitarian and socially unstratified society, were not effectively integrated in the national polity. Moreover, many Diola adhere to Christianity and Animism as opposed to the majority, who confess to the Muslim faith.

The pivotal socio-economic background factors to be highlighted are the loss of control over important resources and the fear for loss of cultural identity. The Diola community presently resents being excluded by the central authorities residing in Dakar from participating in the decision-making process regarding exploitation of resources in the Casamance region, as they claim legitimate ownership of these resources.

The application of the new constitution, which has transferred previously communal land rights to the state, has had a profound impact on local customs and resource management in the Casamance region. Another outstanding feature of the Diola is their attachment to land (notably rice paddies), as they rely on a precarious ecosystem in the low coastal areas of the Casamance river estuary allowing for the interplay between rice cultivation, marginal fishing and cash crop production of mainly peanuts and cotton. The region is furthermore commonly seen as the country's bread basket. The region can therefore hardly be labelled as poor if compared with other regions in Senegal. Within the region itself, the Diola majority seems to be less integrated in the market economy than other ethnic groups residing in the Casamance area. This can partly be attributed to the persistence of traditional livelihood strategies reflecting Diola culture.

The selective exploitation of fishery resources by foreign ethnic groups is an outstanding example of this process. Ethnic groups originating from regions hit by consecutive droughts have used fishing the Casamance River and the Atlantic Ocean as a way to overcome the farming system's crises. Although the indigenous fishermen are far more numerous than the immigrant Serer and Toucouleur fishermen, the latter control large-scale deep-sea fishing, which requires specialized equipment, knowledge and marketing channels. The Senegalese state earns foreign currency with the export of shrimps and deep-sea fish. The Diola gradually realized the importance of this resource, which was traditionally under their legitimate control, but found themselves to be disadvantaged competitors for the same resources, resulting in resentment between the Diola and Toucouleur communities. The Mouvement des Forces Démocratiques de la Casamance (MFDC) – the Diola-dominated rebel movement – has capitalized on these feelings, and in 1992 immigrant fishermen were killed in targeted attacks.

Concurrently, the labour migration of young Diola to Dakar, an alternative livelihood strategy dating back to the 1950s, became hazardous as of the mid-1970s. The limits to the absorption of labour power in the Senegalese economy and the subsequent lay-off of state personnel also left many young urban Diola unemployed.

Disappointment with the state among the educated casamançais led them to withdraw from the state and return to their villages of origin to settle as farmers.

To complete the picture, the cultural factor needs to be accounted for, meaning the gradual penetration of the Wolof language and culture (modern music, food and dress), notably among the young Diolas. Since independence, Wolof has replaced Creole as a lingua franca in the Casamance. The slow 'Wolofization' has added to the grievances, as Wolof predominates in the national media and regional culture is completely ignored. This form of cultural neo-colonialism, combined with fear of loss of cultural identity in view of the ongoing 'Wolofization' of the youth, has angered most Diola.

After the bloody confrontations of 1982 and 1983 in which over one hundred people died, the Senegalese state took an ambiguous stand towards the region. In order to counter the attraction of the newly emerging resistance movement MFDC, the central government appointed several young casamançais in the local bureaucracy, while simultaneously setting up a committee of wise men to address the underlying causes of the conflict. This initiative, however, was either not encompassing enough or came too late.

On the socio-economic dimension, the establishment of development projects and agencies was an important priority for the state and external donors to counter some of the underlying grievances. On the other hand, however, the state divided the Casamance region into two constituent entities, the smallest being the Diola-inhabited Lower Casamance, effectively thwarting the MFDC independence movement's claim to the entire region. Furthermore, a campaign of repression was unleashed selectively against suspected supporters of the MFDC within the Diola community. As the local society is profoundly unranked in nature, the soothing effect of appointing some elements to positions within the administration was limited.

The repressive measures impacted more decisively on the relationship between the state and the rebel groups, serving to mobilize further support among the Diola for the MFDC's cause. When in 1989 the state of Senegal was confronted with internal and external threats,⁵¹ the MFDC chose to take on the state militarily. Several rounds of hostilities have taken place since then. The civil war has caused enormous damage to the economic infrastructure of the region. Tourism has diminished and even stopped completely for some years (1991-1993).

51) In 1989 several events coincided: the post-elections riots in Dakar in 1989, followed by the Senegal river border conflict between Mauritania and Senegal, the dissolution of the *Confédération Sénégalaise* (1981-1989) and the dispute with Guinea Bissau over potential oil reserves on the continental plain off the coast of the Casamance.

To conclude, the interaction between various socio-economic factors plays an important role in the background of this violent conflict in south Senegal. The impact of the new constitution on land distribution, the expansion of modern economic activities initiated by the state (fisheries and tourism) and executed mainly by immigrants ignoring local entitlements, the incapacity of the state sector to absorb newcomers on the labour market or to accommodate the casamançais, otherwise combined with a long-standing perception of being slowly colonized (as exemplified by the penetration of Wolof culture), have fuelled a strong sense of marginalization and have facilitated political mobilization of Diolas by disenfranchised intellectuals. This has escalated into civil war.

In other cases, notably where mineral resource exploitation can be found, the linkage between resource and group entitlements is less strong. Hence, group mobilization only emerges gradually and largely depends on political awareness of the benefits of the resource concerned. Therefore, the uranium exploitation in the Tamajaq heartland in the Air mountains in Niger did not immediately attract opposition from the nomadic peoples and the state could grant exclusive mining rights to French companies without local repercussions. Only when the ecological crises impacted upon the nomadic people did community leaders start to express discontent over the low levels of government compensation for the regions concerned.

Generally speaking, the exploitation of natural resources – such as land, fisheries, timber, minerals or precious metals – without taking local entitlements into account can be used as a mobilizing factor. One might tentatively conclude that when resources are arbitrarily appropriated by outside groups, provided that such resources are linked to the livelihood strategies of local user groups, the propensity towards group mobilization increases markedly. The Casamance example also shows how changes operate over time, especially when ecological crises force people to look for alternative livelihood strategies.

If resources are not directly related to livelihood practices, as is the case with many mineral resources such as oil or metals, the extraction by outside agents does not seem to have resulted directly in group opposition or mobilization into possibly violent resistance. State legitimacy from the perspective of local user groups is intimately linked to the degree in which states are willing and able to compensate for resource extraction.

Section B-III-B Competition among Groups for Government Resources and Services

The issue of access to state resources and services figures prominently among the analytic approaches to group inequality in South Asia. In most conflict cases, the perceived or real inequalities or threats of a reversal of positions between groups figure prominently as mobilizing factors. It is difficult to relate differences of

government resource distribution among sub-groups uniformly to the outbreak of violent conflict.

In many cases patterns of inter-group inequality within states can be measured in terms of access to and proportional share of specific government services and government jobs. This section therefore elaborates upon the relative position of specific groups with regard to existing patterns and changes in the allocation of government resources. From various case studies it has become clear that the proportional share of government resources cannot as such be directly related to the outbreak of some of the intrastate conflicts in our research sample. Importantly, however, it signals rather how changes in the way that central state authorities allocate resources among constituent groups provide powerful incentives for inter-group competition and disputes between central states and sub-state groups. In general, two distinct patterns can be observed. The first pattern is one in which groups that have hitherto experienced rather high levels of government resources progressively find themselves in a situation in which they lose out against competitor groups, even when their own situation improves. This leads to a net loss of government-allocated resources compared to others. Affected groups will inevitably perceive the loss of government resources as unjust, even if such distributional changes are related to policies aiming at proportionate distribution of such services among the various groups that constitute a state. This process is commonly labelled as 'relative deprivation'.

Sometimes another pattern emerges when groups in reality are not worse of than other groups, but they perceive their situation as unjust when compared with levels of desired state resource allocation based on perceived levels of contribution to the common good. This implies that population groups inhabiting resource-rich areas sometimes claim privileged access to government services and jobs.

In South Asia, patterns of relative deprivation can be observed in the case of the post-Partition migrant Mohajir community in urban Pakistan, and in the origins of the Tamil LTTE armed resistance against the Sinhala-dominated state in Sri Lanka. Meanwhile, in Nicaragua the newly emerging commercial elite have recurrently mobilized into armed opposition against the ruling state elite based on notions of relative deprivation concerning the gains of the national economy, while in West Africa no clear examples stand out, although the Hausa repression of the Igbos' bid for independence for Biafra can be added to the list. The ruling Fulani and Hausa elite groups residing in northern Nigeria feared loss of power and status, as the loss of oil-rich Biafra would certainly have resulted in a deterioration of their relative power position within the Nigerian federal state.

Pakistan

The Mohajir case in Pakistan is an interesting example of how the privileged position of a minority gradually eroded in the aftermath of the secession of

Bangladesh. As a result of the Partition, a large community of Indian Muslims had settled in (then) Western Pakistan. This group is commonly referred to as the Mohajir, consisting of diaspora Muslims from all parts of India. These refugees were mostly relatively well educated, as well as highly motivated to participate in the establishment of a strong Muslim-dominated competitor state against India. They came to dominate the federal government bureaucracy and the army of newly emerging Pakistan. Over the years the influence of other ethno-linguistic groups inhabiting Pakistan, notably the Punjabi, threatened the Mohajir community's power position, and as a result the Mohajir gradually lost their initial power position and status in Pakistan. The Mohajir perceived this loss of power and access to government positions as a discriminatory process initiated by competitor groups, and loss of socio-economic group status provided the necessary incentives for political mobilization. In the process a Mohajir ethno-political identity took shape and became increasingly assertive. In the urban setting of Karachi, where the Mohajir community was numerous and well established, this process ultimately culminated in violent actions against the federal authorities, as recent migrant groups⁵² vied for scarce government resources.

In Pakistan a dynamic materialized in which the Mohajir lost erstwhile group privileges to other upwardly mobile groups in local society. The case of the Mohajir (see Box 3.3) is an interesting case of so-called relative deprivation. The Mohajir share a common identity based on post-Partition history. When it became clear that they had lost ground to other ethno-linguistic communities some leaders successfully mobilized people into an urban guerrilla movement. They were able to use grievances that originated from the fact that unlimited access to government positions and the army had been frustrated, while in fact a quota system had been installed to regulate group access with a view to avoiding group discrimination and uneven distribution of such positions. Hence, from a federal perspective regulated access was justified and could be defended on the basis of proportional group representation in the various government institutions; from the perspective of the Mohajir, however, this meant an absolute loss of positions and hence direct deprivation; and from the perspective of other groups, existing imbalances had merely been redressed and each group hence became entitled to its proportional share.

52) The Afghan war had created large flows of refugees, and notably Pathans had migrated to the urban centres in search of a livelihood.

*Box 3.3 The Mohajir case in Sind Province of Pakistan*⁵³

When Pakistan was founded, a large number of Muslim refugees initially settled almost overnight in (West) Pakistan. The migrants, referred to as Mohajir, came from various parts of India: a large number of refugees came from east Punjab and settled relatively smoothly among their co-ethnics in west Punjab; other refugees came from Uttar Pradesh and from around Bombay. These educated and urban Muslims mainly settled in urban Sind, Hyderabad and Karachi. In the initial period migrants, and Mohajirs in particular, enjoyed privileged positions in government, business and the bureaucracy. Muslims from Uttar Pradesh in India were overrepresented in education, services, professions and political life in disproportionate numbers.⁵⁴ Likewise, migrants from Uttar Pradesh dominated central government and distrusted provincial political leaders because of their perceived anti-Muslim League and therefore anti-Pakistan stance. The upper levels of bureaucracy were dominated by migrants, both Punjabi and Mohajir: the Mohajir, who were only three per cent of the population, had 21 per cent of all jobs in the federal bureaucracy. Among senior jobs, Mohajir held 33.5 per cent of all senior government posts in 1973. Mohajir therefore held a disproportionate share of senior positions in the state bureaucracy and were a privileged minority. By 1986, however, the share of Mohajirs in the federal bureaucracy had diminished to a mere 18.3 per cent of senior civil service positions, and this fell to 14.3 per cent in 1989.⁵⁵

In the case of the Mohajir, it was obvious that the state sector was the ultimate socio-economic stronghold of their community. As a privileged minority, Mohajirs operated at the national level and abhorred sub-national identities based on language, religion and culture. They upheld what was essentially an extraterritorial Islamic identity based on all-Pakistan politics. In the absence of a large demographic base for electing their representatives, the Mohajir identified with the military-bureaucratic establishment.⁵⁶ When the elections in 1970 opened up the state for mass participation, the privileged Mohajir minority came under threat from the emancipating sub-national identities that had won at the ballots, such as the Sind-based PPP (Pakistan People's Party), the party of Ali Bhutto.

The PPP's rule triggered the establishment of a distinct Mohajir identity in the face of indigenous revival in terms of the politicization of ethno-linguistic political agendas.

53) Case study based on Mohammed Waseem, *Ethnic Conflict in Pakistan: Case of Mohajir Nationalism*, paper presented at the International Workshop on Causes of Conflict, held at Hotel Tourmaline, 3-5 March 1997, Kandy, Sri Lanka.

54) M. Waseem, *Ethnic Conflict in Pakistan*, p. 18.

55) M. Waseem, *Ethnic Conflict in Pakistan*, p. 18.

56) Chapter on Pakistan, *South Asia: Regional Report*, vol. 2, p. 291.

Gradually, from the mid-1980s onwards, a militant Mohajir movement emerged. The massive influx of Pastuns, and other refugees from the Afghan conflict in the early 1980s, reinforced the Mohajir identity.

The Mohajir Qaumi Movement (MQM) even tried to create a separate Mohajir state (Jinnahpur) and the redrawing of electoral constituencies in order to safeguard majority voting in specific areas. Their quest for a separate status within Pakistan gained momentum after the 1970 elections. The PPP-led Sind government further triggered identity politics among the Mohajirs. Within Karachi and Sind, the Mohajir succeeded in mobilizing enough electoral support to win elections on that level. The political MQM movement was founded in 1984 and became an aggressive ethno-linguistic movement, mainly in the city of Karachi. The establishment of a rural-urban quota system for government jobs and successive waves of migration provoked violent resistance from the MQM, which launched an urban guerrilla movement against the federal authorities and the Sindhi community.

The basic socio-economic factor behind Mohajir extremism stems from the fear of continuing marginalization from a once powerful central position as well as the lack of a substantial voting bank. Perceived injustices embodied in a quota system for jobs within their traditional power base of Karachi have reinforced the movement. After major confrontations with the army in 1992 and 1995, the movement seems to have been contained militarily. However, the state's lack of performance in fields such as urban planning, supply and civic amenities – such as clean water, sewerage, dispensaries and roads – as well as declining social, cultural and political representation of Mohajirs in public life continue to agitate the minds of the Mohajir community.

The gradual decline of the Mohajir's power position and the rise of the Punjabi in Pakistan can also be interpreted as a gradual power transition between constituent groups (see also the chapter on political factors, the section on power transitions). The loss of relative power positions is therefore intimately linked to the absolute power status of a specific group at a specific point in time. The Mohajir had initially dominated the Pakistani federal government, but the democratization of the early 1970s had revealed the Mohajir community's electoral weakness. The ascendancy of the PPP (Pakistan People's Party) under Ali Bhutto marks the emancipation of the Sindhis and other sub-national identities. The subsequent army coup under Zia-ul-Haq represents the Punjabis' power takeover at the federal level. As the Mohajir had traditionally supported the army but had never played a significant role in its rank and file, they were unable to safeguard their privileges. The contemporary history of the Mohajir community in Pakistan therefore illustrates the intricate relationship between the loss of relative power positions within bureaucratic and political institutions and the takeover by a competing group signalling a gradual power transition.

Sri Lanka

The predominance of Tamils in the post-independence Sri Lankan state bureaucracy had gradually caused resentment among the majority Sinhala population. In the post-colonial setting, the emancipation of the Sinhala and the gradual reversal of the traditional overrepresentation of the Sri Lankan Tamils in the state sector caused widespread resentment among the Tamil minority. In fact, schooling and educational facilities had traditionally been higher in the Jaffna peninsula, where the majority of Sri Lankan Tamils were concentrated. The introduction of a quota system for government jobs, of the discriminatory language act in 1956 and the introduction of affirmative action on behalf of backward Sinhala and Muslim population groups with regard to access to university and higher education in general were largely felt as discriminatory measures against the Tamil minority and sparked violent opposition against the Sinhala-dominated state.⁵⁷

Objectively, the Tamil community is even nowadays more or less proportionately represented in the public sector and even predominates in certain private sector activities.⁵⁸ Nevertheless, the underlying problem for the Tamil community was the structural lack of alternative livelihood strategies in the areas in which they lived. The lack of sufficient natural resources and a poor agricultural potential resulted in dependence on the public sector. After the decline of Tamil representation in the public sector, they could only flourish in the more prestigious private sector spheres of activity – such as the medical, scientific, technical and engineering fields – yet the changes in university access policies regarding these free professions effectively cut off this ‘alternative’ venue for young Tamils.

The Tamil case clearly demonstrates the ‘perceptual’ dimension of such developments. The Sinhala-dominated state, however, failed to acknowledge the structural inhibitions facing this minority and failed to analyse the relative importance of public goods and access to the public sector as essential resources for the Tamil community at large.

Section B-III-C Regional Pricing Mechanisms and Trade Regulations

Central governments intervene in a range of areas. In the case of the Indian Punjab, government pricing policies as well as trade regulations regarding the sale of agricultural produce have had a profound impact on the Sikh community, artificially depriving specific groups and aggravating intra-regional differences. The Punjab is an interesting case since religious and cultural aspirations have become

57) Kingsley de Silva, chapter on Sri Lanka, *South Asia: Regional Report*, vol. 2, pp. 416-417.

58) See Annexe III, Poverty Statistics for South Asia, table on socio-economic inequality in Sri Lanka.

intermeshed with profound socio-economic changes occurring in that state through the implementation of the 'green revolution'. Such profound socio-economic interventions prove to be particularly conflict-prone (see Box 3.4 on the Punjab case).

*Box 3.4 The Punjab Case Study*⁵⁹

The Punjab's conflict history demonstrates that violent agitation against the central state emerged gradually, mainly as a political response to the effects of the green revolution. The 'green revolution' impacted profoundly on the population balance in the Punjab, on productive relations, on interstate trade balances and on growing inequality between rich and poor peasants as well as between urban-based traders and farmers. The Indian federal government in Delhi had a vested interest in controlling the wheat and rice production originating from the Punjab. Punjab's share in the national production of wheat (20 per cent) and rice (10 per cent) is disproportionate to its relative size and population. As a result of central state tutelage, the Sikh community's demand for autonomy progressively became more pronounced.

The impact of the 'green revolution' can briefly be summarized as follows. The Hindu community predominates in the urban trade sector and the Sikhs in the rural agricultural sector. The productive surplus of the 'green revolution' became a major issue between the state of Punjab and the Indian state at the time when the Congress party won the state elections in 1972. The Congress-dominated Punjabi government tended to maximize revenues from inputs such as fertilizer, electricity, irrigation water, machinery and credits and to minimize supply prices for the agricultural products through price fixation, buffer stocks and the restriction of interstate commodity flows.

The 'green revolution' therefore resulted in inter-group and intra-group conflicts. The ongoing process of land accumulation by a small, rich and high-caste section of the Sikh population alienated smallholder sections among the Sikhs; and the accumulation of capital by the urban-based Hindu traders, who profited mostly on the state-enforced discrepancy between input and output prices, led to a stand-off between Sikhs and Hindus.

Within the Sikh community, the rich Jat farming community had grossly benefited throughout the 1960s, when small farmers lost their lands through the detrimental effects of economies of scale.

59) Case study based on Mahendra P. Lama, *Armed Conflicts by the Haves: A Case Study of Punjab*, paper presented at the International Workshop on Causes of Conflict, held at Hotel Tourmaline, 3-5 March 1997, Kandy, Sri Lanka.

The rich farmers belonging to the Jat caste constituted 10 per cent of the total population but owned 60 per cent of all lands. Simultaneously, the Sikhs and the Hindus became increasingly antagonistic to one another because of the cumulative effects of government pricing policies. Furthermore, accumulation of land by large landowners curtailed opportunities for employment and livelihood for the smallholder and middle-class sections of the Sikh peasantry, especially for the youth. The militancy expressed by the Alkali Dal movement in response to the electoral landslide of 1972 was strongly embraced by elements from the Sikh peasantry.

The growing inequality with regard to productive land was an important rallying point for the majority of the militant Sikh movement. Most Alkali Dal members belonged to the deprived sectors of the Sikh peasantry. Moreover, the rich Jat farmers recruited landless Hindu peasants to work the land, depriving poor Sikhs of income. These Hindu agricultural workers belonged almost exclusively to the backward and scheduled castes and voted the Alkali Dal out of power. The Sikh-Hindu population balance was significantly altered as a result, as from 1971 to 1981 the proportion of Hindus increased from 40 per cent to 48 per cent whereas the Sikhs diminished from 60 per cent to 52 per cent. The precarious population balance created an additional incentive for the Sikhs to substantiate their political aspirations in the so-called 'Anandpur Sahib Resolution'. This resolution consisted of a mix of political and socio-economic requests. However, the federal state interpreted the Alkali Dal resolutions strictly as a political manifesto aiming at political autonomy and consequently as a threat to national unity. The central authorities failed to acknowledge some of the long-standing socio-economic grievances of the Sikh community, such as the distribution of the Ravi-Baer waters, cheap inputs, better prices for agricultural products and freedom of trade in food grains. The rigidity of the central state reinforced Sikh extremism. When, almost one decade later, radical Sikhs under Bhindranwale threatened to stop interstate trade and refused payment of taxes, the state intervened violently to crush the militant Sikhs.

The case of the Punjab demonstrates that socio-economic changes resulting from government policies create conflict-prone situations. In fact, only a limited number of farmers and traders profited from the 'green revolution' and as a result many small peasants became landless. The centre clearly used the Punjab as a resource provider, ignored the intrinsic conflicting characteristics of its own policies. Within the Punjab the existence of a growing proportion of landless peasantry stood at strong variance with official government policies aimed at reducing socio-economic inequality. From 1961 to 1983 the proportion of landless peasants increased from 17.3 per cent to 40 per cent in the Punjab. A structural solution therefore needs to look into the basic features of the political economy between the central state and the Punjab, as well as looking into the increased inter-group inequality resulting from the selective impact of the 'green revolution'.

Concluding remarks section B-III: The Effects of Socio-Economic Policies on Inter-Group Competition and Violent Conflict

Viewed from a broad inter-group perspective, the existence of privileged groups and inequality between groups provoke jealousy and protest by contending groups. The latter are eager to enforce a more equitable and proportional representation in the different spheres of the public sector, as well as a proportional distribution of public goods. In fact, patterns of decline and growth and subsequent loss of erstwhile power positions for specific groups are inherent in state-building trajectories. Groups that are affected by such changes do not perceive their situation as one of 'relative' deprivation, but as a real and direct loss of power or as a loss of jobs in the public sector. Policies to redress inequality and measures to realize more equitable resource distribution among constituent groups within states are therefore potentially conflict-prone. Such policies intervene in the existing balance of power between groups and have unintended side effects, as they may help to empower specific groups to the detriment of others and, hence, assist in power transitions.

The effects of government policies, either through resource extraction or through the selective delivery or denial of specific government services and so-called public goods, impact on patterns of inter-regional inequality. In fact, as the Punjab case illustrates, most central governments apply policies with inbuilt contradictions. Resource extraction is in many cases a necessary prerequisite for central bureaucracies to be able to distribute between regions with a surplus and regions with a deficit. Moreover, resource extraction generates a surplus value often used to maintain essential government services.

State bureaucracies should try to understand the inherent contradictory nature of inequitable resource allocation, provided that they want to promote equitable state policies regarding the provision and distribution of public goods. This section concludes that some groups and communities rely more heavily on state resources because of historical or natural conditions prevailing in their areas, and in such cases – for example, the Sri Lankan Tamils or the Mohajir in urban Pakistan – compensatory mechanisms could be devised to accompany the distribution of public goods to try to soothe potential dissent.

In this section, therefore, patterns of resource allocation and resource extraction by state authorities and the impact on groups' status and socio-economic well-being emerge as pivotal factors in the socio-economic perspective on the emergence of violent conflict. Again, a specific configuration of socio-economic factors can be identified, namely identity, location, resource availability, government policies regarding resource extraction and patterns of resource allocation by state authorities. This combination of factors provides a fertile breeding ground for dissent among groups and between groups and the state.

To conclude, resource extraction is widely perceived as a prerequisite of legitimate states. States are internally sovereign, implying that they have a

monopoly over resources within the state's territory. States, however, as a rule compensate local constituencies for their resource contribution to the state at large. According to Holsti, states have the right to extract, but they must also provide services and allow participation in decisions to allocate resources. If states fail to deliver public goods, vertical legitimacy⁶⁰ of the state is threatened. As a result, communities inhabiting such resource-rich areas are likely to develop grievances, which in turn can be used to mobilize such groups into political action.

Finally, in some cases economic development projects set up by central governments in order to promote socio-economic developments in targeted areas and among targeted population groups may have opposite effects. Some distinct ethno-linguistic groups may perceive such programmes as efforts to annihilate their culture and hence resist such initiatives (as with the CHT in Bangladesh, and the Diolas in Senegal).

C) Economic Growth, Stagnation or Decline

Section C-I General Overview

This section investigates the role of economic growth. The research question focused on the relationship between economic growth dynamics and the outbreak of violent conflict, that is, if economic growth increases, the likelihood that conflict will diminish and vice versa.

The economic performance of the states under investigation has fluctuated enormously during the post-independence period.⁶¹ Generally speaking, patterns of economic growth and decline seem to have taken place despite conflict dynamics in the three regions and fifteen countries under study.⁶² Apart from possible causal relationships, this analysis tries to review the potential role of economic decline as a mobilizing factor. When economic decline sets in or when economies stagnate, states are mostly in dire straits.

Furthermore, it is important to make a distinction between long-term and short-term changes regarding local economic dynamics. In many cases, abrupt

60) *Vertical legitimacy* refers to authority, consent and loyalty to the idea of the state. This type of legitimacy thus implies that large segments of the population accept the rightfulness of the state, and its authority to issue commands. A fundamental prerequisite for vertical legitimacy is the implicit bargain between the state and the political community. This bargain, however, is always a matter of judgement and perception, and may consequently change over time. From K.J. Holsti, *The State, War and the State of War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

61) Reliable statistics on economic growth or decline were not available for a number of countries, and conclusions should therefore be drawn with restraint.

62) See Annexe V, Selected Economic Statistics.

changes such as the overnight devaluation of national currencies or the abolition of food subsidies have provoked violent reactions, mainly among urban constituencies. In Dakar, Senegal's capital, for example, food riots took place recurrently during the 1980s but never spread beyond the urban setting.⁶³ It should be remembered that such violent incidents, however devastating, are mostly erratic and spontaneous in nature and only rarely develop into full-scale violent conflicts. Since the aim of this study is to unravel causes of large-scale violent conflict, these events are not taken into account. Long-term economic dynamics can have important repercussions for individual states or for specific groups within local society. Hence, the focus in this section lies on long-term trends and structural economic development patterns and their effects on the genesis of violent conflicts.

Simultaneously, it is important to make a sharp distinction between economic dynamics as a possible causal factor accounting for the outbreak of violence and as a result of violent conflict. The conflicts in the Punjab (India), Chittagong Hill Tracts area (Bangladesh), Kashmir (India), Guatemala, the contras' war (Nicaragua), El Salvador, the Biafran civil war (Nigeria), the Mouvement des Forces Démocratiques Casamançais' rebellion (Casamance region in Senegal) and the Tamajaq insurgency (Niger) have clearly had devastating effects on the performance of national economies. In the case of Central America, the negative economic effects of the protracted internal conflicts, combined with the international isolation, seem to have incited the contending parties to envisage peaceful settlements. Economic decline was apparently an important incentive for the conflicting parties in Guatemala in the 1980s, when despite a military victory by the incumbent military government over the guerrilla forces, a democratically elected government under Cerezo managed to reach a national consensus on peace talks to arrive ultimately at a negotiated settlement of the conflict.⁶⁴ When national economies have been devastated or nearly destroyed by violent strife, the lack of income more often than not forces people to develop alternative livelihood strategies, in turn facilitating the emergence of so-called shadow economies and violence-related economic activities.

Conclusions section C-I: Macroeconomic Growth, Stagnation and Decline

To conclude, economic performance on the macro level does not seem to be related to the outbreak of violent conflicts. Although there seems to be no direct causal linkage between economic developments and conflict dynamics, indirect connections are abundant. In the previous section on regional inequality, it was

63) Ferdinand de Jong, *Causes of the Casamance Rebellion in Senegal*, p. 196.

64) Report on Guatemala, *Central America: Regional Report*, pp. 190-191.

demonstrated that in some cases the struggle about the benefits of the national economy and far-reaching state interference in the regional economy may spawn political conflict in regions within states (for example, the Punjab in India, Bangladesh versus West Pakistan, Hausa versus Igbo in Nigeria). Short-term economic crises may lead to spontaneous outbursts of public discontent. The following section analyses whether long-term economic stagnation or decline eventually leads to the mobilization of segments of the population into violent opposition to the state.

Because most countries and regions in our research sample have revealed rather specific economic development patterns, a region- and country-specific overview is presented in the following section.

Section C-II Regional Economic Dynamics and the Impact of Economic Transformation on Conflict

South Asia

Bangladesh

The fragility of state economic performances in South Asia is exemplified by the case of Bangladesh, where a fast-growing population, recurrent natural disasters (floods), erratic price fluctuations of primary commodities on international markets and a widening gap between investments and savings account for the fragility of the domestic economic system. In view of the overall marginal growth of the Bangladeshi economy during the period under investigation, it is tentatively inferred that a weak economic performance can be seen as an important permissive factor underlying the prevailing social and political instability in Bangladesh.⁶⁵ However, this has not so far led to major violent disputes between constituent groups.

India

For India the problem of scale imposes itself and one needs to look into the performance of individual states to depict a more penetrative image. Some states, such as the Punjab and Haryana, have recorded some of the highest growth rates over a period of some twenty years; other affluent states (such as West Bengal and Gujarat) have recorded low levels of growth; and among the backward states some experienced rapid growth (such as Orissa and Manipur) while others remained stagnant (as in Bihar, Assam and Madhya Pradesh).⁶⁶ Despite the lack of covariance between growth statistics and the upsurge of violent conflicts, some trends

65) Abdur Rob Khan, country paper on Bangladesh, *South Asia: Regional Report*, vol. 1, pp. 242-243.

66) See Annexe V, Selected Economic Statistics, table on macroeconomic data for India.

can be observed for India. In the four states that have recorded the lowest average growth rates, widespread unrest in rural areas materialized.⁶⁷

Sri Lanka

In general terms, economic stagnation in Sri Lanka was among the pivotal factors presented by the commission of inquiry into the causes of the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP – People’s Revolutionary Front) uprisings. In Sri Lanka the economic stagnation created a hotbed for discontent, as the effects of the youth bulge could not be absorbed by the economy. This provided the rallying ground for the JVP movement. The incapacity of the Sri Lankan state to provide jobs in a state-dominated economic system mobilized public discontent,⁶⁸ and consequently, the JVP’s political leadership skilfully exploited the weakness of the frail political system, which was already under enormous pressure because of the continuing Sinhala-Tamil stand-off (see Box 3.5 on the JVP case study).

Box 3.5 The JVP Uprisings⁶⁹

The JVP uprising of 1971 was precipitated by the electoral victory of the United Front in May 1970. The JVP quickly seized the political initiative and organized mass demonstrations to force the new government into compliance with its election promises. When violence broke out in April 1971, the JVP aimed to overthrow the government.

The prelude to these events was rooted in several factors that coincided to provide the necessary preconditions against which a first round of violence materialized. First, the state was firmly engaged in the national economy, and dominated vital sectors. The state sector was the major venue for upward mobility. Second, the majority of insurgents were young people, relatively well educated and belonged to low-caste and low-class segments of Sinhala society.

67) Gerry Peiris, chapter on India, *South Asia: Regional Report*, Part 1, pp. 121-125.

68) Sri Lanka Country chapter, pp. 359. In *South Asia Regional Report*, Volume 2. International Centre for Ethnic Studies, Sri Lanka; Kandy and The Clingendael institute, The Netherlands; The Hague.

69) This case study is largely based on a paper written by G.H. Peiris, *Insurrection and Youth Unrest in Sri Lanka*, paper presented at the International Workshop on Causes of Conflict: South Asia, organized by the International Centre for Ethnic Studies, Hotel Tourmaline, Kandy, 3-5 March 1997.

The populist socialist government elected to power only rhetorically addressed the crucial issues related to socio-economic inequality. Sri Lanka was and still is a country with sharp socio-economic inequality between rich and poor. The prevailing system of political patronage that operated within Sinhala society favoured established elite groups and their offspring, leaving no options for upward social mobility for the bulk of young people. All these elements provided incentives for violent protest. Frustrated university graduates and landless unemployed proved to be a fertile mobilizing ground for the violent JVP movement. The expectations of some of the young supporters of the new government remained unfulfilled and they eventually opted for revolutionary change. However, the catalyst workings of ideology, organization and leadership were indispensable for the mobilization of socio-economic grievances.

The violent confrontation lasted for several months and the JVP movement was finally crushed militarily.

The government made inquiries into the motives behind the youth insurgency. The Commission of Inquiry concluded that the socio-economic grievances of particular groups had been instrumental in the trajectory towards violence. The political establishment consequently increased the influence of the state in matters related to the national economy. In order to counter some of the socio-economic causes leading to the first JVP uprising, the Land Reform Law of 1972 was implemented, as well as the nationalization of tea estates and plantations in 1975. The socialist government's response, which addressed some of the JVP's grievances, crippled the national economy and led to a further decline in economic performance as well as a decline in state sector job opportunities. The basic features of a political system dominated by Sinhala elite groups did not change. The practice of political patronage persisted, as well as the shrinking of the labour market and a lack of private economic opportunities in a state-controlled economy. Most participants in the 1971 uprising and the leader of the movement were granted amnesty in 1977.

The JVP was revived as a political party and entered the electoral process as a democratic party. In 1983 the JVP was accused of complicity in ethnic riots and was threatened with political annihilation. This eventually led to the JVP going underground and becoming a clandestine movement. When the Tamil-Sinhala conflict escalated and India mounted an exterior intervention, widespread xenophobic and nationalist emotions ensued. The arrival of the Indian Peacekeeping Force in 1987 initiated a cycle of violent protests by the JVP and other nationalist groups. The second JVP uprisings combined nationalist rhetoric with persistent socio-economic deprivation of the Sinhala youth, largely mobilized from among the lower batgama and vahumpura castes. Furthermore, these relatively poor interest groups within Sinhala society only had limited access to the political decision-making realm.

The most prominent socio-economic factor behind the violent protests was the prevailing situation of lack of employment opportunities, as well as lack of access to higher social positions within Sinhala society. This was the result of a state-dominated economy, which proved incapable of realizing sufficient economic growth to absorb newcomers on the labour market.

To conclude, Sri Lanka's stagnant economy and the state-centred development model failed to provide dearly needed jobs. Demographically, a so-called 'youth bulge' had materialized, indicating a disproportionate number of young people in the population at large. This youth bulge created a growing demand for jobs, which the stagnant economy could not provide. The lack of social mobility for the newly educated youth who flooded the labour market resulted in the emergence of a large group of frustrated youth. Against this background the appearance of an extremist ideological and ultra-nationalist movement proved particularly conflict-prone, leading to the first JVP uprising. During the second JVP revolt in 1987, these grievances enabled the mobilization of a young extremist constituency, stirred up by the populist nationalistic rhetoric of the movement's leadership. In the perception of the rebelling JVP movement, the dominant Sinhala political elite had sold out to the Indians, thus humiliating the Sinhalese majority.

Pakistan

Pakistan's economy had to be restarted completely twice in thirty years: first after the Partition in 1948; and second after the independence of Bangladesh in 1972. These events led to a complete reorientation of the local economy. The agricultural heartland was forcibly redirected to the Pakistani Punjab and the Bengal province after Partition, and to the Pakistani Punjab after 1972. This provoked a lopsided development process, greatly benefiting the Punjab. The Punjabis' economic domination created the preconditions for the predominance of Punjabis in the army and state bureaucracy. Formerly influential groups slowly lost ground to the Punjabis, and the concomitant process of identification between the central state and the Punjab has created enormous tensions between the state and other regions where other ethno-linguistic groups predominate.⁷⁰ The ongoing process of economic liberalization enforces economics of scale and efficiency, reinforcing the deprived position of remote and mostly rural areas. This phenomenon threatens the survival of the state of Pakistan as the already weak political legitimacy is further eroded by the lack of redistributive capacity in directing investments to marginalized areas and peoples. Grievances towards the central government in Baluchistan thrived on lack of investment and economic progress in the region and eventually

70) P. Douma, G. Frerks and L. van de Goor, *Causes of Conflict in the Third World: Synthesis Report* (The Hague: Netherlands Institute of International Relations 'Clingendael', 1998), p. 77.

spawned the secessionist movement (see the chapter on political factors, the section on contested sovereignty and secessionist groups).

Afghanistan

In the case of Afghanistan, the formal economy was virtually destroyed during the civil war, and as a result a parallel economy, based on the production of drugs and the illicit trade in arms and other highly profitable illegal commodities, has spawned the emergence of a war economy. This development has resulted in a new cycle of internal warfare, since most peasants were uprooted by years of civil war and Soviet occupation. Agriculture has become a hazardous proposition because millions of landmines are scattered across the country. Consequently, most Afghans face the choice of either joining armed militia or becoming refugees. The virtual destruction of the formal sector has reinforced the growth of illicit economic activities.⁷¹ The ousting of the Taliban regime has not changed the economic reality underlying Afghanistan's conflict dynamics. Economic breakdown therefore provides an important incentive for the development of so-called war economies. Warring factions profit from the maintenance of war economies and a vicious circle of violence-related profit-making hence materializes. It has proven to be extremely difficult to undo such profound socio-economic transformations. Decades of warfare have created war-related economies, and it will take years to undo them.

West Africa

In West Africa the general image is one of economic stagnation and decline. Economic growth, when it materialized in the 1960s, led to conspicuous consumption by the political elite and to a boom in export substitution industries. The economic performance of individual states has been strongly determined by fluctuations in the international commodity markets. Macroeconomic parameters showed a decline in growth during the 1970s and 1980s, as a result of the climatic disasters of 1973-1974 and 1984-1985, as well as the oil crises of the early 1970s. The public sector continued to provide jobs for newcomers on the labour market, further increasing the external debt. When structural adjustment measures were implemented in the early 1990s, most regional economies lapsed into crisis (see the chapter on external factors, the section on external economic interventions). The CFA (the common currency of most francophone West African countries) devalued in January 1994, followed by the Naira (the Nigerian currency).

71) For an indepth discussion on this phenomenon, see Pyt Douma, *The Political Economy of Internal Conflict: A Review of Contemporary Trends and Issues*, Working Paper 1 (The Hague: Conflict Research Unit of the Netherlands Institute of International Relations 'Clingendael', 2001).

Ghana and Nigeria have been less affected by these droughts than the Sahelian countries. Nevertheless, substantial areas were struck during these years, impacting negatively on overall economic performance. The economies of Senegal and notably Niger are extremely dependant on the sale of one primary commodity: groundnuts and uranium respectively. Against the backdrop of such structural weaknesses, budget deficits and external indebtedness grew to unprecedented heights, and despite the substantial devaluation of the CFA currency in 1994, the economies of the entire region have not recovered from the crises of the 1980s.

Senegal

Senegal provides a good example of the short-term impact of economic hardship and the evolution of political dissent as opposition parties use such developments to make people rally to their cause. The events in Dakar in the aftermath of the 1989 elections can be linked directly to popular discontent concerning the impact of economic hardship. This was felt more directly when subsidies for food or basic products such as kitchen oil or petrol were abandoned by the government of the day. As has been stated earlier, such protests – violent as they may be – do not necessarily lead to prolonged violent conflict between groups in society. Government pricing policies can therefore at best be aggravating during certain periods; they can work alongside other factors that have a more structural character and serve as a trigger. Surprisingly, despite years of economic decline and major lay-offs in the public sector due to structural adjustment programmes, no violent conflicts other than the Casamance rebellion in south Senegal have materialized.

Niger

The case of Niger demonstrates that the overall weak economic structure of Niger has indirectly created conditions for the alienation of specific groups within the state. Notably, the loss of uranium profits when the boom subsided in 1981 and the impact of the drought of 1984-1985 had a profound impact on the capacity of the state to foster economic growth. These events also impacted on the economic decline of, notably, the pastoral sector. When the state proved incapable of compensating the pastoral peoples, popular dissent with the central state grew.

Central America

The economic dynamics of the Central American states overlap to a great extent. The 1960s were a period of economic growth, followed by stagnation in the 1970s and economic decline in the 1980s. The entire region was dominated by an export-oriented agricultural model of the economy. Huge estates, mostly owned by foreign multinational companies or national landowning elites, produce coffee and tropical fruits such as bananas and pineapples for export purposes. This fragile lopsided economy depended on the availability of a large rural working force. After the

Cuban crises and the subsequent economic blockade, new opportunities were created as cotton and sugar became important new products, along with cattle raising. This in turn led to the creation of a new economic elite that joined the ranks of the landed elite. Simultaneously, a process of industrialization started, culminating in the creation of a regional common market, the Central American Common Market (CACM). This common market, however, dissolved after the short interstate war in 1969 between El Salvador and Honduras (the so-called 'Soccer War'). However, the rise and decline of the CACM impacted differently on the five countries of the sub-region: Honduras and Nicaragua stand out as basically agricultural countries, where large foreign companies exerted substantial influence over local affairs; El Salvador had a strongly developed domestic industrial sector; while Guatemala and Costa Rica ranked somewhere between these two groups. These differences, although relatively small, provided a structural background against which some of the internal conflicts in the region emerged.

Nicaragua

During the Somoza period in Nicaragua, overall economic indicators showed a pattern of steady growth. This pattern underwent changes in the aftermath of the 1972 earthquake, resulting from the cumulative effects of international recession, the oil crisis and the decline of the CACM. The economic setting therefore set the stage for increased opposition and must be linked to relevant political factors to account for the outbreak of violent revolutionary opposition to the regime. During the Sandinista period, the economy experienced modest growth followed by a period of constant decline. These changes have to be viewed as a result of the internal war against the contras and the effects of external economic blockade by the United States. In this case, the economy can be used as an indicator of the impact of violent conflict on the national economy of Nicaragua. Deteriorating standards of life, scarcity and general poverty resulting from years of economic decline and stagnation led to the democratic ousting of the Sandinista junta. Subsequent governments, although succeeding in stabilizing macroeconomic performance, faced increasing internal opposition as a result of the enormous socio-economic costs for the population at large as a result of austerity programmes and increasing liberalization and privatization of the economy. Such negative effects may yet again lead to a spiral of opposition and possibly violent conflict, provided that the weak institutional democratic arrangements fail to accommodate the wishes of the contending parties.

Concluding Remarks section C-II: Regional Overview on Economic Growth, Stagnation and Decline

The indirect and underlying role of economic decline and stagnation with regard to the mobilization of popular discontent has been demonstrated in all of the regions.

Economic performance stands out as an important mobilizing factor in a number of countries, such as in Sri Lanka. However, apart from the Sandinista period in Nicaragua, there is no evidence to support a linear relationship between decline in economic growth and violent conflict or the reverse. It therefore seems likely that political factors, such as the predominance of elite groups and specific measures favouring some groups above others, become salient in the context of economic decline.

Observations and Conclusions chapter III: Socio-Economic Factors

The socio-economic dimension has provided some useful insights into a vast number of conflict- and country-specific developments, as well as providing some knowledge of specific clusters of factors that sometimes lead to violent conflict.

Overall, a number of comparative general patterns can be observed between all of the countries and regions involved, notably regarding the impact of government services' allocation, the mobilizing capacity of unequal resource distribution, the linkage between inter-group socio-economic inequality and identity-related factors (such as language and religion), the importance of access (and rights) to entitlements, such as land, and the effects of economic growth, stagnation or decline on existing relationships among groups.

The impression emerged from the various case studies that patterns of identity-related political mobilization often materialized as convenient rallying points for political entrepreneurs. Identities were sometimes reinvented as growing awareness of belonging to a distinct cultural group was deliberately used (as with the Mohajir case), when it became clear that other levels of group mobilization, based on material or political issues, had been exhausted and group privileges or group survival were threatened (as in the CHT case).

Moreover, it seems that cultural identity and geography are not sufficient to provide a satisfactory explanation for emerging patterns of group mobilization and violence. When the specific policies of dominant groups in society were analysed in conjunction with the overlap of identity and geography, more precise explanations could be presented. Even so, such a conjunction of factors does not automatically account for violent conflict. Other factors related to the political decision-making process, both in the dominant and the subservient sub-state groups, must be taken into account. This becomes clear when reviewing the role of government service allocation and jobs' provision. Cutbacks have had serious repercussions for internal stability in a number of cases, and violent conflicts have evolved around these issues (for example, the Tamil conflict in Sri Lanka and the Mohajir case in Pakistan). Even seemingly conflict-neutral policies, such as the pricing of agricultural products and inputs, may have strong conflict-prone side effects, as the Punjab case testifies.

Also, when groups perceive their plight as the deliberate outcome of government policies, the likelihood of violent conflict increases.

Economic decline or growth also seems to provide useful rallying grounds for political entrepreneurs and leaders. However, severe economic decline may sometimes incite population groups to opt out massively, as Ghana and El Salvador have experienced, or lead to the development of shadow and war economies (as in Afghanistan and regions within countries such as the Tamil-dominated regions in the north-east of Sri Lanka). Migration as a safety valve option proves to be vulnerable, and can be dramatically reversed as the case of Nigeria testifies: in the early 1980s all foreign workers, mostly Ghanaians, were expelled instantly as a response to macroeconomic decline.

Finally, socio-economic factors hardly ever seem to have caused violent conflicts directly and predominantly seem to play a mobilizing role. As a result, even some of the clusters of factors that were identified in this chapter cannot satisfactorily account for the outbreak of major violent conflicts. It seems likely that other factors related to the political decision-making processes of segments of a specific population must be taken into account. This may lead to the identification of more encompassing clusters of factors and to a more comprehensive understanding of the causes of conflict. We therefore now turn to an analysis of political factors.

IV Political Factors

Introduction

A separate analysis of political factors is needed in order to ascertain the relative importance of individual factors regarding the genesis of violent conflicts. This chapter presents an analysis of the three working hypotheses identified on the basis of major findings from contemporary conflict studies (see chapter I).

This study of political factors postulates that the institutions and policies of state elites are of vital importance. State elite groups to a large extent determine the course and direction of political processes within states. It seems likely that the way in which such elite groups entertain political relations with subservient sub-state actors determines the political dynamics of conflict and peace within states. Consequently, incumbent political elite groups impact on the 'performance' of states.

Throughout this chapter, differences in state performance – in terms of institutional capacity, capacity to apply effective power-sharing formulae and capacity to ward off power transition by competing elite groups – are linked to the issue of the emergence of large-scale violent conflicts. Each of the above properties is dealt with in a specific section. Cross-references are made within each section to other factors involved, notably the socio-economic factors

already dealt with in the last chapter. Where possible, reference is made to missing factors to be located in the external dimension.

This chapter on political factors therefore also builds on the assumptions and conclusions from the chapter on socio-economic factors. We have postulated that socio-economic grievances provide the necessary preconditions on which political discontent flourishes. What can be said about the role of political factors in this regard? Are they merely permissive or pivotal factors? In order to be able to answer these pertinent questions, we now turn to the analysis of political factors.

Prior to presentation of the major findings, an overview of colonial legacies is required in order to provide a historical context to the study of political factors.

Section A Historical Overview, Colonial Legacies and Contemporary Trends

The capacity of states to implement policies, to maintain territorial integrity and to compel citizens to accept the supremacy of the social order in place differs enormously in the regions and countries included in this study. Almost all of the states involved have inherited specific bureaucratic and security structures from their colonial background. Colonialism, as a distinct form of political economy, has left an indelible mark on the style of governance practised in the various states. Some outstanding features of this 'style' of governance are the overemphasis on administrative management and internal security measures by the political elite of the day. Consequently, in many poor states in the so-called 'Third World' or 'South', social service provision has been neglected, and currently, within the framework of global market liberalization, most social services are submitted to cost-recovery approaches, leading to a further decline in government service provision performance and declining coverage rates. The colonial history has played an important role in the evolution of governmental structures in the countries concerned. The most important developments will therefore briefly be reiterated.

South Asia

States in southern Asia, with the notable exception of Afghanistan, seem to have developed well-functioning bureaucracies and national armies. In fact, notably India's and Sri Lanka's governmental structures can easily stand comparison with so-called developed countries within the Western world. The British Raj in South Asia left a lasting legacy to the incumbent governments of the newly independent states. The contemporary bureaucracies are largely grafted on the English colonial model, even concerning some legislative and constitutional arrangements. In India, the various ministries have continued to maintain the inherited English administrative procedures to keep records and

statistics for major developments within sectors, allowing the maintenance of a well-functioning institutional memory and central planning capacities. Because of the development of an excellent and efficient infrastructure, India enjoys the advantage of being able to govern its territory effectively and provide goods and services to almost all regions of the country. Pakistan faced enormous challenges in this regard, as the country at first consisted of two geographically separated units. Sri Lanka also benefited from a well-functioning colonial administration and infrastructure.

West Africa

In West Africa, by contrast, the picture is totally the opposite. Even though different colonial legacies are involved, as both English and French ex-colonies are included in the research sample, all of the states studied lack efficient government institutions. In West Africa most states can be labelled as underdeveloped; many state institutions are still embryonic and ill equipped, and are confronted with formidable tasks. The government sector in this region has always been oversized but functionally weak, although the security sector tends to be relatively well endowed. The fact that most African countries were effectively colonized only at the end of the nineteenth century may to some extent account for the lack of a substantial colonial administrative legacy. In fact, most African colonial territories were organized in such a way as to be able to ship out resources and raw materials without bothering too much about how to run these territories, provided that internal security and sufficient labour were secured. These purely extractive colonial arrangements, combined with the development of a coastal-oriented infrastructure, eventually left most countries in the region with a legacy of administrative neglect and the selective development of state structures that were only geared towards internal suppression and exploitation. Hence, the incumbent elite inherited embryonic state structures, consisting largely of core areas located on the coast and an underdeveloped rural hinterland. As a result, the heritage of the colonial state provided a blueprint from which so-called 'predator' state structures in some cases gradually evolved.

Central America

In Central America the institutional capacity of most countries has traditionally been rather weak, as these countries are relatively small, possessing only a few resources on which to maintain state institutions. This region has governments that have served the interests of powerful elite groups for a long time and is traditionally weakly developed in peripheral areas. Reflecting the internal organization of the colonizing state – Spain – the small countries on the Isthmus developed centralized top-down administrative systems. Because of the development of plantation economies, these states closely resembled the West African states, but in contrast to the latter, all countries in Central America

developed as 'settler states' through the gradual and ongoing racial transformation of the population, which was initiated by the Spanish. The indigenous populations were almost annihilated, with the notable exception of the Mayans in Guatemala. In addition, black slaves were imported to work the plantations. Inbuilt racist differentiation formed the basis of the newly developing states' social hierarchy. Government institutions were hence largely geared towards the needs of the *Criollo* elite and their political clients inhabiting political and economic core areas, whereas peripheral areas inhabited either by indigenous communities or people of mixed blood (so-called *Mestizos*) were marginalized. This in turn led to the development of geographically fragmented states, in which the central highlands developed full-fledged state structures, whereas the remote mountain areas and coastal plains somehow remained outside the administrative realm of the state.

Concluding Remarks section A

On the basis of this rather general overview, it becomes clear that the legacy of colonialism has left an indelible mark on the independent successor states. Even in Central America, where most states gained their independence one century earlier than most African and Asian countries, the spatial and inbuilt features of governance initiated by the Spanish have persisted until the present.

In most of the West African states, colonialism was a short-lived experience and political integration of the various constituent groups within states only materialized rarely. Therefore, potentially strong centrifugal forces operating in African states seem to be inherent in the post-independence state-building trajectories. The nation-building process in Central America seems to have contained such forces. In Asia, notably in post-Partition India and Pakistan, cultural differences between constituent peoples continue to challenge the very notion of these states. In states where the colonial authorities had developed full-fledged state bureaucracies and educated an indigenous layer of civil servants, the existing colonial heritage has greatly improved the capacity of incumbent political elites to build independent states and to contain centrifugal forces. Nevertheless, it is difficult to determine to what extent this legacy has predestined the post-colonial developments in the various regions. The indigenous elite groups that took power after independence all pursued distinct political projects with different outcomes.

To conclude, the different historic trajectories of the states under investigation have revealed the existence of distinct regional colonial legacies. Moreover, most states have tended to concentrate on the maintenance of internal cohesion by developing well-equipped national armies. These armies have primarily served to ward off internal opposition towards the incumbent elite, which time and again has led to patterns of outright repression of sub-state interest groups, distinct ethno-linguistic groups and ideologically inspired rebel movements. As can be inferred from contemporary history, post-colonial states tend to remain intact territorially, notably in sub-Saharan Africa and

Central America. In South Asia, regardless of the presence of well-developed state bureaucracies, identity-related forces rooted in religion and language have spawned strong centrifugal forces, leading to secession and the formation of new independent states. As the world has witnessed recently with the secession of Eritrea in the Horn of Africa, this process seems to be global in scope and ongoing, and there are no signs as yet that this process is petering out. Quite the contrary, culturally distinct regions and ethno-linguistic groups continue to claim political autonomy and sometimes try to secede. What, then, are the forces at work behind these processes? When do such processes lead to violent disputes between distinct groups previously cohabiting the same state in more peaceful ways? How do states contain such forces and what features determine the outcome of such struggles?

Section B Institutional Capacity; Weak States, secessionism, federalism and nation building

Section B-I Weak states; Introduction

The first research hypothesis is related to the issue of the institutional capacity of a regime: if this capacity increases, the likelihood of conflict will diminish; but if it decreases, the reverse will happen.

When considering the entire research, all the countries and regions involved, it can be tentatively concluded that most states in the sample have more or less managed to develop state structures that are capable of at least maintaining national sovereignty. Initially, when reviewing the contemporary histories of the different regions and countries involved, it becomes clear that the performance of states regarding the criteria of maintaining state sovereignty and checking internal dissent seems to depend largely on the existence of effective military means to enforce compliance and to ward off internal and external threats. However, when it comes to implementing policies and the capacity to promote the idea of a 'social contract' between its constituent elements a rather diffuse image emerges. Despite the presence of some states' overwhelming military capacities, many conflicts have materialized in which seemingly insignificant sub-state interest groups have successfully engaged in violent confrontations with state security forces, often questioning the political hegemony of a given polity. Such groups have sometimes aimed at outright secession, sometimes such movements have pursued some degree of autonomy or access to state resources. To what extent therefore, can institutional capacities of states preclude or contain the outbreak of such disputes? Is institutional weakness conducive to the systemic breakdown of the state? Can inbuilt properties be held responsible for the outbreak of violent intrastate conflicts?

In order to answer this highly relevant question, we turn to the criteria developed by Holsti¹ to measure state strength. The underlying assumption is that all states can be measured on a scale of state strength, ranging from so-called failed states at one extreme of the scale and strong states at the other extreme. The following three criteria taken from Holsti will be applied in this section: the criteria of ‘vertical legitimacy’² between rulers and ruled; the degree to which an ideological consensus and pragmatic politics (‘horizontal legitimacy’) exists; and the existence of effective internal sovereignty and the presence of international consensus on territorial limits and state sovereignty. All are necessary indicators for the analysis of relative state strength. Hence, states can be strong on one criteria but weak on another, and it is critical to find out whether a certain degree of ‘strength’ or ‘weakness’ in one of the identified factors fosters violent conflicts.

Section B-I-A Contested Sovereignty

Weak states with a limited military and institutional capacity confront enormous difficulties in trying to impose internal sovereignty. In our research sample the case of Afghanistan highlights some characteristics of institutional weakness that are instrumental to the apparent failure to construct a viable state. Afghanistan demonstrates the erratic nature of the capacity to build and maintain internal sovereignty, as it embodies the presence of so-called failed states in the international system. Failed states exist merely through international recognition of borders but not through their independent internal capacity to maintain sovereignty or to compel legitimacy among citizens. Afghanistan has always been characterized by brittle relations between a ruling elite and constituent tribal – and religious – elite groups. Throughout Afghanistan’s history, state elites have failed to build a legitimate state. Instead, at various points in time dominant elite groups merely tried to coerce subservient regional elite groups into compliance by applying military force. Even during such periods of enforced state building, the state largely depended on the timely support of tribal elites to ward off external incursions. The weakness of the Afghan state centres on the fact that as soon as external aggressors disappeared, the fragile coalition of internal Afghan forces was obliterated. As the political economy of Afghanistan remained fragmented in nature, the centre’s capacity to extract taxes and to build government institutions and an infrastructure have hitherto failed. Subsequent waves of violent conflict have moreover ruined whatever state structure was present. Afghanistan therefore provides an almost ‘ideal type’ example of a ‘failed’ state (see Box 1: The Case of Afghanistan).

1) See Annexe VIII for Holsti’s criteria for the sustainability of states.

2) See footnote 60 in the chapter on socio-economic factors.

*Box 4.1 The Case of Afghanistan*³

Since its independence in 1747, Afghanistan can be characterized as a weak state that has failed to complete the process of state-building. This implies that the state (that is, the centre) failed to integrate the diverse ethnic, lingual and religious groups into a single nation, and to exert authority throughout the territory of Afghanistan. The aspect of a weak centre can be retraced through various conflicts that have taken place during Afghanistan's history. Several conflicts have taken place during which the centre acted merely as a bystander, or was even completely absent. All of the centre's attempts in the past (and even nowadays) to increase its capacity and authority over the various groups and regions within its boundaries have failed. The first ruler of independent Afghanistan – Ahmad Khan – tried to centralize power and become less dependent on Afghanistan's major ethnic group (the Pashtun), but his attempt failed and after his death mini fiefdoms emerged. This appears to be a structural feature in Afghanistan's history: every time that an attempt is made to centralize power, the attempt fails and a virtual fragmentation of power takes place. Why did the process of state formation fail? First, Afghanistan's leaders never proved able to downplay the influence of the various tribes. The periods during which the centre could rely on external aid (from the British, the Soviets or the United States) were the only times when the centre was not completely dependent on the tribes and their leaders. In the state-society relationships, the tribes therefore remained an important factor that could not be neglected. The various leaders of Afghanistan who embarked upon reform and modernization programmes were always confronted with limits when increasing state revenues internally. Every time that reforms struck at the power of the traditional landed, tribal and conservative religious elites, a rebellion was provoked. This fate also awaited one of the most radical reformers in Afghanistan's history, Amanullah Khan, who assumed power in 1921. Khan attempted not only to increase the institutional capacity of the state through expanding the state's control over taxes, land tenure and transportation, but also tried to introduce political and social reforms. He introduced the first written constitution in 1921, which focused on the King's accountability to the laws, universal citizenship, and the institutionalization of a parliament: the *Loya Jirga*. Khan also tried to reform and modernize the armed forces. As a result of these attempts, he alienated most segments of society and in this way he invoked a rebellion in 1928 that left him without any supporters. The result of the rebellion was obvious: it meant a return to the *status quo ante*. In 1929 Nadir Khan, a Pashtun, came to power. He founded a dynasty that lasted until 1973. Nadir Khan and his followers were also modernists, but they were aware of the country's limitations.

3) Based on Rasul Bakhsh Rais, *Afghanistan: Country Paper* (Kandy (Sri Lanka): International Centre for Ethnic Studies, 1997).

They consequently chose to compromise with the tribal and religious elites that had plunged the country into a civil war. The reforms upon which they embarked focused not on limiting the local and religious leaders' powers, but on building state institutions like the army, a bureaucracy and an economic infrastructure. The tax base for reaching these aims, however, was very limited. Since the centre could not tax the (traditional) agricultural sector, attention focused on the (emerging) merchant class. Yet this tax base was too small to develop the country. The country's leadership opted for political stability and personal rule instead of giving attention to economic development, since this would have implied taxing the traditional sectors of society. Afghanistan thus remained mainly a tribal kingdom that had to rely on foreign assistance to develop its state institutions and its economic infrastructure.

The central system of the Afghan state functioned according to an oligarchic pattern through networks of patron-client relationships. Powerful and socially influential groups such as the tribal chiefs, the monarchy and religious leaders participated in the system to maintain their status. Informal power-sharing among elite groups gave the political order stability.⁴ The modernist elements in society, notably among educated youth and army officers, who had mainly received their education in the Soviet Union, contested this perpetual stranglehold on political power. In 1973 Prime Minister Daoud staged a *coup* that frustrated military and bureaucratic circles as the limited democratization was ended. In an effort to block the Muslim clergy from gaining power, and to end the monopoly of the oligarchic elite over state institutions, a pro-Marxist movement staged a counter *coup* in 1978. The Marxist groups in Afghan society used this *coup* to extend their political project. A prominent objective of their campaign was recruitment and indoctrination of the officer corps within the Afghan armed forces. It is obvious that the Marxist revolution did not have any roots or broad support in Afghanistan's traditional and religious society. The 'revolution' was therefore nothing but a political change at the top (and, even more specific, within the armed forces). The lack of a solid basis in Afghan society also implied that they had to rely on the application of power and violence to exert political influence. The Stalinist approach to controlling dissent backfired, as they failed to transform local society through revolutionary dialogue and persuasion. As a result they alienated the Afghan population, resulting in the emergence of widespread armed resistance against the new regime. The lack of domestic support furthermore made the *coup* leaders even more reliant upon foreign aid, in this case the Soviet Union (see also the section on the external dimension). The Soviet Union's military support became a crucial prerequisite for regime survival, leading to the invasion of 1979.

4) Rasul Bakhsh Rais, *Afghanistan: Country Paper*, pp. 14-16.

Subsequent military *coups* in the contemporary history of Afghanistan are the replacement of Karmal by Najibullah (1986), the withdrawal of the Soviet troops (1989), the eviction of the Rabbani government in 1996, heralding the rise of the Taliban, and finally the ousting of the Taliban in 2001.

After the withdrawal of Soviet forces and the virtual destruction of the Afghan state, a number of relatively new political forces emerged, vying for state power. The militia leaders, the Islamic guerrillas, the ethnic elite and the Taliban to some extent represent remnants of the old political order. The predominance of the Islamic clergy and some of the traditional Pashtun tribal elites within the Taliban movement signalled the return to power of this old elite. Although profound changes materialized in the political economy of Afghanistan, the resilience of the established power elite has been quite remarkable. Hence the entire conflict cycle initiated in 1973 has made a full circle with the return of the Pashtuni-dominated Taliban, signalling a return to an even more traditionalist, conservative and religious state project. All of these temporary changes in the state's political control were accompanied by sharp upsurges in the level of domestic violence, supporting the contention that such changes as a rule lead to conflict. Foreign military meddling, notably the establishment of a buffer state between the Raj and the Russian empire as a result of the second Anglo-Afghan war (1880) and the Soviet invasion in 1978, temporarily united Afghan society. However, such joint endeavours never outlasted foreign military occupancy. Thus, the fragmentation of the mujahidin forces took place immediately after the Soviet withdrawal in 1989: from 1989 to 1994 a fierce battle materialized between the various mujahidin forces, reflecting Afghanistan's complex ethno-linguistic make-up. The emergence of the so-called Taliban from 1994 heralded the revival of Pashtun power in Afghanistan. The Taliban alienated other ethnic minorities, notably the Uzbeks and Tajiks, and consistently tried to defeat them on the battlefield. The recent ousting of the Taliban regime under united pressure from the US and the United Kingdom, and the subsequent takeover by the so-called Northern Alliance, has not changed the power balance of the Afghan state. The instability of the new regime has raised doubts about the perspectives for a durable peace in Afghanistan. Individual warlords are already openly confronting each other in various parts of Afghanistan, possibly heralding a new round of civil war.

To conclude, the basic capacity of states to realize internal sovereignty seems to have important consequences for their stability. Important features of weakly developed institutional capacity are a lack of internal political consensus about the nature of the state and a lack of vertical and horizontal legitimacy. The predominance of a number of strong sub-state groups based on ethnic affiliation, are engaged in an ongoing power struggle aimed at political domination to the detriment of other groups. From an economic perspective, the absence of a tax-raising capacity, and the failure to control the political economy of the state, are important additional factors related to the weakness

of the state. As the role and status of the state itself is questioned by powerful constituent elements of a polity (in the case of Afghanistan by the tribal elite of the major ethnic groups), internal sovereignty remains an unfulfilled instrumental dimension of a state, seriously challenging its very foundations.

Section B-II Secessionist Movements

Apart from relatively rare cases such as Afghanistan, most states in the research sample proved instrumentally capable of maintaining internal sovereignty. However, the fact that most states have successfully imposed sovereignty does not automatically imply stability or the absence of conflict. State- and nation-building trajectories cast long shadows, and the historical dimension must not be overlooked when discussing the performance of individual states. A distinction can tentatively be made between states in which groups aimed at a 'primary' secession right from the moment of state creation or even predating independence, and states in which groups gradually opted for a 'secondary' secession as a response to growing discontent over the functioning of the state.

There are evidently differences regarding the capacities of the secessionist groups themselves that may account for the degree of success or failure when confronting states. In most of the secessionist cases rather small and militarily ill-equipped communities have taken on the state in which they happened to find themselves. Such cases are found in South Asia, notably the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) insurgency in Bangladesh and the Nagaland rebel movement in north-east India. These insurgencies pose only a minor military threat to the states concerned.

Externally, the 'unfinished business of state construction: the fate of Jammu-Kashmir'⁵ has resulted in the creation of a very explosive interstate conflict between Pakistan and India over the Kashmir region. This can be related to the issue of external sovereignty, that is, to one of Holsti's selected criteria for measuring relative state strength. In fact, in the case of Kashmir both protagonist states involved contest the sovereign control by the other, and this conflict has been compounded by the gradual emergence of a separatist movement aiming to establish an independent state.

Nagaland Insurgency

The Nagas are a clear example of a distinct ethnic community struggling to maintain their own cultural identity on the fringes of a huge multi-ethnic polity. The Nagas have always aspired to self-determination. Hence, the Naga National Council made repeated appeals to the British and made desperate

5) Quoted from Kingsley de Silva, 'Causes of Conflict', *South Asia: Regional Report*, Part I (Kandy (Sri Lanka): ICES; and The Hague: Netherlands Institute of International Relations 'Clingendael', 1998), p. 31.

attempts to remain outside the geographical framework of partitioned India before 1947, to the point of unilaterally declaring the independence of Nagaland one day before India became independent (14 August 1947).⁶ It can consequently be postulated that the Nagas have contested Indian sovereignty over their territory from the start. Clearly, the forceful integration of Nagaland into the Indian union, the high-handed attitude of Indian leaders to well-founded claims to independence and the continuing military occupation and abuse of human rights by the Indian army have provided an enabling environment in which a violent dispute materialized. The armed forces of the National Socialist Council for Nagaland (NSCN) continue to harass the Indian army. India has consistently downplayed demands for an independent Nagaland, as this region straddles the strategic border region with Burma. This issue is compounded by the fact that NSCN leaders have asked for the inclusion of Naga-speaking areas in adjoining Indian states (Assam, Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh) and adjoining areas of Burma. The intransigence of successive Indian governments on some form of autonomy has radicalized large sections of the Naga community, to the point that anything short of total independence will fail to satisfy their demands. The secession of Nagaland would open Pandora's box for India, as a large number of small ethnolinguistic communities would certainly follow Nagaland's example.

The Chittagong Hill Tracts Insurgency

The Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) are a peripheral and mountainous border area, inhabited by various groups with an ethnic and cultural background different from the dominant group of Bangladesh, the Bengali. The CHT area has strategic importance for both India and Bangladesh, as it straddles Burma's north-western region. During discussions on the independence and partition of the Raj, the Bengal Boundary Commission, presided over by Radcliffe, decided to award the CHT region to Pakistan. There was discord among the Pahadees:⁷ some favoured an independent monarchy; others a federation; and a third group wanted to be incorporated in the Indian state. During the battle for independence between East and West Pakistan, groups in the CHT area collaborated to a large extent with the (West) Pakistani government. As a result, relations between the Pahadees and the centre of the newly independent state of Bangladesh were far from cordial. The CHT area's status remained disputed. On 18 March 1972 the CHT groups formed a Pahadee political

6) Mahendra P. Lama, *Identity-Based Politico-Armed Conflicts in North-East India*, paper presented at the International Workshop on Causes of Conflict in South Asia, held at Hotel Tourmaline, Kandy, Sri Lanka, 3-5 March 1997, p. 4.

7) Indigenous peoples of the CHT numbering fourteen distinct ethnic groups, the Chakmas being the most dominant; see Aftab Ahmed, *Ethnic Turmoil in the Chittagong Hill Tracts Region of Bangladesh*, paper presented at the International Workshop on Causes of Conflict in South Asia, held at Hotel Tourmaline, Kandy, Sri Lanka, 3-5 March 1997, p. 3.

party – *Parbatya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samiti* (JSS) – and a military wing – the *Shanti Bahini* (SB) – on 7 January 1973. The new constitution of November 1972, which was established under Najib’s rule, ignored the identity of people other than Bengali (‘Citizens shall be known as Bengali’), which enraged the ethnic CHT communities. Underlying socio-economic factors related to the issue of the forced eviction of the indigenous Chakmas from fertile communal lands and to the continuing influx of migrants from the plains of Bangladesh led to widespread discontent. These issues confirmed the peripheral status of the Pahadee groups inside their own region and gave a strong impetus to political awareness of the externally enforced marginalization (see Chapter III on socio-economic factors, Box 3.1).

The military regime that came into power after the *coup* in August 1975 also rejected the JSS’s autonomy demands, and stepped up counter-insurgency measures, leading to the gradual but massive deployment of Bangladesh army personnel in the CHT area. The military presence was extended to 55,000 troops (230 army camps). As of the early 1980s the military government of General Ershad embarked on a series of peace talks with the JSS and succeeded in promoting internal division among different CHT ethnic groups. Meanwhile, the political predominance of the Chakmas was greatly resented by other ethnic groups among the Pahadee population. In 1988 the National Committee for the CHT (NCCHT) was formed by Ershad, which reached an agreement with the non-JSS leadership on the basis of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). The JSS hardliners, however, rejected the MoU, and a rather ramshackle peace agreement has currently been reached with the incumbent civilian government.

When considering the conflict history of the CHT, it becomes obvious that already in the immediate aftermath of the Partition the legitimacy of incorporation into Pakistan as a result of the English border commission’s conclusions was highly contested. Moreover, the Bangladeshi constitution of 1972 did not recognize the existence of different ethnic identities in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. Hence, the basic question of state legitimacy remained unanswered in the case of the CHT.

The Kashmir Dispute

The conflict between India and Pakistan stands out as the single most threatening security feature in South Asia related to the issue of external sovereignty. The Indo-Pakistan dispute over Kashmir has so far resulted in three wars (1947-1948, 1965, and 1971), and is still not solved. The threat of the dispute escalating to the level of military violence is still present. The risks involved in such a potential conflict are enormous, since both countries have a nuclear option at their disposal for times of extreme emergency. The Kashmir dispute originally revolved around the founding principles of the states concerned – that is, a Muslim state, Pakistan, that is supposedly heir to, and home country for, all Indian Muslims; versus a secular Indian state, that is

home to a multitude of different religious groups. The Kashmir conflict therefore seems to threaten the sovereignty of both states involved, and by its very nature has become a protracted dispute. The threat to national unity is precisely the argument forwarded by India, whereas Pakistan continuously points to the fact that Kashmir has been illegally transferred to the Indian union without consulting the people. The manipulated integration of Kashmir into the Indian union has provided the background for continuous internal opposition to the presence of Indian troops and has led to the conclusion that the Kashmir insurgency is rooted in the mishandling of Kashmiri politics by the Indian government. As a result of the enduring quagmire, during the last decade Kashmiri ethnicity and self-assertion have gradually emerged,⁸ further complicating the issue. In fact, most Kashmiri would prefer an independent state rather than merging with either Pakistan or India. Despite mujahidin incursions and intermittent exchange of shellfire, the current 'Line of Control' between both belligerent forces exemplifies the 'stability' of the current crises. The Kashmir crises clearly demonstrate the importance of the British Raj's lingering heritage. The unfinished business of defining borders, and hence of sovereignty of the constituent states, looms large over the political future of the sub-region.

From the above-mentioned cases, only the CHT question has resulted in a fragile peace process, although some protagonist factions have refused to accept the brittle peace. Recent political developments in the sub-region⁹ have underscored the volatile character of the Kashmir dispute. The Nagaland conflict is smouldering but very much alive.

In all of the cases central governments highlighted similar arguments to motivate state actions: geostrategic arguments (resource areas and border areas); and arguments of scale and efficiency have been used. The latter argument ridiculed the aspirations to statehood for such groups: 'too small to become a viable state, too few people, too limited a resource base'. Relative size and demographic weight became a privileged instrument in the fight against centrifugal forces. In India these tactics were notably employed by the successive political leaders of the Congress Party. In Nagaland, Assam, and Mizoram in the north-east of India the political aspirations of the indigenous elite groups were manipulated by a combination of migration policies and shrewd political exploitation of ensuing clashes between residents and migrants.¹⁰ Another common feature of central government policy concerns the creation of internal dissent in secessionist areas. For example, in the case of the CHT area in Bangladesh, successive military governments have created an

8) Rasul Bakhsh Rais, *Stable Crises: Kashmir, India and Pakistan*, paper presented at the International Workshop on Causes of Conflict in South Asia, held at Hotel Tourmaline, Kandy, Sri Lanka, 3-5 March 1997, p. 2.

9) The demise of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan and the terrorist attacks on the Indian parliament in December 2001.

10) Mahendra P. Lama, *Identity-Based Politico-Armed Conflicts in North-East India*.

atmosphere of mutual distrust between rival factions inside these irredentist communities. The deliberate manipulation of contending factions within groups has resulted in the fragmentation of these movements, as a rule resulting in the emergence of moderate and hardline sub-groups. Such practices do not automatically benefit the instigating agent, as hardline sub-groups tend to escalate their military tactics and may well succeed in exterminating moderate factions. At the least, such splinter groups often become a nuisance factor at the fringes of the conflict-mediation process. Clearly, therefore, the institutional capacity of states to contain such movements militarily does not imply that such movements are effectively curtailed. Once sovereignty has been imposed forcefully, the durability of political systems comes to rely heavily on consensus between constituent groups on the nature of the state. Race, ethnic affiliation, religion and language thus played, and continue to play, a major role in all states.

To conclude, the issue of effective internal and external sovereignty seems to be subservient to the notion of a given state's political legitimacy. Military options rarely prove to be effective and state elites have to engage in other strategies in order to contain internal dissent effectively. State elites have hence in some cases engaged in alternative approaches, such as reshuffling the internal organization of states, and have even made efforts to reshape identities and engage in nation-building. A distinction has been made between state-building, defined as an institutional attempt to foster viable states, and nation-building, which aims at the creation of a new national identity. These two distinct political projects are subsequently related to the emergence of violent conflict in the following sections.

Section B-III Federal Political Projects: the cases of Nigeria and Pakistan

Nigeria

Post-colonial Nigeria was initially based on two separate colonial entities: the north and the south. These entities referred to what was perceived as the 'natural political space' for some of Nigeria's biggest ethnic groups (out of around 250 different ethnic groups in total). The north 'belonged' to the Hausa and the Fulani. In the southern region two ethnic groups predominated: the eastern region was perceived as Igbo territory; and the Yoruba claimed the western region. Together, these four groups constituted about two-thirds of Nigeria's total population. It is obvious that any central government in Nigeria would have had to confront this problem of 'ethnic regionalism', thus making any attempts at state formation and nation-building painful and hard, especially since the British had never embarked on such an undertaking. This implies that at the start, from independence, Nigeria had no history of centralized government. In addition, the only attempt at centralizing part of the administration in Lagos had for a long time excluded the north. The north was

always perceived as being different because of its mainly Islamic culture, which contrasted deeply with the more Christian-oriented south. Independence implied that Nigeria had to deal with the regional divisions of the country. The best solution seemed to be the federal system of government. Since this option implied a clear power-sharing formula between the federal and the regional levels of government, federalism became the common denominator for political unity and stability in Nigeria. However, since each region was already more or less run as the political fiefdom of the dominant ethnic group, the regions aimed for a considerable level of political autonomy *vis-à-vis* the federal government, in particular the northern region.

Any federal government in Nigeria would always have to contain a strong representation of the Hausa and Fulani. This also implied that any federal government would always take special care of the position of the north *vis-à-vis* the other regions. To put it more strongly, any attempt by the eastern and (mid-)western regions to dominate the federation would be perceived by the north as an attempt to undermine the position of the north. Politics at the federal level therefore had a zero-sum character: the north felt threatened by acts from the east and the west that would reduce its influence at the federal level; and the south felt threatened by the policies further strengthening the north. This narrow zero-sum interpretation of national, federal-level politics (and of the north in particular) became clear during the events in 1963 and 1966 – that is, the attempt at Igbo secession, and the civil war, which lasted from 1966-1969.

Events leading to the Nigerian Civil War

The January 1966 *coup* by eastern Igbo military was an attempt to break the power of the northern Hausa and Fulani power bloc at the federal level and was not initially an attempt to secede from the federation. As already highlighted earlier, the natural majority of the Hausa and Fulani implied that under normal democratic majority rule, no changes were to be expected.

The Nigerian Civil War was the climax of a series of political crises in which Nigeria had been engulfed from 1964 until the demise of the First Republic in January 1966. The political crisis itself had centred on the controversy surrounding the control and exercise of political power at, particularly, the federal governmental level. More importantly, the elites of these four dominant ethnic groups in the country – Hausa and Fulani (north), Igbo (east) and Yoruba (west) – conceived of federalism and of democracy as enabling them to exercise a more or less permanent political control over their respective regions. The regions thus served as the secure bases from which attempts were made to conquer power at the centre through the instrumentality of political parties, which themselves were the embodiment of regionalist and

ethnic interests.¹¹ Moreover, the three regions were on differing levels of economic development and needed to draw regularly from the federally controlled Distributable Pool Account (DPA) in order to respond more adequately to the needs of their populace. The control of federal revenue and its distribution therefore became a pivotal political issue.

The violent military *coup* of January 1966 targeted the political and military elites of Northern Nigerian origin. This is self-evident since the elites from this region controlled power at the federal level, had vowed never to lose this and, therefore, any forcible change of leadership at this level implied eliminating them from the political scene but not necessarily liquidating them physically. The zero losses recorded for the senior officers of eastern Nigerian origin meant, as events proved, that the *coup* was led by Igbo officers. General Aguiyi-Ironsi, an Igbo, took power, announcing the abolition of federalism in Nigeria in May 1966 by unifying the hitherto discrete regional public services in the federation. This move was interpreted by the Hausa and Fulani elites as signalling the beginning of a process that would place the northern region under the hegemony of the east (Igbo) and indeed of the south. It was no surprise then that in July 1966, just two months after a riot instigated by the northern political elites against the Igbo residing in the north, military officers of northern Nigerian origin ousted the regime of General Aguiyi-Ironsi in a bloody *coup d'état* in which the pattern of killings swung against the Igbo. This was a return to the *status quo ante*, which also marked a rejection by the north of the imposition of a unitary form of government on Nigeria. The intransigence that the eastern region displayed during some sessions of the Ad Hoc Constitutional Conference, in the light of its heavy losses in the July 1966 *coup d'état*, was answered by the north with the horrendous massacres of easterners, mainly the Igbo, in September and October 1966. The mass killing of the Igbo was therefore another variable that precipitated Igbo secession and a civil war that ended with the military defeat of the Igbos in 1969.

As indicated above, opting for federalism did not solve the problems that Nigeria faced at independence. The strong position of the 'ethnic' regions in particular implied that the federal government was in a weak position. The erosion of federal power and the possible disintegration of Nigeria apparently moved the military to the centre of politics. They initially perceived themselves as a bulwark against this erosion, capable of restructuring the political power relationships in the Nigerian federation, as well as reinstalling democratic rule and keeping politics away from ethnic bias.

11) Emeka Nwokedi, 'The Dynamics of Conflict in Nigeria', in *West Africa: Regional Report* (Port Harcourt (Nigeria): Centre for Advanced Social Science; and The Hague: Netherlands Institute of International Relations 'Clingendael', 1998), pp. 140-191.

Pakistan

The performance of the state in Pakistan is equally characterized by problems related to the process of state formation. As regards the instrumental point of view, the state in Pakistan has no historical background, but came into being after Partition in 1949. Just like Nigeria, the newly independent state had no historical capital or political centre, thus complicating the process of state formation, and particularly a process of popular identification with the centre. The new centre was thus confronted with the difficult task of bringing about centralization and a sense of state and nationhood in a state that lacked such a tradition. The fact that the federating units were merged into one new state implied that their identities and aspirations at independence were hampered. The emergence of several movements for autonomy or even independence illustrates the discontent of several groups: the Pashtun nationalists, the Baluch nationalist movement, the Sindhi nationalist groups, the ethnic Mohajir movement and the sectarian Anti-Ahmadiya movement. The clearest failure of the centre in promoting the idea of an all-Pakistan identity, however, is still East Bengal's secession in 1971, resulting in the new independent state of Bangladesh.

The political elite in the newly independent state of Pakistan came from the Muslim minority provinces of British India, and not from the Muslim majority provinces that were to constitute Pakistan. This was a heritage from the colonial period, during which the All India Muslim League was dominated by people from the Indian Muslim minority provinces. The new leadership in Pakistan as a result had no electoral basis in the provinces constituting Pakistan, except for the refugee population (still a considerable 20 per cent). This affected the functioning of the political system in Pakistan, not only excavating parliamentary democracy (since the country's politics were shaped along non-representative lines), but also creating opportunities for identity- or community-oriented political parties. The main player on the national level, the military, which was largely composed of Punjabis, was in favour of centralization of power and wanted to dismiss separate sub-national identities and movements striving for autonomy. In its attempt to reach this aim, the military, and through them the Punjabi element in the new federation, found support in Pakistan's migrants coming from India. Both lacked a countrywide constituency and consequently focused on an all-Pakistan approach. This included an all-Pakistan bureaucracy as well as an all-Pakistan national identity. This coalition ensured the emergence of power in the hands of the federal government. From the early stages onwards, the military played a central role in Pakistan's politics, partly because of Pakistan's troubled relationship with India. This feeling of insecurity formed a structural context in which the military could easily dominate. The uncertainty over the rules of the political game also gave the military a lead in the struggle for power, which made it easier for them to advocate a unitary model for governance, and a centralized and presidential form of government.

The Secession of East Pakistan

The continuing exclusion of sub-national cultural groups in Pakistan came under pressure as a result of the 1970 elections. These elections opened up the state – for a short period at least – to mass participation, which not only led to indigenous revival in terms of politicization of ethnic-linguistic identities in all provinces other than Punjab, but also to Bangladesh's independence. Bangladesh – that is, the former East Bengal – had a share of 55 per cent of the total population of Pakistan, yet it only had a share of 10 per cent and 13 per cent in the army and bureaucracy respectively. Demands for equality, justice, and provincial autonomy by East Bengal were rejected by the centre. The centre alienated the East Bengalis even further through imposing successive governments on the province led by the centre's nominees. East Bengal was also discriminated against on the economical plane. The demands for autonomy became more extreme during the 1960s, and resulted in a Six Points programme that, except for defence and foreign affairs, implied complete independence. The Bengali Awami League won the 1970 elections based on these points, which gave it legitimacy. It was, however, clear that implementation would result in virtual liquidation of the state of Pakistan. Both parties' unwillingness to compromise escalated to civil war and the separation of East Bengal from Pakistan in 1971.

The Baluchi movement also aimed for more autonomy and even separatism because of the Centre's dominant role. From 1973-1977, the Baluchistan People's Liberation Front (BPLF) pursued a nationalist and separatist agenda and waged a guerrilla war. This war, as well as the one in East Bengal, partly resulted from the 1970 elections, giving the advocates of a separatist agenda a mass mandate. The Baluchi movement furthermore felt strengthened because of East Bengal's success. Unlike East Bengal, however, the Baluchi movement could not draw on enough external support from India, the Soviet Union and Afghanistan, and as a result the BPLF was militarily defeated and the region's aspiration to independence was militarily crushed.

Conclusion B-III

At independence, a clear political centre was lacking in both Nigeria and Pakistan. Both countries experienced a potentially strong opposition from constituent regions and in both cases a federal form of government was adopted. The relative weakness of the federal government opened possibilities for specific groups to opt for independence or greater autonomy. In both cases the military stepped in to ensure national unity and to concentrate power in the hands of a consolidated federal government. The outcome of the secessionist efforts differs, as Igbo secession failed whereas the Bengali quest for independence finally paid off. Many additional factors have to be taken into account, of which geographical proximity in the case of the Igbo as well as the active support of an interested powerful intervening actor (India supporting

Bengali rebels against the Pakistani troops) stand out. Clearly, the political predominance of Mohajir/Punjabi and of Hausa/Fulani elite factions in Pakistan and Nigeria respectively to some extent provoked violent opposition by strong internal contenders, in an effort to break the power monopoly at the federal level within the context of a political culture in which political power was perceived as a zero-sum game by all of the belligerents involved.

Finally, the federal arrangements in Pakistan and Nigeria were established to break the primordial identity forces to the benefit of the dominant successors of the erstwhile colonial powers: the Mohajir conspired with the Punjabi military cadres to create a new political centre; and in Nigeria the Hausa and Fulani carefully crushed internal opposition at the centre. Hence, in these so-called federal states the centre became the ultimate political prize in a zero-sum political game. In fact, in both cases forceful political centralization was disguised as a federal project. Collaboration between the armed forces and the Hausa/Fulani elite has so far been able to retain power despite serious efforts by contending Igbo elites to break away from the federation. However, the ongoing fragmentation of the Nigerian federation, largely to the detriment of the ethnically diverse south, has finally backfired in the north, as progressively distinct ethnic groups in the central belt and the north claim separate states for themselves. Interminable squabbles between the ever-growing number of constituent states¹² over the distribution of the oil revenues, accumulated in federal reserve funds, have filled the gap of genuine political power-sharing, thus to some extent precluding political reform. Nevertheless, this type of 'divide and rule' politics safeguards the superiority of the central federal government over the governments of the constituent states.¹³ In Pakistan the federal project has entered dire straits, as the Punjabi have progressively ousted the Mohajirs from central positions in the administration and the army. The precarious balance between the Sunni Islam and the state has shifted towards greater intolerance of minority religions and led to serious communal clashes in the core region of Pakistan: the Punjab.¹⁴ After the violent secession of Bangladesh in 1970, the Pakistani state has not given in to any further sub-national claims of constituent ethnic groups, and the state has become vulnerable to extremist Islamic blackmail, further aggravating the political quagmire. The resource weakness furthermore leaves the current military elite with few escape-valve options.

Although the attempt at secession by the Baluchis was militarily contained, it does not imply that the issue has disappeared from the political

12) In 1999 there were 36 states in Nigeria as opposed to three at independence.

13) Quoted from Emeka Nwokedi, 'The Dynamics of Conflict in Nigeria', p. 176.

14) Mohammad Waseem, *Sectarian Conflict in Pakistan*, conference paper presented at the International Workshop on Causes of Conflict in South Asia, held at Hotel Tourmaline, Kandy, Sri Lanka, 3-5 March 1997, pp. 4-5.

agenda. Such conflicts can sometimes simmer for decades, to reappear when internal or external conditions are favourable.

Section B-IV Creating New Identities: Nation Building in Senegal and Ghana

The post-colonial state-building trajectory in West Africa was founded on the principle of inventing a new national identity, ignoring the highly complex issues of multiple ethnic identities. The colonizing powers had manipulated the very existence of identity-related differences, elevating specific groups to high power status to the detriment of others, thereby creating an atmosphere of mutual distrust and inter-group competition. Both Nkrumah and Senghor, prestigious leaders in the early days of decolonizing Africa, resorted to what would be described as top-down centralized one-party dictatorships. In fact, both men aspired to the ideal of a new African renaissance, in which primordial identities, including the humiliating heritage of colonialism, would be replaced by new political identities.

Ghana

During the early years of independence in Ghana, an all out power struggle evolved between the old ethnic power elite and a newly emerging, Western-educated, ideologically motivated elite. Nkrumah thus set out to acquire grass-root support from the masses of the Ghanaian population whereas his opponents consistently relied on support from the established power elite: Ashanti nobility, wealthy cocoa producers and rich traders. Although Nkrumah seems to have succeeded in his socialist project, as exemplified in his successive victories at the ballots in the period 1950-1960,¹⁵ he alienated most of the powerful economic and political elite groups.

The new government under Nkrumah's leadership tried to deal with the problems of state-building and legitimacy through the application of the ideology of 'scientific socialism'. Since the socialist ideology was at the heart of the state-building project – that is, it had to provide legitimacy – its success depended on acceptance by the population at large. At the beginning of his rule, Nkrumah tried to emasculate the issue of ethnicity in national politics by consciously diverting resources to the development of backward ethnic groups. This policy of 'self-abnegation' as regards Nkrumah's own ethnic group the Nzima, made it hard for other ethnic groups to claim special rights. A network of socialist organizations and satellite organizations was created to support this approach. Those who opposed it were seen as opponents to the regime. Nkrumah's Convention People's Party (CPP), however, became more and

15) Okwudiba Nnoli, 'The Conflict Process in Ghana, 1950-1990', in *West Africa: Regional Report*, p. 36.

more centralist in its approach, first reducing the role of elected regional assemblies to advisory assemblies and later abolishing them completely. The Nkrumah regime furthermore embarked upon a number of laws that outlawed sectional parties based on tribe, region and religion. Nkrumah gradually resorted to more exclusionary policies, culminating in the declaration of a one-party state in 1963, which eroded regime legitimacy. The end came in 1966 when a coalition of economic interest groups, in coalition with the armed forces supported by foreign political and economic interests, overthrew the Nkrumah regime.

Senegal

Senghor's attempt in Senegal to create consensus with regard to the concept of the state through managing ethnic differences focused on nation-building through constitutional means and language policy. First, he drafted a constitution prohibiting political parties from identifying with one particular race, ethnic group, sex, religion, language or region. Acts of racial, ethnic or religious discrimination, as well as any regionalist propaganda, were regarded as undermining the internal security and the territorial integrity of the state. As a consequence Senghor legitimized a one-party system of his own political party: the *Parti Socialiste* (PS). Furthermore, language was perceived as crucial, hence the decision to use French as the official language, thus avoiding problems that might have resulted from choosing an African language. In this way, no ethnic group could claim superiority on the basis of its language being used as the official language. In order not to alienate or antagonize the various groups in Senegal, six of the African languages spoken in Senegal were chosen as national languages: Jola, Malinke, Pular, Serer, Soninke and Wolof. Of these, Wolof (the language of the largest ethnic group – 39 per cent – in Senegal) is mastered by approximately 90 per cent of the population, while French is mastered by only 20 per cent of the population. Wolof consequently became the lingua franca in Senegal and the general perception is one of Wolof domination. Not only is the Wolof language predominant, but as a group the Wolofs inhabit the core areas around the Cap Vert peninsula, where the major economic and political institutions are located. The success of the Wolof has had its effects on the centre's attempts to create a single Senegalese identity throughout the whole territory. Its failure is especially apparent in the periphery, where ethnic regionalist movements oppose the perceived Wolof domination. In analysing Senegal, the focus is on one of these regions, the Casamance, where since the 1980s a resistance movement has been developing, which has regional as well as ethnic components.

The centre's attempt to create a Senegalese identity, or at least to prevent the mushrooming of local ethnic parties, implied a severe limitation on the functioning of the democratic system in the period from independence to 1974. This controlled functioning of the democratic system not only focused on the exclusion of ethnic or identity-related political parties, but was also to include

political opposition. The virtual prohibition of political parties, and the co-optation of the most vociferous protagonists in the President's *Parti Socialiste*, precluded the emergence of legal opposition. The 'liberalization' in 1974 was also a concerted undertaking. The number of parties allowed was constitutionally limited to three. These parties were furthermore supposed to represent three political currents: liberal democracy, social democracy and Marxism-Leninism. In 1980 the limitations were lifted further. As a result, eight political parties could participate in the 1983 elections. The integrity and influence of these parties, as well as the openness of the elections, however, are questionable since the centre controlled all political developments. After most elections, the opposition parties have accused the government of fraudulent activities. The opening of the political system can be characterized as a face-saving and window-dressing operation for the incumbent *Parti Socialiste* leadership. The presidential system made it possible for the President to manipulate politics, and in the case of Senegal this practice was very obvious. During his twenty-year reign, the first President of the state, Senghor, monopolized power by constitutional means, thus severely reducing the role of Parliament. Even his succession was an orchestrated event, by installing Senghor's hand-picked successor, Abdou Diouf, to power. The shortcomings of the democratic system, however, were somewhat compensated through the use of a system of religious middlemen (marabouts). These marabouts exchanged political influence for massive support at the ballots, organizing their followers as genuine voting banks. To some extent these religious leaders articulated and channelled popular discontent towards the politicians in control of the state. The political communication between the centre and local societies came to rely on a network of unofficial institutions and structures, such as the Muslim brotherhoods (namely the Mouride and Tidiane societies).¹⁶

The Casamance Rebellion

The Casamance conflict centred on the concept of the Senegalese state. The claim of the Casamance region to independence was based on the perception of the leaders of the *Mouvement des Forces Démocratiques de la Casamance* (MFDC) that the region had never been a part of Senegal, not even under French colonial rule. The MFDC thus questioned the legality of Casamance's status as a Senegalese region. The claim of the MFDC that the Casamance has a right to become independent, however, was supported by neither the centre, nor by the French. They both regarded Casamance as an integral part of Senegal, and claims suggesting the opposite were constantly dismissed. The secessionist ideas of the Casamance rebel movement surfaced in 1980, long after the

16) Ferdinand de Jong, 'Causes of the Casamance Rebellion in Senegal', in *West Africa: Regional Report*, p. 198.

Senegalese state had been established¹⁷ and therefore it seems that this argument was used to empower the movement rather than to try to revive a historic reality. The intransigence on this issue by the Senegalese government, however, has reinforced the existing perception among the Diola that they have gradually been colonized by the dominant ethnic group: the Wolof.

The conflict has escalated to the level of military confrontation several times since the first expressions of opposition, especially in the 1990s. Attempts to deal politically with the problem failed, and the conflict escalated several times. Time and again socio-economic grievances surfaced, related to resource exploitation by outsider groups (see the chapter on socio-economic factors, Box 3.2). These grievances were openly articulated during political upheavals that took place in Ziguinchor, the regional capital. The conflict therefore hinges on the socio-economic grievances, feeding a perception of continuing marginalization among the Diola. Conflicts of interest centred on the benefits of local resources in turn materialized politically around the unresolved question of state legitimacy.

In this regard it is important to add the impact of the external political environment. During the 1980s Senegal was also confronted with external security threats (see the chapter on external factors). These involved conflicts with neighbouring states over land and border issues (Mauritania, Gambia and Guinea Bissau) and required the deployment of troops in the border regions. These problems destabilized the centre and opened new opportunities for the MFDC and its military wing to step up activities, and thus to seize the opportunity to boost its profile and bargaining position. The MFDC covertly established military camps across the border in Guinea Bissau, from which surprise attacks were mounted.¹⁸

To conclude, the explicit aim of newly independent states was to render secessionist movements obsolete by the construction of alternative national identities. In both cases it has become obvious that such endeavours underestimated the strength of sub-national identities, mostly based on ethnic and linguistic differences. Powerful interest groups in both Ghana and Senegal somehow managed to survive the initial onslaught of the post-colonial elites and their ruthless exclusionary political projects, which in the process had led to the establishment of one-party states combined with presidential rule. In the West African region at large, resistance against Nkrumah's uncompromising socialist and pan-African ideology resulted in the emergence of powerful countermovements led by pragmatic African leaders in many other sub-Saharan countries. These leaders largely complied with the foundations of the

17) In December 1980 a priest from the Casamance, Father Diamacoune Senghor, sent a letter to the incumbent President Abdou Diouf in which the right to independence was presented as an infeasible right. This was the first open manifestation of independence some twenty years after Senegal was established as an independent state.

18) Marut (1996), *op. cit.* in Ferdinand de Jong, 'Causes of the Casamance Rebellion in Senegal', p. 242.

existing colonial state system and thwarted pan-African ideals.¹⁹ The established post-colonial elite successfully pursued the political objective of freezing colonial borders, but in the cases of Ghana and Senegal were ousted by exponents of a newly emerging nationalist and pan-African socialist movement. These nationalist politicians used populist rhetoric to create a new all-encompassing national identity in their countries. All citizens had to participate in their inclusive perspective on nation-building, even at the expense of existing political rights.

Conclusions Section B: Institutional Capacity

A distinction has been made in this section between weak and strong states, depending on their capacity to enforce internal and external sovereignty. It can be concluded that a lack of institutional capacity leads to the emergence of weak or so-called failed states, as demonstrated by the Afghanistan case. Most states, however, possess enough coercive capacity to enforce sovereignty. This does not automatically guarantee state stability. States that merely enforce their political will upon sub-state actors may well face secessionist movements, as the Indian and Bangladeshi cases demonstrated. States sometimes engage in alternative approaches, either through reshufflings of the structure of the state or through attempts to create new political identities. Broadly speaking, in the various state- and nation-building endeavours analysed so far, one distinct elite group inevitably predominated the domestic scene. Because of their exclusionist nature, such political projects were highly vulnerable to violent internal dissent, as they lacked sufficient legitimacy among the constituent units. It can be concluded from this analysis that states that focus narrowly on issues of internal and external sovereignty in a top-down manner are confronted in many cases by opposition from other sub-state groups.

State capacity, in conjunction with vertical and horizontal legitimacy, may well prove to be important prerequisites for political stability. However, a general negligence of state legitimacy can be observed in the cases analysed. Most incumbent elite groups based their rule on the assumption that because they had somehow ousted the colonial rulers, they were the legitimate inheritors of the post-colonial states. Coercion rather than compromise characterized many states in the post-colonial period. In the cases presented so far, only limited and artificial attempts to create genuine legitimacy can be identified. A lack of legitimacy underlies all of the conflicts presented so far in this chapter. The absence of legitimacy could consequently be considered an important proximate cause of violent conflict. This assumption implies that in any violent conflict perceptions are found among protagonist factions contesting the legitimacy of state authority.

19) The late President of Côte d'Ivoire, Houphouët Boigny, was the most vociferous protagonist of this political attitude and a staunch supporter of French influence in the West African region.

It furthermore becomes clear in the analysis that even attempts at state- and nation-building by newly independent states in the south did not automatically resolve the crucial issue of state legitimacy. The attempts to forge new states and new national identities in many cases provoked violent resistance, albeit that these states did not all give in to such secessionist violence. Why did such forces lead to violent rebellion in some countries and not in others that evolved under comparable circumstances? Why did a violent rebellion emerge in Senegal and not in Ghana? If we examine the political factors, surely there are many similarities between the cases mentioned. Both the Ghanaians and the Senegalese were forcefully integrated into nation-building endeavours after independence. In both cases internal opposition was virtually muzzled. In both cases there was a lack of 'vertical and horizontal' legitimacy. In both Ghana and Senegal separate territories were inhabited by distinct ethno-linguistic communities. Both countries had the military capacity to crush internal opposition or to suppress attempts at secession. What, then, made the difference? The political factors studied so far do not provide adequate information to answer this question. To some extent the failure of the Senegalese state to penetrate the political organization of the Diola provides a partial and tentative answer. In Ghana the process of political integration seems to have impacted on all constituent communities. Furthermore, the predominance of one ethnic group as opposed to other ethno-linguistic communities is less pronounced in Ghana. Nkrumah effectively thwarted Ashanti predominance in the early years of political independence. By contrast, in Senegal the paramount position of the Wolof was strengthened in the aftermath of independence, to the detriment of other constituent ethno-linguistic groups. This seems to indicate that the relative power positions of constituent groups are an important political factor in conjunction with the issue of state legitimacy.

From the case studies on state- and nation-building, a picture emerged that violent resistance did not emerge overnight; it resulted from historical developments. From the scant evidence available, it seems furthermore that in many cases resistance (non-violent and violent) against the state slowly became reality as a result of a failure to accommodate the wishes and grievances of sub-state actors somehow. Some groups initially aimed at a more equitable resource distribution (see the chapter on socio-economic factors). Only when such demands were neglected, resolved in an unsatisfactory manner or even repressed violently, did sub-state actors become radicalized, as in the case of the Casamance. Under these circumstances, collective violence emerged as an alternative to pursuing group agendas, and eventually may lead to extremist options such as secession.

The issue of various sub-state actors' relative power positions, and therefore the issue of power-sharing, should consequently be analysed more closely. To what extent can such arrangements preclude the outbreak of violence? What types of arrangements seem to be more effective in this regard than others? Which regime type is conducive to effective power-sharing? Do

certain arrangements spark violence instead of promoting peaceful cohabitation? We turn to power-sharing in the following section.

Section C Power-Sharing and Exclusion

This section focuses on the various power-sharing formulae that have developed over time in the countries and regions studied. From the discussion of the institutional capacities of states, it may be inferred that a total lack of power-sharing arrangements provides an enabling environment in which dissent and grievances can be politicized by constituent groups. The analysis in this section tries to investigate the assumption that if a regime is inclined to apply mechanisms of power-sharing, the likelihood of conflict will diminish (if this mechanism is not applied, the reverse will happen). Power-sharing has been defined as the propensity of a state to allow sub-groups in society to take part in political decision-making, and in some cases has entrenched political participation as a constitutional right. States that have no constitutional provisions guaranteeing sub-state group participation in some cases still apply some degree of power-sharing in practice. As a result, a rather diverse picture emerges from the various empirical cases studied.

Section C-I Broad Regional Overview

A broad overview of the countries studied reveals that a first distinction can be made on the cross-regional level.

Constitutions in Central America rarely include formal provisions for power-sharing between all constituencies and socio-economic layers of society. As a matter of fact, in all of the countries on the Isthmus indigenous groups have been totally excluded from the political arena. Second, constitutions in general have historically been developed to legitimize the existing political system, in the process enforcing the dominant role of elite groups in society.

In West Africa, mostly one-party systems were erected after decolonization in order to abrogate and preclude the emergence of identity-based politics, in the process frustrating the political aspirations of specific ethno-linguistic constituencies. Incumbent elites consequently drew support from dominant ethnic groups, co-opted into the system through patrimonial and clientelist political systems. As a result, some groups were excluded from the political process and the political elites were able to monopolize power through the manipulation of constitutional reform that suited their ambitions.

In South Asia, with the notable exception of Afghanistan, different models emerged. India largely maintained the constitution that had been developed under the Raj. Sri Lanka constructed a new constitution, which focused on the emancipation of the Sinhala majority and which alienated the Tamil minority. Pakistan, and later also Bangladesh, adopted strong centralist policies based on

the political projects of political elites, such as the Mohajir in Pakistan, without due consideration for minority demands.

The major conceptual problem facing the analysis of power-sharing is that all political entities are based on some type of, albeit sometimes rudimentary, power-sharing principles. However, some countries in the research sample seem to lack even nominal power-sharing arrangements, notably Afghanistan and to a lesser extent Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nigeria, Niger and Senegal. All of these countries have experienced political dissent at least, and it seems plausible that these conflicts partly resulted from a failure of the incumbent elites to address political aspirations of significant minority and sometimes even majority groups living within their respective states effectively. From the section on institutional capacity, it has been inferred that states that continue to struggle with state sovereignty and national identity lack power-sharing policies, which in the process may enforce state legitimacy.

There hence seems to be a clear distinction between states where a wide range of nominal arrangements have been pursued and countries in which elaborate power-sharing formulae exist. A number of countries have formally anchored power-sharing in the constitution. It seems that such power-sharing, formalized in the constitution, is the expression of a state's ambition to foster legitimacy among its constituent units. As a result we can tentatively distinguish between countries in which 'rudimentary' power-sharing formulae prevail, among which one category exists of countries that applied a mixture of repression and reform and one of countries with well-established and substantial power-sharing arrangements. El Salvador, Guatemala and Nicaragua represent countries in which prevailing policies of limited co-optation²⁰ qualify as examples of 'rudimentary' power-sharing. Furthermore, the cases of Honduras and Ghana can be highlighted as a separate category of power-sharing. Authoritarian regimes in these two countries applied mixed policies of repressions and limited reform. The cases of Costa Rica, India and Sri Lanka form a separate category of countries in which extensive and formal power-sharing agreements prevail.

Section C-II Absence of Power-Sharing: The Central American Cases of Selective Inclusion of Powerful Interest Groups and the Exclusion of Peripheral and Marginal Groups

The Case of El Salvador

Power-sharing was not high on the agenda of the military-economic elite that was governing El Salvador. The relationship between the military and the economic elite dates back to the 1930s in El Salvador, when they embarked

20) This concept implies that only a few of the constituent political actors within a state are implied in some type of political power-sharing arrangement.

upon a 'special relationship' from which both were to benefit. The economic elite consists of a limited number of powerful families, including landed elite groups and urban merchant and business elites. The military consists largely of the middle and top brass of the army, which have gradually transformed into a separate interest group. The military were able to gain political power and privileges, as they were crucial for the protection of the interests of the economic elite and a bulwark against popular protest movements. This symbiotic relationship between the military and the economic elite over such a long period can be explained by the fact that the elite was local (that is, Salvadorean). The elite moreover had almost exclusive control of the national economy, and was not submitted to external economic powers (such as transnational companies).²¹ Its composition was very homogeneous. The economic elite was furthermore subdivided into two groups: a land-based elite group (coffee sector), and a merchant group. The second was dependent on the first, which was very conservative in nature and stifled reforms (which was favoured by the merchants and industrialists) well into the 1970s. For most of the period under investigation, El Salvador can be considered a typical authoritarian state. Its institutional capacity was largely based on fear, force and coercion. This is also why the military was imperative for the incumbent elite.

Interestingly, some kind of 'mechanism' between hardline and populist policies somehow provided temporary escape valves for the incumbent elite to give opposition parties an illusion of political participation and change. This 'mechanism' worked through military *coups*.²² A reform-oriented, populist *coup* would bring moderate officers to power, aiming at (limited) political liberalization and economic and social reforms. However, as soon as the possibility of real social and political change was about to be realized, a new military *coup* took place, bringing a hardliner to power who would reverse the proposed reforms, notably regarding a more equitable distribution of land (see the chapter on socio-economic causes, the section on resource-related conflicts and land). This 'mechanism' of power transfer was deceptive, because real change never came about, but only measures that did not endanger the elites' economic holdings.

The military also controlled the election procedures through the Central Election Council (CEC). In this way they not only controlled the collection of votes, but also the qualification of political parties. If parties had a serious chance of winning elections, they were disqualified. If parties passed the test and were still too successful, these election results were 'adapted'. The practice of selection preceding and fraud during elections indicated that there were no opportunities for any kind of change via the electoral route. The only change to

21) Manuel Rojas Bolanos and Tania Pleitez, 'El Salvador', in *Central America: Regional Report* (San José (Costa Rica): Fundacion Arias; and The Hague: Netherlands Institute of International Relations 'Clingendael', 1998), p. 121.

22) Manuel Rojas Bolanos and Tania Pleitez, 'El Salvador', pp. 122-123.

be expected was from a rupture of the military-elite alliance, or a successful insurgency. With regard to a rupture in the military, the chances were very small because of the *tanda* system.²³ This system is an important characteristic of the Salvadorean military. The *tanda* stands for an academy graduation class. Given that officers move up the military hierarchy at more or less the same pace, *tandas* develop a strong sense of cohesiveness. In fact, the *tanda* system to a large extent eliminated general conflict within the military officer corps: officers knew that sooner or later their *tanda* would move up to the next rank, and that their patience would inevitably pay off.

As a result of the exclusionary character of the military oligarchy in power, the way for more inclusive power-sharing through political means was firmly blocked. Because of the limited (and gradually further eliminated) space for democratic political participation, urban guerrilla groups emerged. These urban revolutionary movements extended their activities and bases to the rural areas when the fighting started. Most of the revolutionary movements had a Marxist-Leninist ideology and aimed for rule by the proletariat. This fundamental difference in ideological outlook was, of course, unacceptable for the military-economic elite. The Church played an important role in the opposition when the struggle extended to the rural areas, where the Catholic Church, through the establishment of Christian Base Communities (CBCs), had organized the poor, trained local leaders, and introduced the principles of participatory democracy. As a result of these activities, the base of El Salvador's political regime was being questioned and popular support for the insurgents increased. This enabled the Salvadorean opposition movement to build alliances with the popular organizations and to challenge the exclusionist character of the political system in El Salvador.

Nicaragua-Somoza Period

Authoritarian regimes headed by so-called *caudillos*²⁴ and the frequent use of force to impose the authority of the economic elite on the rest of society are almost structural characteristics of Nicaragua's political culture. This already indicates a limited scope for power-sharing, yet a system of pacts among specific powerful economic interest groups served as a minimal power-sharing arrangement during the Somoza period. These pacts were instrumental for the regime as well as for the other parties involved. The power structure during the Somoza regime was such that there were those who were closely allied to the regime (taking part in the power positions and the enrichment), and those who had no direct relationship to the inner power circle and were politically

23) Manuel Rojas Bolanos and Tania Pleitez, 'El Salvador', p. 163, footnote 36.

24) *Caudillos* are authoritarian patriarchs, who have a strong control over the political system, ruling through a combination of political favours for affiliated elites and ruthless violence to suppress dissent.

marginal. The expanding economy in the 1960s and 1970s,²⁵ however, provided an important boost for the Somoza clan, as well as for the newly emerging middle class and economic elite. Since these groups had an interest in a well-functioning economy, pacts between them were obvious. This informal pact system not only limited itself to these (new) middle-class groups, but encompassed the urban working class as well. It thus seems that as long as the economy expanded, the regime was able to command commitment and legitimacy from large and important segments of society. The expanding economy, however, also had reverse effects for the pact system. The rising middle class contained not only new economic power groups, but also a new class of intellectuals with a libertarian conscience. This new group started to oppose the Somoza regime, but was not very successful in changing the excessive concentration of force and political power (see also the section on economic power transition).

The co-optation mechanism came under pressure, and the then leader – Somoza Debayle – had to negotiate with the opposition in order to establish a form of joint government. This was only window dressing, since Somoza could retain de facto power through control of 60 per cent of the seats in Congress and command of the *Guardia Nacional* (GN).²⁶ This, of course, was also clear for the opposition, resulting in the departure of prominent opposition leaders from the party. The 1972 earthquake, and the resulting hectic situation, was utilized by the Somoza clan to recover absolute power. The willingness, in face of new opposition movements and social unrest after the 1974 elections, again to give and ensure at least a minimum of legitimacy, had now completely disappeared. The means to retain power were increased repression, the imposition of martial law and the declaration of a ‘state of siege’ that lasted until 1977. The response to the progressive loss of support from the elite, and the growing social discontent and civil disobedience, was violence. This solidified the opposition movements and resulted in the mobilization of a broad society-wide front of opposition that was able to remove the Somoza clan from power in 1979.

Nicaragua-Sandinista Period

The pact system was also important with regard to the Sandinista period, and especially during the formation period of the opposition to Somoza. As the struggle heightened, the strategists of the *Frente Sandinista de Liberacion*

25) The Cuban revolution and the subsequent US embargo had boosted sugar cane and cattle ranching on the Central American Isthmus. Furthermore, demand for agricultural produce was generated through the short-lived Central American Common Market (CACM). A gradual process of import substitution simultaneously took place, leading to a growth in domestic industry.

26) Abelardo Morales Gamboa and Raul Rosende, ‘Nicaragua’, *Central America: Regional Report*, p. 44.

Nacional (FSLN) had to make fundamental choices with regard to the most efficient political strategy. The so-called ‘*Terceristas*’ faction within the FSLN, who saw the need for action in both the rural and the urban areas, promoted a multi-class alliance strategy. The *Terceristas* was led by Daniel and Humberto Ortega, who both favoured cooperation with the ‘bourgeois’ sector of society. This faction was strongest, and made it possible to create a broad opposition front directed against Somoza. As indicated, this multi-class front was only able to cooperate because it had a short-term aim: the overthrow of the Somoza clan. The coalition failed to establish either a basis or mechanisms for multi-party political competition. As soon as the aim to overthrow Somoza was reached, the ideological differences with regard to the long-term aims drove the coalition apart again.²⁷ The FSLN used its hegemonic position with the aim of imposing a system that to a large extent seemed to reproduce (or produce) variations of the traditional way of exercising power in Nicaragua. The FSLN introduced a centralist political system that revolved around the decisions of the National Directorate of the FSLN. Furthermore, a system of pacts and alliances with non-Sandinista sectors was established, implying their subordination to Sandinista hegemony. Repression of the opposition took on more apparent forms through censorship of the media and deteriorating human rights’ practices. The legitimacy of the FSLN increasingly came under pressure when it became obvious that the aim of protecting the revolution was more important than power-sharing. As a result, extra-legal ways of opposition were the only option left for opposition parties to achieve changes in the system.

The changes embarked upon by the FSLN as a result of the Esquipulas peace process²⁸ and the deteriorating economic conditions came too late. The legitimacy of the revolution was already questioned by a majority of the population, resulting in an electoral defeat at the ballots of 1990.

Guatemala

In Guatemala, after the ousting of Arbenz, the military assumed primacy in the political power nexus of the country. During the entire period from 1954-1985, the so-called ‘Law for the Defence of Democratic Institutions’ secured total control of the military over the political process and political parties.²⁹ The main characteristic of their policy was to exclude all left-wing politicians and parties from the political centre. The military sometimes accepted civilians as President, whenever one of the accepted opposition parties was elected and it appeared better to have this party and its leader ‘in power’. This type of

27) Abelardo Morales Gamboa and Raul Rosende, ‘Nicaragua’, pp. 51-53.

28) Esquipulas is a small village in Guatemala where the leaders of the five Central American countries came together to discuss options for a regional peace process. The first meetings took place in 1985 leading to the Esquipulas II Accord of August 1987.

29) Hector Rosada and Margarita Mooney, ‘Guatemala’, *Central America: Regional Report*, p. 182.

window dressing was abandoned during the period 1970-1985, when the military openly neglected the outcome of various elections (as in 1974). The democratic process in Guatemala during the period 1954-1985 was thus nothing but a façade. Throughout this period the military effectively promoted the economic interests of foreign multinational companies and domestic economic elite groups. A change took place after 1985, when the military finally conceded to political negotiations with the armed opposition, resulting in the acceptance of democratization of the political process. Instead of managing the political process in Guatemala, the all out military campaign against the *Union Revolucionario Nacional Guatemalteca* (URNG) had resulted in the military becoming an army of occupation in their own country. The counter-insurgency campaigns of the early 1980s had devastating effects on part of the central highlands, resulting in mass killings, destruction of hundreds of villages and the massive depopulation of some areas.³⁰ Despite the benevolent attitude of major powers such as the US, and surprisingly low-profile media coverage of these genocidal campaigns, this ruthless counter-insurgency tarnished the public image of the military regime. Many relief NGOs had exposed the military campaign by providing substantial aid to the massive indigenous refugee population that had fled to the adjoining Chiapas region of Mexico. As soon as the military became aware of the fact that fostering loyalty to a legitimate government was a necessary prerequisite in order to consolidate the military 'gains' of the counter-insurgency, they embarked on a different approach. This new approach focused on creating loyalty through economic reform measures and a return to more democratic principles. They concluded that in order to re-legitimize the state, power had to be transferred to civilians. The military were only willing to do this if they were not going to be prosecuted for human rights' abuses in the past. Consequently, the process of democratic transition remains vulnerable and the issue of impunity ranks high on the political agenda.

In addition, special reference should be made to the position of the indigenous Maya population. The Mayans have been excluded by the centre ever since the Spanish conquest. Their exclusion is remarkable since they allegedly form a numeric majority in Guatemala. The politics of exclusion by the *ladino* part of society did not pose a 'problem' for the centre until the Mayans increasingly became aware of their backward position. The fact that the Mayans gained full rights as citizens under Arbenz did not change their political attitude. Only when the cumulative impact of economic policies resulted in loss of ancestral lands and forced labour migration³¹ did a process start towards political mobilization. The insurgency movement URNG could

30) Hector Rosada and Margarita Mooney, 'Guatemala', p. 189. The military campaign resulted in 440 villages being completely destroyed, 100,000 civilians being killed and 150,000 refugees in Mexico as well as thousands of internally displaced people.

31) Hector Rosada and Margarita Mooney, 'Guatemala', p. 215.

build on the feelings of discontent within the Mayan societies. Because of this development, the issue of the Mayans and Maya representation in the centre was put on the agenda after several centuries of neglect, and the political representation of the Mayans was included in the peace negotiations and formally laid down in the accords of 1996.

Concluding Observations section C-II: Absence of Power-Sharing

To conclude, one can observe that the application of limited forms of power-sharing mechanisms combined with the forceful exclusion of certain groups and political parties provided the background against which violent opposition emerged. Violent opposition was widely perceived as the sole means to enforce fundamental political change in these three Central American countries. If the Central American cases are compared with the West African cases from the previous section on institutional capacity, it becomes clear that incumbent political elites of these states pursued exclusionary policies based on the existing socio-economic stratification and identity policies. The historical collusion of the interests of oligarchic landed elite groups and the military in Central America almost inevitably led to policies of exclusion, with the ultimate aim of consolidating an anti-communist political ideology. As a result, authoritarian states evolved in which elite interests were protected by the armed forces. In these states there was no room for more inclusive political projects, as such projects would have led to structural changes, threatening elite interests. Although the institutional capacity of these states was well developed and the national identity unchallenged, persisting patterns of socio-economic inequality provided a fertile breeding ground for political dissent. The lack of a perspective on genuine socio-economic reform (notably concerning land distribution) led to a growing awareness of the unequal character of power-sharing in these states. The attempts by political opposition movements to gain access to the political decision-making process and to try to change modalities of power-sharing were mostly turned down forcefully, leading to the murder of opposition politicians and the suppression of political opposition. These brutal forms of political exclusion provided an enabling environment for the emergence of violent opposition in the countries mentioned.

The role of indigenous population groups, such as the Mayans, seems to be less directly related to the issue of power-sharing since their political isolation has already existed for centuries. However, the Mayans have for a long time been able to live parallel lives in relative seclusion, confined to specific geographical areas that were only marginally integrated in the prevailing political economy. Once the dominant *ladino* elite encroached upon their labour capacity and reproductive assets (that is, land),³² mainly as a result of

32) The growth of large plantations of bananas and sugar cane in the coastal plains of Guatemala resulted in a strong labour demand. Indigenous workers were recruited and a circular pattern of

geopolitical changes in the region affecting the economy, the Mayans became amenable to political mobilization. Nevertheless, once their 'virtual' autonomy became threatened, 'awareness' of their broader economic and political subordination within Guatemalan society grew. During the rise of the so-called second wave of insurgency, the Mayans became targeted by URNG cadres, who learned local languages and recruited support among the indigenous communities.

Section C-III Repression and Reform: The Cases of Honduras and Ghana

Honduras

The role of the military in Honduran politics has not only been strong during periods when the military openly ruled the country, but also during civilian regimes. The influential position of the military in politics was a result of developments in the 1950s, when the military intervened in politics in order to 'defend democracy'. The military drafted a new Honduran constitution in 1957, which contained Article 319, stating that the President of the republic had to issue all orders through the chief of the armed forces. The chief could disobey such orders if he felt that they violated the spirit or letter of the constitution. Article 319 raised the military above politics as protectors of the country and its constitution.

Notwithstanding the fact that the military were the main power in the Honduran political centre, limited power-sharing was applied in Honduran politics. Such power-sharing, however, took on different forms. One of its main expressions was the maintenance of a bipartisan system of political parties. The political system in Honduras was dominated by the Honduran National Party (PNH) and the Honduran Liberal Party (PLH). The PNH drew most of its electoral strength from the rural areas (both *campesinos* and the landholding oligarchy); and the supporters of the PLH could mainly be found in the more developed zones (the capital and the more developed zones of the north-east). Party affiliation was furthermore characterized by a generation-to-generation tradition and a patronage system (public sector jobs could be distributed by the leader of the party).

Co-optation was another, related characteristic of Honduran politics. Co-optation also existed on the level of opposition parties and their right to organize. The aim of the military was to prevent the creation of communist-oriented organizations among the main opposition forces in Honduran politics: *campesinos* and the labour unions. Therefore, the Inter-American Regional

Mayan labour migration ensued. This tendency also partly resulted from changes within the Mayan economy, as the ongoing fragmentation of land on the traditional Mayan highlands, as a result of heritage practices, resulted in a growing number of marginal Mayan peasants.

Organization of Labour (ORIT) and the American Institute for Free Labour Development (AIFLD) were invited to help organize new unions. As a result, the unions were less ideologically biased towards communism. Besides this aspect, the unions were associated with the two main political parties. This system of co-optation gave the unions and the *campesino* movements a voice in Honduran politics and an impression of participating in politics, thus preventing the creation of large-scale extremist unions and movements. Thus, the communist-controlled United Federation of Honduran Workers, which represented some 30,000 workers, was targeted by government repression. Several leaders were assassinated and disappeared during the 1980s.³³

Social tensions were strongly related to the battle for agrarian reform. A slowing down of the process of reform, which happened during several periods, caused an increase in organized manifestations of agitation in the countryside. The risks involved in not being able to manage these problems were evident from developments in neighbouring countries. The military was very much aware of the threat of a communist revolt, and knew that its success and legitimacy would depend on adequately dealing with the issue of agrarian reform (see also Chapter III on socio-economic factors, resource-related conflicts, and the section on land reform in Honduras). By doing so, an ideological challenge of the political nature of the state could be prevented. The military were instrumental in preventing social unrest from escalating to such a level. They had already intervened in politics on several occasions. In 1963 they did so because of the implementation of the Agrarian Reform Law, when they overthrew Villeda Morales, who, from the perspective of the landed oligarchy and the military, was embarking too enthusiastically on the reform programme. The 1972 *coup* was an attempt to restore national order and to implement real reform without challenging the landed class. During the ensuing decade, three successive military governments effectively 'froze' solutions to the country's structural land distribution problem. Although some land reform took place, substantial changes did not come about. In order to deal with feelings of discontent from the *campesinos*, the military followed a highly effective dual policy: on the one hand they promoted limited agrarian reform combined with regulated and co-opted political participation; on the other hand, embarking on a policy of repression and violence. Furthermore, they targeted poor immigrant Salvadorean *campesinos*, who served as perfect scapegoats for the consecutive regimes. In doing so they provoked a short interstate war with El Salvador, which gained them additional credibility and internal support (see the chapter on external factors).

33) Rosa Sanchez and Fernando Zeledon Torres, 'Honduras', *Central America: Regional Report*, p. 265.

Ghana

The history of the military's interventions in the politics of Ghana started at the end of Nkrumah's rule. The military *coup* of 1966 implied a return to the pre-independence period. The new leaders embarked on a 'roll-back' policy, reversing the 'achievements' of Nkrumah's socialist policies on the economic as well as on the societal level. The new leadership (the military National Liberation Council – NLC) repressed all Convention People's Party (CPP)-created institutions. Under growing economic and political pressure, the NLC became more intolerant and repressive towards the opposition. In the end, the NLC lost the 1969 transitional elections, and the Progress Party (PP) moved into power. The PP's leader, Busia, embarked on a repressive policy and unconstitutional behaviour. Busia overstretched his powers when he started to endanger the privileges of the groups that had brought him to power in 1969, and as a result the military moved back into power in 1972.

The new military leader, Acheampong, embarked on policies that were to give him the support of the nationalists as well as the socialist-oriented groups within society. This approach temporarily gave the population new trust in the state and military leadership. In the long run socio-economic inequality increased, and the major part of the population again felt neglected. Acheampong attempted to strengthen his position and banned all opposition groups in 1978, exiling their leaders. This increase of repression in combination with a deteriorating economic situation was not accepted by all of the military, and as a result General Akuffo replaced Acheampong. The new military leadership, however, was also incompetent in dealing with the economic and political hardships, and another *coup* in 1979 was to change this situation.

The 1979 *coup* was special in several regards. First, the *coup* was led by a Ewe: Jerry Rawlings. His presence ended all sectional discontent from the Ewe that still existed. In 1956, the Ewe as well as the Ashanti had briefly embraced secessionist projects that were subsequently repressed. The Ewe inhabited the border region with Togo, constituting former British Togoland, which decided to join Ghana during a UN referendum in May 1956.³⁴ Second, Rawlings' Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) embarked on 'house cleaning' policies: several people who had served under Acheampong and Akuffo were dismissed, arrested, sentenced or killed; corruption was redressed (illegally acquired money had to be refunded); and people's courts were called into being. As a result of this approach an increasing lack of order characterized the security situation, yet the AFRC did not deal with this aspect. Instead, it turned over power to a civilian government under the leadership of Limann in September 1979. Limann's government proved incapable of dealing with the economic and security situation of the country, and this finally resulted in a

34) Okwudiba Nnoli, 'The Conflict Process in Ghana, 1950-1990', *West Africa: Regional Report*, p. 33.

new military *coup* in 1981, in which Rawlings again seized power. Because of the failing policies of the previous regime, the population was not as supportive as in 1979. In order to get widespread support, Rawlings and his Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) adopted populist rhetoric and symbolism. Part of his socialist policies focused on creating structures in which 'the people' could participate, for example the People's Defence Committees, the Workers' Defence Committees and the National Investigation Committees. As a result, the repressive character of his policy was decentralized, using civil society and people's courts.

The new leaders were confronted with a persisting bad and even worsening economic situation. Rawlings tried to reverse this situation by again turning to the West for help. In doing so, he launched an Economic Recovery Programme (ERP) in 1983 (see chapter III socio-economic factors). The shift in economic policy also implied a shift in ideological outlook: the PNDC disposed of its left-wing character (and members); the various PDC committees were replaced; and as public participation was reduced, the incumbent regime again took over control of politics. This shift was also accompanied by an increase in government repression. Discontent of several sections of society and the military became apparent during these years: from 1981 till 1985 nine (failed) attempts at a military *coup* took place. There were also outbursts of civil discontent ('IMF riots'). The increase of repressive methods by the government also became reliant on several non-democratic practices in order to stay in power. It took until the 1990s, when democratization was already on the rise on the African continent, for the government to give in to this new development as well and to establish a multi-party democratic order and general elections in 1991. However, Ghana managed to steer free of major violent conflicts.

Interestingly, a 'dependence-on-*coup*-syndrome' reigned in Ghana: the people started to depend on military *coups* to 'rescue' them. This dependency on the military, however, also indicates the lack of a functioning democracy, as well as the lack of ideological leadership able to present acceptable and convincing long-term strategies to deal with the problems facing the country. Nevertheless, no opposition group emerged to challenge the fragile system and it could be concluded that the people more or less accepted the concept of the state and Ghanaian citizenship as opposed to alternative identities (since no group applied for self-determination during the whole period – except for the Ewe, who initially wanted to join their co-ethnics in adjoining Togo but were forced to comply with the outcome of the UN referendum).

To conclude, a succession of military regimes proliferated in the contemporary history of Ghana, sometimes temporarily replaced by so-called civilian regimes. These interim regimes were overthrown by military force as a result of their highly exclusionary policies and their incapacity or reluctance at genuine power-sharing with other interest groups in society. The arrival of Jerry Rawlings to power heralded a period of totalitarian repression and a virtual freeze of political dialogue between various interest groups. As a result Ghana

managed to steer clear of widespread violent conflict, but the underlying exclusion of genuine articulation of political interest remains a crucial issue threatening the system's stability in the long run.

Conclusions section C-III: Repression and Reform

Because the outbreak of large-scale internal violence has been adopted as the crucial dependant variable in this study on the causes of conflict, these countries clearly deviate from the general pattern observed in their respective regions. Both Ghana and Honduras managed to steer free of such major internal conflicts. In both states a mixture of political repression and limited reform was applied by a political system in which the armed forces dominated. These political projects were largely facilitated by overt or covert support from powerful external agents (see the chapter on external factors). Both countries also demonstrate the importance of safety-valve options at specific moments in time. In the case of Ghana, a pattern of massive out-migration of Ghanaians materialized. Many Ghanaians worked in Nigeria or migrated to west Europe. In Honduras the short interstate war with El Salvador enabled the incumbent military regime to oust Salvadorean immigrants, thus providing new land to Honduran *campesinos*. It seems that the partial integration of potentially powerful opposition movements, such as labour unions, in both countries has helped the regimes to acquire some degree of legitimacy in the eyes of the population. In fact, such movements were skilfully manipulated into docile and controlled mass movements. These movements could advocate openly regarding general labour conditions, such as wages and working hours, but structural issues such as existing land distribution or preferential treatment of foreign companies could not be addressed. The illusion of genuine power-sharing was manipulated by the power elite, to the extent that mass movements even supported these regimes when they entered dire straits. In Honduras, *campesinos* actively chased Salvadorean peasants, and the People's Defence Committees terrorized co-workers in Ghana.

Although Ghana and Honduras experienced internal repression, leading to the extra-judicial killings of opposition leaders and civilians, they steered free of the type of conflicts defined by this study. Such policies, however, do not automatically imply the establishment of legitimate authority or of peaceful societies.

Section C-IV Elaborate and Established Forms of Power-Sharing

States only embarked upon power-sharing arrangements deliberately in a few cases. These states sought to promote political consensus among constituent groups. In some cases, however, these attempts somehow produced contrary results. In India and Sri Lanka notably, a gradual erosion of state legitimacy can be observed, partly resulting from the application of unbalanced power-sharing formulae.

Section C-IV-A India and Sri Lanka: Gradual Erosion of Inbuilt Power-Sharing Mechanisms

India

The Congress Party was not just the main political party in India at independence, but it seemed to represent all of India's political affiliations. It therefore served as an 'umbrella' party: it provided space for a wide range of political views and attitudes, and it drew its support from all classes and castes, as well as from all ethnic and religious groups. 'The Congress Party embodied in itself the principle of power-sharing: virtually every ethnic and religious group in independent India, and a wide variety of castes, found representation within the party, and through it in the political executive, and in parliament'.³⁵ Since the Congress Party not only dominated government at the centre, but also in the states, the aspect of power-sharing was guaranteed.

On the level of the states, regional parties, often organized around specific themes, issues and principles, varying from language and ethnicity to ideology, have successfully challenged the position of the Congress Party. On the highest level between the centre and the states, power-sharing arrangements were thus also guaranteed. Over the years, however, India's power-sharing politics and secular character seemed to be liable to wear.

The principle of power-sharing through the Congress Party came under pressure in the mid-1970s, when its popularity started to decline. The CP's decline in the power nexus of the Indian polity coincided with a revival of Hindu nationalism, which had its roots in Maharashtra state (Mumbai)³⁶ but gradually managed to become a national political force. When Pundit Nehru was succeeded by Indira Gandhi, the Congress Party underwent significant policy changes. The CP started to advocate openly a pro-Hindu stance at the all-India level. However, in view of its broad constituency reflecting the complicated ethnic, religious and cultural tissue of the Indian nation, this policy was doomed to fail. Hindu nationalist parties, such as the *Bharatiya Janata Party* (BJP), easily targeted the CP's ambiguous policy, which aimed at promoting Hindu nationalism while simultaneously safeguarding minority rights, and started its political ascent to power.

Communal violence between Muslims and Hindus had always been a feature of post-independence India, and time and again violent clashes erupted. Communal violence and punctual conflicts became more frequent after the destruction of the Babri mosque in 1992 by Hindu fundamentalist agitators and followers. Bearing in mind the open wounds of Partition at independence and the ongoing crises in Kashmir, it must be realized that in India millions of

35) Quoted from Partha S. Ghosh and Mahendra P. Lama, country chapter on India, in *South Asia: Regional Report*, Part I, p. 80.

36) This was the *Shiv Seena* movement, a radical Hindu movement aiming at restoring Hindu predominance in India.

Hindus and Muslims live and work together throughout the entire federation. Despite a history of communal violence and political manipulation of religious identity by major political parties, relations between both faiths have remained remarkably peaceful. There is a risk, however, that the general perception among Indians on communal clashes becomes mixed up with other forms of conflict that have characterized India for a long time, such as inter-caste, inter-provincial and inter-ethnic, inter-linguistic and inter-generational conflicts.³⁷ The nationalist and pro-Hindu rhetoric of the incumbent BJP-led government can therefore be exploited by extremist leaders within both communal camps, and in the minds of most Indians becomes mixed up with other forms of conflict and threatens the fragile power balance between these groups, which was established through painstaking consensus-seeking politics in the past. The ongoing process of Hindu political revival has compromised the existing power-sharing arrangements between both constituencies. Some policies, such as the quota arrangements for higher education and access to government jobs, have been used to mobilize perceived injustice among the Hindu majority.

Political emancipation of the Hindu majority therefore seems to have resulted in the erosion of existing power-sharing arrangements. Socio-economic grievances related to inter-group competition for government services and jobs (see the chapter on socio-economic factors) seem to provide the necessary preconditions for the emergence of conflict-prone scenarios in the case of the communal antagonism between Hindus and Muslims.

Sri Lanka

Institutionally, Sri Lanka became a highly centralized state during the colonial period, and this legacy of a highly centralized state was one of the difficulties that different post-independence governments had to overcome while developing and introducing measures of devolution of power to regional units of administration. A related legacy of British rule in Sri Lanka was the bringing together of peoples and areas within the island polity (that is, the unified colonial structure). In practice, centralization implied that all of Sri Lanka's minorities (Sri Lankan and Indian Tamils, both Hindu; Sri Lankan Muslims; and a small minority of so-called Burghers, a Christian minority) were integrated in a mainly Sinhalese Buddhist society. During the period 1947-1956, independent Sri Lanka seemingly successfully copied the Western-style democratic institutions and organizations of civil society. This can partly be attributed to the British-educated elite, which was familiar with the political culture of British parliamentary democracy. The introduction of the Language

37) Partha S. Ghosh, *The Hindu-Muslim Question in India: Confrontation and Co-existence*, paper presented at the International Workshop on Causes of Conflict in South Asia, held at Hotel Tourmaline, Kandy, Sri Lanka, 3-5 March 1997, p. 24.

Act³⁸ implied the breakthrough of the populist idea that the concept of a multi-ethnic polity was no longer politically viable. This Act elevated Sinhala to the status of official language, to the detriment of English, which was only spoken by a mere 10 per cent of the total population. Moreover, Sri Lankan Tamils were over-represented in government and they constituted a majority among the English-speaking elite. The emphasis shifted to the concept of emancipating the majority of the Sinhalese. Those in favour of the new policies to redress existing inequalities found justification in the fact that the numerically superior Sinhala-speaking group had been excluded from a fair share of political power by the English-educated elite. From the perspective of the majority, the Language Act and subsequent legislation regarding quotas for group access to university implied a simple balancing out that was commensurate with the relative demographic weight of constituent groups.

Minority groups, however, interpreted these policies as fundamental changes of the concept of a multi-ethnic Sri Lankan state. Instead of a polity that accommodates all communities, it seemed to them that a Sinhalese state emerged in which all communities had to conform to the policies of the Sinhalese majority. For the Sri Lankan Tamil community this was totally unacceptable, because they depended structurally on the public sector because of a lack of natural resources in their homelands as well as a lack of arable lands (see the chapter on socio-economic factors). Although the Language Act was never implemented to the full and the introduction of special provisions in 1958 modified the original policy,³⁹ the centre's legitimacy was severely damaged by this manifestation of Sinhalese nationalism. In fact, it struck at the roots of the concept of a multi-ethnic Sri Lankan polity.

In 1978 a new Constitution was again introduced, this time incorporating a comprehensive set of minority safeguards, a formal reversal of the Language Act of 1956, and reversal of the discriminating features of the university admissions' policy. This did not, however, appease the demands of a gradually radicalizing Tamil movement. It seems that concessions had come too late and were considered irrelevant by some sections of the Sri Lankan Tamils. Throughout the contemporary political history, a gradual process of radicalization is observed. In 1971 the Federal Party (FP) withdrew from the Constituent Assembly when its demands for federalism were rejected. The FP formed the Tamil United Front in 1972, succeeded in May 1976 by the Tamil United Liberation Front, which launched the so-called 'Vaddukodai Resolution', advocating the establishment of a separate Tamil state.⁴⁰ From then onwards, several militant Tamil groups emerged. Because of an incident

38) Kingsley de Silva, country paper on Sri Lanka, in *South Asia: Regional Report*, Part II, pp. 382-385.

39) Kingsley de Silva, country paper on Sri Lanka, in *South Asia: Regional Report*, Part II, p. 384.

40) Kingsley de Silva, country paper on Sri Lanka, in *South Asia: Regional Report*, Part II, Table 6.7, pp. 386-389.

in which some government soldiers were ambushed in the north, the stand-off between the Sinhala majority and the Sri Lankan Tamil minority escalated in anti-Tamil riots in 1983. The internecine fighting between the various militant Tamil groups results in the political annihilation of all groups and parties (including the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF)) by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) movement.

The LTTE movement opted for military secession and the formation of a Tamil homeland in the north-east of the island. The Sinhala political establishment consistently tried to contain the LTTE militarily, and proposed devolution of power as a political solution to the LTTE insurgency. The problem, however, was and is to determine the most appropriate unit of devolution. Here the Sinhalese and Tamil communities disagree totally. Whereas the Sinhalese, regardless of political affiliation, aim at a system of provincial councils, the Tamil Tigers press for a regional unit encompassing the northern and eastern provinces as a manifestation of the 'traditional homelands' of the Tamils. For large sections of the Sinhalese, such a unit of devolution would be a first step towards separation from the Sri Lankan polity, and is therefore unacceptable.

Concluding Remarks section C-IV: Gradual Erosion of Inbuilt Power-Sharing Mechanisms

To conclude, we can infer from the Indian and Sri Lankan cases that the initial constitutional safeguards for minority communities embodied the principle of power-sharing effectively. In both countries the gradual adoption of populist majority ideologies heralded a decline of political stability. In the case of Sri Lanka, the formal reversal of discriminatory policies notwithstanding, a violent conflict emerged in which the nature of the Sri Lankan state is contested by the leading radical movement of one of the main minority groups. It can therefore tentatively be inferred that changes in existing power-sharing arrangements need to be handled with utmost restraint by the incumbent political elites of the day. Alterations, let alone dramatic changes, in such power-sharing arrangements easily lead to political discontent and provide fertile breeding grounds for dissent among minority groups. Both among the Sri Lankan Tamils and among the Muslims in India, the general perception is one of neglect by the central authorities. Therefore, even if changes in existing power-sharing arrangements can be justified on the basis of proportional representation, they should be revised carefully. The case of Sri Lanka clearly demonstrates that the structural dependency of the Tamil minority on the public sector implies that there was precious little space for manoeuvre by the central state. The reversal of inequalities automatically implied a net loss of Tamil status and income. In order to make power-sharing arrangements effective, it seems that there is a need to evaluate and adapt such provisions constantly, taking into account the positions of the various groups involved.

The Case of Costa Rica: Durable Power-Sharing

In sharp contrast to its direct neighbours and even to the wider region, Costa Rica managed to escape the cycles of violence that have characterized the contemporary history of the Central American region. Part of the explanation for the absence of violent conflict lies with the prevailing political culture,⁴¹ in which power-sharing has become embedded into socio-economic redistribution of government services among the population at large.

Costa Rica appears to have developed a model of peaceful coexistence between different interest groups in society: a model of state-led investment and so-called 'preventative control pacts'.⁴² Costa Rica's political culture can best be described as a democracy in which preliminary control mechanisms of an ideological sort tend to impede dissension and ideological and cultural contradiction. This implies that there is a high degree of consensus on the political rules of the game, as well as consensus on the ideological plane. Prohibition of the Communist Party in 1949 did not result in a large resistance movement or in attempts by excluded parties to challenge the state. Accepting democratic elections and their outcomes as a means for the transfer of power is another indicator of the high degree of consensus and trust in the prevailing political system. The political rules of the game were clear, accepted by all parties involved, and allowed for equal access to political decision-making. Furthermore, the flexibility of the political system to adapt, to transform and to incorporate newly emerging elements sets it aside from the other states on the Isthmus. Circumstances change over time, implying that prevailing political and economic paradigms and their interpretations need to be amenable to necessary adaptations. Failure to do so might result in erosion of legitimacy. The particularity of the Costa Rican state lies in its apparent capacity to facilitate the emergence of pacts among the parties and factions involved in the political process. In doing so, the state is capable of re-establishing the underlying consensus-oriented properties of the system or of transforming it by adding new elements.

These systemic properties were developed in an opportune socio-economic and political climate during the 1950s and 1960s. The newly developed state interventionism created a new industrial elite next to the traditional agro-exporting elite. Under the state's leadership, the new elite did

41) This term refers to the way in which political rules and traditions have historically evolved in a particular state, how the political rules of the game are interpreted by the powerful constituent elements of a given polity and how such groups interact with each other through more or less agreed upon political procedures. This implies that patterns of political behaviour sometimes become ingrained in the collective memory of a state and are perceived as normal political acts.

42) This term is used by the authors of the country chapter on Costa Rica. It refers to the pre-emptive capacity of states to use socio-economic policies as dissension neutralizers or as conflict neutralizers; Jaime Ordonez and Fernando Zeledon Torres, 'Costa Rica', *Central America: Regional Report*, pp. 314-315.

not compete with the traditional elite, thus further stabilizing and strengthening the system. On the political plane, there were only two main contending groups for state power: the National Liberation Party (*Partido Liberal Nacional* – PLN) and coalitions of its opposition. Costa Rica's political scene has remained peaceful and devoid of violent confrontations ever since the Communist Party was prohibited in 1949, and its return to legal politics in 1975 did not alter the political landscape. In this regard it is important to take note of the powerful position of the PLN in Costa Rican politics. The PLN is not only pre-eminent in the executive branch, but also in the National Assembly. This feature of Costa Rican political history explains the consistency of Costa Rican politics. Another important aspect in this regard is the abolition of the army: the absence of a strong military is an important feature when compared to the neighbouring countries, which seem to have embarked upon military-oriented models of development. Meanwhile, Costa Rica has no history of military intervention in affairs of the state.

Major Conclusions section C: Power-Sharing

The various ways in which power-sharing among constituent groups was organized impacted strongly on the propensity towards violent disputes between state elite groups and sub-state actors.

From the Central American cases of rudimentary power-sharing, it becomes clear that states have to be careful not to become de facto non-inclusive political systems. From the examples highlighted, it can tentatively be concluded that if such states fail to include a critical mass of powerful allied groups they may ultimately face internal (violent) opposition and face political and military defeat. In some cases elite groups prove to be resilient, and work out some kind of political compromise with subservient interest groups in society. In the case of Honduras, a combination of selective repression of 'extremist' interest groups such as communist labour organizations and the formation of apolitical labour organizations loyal to the prevailing political order proved to be a successful formula. Even when the Honduran political elite faced a major land scarcity crisis, it successfully used Salvadorean illegal immigrants as a scapegoat. It seems that this particular combination of repression and reform helped the incumbent political elite to avert the type of violent opposition that characterized neighbouring countries on the Isthmus.

Some countries managed to develop more inclusive types of power-sharing. In the cases of India and Sri Lanka, post-colonial governments initially ensured structural power-sharing among constituent groups. Eventually, however, in both countries majority groups aimed at proportional representation despite historical and structural justification of existing arrangements. As a result, some minority groups felt threatened and over time their grievances towards the majority groups led to the emergence of radical groups. Identity became a crucial rallying point for these groups, revolving

around the issues of language and religion. The presence in South Asia of power-sharing arrangements anchored in post-colonial constitutional arrangements did not in itself preclude the eventual erosion into violent opposition by affected sub-state groups. The imposition of abrupt changes that affected specific groups proved to be a clear indicator for future dissent. The Indian and Sri Lankan cases demonstrate the gradual erosion of inclusive types of power-sharing as a result of emancipating demands raised by neglected minority groups. Although this is a common problem facing democracies, systemic flexibility seems to be required to incorporate changing demands effectively into existing constitutions or power-sharing arrangements.

Only the case of Costa Rica stands out as a successful example of power-sharing amid a region that has experienced almost four decades of political violence. Costa Rica developed a constitutional democracy, in which changes were obtained through the ballots. Moreover, the outcomes of the electoral process were accepted by all political parties, regardless of their ideology. Political compromise between the interests of the landed elite and the revolutionary liberalists formed the basis of a new constitution in 1948. This constitution contained a number of power-sharing arrangements, which stabilized Costa Rica's political system. Throughout the following decades, the governing elite groups managed to ensure a system of pacts between important political pressure groups. This mechanism, referred to as 'preventive control pacts', ensured the stability and non-violent character of Costa Rica.

The examples of countries that had developed inclusive forms of power-sharing demonstrate the historical reality that political systems are always changing. It is therefore important to emphasize that even successful power-sharing formulae need constant adaptations in order to remain effective. In every polity gradual changes operate that potentially undermine existing power-sharing arrangements. Sometimes, political elite groups manage to incorporate these gradual changes effectively, but in most cases the effects of gradual and systemic changes are underestimated and hence neglected, contributing to the possibility of power transitions. Power transitions can mostly be characterized as gradual processes in which power is taken over from the incumbent elite by a protagonist elite group. Such gradual changes may sometimes be accompanied by violent confrontations between the incumbent elite and the contending elite. The following section analyses some examples of power transition.

Section D Power Transitions

Section D-I Defining Power Transitions

Power transitions are analysed in this section. Power transition has been defined as a successful attempt by a contending group to wrestle power from the incumbent elite resulting from a structural change in the balance of power between these groups. The balance of power may be affected as a result of

demographic, economic and political changes. Such changes mostly take place over a relatively long period of time and may hence be qualified as gradual. In some regions and countries the empirical material points to cases of rapid power transition. From the case study material it becomes evident that not all cases in which patterns of systemic change can be observed necessarily lead to violent conflict or the ousting of the incumbent elite. In a number of cases power transition does not materialize and remains a latent threat to the stability of a given state. To what extent, therefore, does rapid power transition between socio-economic, religious or ethnic groups lead to an increased risk of violent conflict (while an unchallenged hierarchy will create stability).

Section D-II Demographic Changes: Natural Growth Rates and Immigration Issues

National Growth Rates

Population censuses have time and again become hotly contested and controversial rallying points for the constituencies involved. In and by themselves, such mechanisms do not pose a threat, but in a political context in which resource distribution or access to scarce government services or jobs is related to numerical strength, counting populations becomes a highly politicized act. This can be observed in all of the regions and countries studied, as exemplified by the debate about the alleged numerical majority of the Mayans in Guatemala, of Sikhs in the Punjab, Muslim Kashmiris in Kashmir in India, the demographic balance between Pashtuns and Mohajirs in Sind province in Pakistan, and the innumerable headcounts and ethnic redivisions in the Chittagong Hill Tracts area of Bangladesh. Natural growth as well as migration are therefore potent and highly conflict-prone time bombs, as they impact on population balances and the numerical strength of sub-groups residing in specific areas.

The youth bulge of the Sinhalese during the early 1970s put an enormous pressure on the Sri Lankan state to provide education, health care and job opportunities. Patterns of natural growth inevitably lead to a higher demand for public goods and hence on state resources. Demographic changes in and by themselves do not explain the outburst of violent behaviour of sub-state groups, but do provide incentives to political mobilization. In the West African context, where agricultural innovations are slow to materialize and the number of people and cattle are steadily on the increase, the increase of violent confrontations between different population groups has been widely attributed to these changes. Often there are underlying discriminatory attitudes against groups that supposedly grow too fast, meaning that they grow faster than other groups, who feel threatened in the process.

India

India, one of the successor states to the British Raj, has witnessed several gradual power transitions as subsequent power elite groups were replaced by newcomers. The hereditary rulers and zemindars⁴³ were replaced by the nationalist elite after Partition. In this case the post-independence period heralded the successful takeover by bourgeois and educated members of the higher castes. The power of this Westernized and English-educated minority in turn gradually waned, as middle class groups became emancipated in the political process. Because of the democratic nature of India and the general acceptance of the outcome of general elections as the ultimate expression of the will of the Indian people, lower-caste groups could use their demographic strength to broker political change. Their leaders managed to rise to politically paramount positions. Politicians representing low-caste interests have consequently dominated India's political scene. Nevertheless, such changes did not result in large-scale violent transitions. Such patterns can therefore be regarded as evolutionary, contributing in the long run to diffusion of tensions.⁴⁴

Migration: The Case of Assam

Migration provokes uncertainty among resident populations and may well lead to rancour and hatred fed by xenophobia. In Assam state in the north-west of India, the influx of immigrants has reduced the status of the indigenous people to that of a minority within their own homelands, setting the stage for a gradual power transition resulting from a change of the population balance. The indigenous people, the so-called Ahoms, currently form a minority in their traditional homelands and are outnumbered by immigrant Bengalis. These migrants were originally Hindus coming from West Bengal during colonial times and after the Partition, but gradually the majority of the migrants consisted of Muslim Bengalis originating from independent Bangladesh. Bengali migration, initiated by the British during colonial rule but continued after the Partition, concerned poor landless peasants from West Bengal who were put to work on the tea plantations. This impacted profoundly on the political economy of the Assamese society and over time changed the demographic balance. This process was greatly resented by the indigenous Ahoms. In the 1950s a strong nationalist movement emerged aiming at restoring Assamese predominance in the region. In parts of Assam, and in the whole of the north-east, tribal people have either been displaced totally, or have lost much of their arable lands to migrants. In Assam, but also in adjoining

43) The landed elites who live from renting out land and on revenue from sharecropping are commonly referred to as zemindars.

44) In the chapter 'Theoretical Formulations', *South Asia: Regional Report*, Part II, pp. 545-577 at p. 553.

Mizoram and Tripura, migrants have become economically and socially dominant, acquiring political power over the local ethnic groups. From the late 1970s onwards, Muslim Bengalis started to penetrate the region, mostly without official status. This issue has been high on the political agenda of most political parties in Assam. A militant fraction, called the All Assam Student Union (AASU) movement spearheaded the violent expression of anti-immigrant sentiments. The AASU initiated pogroms against the Muslim Bengalis, and in February 1983 killed thousands of Bangladeshis in a deliberate attempt to oust all migrants from the state ('Assam for the Assamese'). These killings have been attributed to members of the Lalung tribe who had lost much of their land to immigrants.⁴⁵

In the colonial setting the British had already firmly poised the Bengalese against the traditional Assamese elite, and had discarded the Ahoms from official functions while simultaneously making Bengali the official language. In the case of the Assamese, the pre-colonial identity and independence re-emerged in the post-colonial era, but the Indian leadership initially sided with the Hindi Bengali majority, effectively thwarting Ahom aspirations to political autonomy. Simultaneously, the stand-off between the Bengali Hindus and the Ahoms initially facilitated the social position of immigrant Bengali Muslims in Assam. They were initially perceived as allies by the Ahoms against the Bengali Hindu power elite. The status of these new immigrant communities underwent significant changes as their numbers grew and the Ahoms were displaced or lost access to land. During recent decades a tendency of cultural assimilation can be observed among the immigrant communities, as they adopt Assamese language and customs to avoid becoming victims of recurrent ethnic riots initiated by extremist Assamese movements such as the AASU. The cultural awareness of the indigenous peoples gained momentum when the first generations of educated indigenous people entered the labour market and were confronted with severe competition from immigrant groups, especially those belonging to the Bengali Hindu group.⁴⁶ Population censuses carried out at regular intervals were other triggering points for violent activities by nationalistic student-dominated Assamese.

Migration: The Case of the Mohajir

The post-Partition Muslim immigrants from India rapidly became the political elite of newly emerging Pakistan. In the early years after independence, the Urdu-speaking immigrant elite from India dominated politics and the bureaucracy. After the ascendancy of the Punjab-based army in politics in the late 1950s, the Punjabi identity of the Pakistani state became more

45) The chapter on India, section on socio-economic dimensions, in *South Asia: Regional Report*, Part I, pp. 121-143 at p. 139.

46) Mahendra P. Lama, *Identity-Based Politico-Armed Conflicts in North-East India*.

pronounced. In later decades the so-called 'Punjabization' progressed further, notably in the state bureaucracy and the military. In 1973 the Punjabis held 49.3 per cent of all officer positions and 54 per cent of all senior bureaucrat positions against 30 per cent and 33.5 per cent respectively for the Urdu-speaking Mohajir community. By 1993, the statistics obtained for both employment sectors were at 55 per cent and 58 per cent for the Punjabis against a mere 18 per cent and 18.3 per cent for the Mohajir community⁴⁷ respectively. The immigrant community therefore gradually lost ground to the Punjabi community. This growing monopolization by the Punjabis also affected other ethnic groups and eventually provided incentives for the emergence of nationalist groups in the 1980s.

At the all-Pakistan level a power transition hence took place in which the erstwhile dominant immigrant elite had to yield influence to the numerically dominant Punjabi. The Urdu-speaking Muslim immigrants therefore successfully emerged as the leading elite of a separate state, but over time encountered internal competition from the Punjabi ethnic group. The feelings of frustration and anger over the loss of power were instrumental to the emergence of the extremist Muttahida Qawmi Movement (MQM) political movement, which eventually confronted the incumbent Punjabi power elite but was militarily defeated.

Section D-III Power Transitions resulting from Economic Transformation

In some cases a process of economic transformation gives rise to new economically powerful groups. Relative economic deprivation of specific sub-groups of the elite sometimes seems to have provoked violent opposition towards specific governments. During the Somoza period the newly emerging economic elite, springing from the agricultural diversification in the 1960s (cotton, sugar cane and cattle raising) were initially co-opted into the political system but subsequently marginalized to some extent. This infuriated members of this group and led to mobilization into the broad resistance movement against the Somoza clan (see Box 4.2 on the case of Nicaragua). The same elite group later joined the contra ranks when venues for capital accumulation were blocked by the Sandinista regime and participation in the newly established mixed economy model was refused to them.

47) Mohammad Waseem, chapter on Pakistan, in *South Asia: Regional Report*, Part II, p. 274.

*Box 4.2 The Role of New Economic Elite Groups during the Somoza Regime in Nicaragua*⁴⁸

Between 1950 and 1970, the period of the ascent of the Somoza dictatorship, the Nicaraguan economy, like the rest of the region's economies, was favoured by accelerated expansion. Certain activities were promoted during this period, such as the planting of cotton and sugar cane as well as cattle raising, which served to diversify an agrarian structure that had been based on the cultivation of coffee and bananas. Moreover, as of the post-war period, coffee and bananas found very favourable conditions, which in the case of coffee stimulated the expansion of cultivation areas. But what is important to underline are the consequences of economic modernization on the political system. The expansion of coffee cultivation, as well as the development of sugar cane, cattle raising and cotton, gave new social groups access to the benefits of economic development, and in effect these groups were incorporated into the social system with their respective quotas of economic power. In this way, a new economic elite was consolidated around cotton, sugar, beef and milk production, and added to the traditional sectors of the agrarian middle class. These structural changes of the rural economy were incorporated into the traditional system of pacts and arrangements that generated a certain base of artificial legitimacy for the Somoza regime.

This dynamic, although incorporating a broad sector of small and mid-size producers who generally cultivated on marginal lands, began to ensure an economic power structure in which the best lands and the greatest benefits remained in the hands of a reduced number of large landholders, augmenting the conditions of poverty in the countryside and providing an eventual mobilizing factor for the opposition. The appearance of new activities also opened sources of wealth accumulation for members of the Somoza dynasty. Under these new circumstances, the Somoza family put into practice mechanisms to appropriate goods and recover benefits through illegitimate and unfair procedures, aggravating existing tensions.

The clearest example of the ascent of an elite linked to the new agricultural and ranching activities was marked by the power of the cotton-producing sector, which established its own bank – the Bank of Nicaragua (BANIC) – and had its own supply system for agricultural inputs, which controlled the export system through three exporting businesses, and managed other diverse activities related to the industrialization of cotton and its derivatives. However, the results of the enormous economic effort did not produce an increase in the general well-being of the population's conditions through a more or less just distribution of the benefits.

48) Case study based on Abelardo Morales, chapter on Nicaragua, in *Central America: Regional Report*.

Profits ended up in the hands of small groups of large landholders, principally the Somoza family and its allies, excluding the new economic elite groups from a share of the profit. This exclusive appropriation of the benefits of economic growth limited Somoza's co-optation capacity, and his grip on the newly emerging economic elite groups diminished. This enabled the emergence of a broad-based opposition against the Somoza regime.

Until the early 1970s, the Nicaraguan economy did not show symptoms that threatened the dynamism demonstrated during the previous decade. There are therefore no indicators that create the suspicion that the resistance movements began inspired by the country's economic situation or the population's state of poverty. Although the country had begun to feel the impact of the variations in international oil and petroleum derivative prices, it was only at the end of 1972 that the local economy was strongly shaken by the material losses caused by the December 1972 earthquake, which triggered not only the political crisis and escalated armed conflict, as mentioned above, but also a growing economic crisis. The fact that the fragile economic structure was very vulnerable to external movements was revealed in its full magnitude in the 1970s. The vulnerability of the Nicaraguan economic system deepened even further as a result of the concentration of land ownership and national wealth, characteristic of the Somoza domination system. It had become evident that productive expansion, which originated in the expansion of foreign markets for cotton, coffee, bananas, sugar cane and manufactured goods, had run directly head on with the structural deficiency of wealth distribution, which in the stage of the dynasty's ascent was based on violent forms of land expropriation and the population's deprivation from the benefits of national production. The incorporation of important sectors of Nicaragua's business sector in the fight against the regime responded to the governing family's imposition of a series of mechanisms that excluded those groups that were considered disloyal to the regime from the distribution of wealth, which aggravated the conflict.

The impact of economic transformations potentially has powerful conflict-prone implications for the states concerned. Sometimes, however, states themselves play an important role with regard to economic transformation. The role of the state in Sri Lanka's economy was deliberately boosted and a centrally planned economy emerged during the post-colonial period in which the state bureaucracy played an important role. Sri Lanka, as a result of deliberate government policies, aimed at improving physical quality-of-life indicators to the detriment of economic growth. This in turn eventually provoked a slow rate of employment generation against the background of a fast-growing population. As was already demonstrated in the chapter on socio-economic factors, a so-called youth bulge materialized in Sri Lanka, creating a setting in which upward mobility was denied to many young people freshly emerging from the educational system and searching for an improvement in their situation (see the chapter on socio-economic factors, the section on regional economic dynamics, Box 3.5 about the JVP uprisings). Much of the

education was also of a type that generated rising expectations and intensified resentment when the expectations remained unfulfilled. Hence, the political mobilization of part of the disenfranchised youth by a militant political movement, the *Janatha Vimukhti Peramma* (JVP), was firmly rooted in this combination of slow economic growth and a lack of absorbing capacity of the labour market for highly skilled young professionals.⁴⁹ Government policies aiming at a general improvement of standards of living must take into account such important side effects, which turn out to be highly conflict-prone.

Concluding Remarks section D-III: Economic Power Transitions

It is tentatively concluded that economic transformation is a multifaceted process, which sometimes leads to the emergence of new economic elite groups. Such groups can either be co-opted into existing political patronage systems or be excluded. Such selective group exclusion can reinforce the conflict dynamic within states and politicize the behaviour of such new elites. By consequence, such groups can participate in violent opposition against exclusive elites, as the Somoza case demonstrates. In other cases, where state elites intervene in the national economy, the effects are mixed. Other concomitant developments can sometimes even put well-intended government policies in jeopardy.

Major Conclusions Chapter IV: Political Factors

The salience of political factors clearly emerges from the review of the various key factors analysed and reviewed in this section.

Institutional Capacity

To conclude, a limited interpretation of institutional capacity by any incumbent power elite as the mere capacity to maintain territorial unity by monopolizing violence does not automatically imply that there will be no violent internal disputes. In many cases the suppression of internal opposition, either by directly repressing independence movements, by imposing top-down political projects or by sheer military suppression trying to freeze the expression of any alternative political discourse, has at best forestalled violent conflicts. In most cases, such limited and coercive 'solutions' imposed by incumbent elite groups have strengthened the position of hardline factions within belligerent sub-state groups and contributed to the emergence of violent responses by

49) Gerry Peiris, *Insurrection and Youth Unrest in Sri Lanka*, paper presented at the International Workshop on Causes of Conflict, held at Hotel Tourmaline, Kandy, Sri Lanka, 3-5 March 1997.

armed factions. Only when states clearly failed to command sovereignty did a raw power struggle almost inevitably ensue between powerful contestants (as in Afghanistan).

Political projects trying to restructure the state or sometimes aiming at reinventing new national identities have failed to take root in the recipient societies, mainly as a result of the fact that such projects are conceived by small elite groups and imposed upon majorities without taking into account the powerful forces of existing primordial identities. Furthermore, most such political projects merely served as political window dressing, barely obscuring the underlying rationale of consolidating power at the hands of the various post-independence elite groups.

Federal arrangements in Nigeria and Pakistan turned out to be alternative strategies to centralize power in the hands of one specific group in local society. The federal government consequently became a puppet arrangement to cover up the predominance of a given power elite within a state. As a result of the failure of incumbent elites to apply a repressive and limited interpretation of institutional capacity, state legitimacy became jeopardized.

Power-Sharing

Power-sharing between constituent groups emerged to become an almost pivotal factor with regard to the conflict-proneness of political entities. Mostly, however, as exemplified by the Central American examples, a very narrow application of the principle of power-sharing was applied. In these societies, a strong coalition of landed elite and the top brass of the army repressed real reform and failed to extend power-sharing to include broader sections of the populace. These exclusionist alliances contributed to the unification of domestic opposition and led to various revolutionary conflicts, of which the Nicaraguan (FSLN), the El Salvador (FMLN) and Guatemala (URNG) cases and movements testify.

Honduras and Ghana have followed a trajectory in which repression and limited reform were combined in order to preclude the outbreak of violent opposition. Consecutive governments, both civil and military, eventually succeeded in avoiding the unification of internal dissent and the materialization of large-scale domestic violent conflict. Needless to say, such political projects remain highly controversial and could also represent mere examples of the successful freezing of prevailing political dominance by a few elite groups so as to stall the development of genuine power-sharing and internal political consensus. It moreover seems that distinct escape-valve options have accompanied such political projects: abundance of land in the case of Honduras and extensive migration in the case of Ghana.

Finally, inclusive forms of power-sharing do not automatically help societies to steer free of violent conflict. Majority populist political rhetoric combined with deteriorating minority rights (real or perceived) have proven to be devastating forces that easily tilt a relatively inclusive political system on the

road to violent confrontations between constituent groups, as the Sri Lankan and Indian cases amply demonstrate. Inclusiveness and prevailing power-sharing formulae must be regularly reviewed and updated or restructured to allow the continuity of a non-violent and more or less 'stable' political system. Such an inbuilt systemic property seems to be able to integrate effectively changing group positions and group ambitions and perspectives, as the Costa Rican example has hitherto successfully demonstrated. Systemic flexibility allowing a constant re-evaluation of relative group positions hence seems to be an important conflict-preventive mechanism.

Power Transitions

Systemic and gradual power transitions do not automatically lead to violent conflict but sometimes provide 'ideal' enabling environments for political mobilization by community leaders who seek to acquire power. Migration and demographic changes continue to be extremely conflict-prone, as such changes may well adversely affect the position of threatened indigenous groups, as has been amply demonstrated in the case of India's north-eastern states. Large-scale migration inevitably leads to changes in the political power balance and therefore easily results in violent stand-offs between threatened indigenous groups and newcomers. However, important intervening variables, such as the prevailing policies of central states as well as the degree to which newcomers are willing to integrate, have important consequences for the outcome of this process. In Pakistan, on the other hand, a unique situation materialized after the Partition, because minority immigrant elite groups initially monopolized political and economic power, but saw their paramount position gradually threatened. The subsequent power transition headed by the demographically dominant Punjabis signalled a return to 'normal', that is majority, rule.

Nevertheless, mass migration of distinct ethno-linguistic groups other than those residing in the host area creates political tensions that can quickly degrade into open hostilities and violent conflict. Obviously, external agents can steer such movements, either by issuing provisions that contain such population movements, or by contrast stimulating the displacement of such groups, and hence they are partly responsible for the ensuing political problems. It becomes clear that using migration as a political instrument to contain a specific sub-state local power elite group can be interpreted as an alternative instrument of state coercion. However, such policies inevitably encounter fierce resistance and may well provoke violent confrontation between the elite groups involved.

Power transitions can also evolve from changes in the economy. From the Nicaraguan case it can be concluded that such emerging economic power elites can also successfully stage power transitions. In this particular case the newcomers aligned with a nationwide opposition front to wrestle power from the Somozas. It seems, however, that these new elite groups 'used' the Sandinista liberation movement as a 'vehicle' to realize their political objective.

The fact that most of this economic elite group eventually dissociated itself from the Sandinistas to join the ranks of the contra movement seems to support this observation. The ousting of the Sandinistas through the ballots provided a new opportunity for this power elite to stage a political comeback under the government of Violetta Chomorra. Hence, tentatively, it seems that 'economic' power elites stage power transitions in an indirect manner.

Political factors seem to be highly relevant factors for determining causal relations between political dynamics and state characteristics and the outbreak and sustenance of violent conflict. In fact, denial of group rights to promote group interests in the national political arena has certainly spawned extremist political discourse and group mobilization. Violent repression and the application of 'divide and rule' policies have fragmented internal opposition but also strengthened hardline options. Limited power-sharing has also enabled the unification of internal dissidents, leading to the proliferation of broad coalitions of opposition forces and violent countermovements, as venues for genuine reform were clearly lacking. In only a few instances was conflict contained, at least for a substantial period of time, by the shrewd manipulation of dissident movements applying mixed forms of repression and reform. Inclusive power-sharing formulae have mostly allowed the articulation of peaceful interests and effective power-sharing.

Nevertheless, such states remain vulnerable to systemic change and evolving group interests and perceptions, and must remain flexible to adapt adequately and promptly. Finally, systemic power transitions are inherent as a result of population growth, decline or migration and need to be handled with great care. Again, states need to react promptly to important economic, social and political changes, as exclusion of specific sub-groups inevitably provides fruitful grounds for group mobilization into collective violence. As politics and political participation are the necessary prerequisites for the articulation of group interests in society, withholding even nominal venues for the expression of such interests, or repressing such groups outright, puts political elite groups on a collision course with marginalized sections of society.

V External Factors

Section A Regional Security Settings

It is often assumed that the existence of unstable security settings has had a detrimental impact on the internal security situation of countries located in such settings. In this section the assumption will be tested that if a regional security setting becomes unstable, conflict is more likely to break out and vice versa. Again, the premise underlying this research hypothesis is based on the idea that either some undefined diffusion effects materialize from adjoining regional unstable areas or as a result of deliberate actions by neighbouring states, as was the case in the first section analysing the role of individual neighbouring states. Here, the focus lies more broadly on a regional perspective. Conflict would result in this case from the cumulative impact of instability in more than one adjoining country simultaneously, or stemming from a series of conflicts succeeding each other in various countries within one region.

Section A-I Brief Overview of Regional Security Settings

South Asia

India is the regional superpower in the South Asian region and its foreign policy objectives and strategies to a large extent determine the outcome of border issues and regional conflicts. The geostrategic threat to its hegemony comes from China and not from Pakistan. Pakistan has been artificially propped up as a power contender to India by mainly the United States. In the aftermath of the Afghanistan imbroglio, external political interference has diminished greatly, to the detriment of Pakistan. India has intervened directly in the affairs of Sri Lanka and covertly in the CHT issue in Bangladesh, but in neither case was it successful. Nevertheless, the autonomy of smaller countries in the sub-region is determined by Delhi and future developments in their relationship will have to take the interests of the large neighbour into account. Pakistan faces internal and external turmoil as it is confronted with the fallout of both the Kashmir and the Afghanistan conflicts. Afghanistan therefore provides the key to regional stability. Any solution to this vital issue needs to take into account the contending interests of half a dozen regional powers. Finally, the controversy between India and Pakistan persists and there has been no sign that the Kashmir conflict could be resolved peacefully. The protracted character of most of the conflict issues in the region has given impetus to new, and deviant, security concerns for the states involved. Both India and Pakistan have become nuclear powers and there is a global awareness that both countries need to start thinking about security guarantees other than nuclear threats. New actors within existing states, such as leaders of Muslim fundamentalist groups in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Kashmir as well as elite groups from secessionist ethno-linguistic movements in the north-eastern states of India and in northern Sri Lanka, have developed strategic interests to continue the violent confrontations in a power bid to acquire formal status as independent states. These conflicts mostly feed on existing socio-economic and political grievances and are financed largely through a number of illicit activities, ranging from hard drugs to weapons. The regional security setting has hence become more unstable, because the number of intrastate security issues is on the increase.

Central America

In general the history of the sub-region consists of an almost continuous range of highly volatile political events until the late 1980s, when de-escalation set in. The regional security setting can therefore be characterized as one of continuing tension within the overall context of superpower rivalry. In fact, this sub-region faced a prolonged history of political turmoil. However, specific moments in time deserve focused attention, such as the counter-revolution in Guatemala (1954), the Cuban revolution (1959), the Cuban missile crises

(1962), the invasion of the Dominican Republic (1965), the Soccer War between Honduras and El Salvador and the overthrow of the Somoza regime (1979). Throughout the contemporary conflict history, the United States continued to intervene in this strategically important area, confronting what in its view were a series of communist and anti-US revolts. As a result of the overthrow of the Arbenz government in Guatemala in 1954, many reform-oriented politicians and their supporters were marginalized politically, resulting in widespread indignation about US involvement in the *coup*. The Cuban revolution inspired many armed revolutionary movements in surrounding countries, notably in Nicaragua and Guatemala, and resulted in an upsurge of armed confrontations. The Cuban missile crisis reinforced the predominance of the US and its exclusive hold on the region, reconfirmed by the invasion in the Dominican Republic. The short-lived interstate war between Honduras and El Salvador in 1969 halted the regional economic integration process and highlighted the importance of the ongoing interstate rivalry regarding unresolved border issues. Finally, the overthrow of the Somoza regime and the arrival of a communist Sandinista regime led to direct confrontation between the US-backed contra forces and the incumbent regime. Within El Salvador and Guatemala, tensions simultaneously escalated into civil war and the regional security setting was adversely affected.

A regional peace initiative emerged in 1985, the so-called Contadora Initiative, in order to counterbalance US diplomatic hegemony. The initiative focused on the Nicaraguan crises and tried to promote regime legitimacy of the Sandinista regime. Although its efforts initially failed, the initiative reinforced the self-confidence of adjoining states and altered the region's political landscape. Finally, the Arias initiative led to the Esquipulas-II Peace Agreement (1987) and paved the way for gradual improvement of the regional security setting. Meanwhile, the international political arena showed a decline of superpower rivalry, providing the diplomatic space to reach a peace agreement on the Sandinista-contra war in Nicaragua.

West Africa

In the early years following independence, the regional security setting in West Africa was quite stable and peaceful. The Sawaba rebellion facing the Hamani Diori regime in Niger was successfully contained and the short-lived border dispute¹ between Dahomey and Niger about the delimitation of the Niger River did not lead to violent conflict between the protagonists. In the wider regional context, no violent political conflicts can be identified for the period. As a

1) A stand-off materialized around the so-called Île d'Été, an island in the Niger River. In fact, the continuing socio-economic predominance of Dahomey's intellectuals in the administration of the various ex-colonies triggered this geopolitical non-issue and resulted in the expulsion of thousands of resident Dahomey civil servants from Niger.

matter of fact, the Biafra civil war, one of the three conflict cases analysed in the West African sub-region, was the first large-scale violent internal conflict that materialized. The Biafra war represents the first case whereby a post-colonial state was challenged by the people inhabiting one of its constituent federal units in a bid for independence. The military defeat in 1970 can be interpreted as a political landmark demonstrating the will and ability of post-colonial governments in West Africa to counter the tide of secessionist aspirations. The external interference had important repercussions for the duration of this intrastate conflict. The United Kingdom and the Soviet Union backed the federal government and provided arms, whereas France and Portugal sided with Biafra. This stand-off between former colonial powers in the sub-region centred on the perceived predominance of Nigeria in the West African context: France deliberately sought to dismember this huge state; and the UK tried to preserve its unity at all costs. From this period onwards, the various power elites in the region tried to stabilize existing political units in the region in order to limit external meddling by former colonial powers. These external powers sought to exert influence through the existing vertical political and economic linkages.

Few cases of violent conflict erupted in the sub-region during the 1970s. External intervention by Portugal in 1971 can be characterized as colonial interference in an effort to maintain their possessions in Guinea Bissau and the Cape Verde archipelago. In 1974 a short-lived interstate war between Mali and Burkina Faso erupted over boundary disputes. These conflicts, however, did not impact upon the region in the way that the Biafra war did. The following decade witnessed the beginning of a number of protracted intrastate conflicts throughout the region. In the early 1980s a second major drought hit the region and stretched the capacity of local populations to face the ensuing hardship. Simultaneously some countries collapsed economically leading to massive out-migration as a coping mechanism. Ghana and Guinea-Conakry were notably severely affected. In 1982 the Casamance conflict in Senegal was openly articulated following some violent incidents in the regional capital Ziguinchor. Later, in 1985, the border dispute between Mali and Burkina Faso re-emerged, followed by the 1989 boundary disagreement between Senegal and Mauritania, leading to the persecution and slaughter of migrant communities living in the respective countries. 1989 also witnessed the beginning of the civil war in Liberia by a rebel force led by Charles Taylor. The power struggle lasted until 1997, when Taylor was elected as President. Taylor also played an important role in the rebellion that started in adjoining Sierra Leone in 1991. The invasion by a small rebel force heralded a new phase in the region's conflict history: the power struggle between the United Revolutionary Front and the incumbent government of Sierra Leone destabilized the wider so-called Mano River region, comprising Guinea-Conakry, Sierra Leone and Liberia.

Section A-II Some Examples of Unstable Security Settings and Intrastate Stability

An Unstable Neighbourhood: The Case of Niger

Political instability in neighbouring countries surrounding the Sahelian state of Niger has fostered instability and led to a series of conflicts. After the great drought in 1973-1974, many nomads were forced into exile, notably to Algeria and Libya. **Libya** had become a regional security liability when President Gaddafi openly claimed mineral-rich parts of Niger and Chad. Gaddafi managed to acquire some support in Niger by bribing some politicians. In turn, this motivated a military *coup* in Niger, which downplayed Libyan territorial claims and diplomatic ties were subsequently severed. Prior to this crisis, Niger forcibly sided with the federal government of **Nigeria** during the Biafra crises, as the majority of its citizens are Hausa who maintain strong cultural and economic ties with their siblings across the border in northern Nigeria. Furthermore, landlocked Niger depended very strongly on the Nigerian economy for import and export. The military rule in Niger came to an end in 1991, when a National Conference was held. The Tamajaq rebellion broke out as a consequence of the failure to take the genuine grievances of this semi-nomadic group into account and was triggered by the unfulfilled promises and humiliations in the aftermath of their forced repatriation from neighbouring Algeria and Libya. The changing fortunes of the various warlords in **Chad** and the discovery of oil reserves in the Lake Chad area led the Toubou community into rebellion against the state of Niger in 1995. The Toubou had siblings across the border in Chad and weapons flowed freely in the border areas. The decision of some of the Toubou sub-tribes, moreover, to revolt against the central state was partly motivated by the ongoing guerrilla war between the Tamajaq and the state security forces. The Toubou witnessed the impotency of the national army and calculated their chances at military success.

Nevertheless, despite these conflicts in neighbouring states there seems to be less direct interaction between developments in the regional security setting and internal conflicts in the case of Niger. The weakness of Niger's national army, the vastness of the sparsely inhabited countryside and the virtual non-existence of borders in the region between the desert and the semi-arid zones resulted in a prolonged deadlock between the protagonist forces. These conflicts eventually petered out and peaceful agreements were brokered through the mediation of neighbouring states, notably Algeria and Burkina Faso.

The Regional Security Setting and Afghanistan

Afghanistan's resistance movement against the Soviets was highly diversified and could not agree on a power-sharing arrangement to satisfy all of the parties involved. The various factions were split according not only to territorial origin

but also with regard to ethnic background. Afghanistan virtually split up into a number of ethnic regions, especially when the Taliban emerged as the leading Pashtun movement after years of internal strife among tribal leaders. During the Soviet occupation, a pattern had emerged in which each group was supported by kin groups residing in neighbouring countries. As a consequence, the major protagonists had direct connections with regional powers, turning the conflict into a veritable geopolitical battleground. The Hazara Shi'ite group received support from Iran; the Pashtuns were backed by Pakistan; and finally the Uzbeks and Tajiks were supported by the newly emerging Central Asian republics.

Controversy between various strongmen and ethnic militias continues to have a destabilizing effect on the entire region. The ongoing failure to restructure the Afghan state has resulted in the creation of an 'anarchic opportunity space', in which a so-called war economy has flourished allowing for the trafficking of drugs and small arms, as well as the training and harbouring of terrorist groups. This in turn strongly impacts upon other regional conflicts such as the Kashmir conflict.

Conclusions section A: Regional Security Settings

A review of the various regional security settings demonstrates the importance of the strategic interests of outside actors and regional players. Furthermore, when regions become unstable, individual states are confronted with serious threats to internal security. The regional conflict in West Africa, the Afghanistan imbroglio and the case of Central America demonstrate the salience of this finding. Nevertheless, a direct linkage between unstable regional security settings and conflict has not been found. The intervention of Charles Taylor in Sierra Leone is the only case where deliberate intervention can be substantiated. The ensuing security settings seems to have backfired on Taylor, as Liberia presently faces internal rebellion whereas Sierra Leone has returned to normalcy. However, regional stability resulting from regional peace initiatives such as the Contadora Initiative and the Esquipulas Peace Agreements most likely have a conflict-containing effect. Regional security settings can therefore also be ranked as an aggravating or de-escalating factor, depending whether a region is stable or not.

Regional security settings are notoriously unstable. All of the regions presently experience developments that may lead to a deteriorating security setting. In Central America, as a result of the strategic location (Central America forming a natural corridor from South to North America) and the incomplete application of post-conflict provisions (demobilization, creation of jobs and distribution of lands to the demobilized rebels and soldiers), the illicit trade of weapons and drugs has become a major security issue. The US policy against drugs in Central America and beyond ('Plan Colombia') has boosted the resurgence of military projects and promoted the position of military

establishments. This puts pressure on the fragile peace reigning in the Central American region.

The three South Asian countries of Iran, Pakistan and Afghanistan are located around the meeting point of the Middle East, South Asia and Central Asia. Various important strategic issues have converged superpower interests on this region – the illicit trade in drugs and weapons, and oil findings in the Central Asian countries – and this area will hence remain conflict-prone in the foreseeable future² as a result of the wider power dynamics involved between Russia, China and the US.

Finally, in West Africa, instability prevails in the Mano River area because the current regimes in Guinea-Conakry and Liberia continue to compete for regional power and economic gains. The weak capacity of regional institutions, such as ECOWAS, to impose stability effectively compromises the future of the region.

Section B External Political And Military Interventions

External meddling by states in the affairs of other states has often been regarded as an important factor initiating conflict in targeted states or possibly leads to a prolongation of conflict. Such effects are mostly depicted as some sort of amorphous process of contamination and are viewed as contagion effects.³ This, however, does not do justice to the deliberate activities of external agents that may well have a pertinent interest in provoking conflict in a specific country, with the aim of destabilizing the incumbent regime and possibly leading to the takeover by a ‘friendly’ regime. So-called ‘proxy wars’ are sometimes fought between rival superpowers in third countries, often provoking large-scale destruction and internal destabilization. The fact that external meddling may be the outcome of a deliberate move by protagonist political elites or by third countries has led to the formulation of the following research hypothesis: if external military assistance and interference (such as arms deliveries and armed interventions) increases, conflict will be more likely to break out and vice versa.

This section first analyses some ‘proxy wars’, followed by a review of interventions by neighbouring countries.

Section B-I Superpower External Interventions

Only two major internal wars in our research sample can be safely designated as ‘proxy’ wars between the contesting superpowers: the contra war between the

2) Mohammad Waseem, in chapter on Pakistan, *South Asia: Regional Report*, Part II, p. 320.

3) Michael E. Brown (ed.), *The International Dimension of Internal Conflict* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1996), p. 25.

US-backed opposition and the Sandinista government of Nicaragua; and the Soviet-controlled Afghanistan puppet regime versus the US-supported mujahidin movement. In both cases, violent conflict – that is, the outbreak of a violent confrontation between different factions within a state – seems to be related directly to these external political and military interventions. In these specific cases, internal war seemed the ‘logical’ and ‘inevitable’ outcome of such interventions. Nevertheless, prior to external meddling, resistance had already gained momentum against what were essentially rather extremist political projects.

The Afghanistan Imbrolio

The Afghanistan conflict can be viewed as the last and most important proxy war in Asia, fought between the superpowers in the framework of the Cold War. Afghanistan remains the foremost important security issue for the entire region. From the early days of British incursion in the subcontinent, the Pashtun-dominated kingdom has been a battleground for the Tsarist Empire and the British Empire. It took the British quite a long period and two wars before they subdued the Pashtuns and imposed upon them a treaty that relegated foreign affairs to the British. In fact Afghanistan became a buffer state to protect the Raj against Russian aggression. Afghanistan remained a weak state internally with underdeveloped state institutions. The state was ruled by a King, relying on a coalition of traditional tribal and religious leaders. In turn, the people were mainly socialized into their tribal background, and territorial and tribal affiliations were the only bases for legitimacy of political power (see also Chapter IV on political factors, Box 1 on the Afghanistan case).

When Sardar Daoud ousted the monarchy in 1973 he contested the legitimacy of the so-called ‘Durand Line’, which had been imposed upon Afghanistan by the English in the eighteenth century. This, however, strained relations with the Pahlavi dynasty in Iran and the leader of Pakistan, Ali Bhutto. Iran expelled over one million Afghans and Pakistan launched a modernization programme in the North-West Frontier Province to counter the overthrow of the monarchy. Although this prompted a more modest stance by Daoud’s regime, the contours of future conflict were already visible. Daoud was killed in a violent *coup d’état* that took place in 1978. A radical Marxist faction, the *Khalq* movement, took power. In 1979 the Soviets feared destabilization of this emerging Marxist regime and decided to invade, as US interests had suffered a major setback through the ousting of Shah Pahlavi from Iran.

The Soviet occupation escalated into all-out war between the Soviet-backed Marxist regime and the opposition forces backed by Pakistan and the US. This broad mujahidin movement eventually succeeded in defeating the Soviets, leading to their withdrawal in 1989. During the Soviet occupation the United States heavily supported the Pakistan-based resistance groups. The US provided substantial military and economic aid to Pakistan in an effort to

contain Soviet Afghan forces from gaining additional territorial profits inside Pakistan. In only one decade – from 1979 to 1989 – the US and Saudi Arabia supplied an estimated US\$ 5 billion in military assistance to the mujahidin resistance.⁴ Here, the proxy war resulted in boosting an Islamic movement directed at the ousting of Soviet forces from Afghanistan.

However, when the Soviets were defeated and left Afghanistan, the interest of both the US and the Soviet Union sharply declined, leaving a power vacuum that gave regional powers an opportunity to meddle in the affairs of this collapsed state. The conflict within Afghanistan has not been solved. The stalemate between the Taliban and the northern coalition lingered on until the events of September 2001, after which the US supported the Northern Alliance, which led to the fall of the Taliban. Nevertheless, the removal of the Taliban has not resulted in the formation of a stable national government.

The Sandinista-Contra War in Nicaragua

The contra war was largely initiated, organized and launched from Honduran soil, financed and coordinated by the United States. As can be inferred from the contemporary history of the region, the US stepped up military aid to the contra movement when Reagan became President in 1980. Support for the contra movement gradually gained momentum when evidence of arms smuggling from the Sandinistas to their Salvadorean counterpart, the FMLN, emerged. As a result, by 1986 some 40,000 contras were based in camps along the southern borders of Honduras.⁵ Military aid peaked at roughly US\$ 70 million in 1985.⁶ The contra war seriously disrupted the Central American region and countless raids and counter-attacks resulted in the disruption of the regional economy.

The Honduran military normally collaborated directly with the US, to the extent that under the Azcona government they asked for military aid under the pretext that Nicaragua had invaded Honduras. US military aid was sent to the Honduran forces, which in turn delivered it to the contras. This led to direct confrontations between Nicaraguan and Honduran forces in the border areas, and as a result the Honduran army greatly increased its presence. Internal opposition against the presence of a foreign army inside Honduran territory gradually increased, as these forces feared a negative fallout for Honduras: if the Sandinistas eventually won the war, they might impose sanctions on

4) Rasul Bakhsh Rais, chapter on Afghanistan, in *South Asia: Regional Report*, Part II (Kandy (Sri Lanka): International Centre for Ethnic Studies; and The Hague: Netherlands Institute of International Relations 'Clingendael', 1998), p. 479.

5) Chapter on Honduras, in *Central America: Regional Report* (San José (Costa Rica): Arias Foundation; and The Hague: Netherlands Institute of International Relations 'Clingendael', 1998), p. 288.

6) Chapter on Honduras, in *Central America: Regional Report*, p. 292, Table 10.

Honduras as a consequence of having supported the contra movement. The war resulted in a military stalemate on the battlefield and seemingly endless skirmishes between small units of both armies. US support to Honduras therefore continued to fuel the conflict because most aid was provided indirectly to the contras. The Sandinistas simultaneously received sizeable military aid from Cuba and indirectly from the Soviet Union. The so-called contra war can be labelled a low-intensity conflict in view of the interminable but low-profile military encounters. Nevertheless, the burden of this counter-insurgency war stretched the capacities of the Sandinistas to the point of virtual economic and regime collapse. In the case of the contra war, military aid therefore mainly served to contain the emergence of socialist and communist regimes, thus as an additional political weapon against the Sandinista regime. However, from a regional perspective this aid resulted in aggravating and prolonging the conflicts in the region, creating as it were an enabling environment for the armed opposition against the revolutionary regime in Nicaragua.

Niger

Proxy conflicts in West Africa between the major powers – the US and the Soviet Union – did not materialize, but smaller powers, notably the predominant ex-colonial power France, intervened in some conflicts in the region. France has been and remains by far the most influential external power in the West African region. France has, time and again, interfered with the internal politics of most of its client francophone states.

The conflict in Niger between the Touaregs and the state must be viewed against the background of French geopolitical interests in the sub-Saharan areas. At Niger's independence, France had tried to establish the OCSR (*Organisation Commune des Régions Sahariennes*) in order to keep possession of important mineral resources in the central Sahara desert.⁷ In the process it stirred up Touareg territorial claims, which laid the foundations for future disputes about independence. This belated effort to consolidate colonial interests was abandoned in 1964, but underscores the strategic importance of this region as a resource provider for France. In the 1980s Libya tried to acquire additional territories in the resource-rich mountain areas of the Sahara, such as the Aouzou strip in Chad and the Bilma oasis in Niger. This political agenda was countered by the French who had vested interests in those areas. Thus military aid, such as training facilities and intelligence services, was generously provided by the French in order to boost the performance of Niger's and Chad's armies. When the Libyan forces occupied part of the Aouzou strip

7) Hamidou Arouna Sidikou, in *West Africa: Regional Report* (Port Harcourt (Nigeria): Centre for Advanced Social Science; and The Hague: Netherlands Institute of International Relations 'Clingendael', 1998), pp. 81-83.

in the 1980s, they were successfully repulsed after a surprise attack by the army of Chad, and Colonel Gaddafi's territorial ambitions were consequently thwarted.

Conclusions section B-I: Superpower interventions

The review of the limited number of 'proxy' wars demonstrates that superpower interests strongly impacted on domestic conflicts once belligerents were able to draw on outside support to boost their military and political performance. Direct causal linkages between violent conflict and external interventions by third parties cannot be ascertained. The emergence of the contras and the mujahidin took place prior to the external interventions. In Afghanistan the mujahidin were initially ill equipped and faced staunch Soviet repression. The substantial external support given to both factions created a kind of balance of power on a higher level and therefore arguably served as an aggravating factor in the military stand-off between the protagonist factions. Meanwhile, without US support the contras would have been a rather weak and divided force unable to wage an exhaustive and long campaign against the incumbent Sandinista regime.

Such conflicts are most likely prolonged by the generous distribution of military and political support by external actors. Conflicts in which intensive external meddling materializes seem to last longer. The negative fallout of such conflicts, in terms of war victims and war-related costs to society at large, is likely to be higher. External military interventions hence mostly seem to serve as 'aggravating' factors. Clearly, however, it has been impossible so far to provide hard evidence and statistical facts supporting the 'prolongation' effect. From the Afghanistan case we learn that even after external meddling had subsided, internal rivalries resurfaced and violent conflict continued almost unabated. Nevertheless, it is reasonable to assume that the level of destruction would have been less devastating had not external actors provided all types of sophisticated weaponry to parties, which had been involved for a long time in internecine fighting about control over the Afghan state with less destructive weapons.

To conclude, it seems important to look at the long-term strategic interests of important regional and global powers with regard to the conflict-proneness of a specific region or individual countries.

Section B-II Political and military interventions by Neighbouring Countries

It has become apparent that in a large number of cases external interventions result from interventions by neighbouring states. A number of these cases were therefore examined in order to draw some conclusions regarding the role played by such outside military and political interventions.

The Kashmir Issue

In South Asia the Kashmir issue is much more than a simple border dispute between two independent states. Kashmir can safely be designated as a protracted conflict related to the political self-image of India and Pakistan. The heart of the matter lies in the manner in which this princely state was attributed to India. The fact that a Hindu ruler relegated sovereignty to India violated one of the Partition's principles. The Muslim rulers of Hyderabad had given in to popular demands by the Hindu majority to remain within the Indian polity. In stark contrast to this the Muslim majority of Jammu-Kashmir were refused the option of siding with newly independent Pakistan. This led to the first military confrontation between India and Pakistan in 1947, during which roughly one-third of the territory came under Pakistani control. Since then two further major wars have been waged between Pakistan and India, respectively in 1965 and in 1971. The 1965 war did not alter the status quo and in 1971 Pakistan was split into West and East Pakistan, the latter emerging successfully as independent Bangladesh, with crucial backing from India.

After the Simla Accord of 1972 the Kashmir issue was 'frozen' for one decade to the advantage of India mainly. Gradually, however, Muslim nationalists reignited the violent conflict through a series of guerrilla attacks on military and civilian targets in Kashmir itself. The international proliferation of Muslim extremism has given impetus to radical Kashmiri independence movements, which seek to liberate Kashmir both from Indian and Pakistani influences. Whereas India continued to downplay the issue as a purely domestic affair, diaspora Kashmir groups succeeded in internationalizing the issue. Moreover, notably for Pakistan, Kashmir again became a useful rallying cry to divert attention away from failures in domestic social and economic policies.⁸ The issue has recently become more intractable than ever, with three parties contending for ultimate political control of Kashmir. The issue of Kashmir for India is directly related to the secular nature of the Indian state: there are more states within the Indian union with specific ethno-linguistic or religious majorities, and Kashmir and secession from the union would provide a dangerous precedent for other such states. The question of Kashmir for Pakistan is perceived as an example of unjust application of the rules that guided the Partition. Finally, for the Kashmir nationalists the crucial issue has become independence from both protagonists. As a consequence of the ongoing conflict both Pakistan and India have invested heavily in the maintenance of important military forces on either side of the 'Line of Control'. This has resulted in a military stand-off fuelling an unprecedented arms race inside the region, largely to the detriment of alternative government spending. The conflict has become the foremost security issue in the entire sub-region, not in the least because both states have acquired the status of nuclear powers.

8) Kingsley de Silva, in *South Asia: Regional Report*, Part I, pp. 144-146.

The history of the three wars between India and Pakistan clearly demonstrates the willingness and ferocity with which both contenders interfere in each other's domestic affairs. The unresolved issues dating back to the Partition continue to fuel animosity between the belligerents. External military interventions from both sides seem to have become the ultimate policy response in order to safeguard national interests in the case of Kashmir.

The Chittagong Hill Tracts in Bangladesh

The international consequences of the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) conflict and some of the insurgency conflicts in north-eastern India overlap to a certain extent. In the aftermath of Partition, these conflicts emerged as a result of the arbitrary manner in which tribal areas had been attributed to either India or Pakistan. A British border commission had drawn up the international borders between India and Pakistan based on rather superficial knowledge about the characteristics of the mountainous border areas.⁹ The religious and linguistic characteristics of the tribal people inhabiting these areas did not coincide with cultural traits of the majority of the people from these emerging independent states. Despite repetitive requests to the political leaders of India and Pakistan – notably to Nehru – these Tripura, Naga, Mizoram and Bodoland ethnic groups vainly requested independence or a substantial degree of autonomy. In the aftermath of the rather arbitrary political inclusion of these peripheral areas into either India or Pakistan, resistance gathered momentum, ultimately leading to armed resistance against the perceived occupant's military forces. In the CHT area the issue was even more confusing when Bangladesh seceded from Pakistan. In the CHT the indigenous inhabitants opted for Indian citizenship, but their movement was easily crushed by the Bangladeshi armed forces. Moreover, despite the alleged affinity with India, in the aftermath of the independence war the CHT tribal community was harassed by a joint Indian-Bangladeshi military force as a punitive exercise because part of it had collaborated with the Pakistani army during the struggle for independence. The Indians intervened to search and destroy insurgency groups that operated from secret bases in the CHT area. The Indian army had a vested interest in pacifying all the distinct ethno-linguistic communities in the entire eastern border region, including the CHT area. By pacifying the CHT area, support to the adjoining rebellious tribal communities in north-east India would be destroyed.

The geopolitical location of these states on the crossroads between China, Laos, Burma, Bangladesh and India has made these tribal insurgencies a major security issue for India. The location of these areas on international borders has made India very suspicious, even regarding modest requests for cultural autonomy.

9) The Radcliffe Commission awarded the CHT to Pakistan in 1947.

Moreover, the struggle for autonomy and independence has important internal roots. The issue of migration of the overcrowded plains of Bengal into the relatively underpopulated hills and valleys of the CHT and adjoining areas have pitted local tribal communities firmly against the intruding ethnic groups. Their survival as distinct ethno-linguistic communities depends on the outcome of the ongoing political and military struggle. As has already been reiterated in the chapter on political factors, these movements have so far been unable to attain autonomy as they are relatively weak and insignificant compared to the forces of the state in which they reside. In the case of the CHT area, India clearly stood to gain from external meddling, as it used the CHT issue as political 'change' to put pressure on the Bangladeshi government to accept bilateral settlements regarding other issues.¹⁰ Thus the repeated request for a more equitable share of the Ganges/Brahmaputra rivers was repeatedly dismissed by consecutive Indian governments, enabling India to realize an ambitious dam scheme in order to tap off enormous amounts of water for its own agricultural use and to produce electricity. The credits for having helped Bangladesh to gain independence, it seems, were partly translated in such advantageous trade-offs for India.

The Sinhala-Tamil Conflict

The Indian-Tamil Nadu-Sri Lankan relationship is unique in international relations, because a single Indian federal state unit, Tamil Nadu, has a strong impact on the relationship between India and Sri Lanka.

India initially condoned active support by the state of Tamil Nadu in south India to their kinfolk in Sri Lanka. This was the result of the complex internal political relationship between the Congress Party and Tamil Nadu. The Tamil Nadu nationalist movement, the *Dravida Munetra Kazhagam* (DMK), was co-opted into the federal political system in exchange for local political autonomy, and the DMK provided electoral support to the dominant Congress Party. Later the DMK radicalized, arousing fear among the Congress Party elite that the Tamils from Sri Lanka would eventually export their violent secessionist movement to their kinfolk in Tamil Nadu. A phase of covert support to the Tamil Tigers by the DMK eventually motivated India to step up its involvement in the Sri Lankan conflict.

The Indian involvement resulted in direct military meddling in the conflict through the expedition of the so-called Indian Peacekeeping Forces to Sri Lanka (IPKF). This military force was mandated to intervene on the basis of a highly contested agreement between the governments of Sri Lanka and India, the so-called Indian-Sri Lanka Peace Agreement of 1987. Internally, many Sinhalese citizens resented this agreement, which was viewed as a humiliation

10) The Faraka Dam issue regarding the Brahmaputra water has been resolved to the advantage of India.

for Sri Lanka, and consequently many radical Sinhalese joined a radical domestic movement, the JVP, that mobilized much support on nationalist rhetoric aimed at ousting the Indian forces from Sri Lanka.

The Indian military intervention with the IPKF was intended to boost the mediating role of India in the conflict between the Tamils and the Sinhalese, but relations between the Indian army and the Sri Lankan Tamil community quickly deteriorated into open warfare between the two parties. India therefore became an active participant in the civil war between Tamils and Sinhalese. The Indian involvement ended in the middle of 1990 when the IPKF was withdrawn.

However, active Indian involvement was motivated by the wish to control latent secessionist tendencies within the state of Tamil Nadu. According to some observers, India intervened on behalf of the Tamil ethnic group to enforce a change of policy upon the Sri Lankan government of the day.¹¹ With hindsight it seems as if India wanted to demonstrate its capacity to react adequately to challenges to its sovereignty and to impose its status of regional superpower. India did not want to lose face and also withdrew after a long period of seemingly endless skirmishes and strategic deadlock. When the intervention in Sri Lanka proved a failure, India simply disappeared from the north of Sri Lanka, leaving a power vacuum that was filled by the Tamil Tiger forces. The external interference was a case of regional power versus small power, whereby the regional superpower India was able to manipulate existing linguistic, cultural and religious ties with groups residing in neighbouring states to its own strategic advantage.¹² Indian involvement exacerbated the conflict and led to the internationalization of ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka, undermining governmental credibility and almost leading to state collapse through the second JVP uprisings (see Chapter III on socio-economic factors, Box 3.5, on the JVP uprisings; and Chapter IV on political factors, the section on power transitions). The intervention furthermore prolonged the conflict, adding an external dimension to a domestic conflict.

The Casamance-Guinea Bissau Border Area

If one takes a closer look at interstate relations in West Africa, Senegal has benefited from a stable security setting for the longest. Only from 1982, when the *Mouvement des Forces Démocratiques de la Casamance* (MFDC)-led insurgency took shape in its southernmost region did the security setting become an important concern for the central government. The dismantling of the ill-fated Sene-Gambian federation, tensions with Mauritania over agricultural lands in the Senegal river basin and the short border war with

11) Kingsley de Silva, in the country chapter on Sri Lanka, in *South Asia: Regional Report*, Part II, p. 429.

12) Kingsley de Silva, 'Historical Overview', *South Asia: Regional Report*, Part I, p. 35.

neighbouring Guinea Bissau, which all materialized in 1989, suddenly changed the prevailing peaceful security setting (see also Chapter III on socio-economic factors, Box 3.2 on the Casamance case study).

The insurgency movement in the Casamance region at once took advantage militarily and launched an attack on border posts and administrative structures in this region. As can be deduced from the regional conflict history (see Chapter II on overview of conflicts), the conflicts with neighbouring countries were quickly solved and led in turn to isolation and military defeat of the MFDC, although not completely as a protracted guerrilla war lingered on. The relationship with Guinea Bissau was greatly improved in the early 1990s as Senegal was in a position to mediate entrance of this poor West African state into the CFA monetary union. Furthermore, Senegal granted a generous share of future off-shore oil revenues to Guinea Bissau, although Senegal had been granted full rights to these oil reserves by a ruling of the International Court based in The Hague. In return, the government of Guinea Bissau promised to end its tacit support to the insurgents. In 1999, however, a civil war erupted in Guinea Bissau between President Viera and a rebelling military commander-in-chief. The latter resented being used as a scapegoat for alleged arms and narcotics trafficking with the MFDC. The Senegalese quickly seized the initiative to try to destroy the rebel military camps in the border jungle area with Guinea Bissau under the pretext of coming to the support of a democratically elected government headed by President Viera. The Senegalese military intervention backfired, however, as most Guinean military rallied to the cause of their commander-in-chief. As a result, the Senegalese army had to withdraw and it was unable to destroy all the infrastructure of the Casamance resistance movement in northern Guinea Bissau.

The external security setting of the conflict in the southern Ziguinchor region and the northern region of Guinea Bissau have therefore proven to be important, as the capacity of the MFDC to sustain the armed struggle depends on its capacity to maintain external linkages based on illegal smuggling activities. MFDC support comes largely from kinfolk that straddle the borders between Senegal and Guinea Bissau, which explains why it is difficult to contain, let alone annihilate, the MFDC.

The cases of Central America

Much tension exists at the regional level among the various states because of the question of disputed border areas and illegal migratory movements. The Soccer War in 1969 was partly due to the unfinished business of defining international borders among the Central American states. Most of these issues stem from the unfinished business of the post-colonial state formation process. As a matter of fact, all of the countries in the region have border disputes among one another. Between Honduras and El Salvador these disputed land issues or so-called *bolsanes* played an important triggering role in the Soccer War. However, most analysts favour the migration issue as the proximate cause

of the war. It seems plausible that in the background structural push factors in El Salvador, such as the skewed distribution of land and lack of alternative employment opportunities, led to massive out-migration of poor landless peasants from El Salvador to Honduras. This tendency was reinforced by the extensive labour demands of the big banana companies in Honduras. When relative scarcity of land became problematic in Honduras, the migrant community that had cleared hitherto unclaimed lands quickly became a scapegoat for the Honduran elite. Vigilante groups violently ousted Salvadoreans, leading to tensions with El Salvador. Neighbouring states failed to undertake adequate action to diffuse the situation and war broke out. As a result the Central American Common Market, which had led to a promising regional division of labour and relative trade-off advantages between member states, stopped functioning, leading to economic stagnation and crises.

Conclusions section B-II: Interventions by Neighbouring States

The unfinished business of colonial boundaries mostly continues to plague relationships between neighbouring states. In all of the regions and among all of the countries such issues have at times played an important role in mounting political tensions and to various external interventions into neighbouring states (see the table on border disputes below).

Table: Historical Border Disputes in Three World Regions related to the Colonial History

<i>South Asia</i> India	Himalayan border conflict with China 1962	Three wars with Pakistan about Kashmir in 1947, 1965 and 1971
Bangladesh	Dispute with Burma about Arakan border area	See India Kashmiri conflicts
Pakistan	Recurrent dispute about the Durand Line issue with Afghanistan	
Afghanistan		
<i>West Africa</i> Nigeria	Border dispute with Cameroon	Territorial dispute with Libya about the Azoua strip Failed union with the Gambia 1989, a colonial 'aberration'
Niger	Demarcation of the Niger river with Benin	
Senegal	Demarcation of Senegal river with Mauritania in 1989	
Ghana	Conflict with Ewe ethnic groups straddling the border between Togo and Ghana in 1956	
<i>Central America</i> Honduras, El Salvador and Nicaragua	Disputes over the so-called <i>bolsanes</i> , pockets of disputed border lands between these countries	

Nevertheless, other factors – such as identity-related issues (Kashmir, CHT, and the Miskito Indian on the Atlantic coast in Nicaragua) – have also motivated external meddling among neighbouring states. Furthermore, ideology was sometimes an important issue that impacted strongly on adjacent countries, notably in the Central American region, where Honduras allowed the United States to use its territory to fight the Sandinistas in Nicaragua. The Indian meddling in the context of the Sri Lankan conflict needs to be viewed against the background of domestic political reasons, as an effort both to control and to soothe political dissent from the Tamils in Tamil Nadu state, a potentially dissident ethno-linguistic community. Moreover, in some cases, neighbours are used as convenient scapegoats by threatened political elite groups, as can be inferred from the case of the Soccer War.

From the analysis so far we tentatively infer that external interventions impact more strongly if a domestic security setting is already tense. In such cases these external activities therefore lead to a deterioration and may well trigger escalation to higher levels of violence and destruction.

It seems that interference by neighbours on behalf of specific groups involved in some of these conflicts resulted largely from the ideological make-up of the dominant political group. For example, it is widely assumed that right-wing governments were largely inclined to facilitate US interventions in other states. However, to what extent did the political elite of Honduras voluntarily support the American supply to the contra movement? The following section on economic external interventions will possibly provide better insights into this crucial question. The same applies to the other camp in the superpower stand-off: Sandinistas were automatically associated with support to other left-wing rebel movements in the region.

Section C External Economic Interventions

Section C-I Introduction

With regard to economic external aid and conflict, the focus must be on whether such aid is indeed instrumental to the outbreak of large-scale violent conflict or whether it has a conflict-containing influence. Such aid can generally work both ways. It may be used to suppress internal dissent and hence boost the capacities of incumbent elites to resist internal opposition, or it can be used to support opposition groups and boost violent resistance. In some countries engaged in internal conflicts, such aid may forestall regime breakdown and maintain its capacity to confront internal opposition (as did American aid to El Salvador); in others it may boost opposition towards the incumbent elite (as with aid to the contra movement fighting the Sandinista government in Nicaragua); and in other cases it seems that economic aid may altogether forestall the outbreak of violent conflict and promote regime stability (as with French aid to Senegal and US aid to Costa Rica).

This section analyses the impact of external economic interventions on the assumption that if there are external economic interventions (such as in the form of structural adjustment programmes or extensive bilateral support), conflict may break out more easily and vice versa. Economic interventions by multilateral organizations will be presented first, after which we will turn to the issue of bilateral economic interventions.

Section C-II Multilateral Economic Interventions

World Bank and IMF Interventions in South Asia

The policies of the World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) sought to back political forces that favoured their solutions to macroeconomic problems.¹³ During the 1980s in Sri Lanka, economic reform initiated by various governments set out to make government more efficient following the recommendations of the Sri Lanka Aid Group and conforming to external economic demands formulated by the IMF.

For India the external influence has remained fairly limited, as India has pursued a policy of mixed economy, in which the state has played a key role in distributing revenues and controlling market incentives. However, the wave of economic liberalization initiated by subsequent Indian governments in the 1990s has resulted in the gradual erosion of state power. This tendency could compromise the state's ability to mediate between various groups in society and to redistribute resources in order to avoid political mobilization based on socio-economic grievances. Furthermore, structural adjustment policies (SAPs) have a direct bearing on subsidies and pricing policies of the state. The latter tendency is likely to have a direct impact on the capacity to mitigate poverty.

Pakistan is a clear example of a country that is severely indebted. For various reasons successive central governments have favoured the utilization of foreign capital to supplement government income. The various economic elite groups in Pakistan have consistently been exempt from taxation and a general culture of tax evasion has materialized. The consequence has been a growing collective capital burden as a result of the accumulation of foreign debts. The share of foreign assistance grew to a staggering 58 per cent for the funding of the Third Five-Year Plan.¹⁴ A second burst of foreign assistance came in the wake of the Afghanistan crises, when the United States invested heavily in Pakistan. When the Soviets withdrew from Afghanistan, Pakistan was left to its own devices and had to engage in various agreements with the WB/IMF (1988, 1994 and 1997). The cumulative effects on devaluation, liberalization of imports and privatization of public assets limited the government's capacity to arrest the downward trend in macroeconomic performance. The quality of the

13) See Annexe V, Selected Economic Statistics.

14) Kingsley de Silva, 'Historical Overview', *South Asia: Regional Report*, Part I, p. 320.

state's performance with regard to socio-economic policies has also been seriously compromised.

External economic interference in Bangladesh is enormous, yet very few pointers in relation to conflict can be identified. The impact of the WB and IMF has resulted in state macroeconomic policy that is in line with the current trend of global liberalization. However, the external financial aid provided by a wide variety of external actors to Bangladesh seems to balance out. Whereas, for example, the liberalization of fertilizer prices has led to social unrest and spontaneous violence, poverty alleviation on the local level, implemented by a wide range of NGOs, has edged off the worst effects of such direct economic interference.¹⁵ In addition, traditional relations between rich and poor segments of society in Bangladesh may mitigate against the worst effects of macroeconomic external interventions, as landless peasants normally seek protection from landowners to ward off the negative effects of economic hardship caused by external influences.¹⁶ Nevertheless, external economic interference imposed by the WB and the IMF seems to impact negatively on the poor strata of society.

The impact of economic policies overall, notably through the implementation of the structural adjustment policies, seems to have been limited in its direct impact on livelihood strategies and performance of the majority of inhabitants of the South Asian region. However, they have led governments to reform domestic economic policies, visibly resulting in a loss of government jobs and cutbacks on food subsidies. Such measures have in turn restrained state capacity to alleviate somewhat the worst effects of unequal access to and distribution of resources and income, operating within the framework of a political economy that remains profoundly dual in character. Subsistence agriculture, largely outside the formal economy, provides most people with daily food and income. The formal economy is fully integrated into the world economy at large and, as such, is part of the larger macroeconomic environment. Tendencies to reform the traditional economic sectors, such as agriculture, may well be very destructive for specific sub-groups in society. The recent attempts by the international funding agencies to limit the role of the state in the prevailing mixed economies of the South Asian region are at strong variance with its potential role as a resource-distributing agent and tend to alienate further the 'haves' and the 'have nots'.

Even when such externally imposed economic reform has not led to severe impediments for individual states, the net effect has thwarted economic growth. Between 1960 and 1977 Sri Lanka copied the so-called 'Nehruvian'¹⁷ development model of India, embracing strong state intervention in the economy. The subsequent, albeit limited, and prudent process of liberalization

15) Abdur Rob Khan, chapter on Bangladesh, *South Asia: Regional Report*, Part I, p. 258.

16) Abdur Rob Khan, chapter on Bangladesh, *South Asia: Regional Report*, Part I, p. 258.

17) Named after the erstwhile President Nehru.

did not lead to significant external economic interventions. The relationship between the various governments and the IMF/WB has allegedly not impacted significantly on Sri Lanka's capacity to determine its own policies regarding macroeconomic developments.¹⁸ Nevertheless, Sri Lanka remains a fragile lopsided economy based on few export commodities. The vagaries of the world's commodity markets make it vulnerable, and dependency on crucial external inputs such as fuels and spare parts has remained high. External financial aid has continued to be an important source for foreign currency and helps the government to cope with important internal demands. External economic aid never reached substantial levels and no direct relationship with the outbreak of the various domestic conflicts can be ascertained. The stagnant economy, resulting from the structural characteristics of the Sri Lankan economy – that is, widespread state control and dependency on agricultural monocultures – has contributed to the mobilization of frustrated youth and can be related to the first JVP uprising (see the chapter on socio-economic factors, Box 3.5 on the JVP uprisings).

Structural Reform in Nicaragua

The case of Nicaragua is highlighted here, as it is a rather small country with limited natural resources and an economy largely based on the so-called agro-export model. This economic structure can also be observed in Honduras and Guatemala. In fact, the economy is dominated by agricultural production of a limited number of commodities that benefit a small group of landed elite in conjunction with foreign multinationals that dominate the related production and distribution channels. After the Sandinistas had assumed power in Nicaragua in 1979, the expropriation of a large number of private estates had temporarily upset this model. When the government of Chamorro assumed power in 1988, most land reforms were revoked and many properties were returned to their previous owners. Furthermore, the Chamorro administration privatized state-owned companies, implemented a sharp reduction in social spending, initiated massive public sector lay-offs and eliminated subsidies on basic consumer goods in order to re-establish macroeconomic stability. The US initially provided economic aid to enable debt arrears to the IMF and the WB. As a result, Nicaragua again became eligible for IMF credits and re-established international credibility. In 1992, four years after the implementation of the economic reform programme, Nicaragua had almost US\$ 11 billion in foreign debt, one of the highest rates per capita in the world. Although multilateral aid increased after 1992, a substantial amount never reached the country but was used to service the huge foreign debt. Despite staunch internal opposition to these austerity measures, the government managed to improve macroeconomic performance and even realized economic growth in the years 1994-1995.

18) Kingsley de Silva, chapter on Sri Lanka, *South Asia: Regional Report*, Part II, p. 429.

Nevertheless, regime credibility among the population declined as unemployment and underemployment rose to a staggering 20 per cent and 54 per cent respectively.¹⁹

Although Nicaragua has not entered another round of violent conflict, the huge debt burden and the enormous budgetary adaptations that suit macroeconomic requirements imposed by the foreign donors have created a social climate in which many people have become impoverished. Social protest against government reform has become a permanent feature of contemporary politics inside Nicaragua. On balance, the economic liberalization policies of the Chamorro government have created new forms of capitalist modernization based on the privatized banking sector, the creation of free-trade zones and entry into the global economy through non-traditional exports.²⁰ The continuing instability of the Nicaraguan economy, exemplified by its fiscal crises and stagnation of imports and exports, jeopardized the structural adjustment project, and it remains to be seen whether macroeconomic performance in and by itself will suffice to maintain internal cohesion and stability. The contemporary economic situation in Nicaragua hence continues to feed group grievances and may well provide incentives for yet another round of violent group mobilization. Radical macroeconomic interventions impact strongly on the countries of the Central American region, as they are all characterized by lopsided, fragile export economies. The enormous economic impact of such measures on the livelihood of significant sections of the civilian population may well provide a fertile breeding ground for political, and in view of the recent past violent, discontent.

The West African Region

IMF and WB support in the West African region has become a critical factor in the power equation. In many cases throughout the contemporary history of the sub-region, examples can be found of the fact that external funds help to maintain regime stability. Incumbent political elite groups have time and again taken recourse to external funding by the WB and IMF, because the internal capacity to raise state revenues has always been seriously hampered by a combination of domestic and external economic factors.

The capacity to raise taxes from the domestic economy has always been rather weak, as many powerful economic groups were exempt from taxes as a means to co-opt these groups into the power nexus. Pervasive poverty among the majority of the civilian populations has further precluded government revenue collection. The rather lopsided economies of many sub-Saharan countries are a serious impediment to economic growth (see also the chapter on socio-economic factors, section C, regional overview on West Africa).

19) Chapter on Nicaragua, in *Central America: Regional Report*, p. 78.

20) Chapter on Nicaragua, in *Central America: Regional Report*, p. 78.

Domestic capacities to generate sufficient resources to maintain the state apparatus have hence been rather erratic and underdeveloped. As a result, many incumbent elites depend on foreign capital flows to maintain the extensive patronage networks that have hitherto enabled them to assure regime survival.

In such a context, external economic aid becomes a powerful instrument for external meddling. For Ghana, the adoption of stringent economic reform in 1983 under Jerry Rawlings allegedly resulted in severe food shortages, collapsing infrastructure, impoverishment of the population at large, public sector lay-offs and a sharp decline of social service provisions.²¹ In fact, these policies contributed to domestic conflict between ethnic groups residing in the north of Ghana.²² Such conflicts can indirectly be linked to the economic austerity measures adopted by the national power elites. Despite continuing economic hardships, the population did not mobilize into violent protest against the regime. A combination of repression and populist reform policies enabled Rawlings to steer free of major internal uprisings (see also the chapter on political factors, the sections on power-sharing, application of repression and reform, and the cases of Honduras and Ghana).

In Senegal, the economic situation started deteriorating in 1971, and was subsequently badly affected by two external factors in 1973: an unprecedented drought; coupled with a fourfold rise in oil prices. Two years later, the country benefited from important financial inflows from the export earnings of phosphates, with record prices in world markets. But most of the gains were used for conspicuous consumption by the elites instead of investment. As a result the economy declined, and during the two years 1980 and 1981 the level of domestic consumption outstripped that of GDP. Adjustment policies were implemented in these conditions. The growth of per capita income was negative from 1970 to 1993, dropping to minus 4.6 per cent in 1993.²³ The first round of adjustment policies drastically cut back on food subsidies, leading to a sharp rise in the price of consumer goods. The deterioration of purchasing power continued throughout the entire period that adjustment policies were applied. The African price index jumped from 100 in 1979 to 202.3 in 1986; from 1985 to 1990, the average worker's purchasing power was reduced by about 30 per cent. In addition, from 1981 to 1989, about 20,000 jobs were lost (14 per cent of waged employment). An unprecedented social crisis developed

21) Okwudiba Nnoli, chapter on Ghana, in *West Africa: Regional Report*, p. 54.

22) The lay-offs of educated young men led to substantial return migration to former places of residence. In the case of the Konkomba, a sub-group of the Mole-Dagbani ethnic group, these returnees refused to pay the traditional tributes to the minority but traditionally dominant Nanumba sub-group. Eventually the Konkomba's insubordination to the old feudal system led to violent conflict between these groups, resulting in a large number of casualties.

23) Makhtar Diouf, *Causes of Conflict in Africa: The Casamance Conflict in Senegal*, paper presented at regional workshop, 1-3 July 1997, CODESRIA, Dakar, Senegal, p. 29.

in Senegal after the implementation of adjustment policies. As a result the state job sector failed to absorb educated newcomers, which led to many educated youths opting out of the system. Because the Diola depended overwhelmingly on the formal sector of the Senegalese economy, they were particularly hard hit, in turn facilitating the mobilization of the Casamance rebel movement.²⁴ However, no major political crises ensued directly from the implementation of these austerity measures and public outcry resulted in sporadic riots only. The adoption of IMF conditions was important for regime survival, because it enabled the incumbent regime of Abdou Diouf to maintain its international credibility and continue to service its internal clientelist network.

This conclusion is corroborated by the Nigerian case, where the WB has been a prominent lender throughout the contemporary history, from 1958 onwards. However, the critical point of this steady flow of resources is that these funds have been consistently committed to the development of infrastructure: roads, railways, port facilities, dams for electricity generation and power transmission, health services, irrigation and water supply. In other words, the loans from the World Bank constituted part of the resources whose allocation and utilization were determined by political and military leaders involved in a network of nepotism that has accompanied Nigeria's economic development.²⁵ The imposition of austerity measures became integral aspects of structural adjustment policies from 1986 onwards. These conditions had to be fulfilled before fresh loans and credit lines could be offered to Nigeria and before some aspects of its huge external debts could be rescheduled. Implementation of the austerity measures has left the most vulnerable in society – the infirm, the old, women and children, especially those in rural settings – in unprecedented dire straits.²⁶ An explosion of social violence by way of religious²⁷ and ethnic uprisings coincided with the regime of the structural adjustment programme and its after-effects.

Conclusions section C-II: Multilateral Economic Interventions

Aid conditions imposed by the IMF and the WB have had important repercussions on the budgetary policies of several of the states investigated. So-called market, tax and fiscal reforms have mostly been at the heart of WB and IMF programmes. In many cases, liberalization of import and export

24) Ferdinand de Jong, chapter on Senegal, in *West Africa: Regional Report*, p. 233.

25) Emeka Nwokedi, chapter on Nigeria, in *West Africa: Regional Report*, p. 166.

26) Emeka Nwokedi, chapter on Nigeria, in *West Africa: Regional Report*, p. 166.

27) The so-called 'Yan Tatsine' fundamentalist movement and its violent campaigns against perceived 'materialism' in northern Nigerian society and state authorities stand out as a prime example of religious-inspired opposition towards the growing gap between the conspicuous consumption of a narrow elite and the populations bearing the hardships of consecutive SAPs under the regimes of Shagari and Babangida.

regulations has been detrimental to the domestic industry: the abolishment of price subsidies has inflated costs of daily essentials for urban population groups; deregulation of interest rates has led to interest inflation; and the privatization of state assets has resulted in the plunder of public assets and selective appropriation of state properties by political cronies of incumbent elite groups. Allegedly, the cumulative effects of such reforms have sometimes resulted in a shift of decision-making from the national level towards the international level – that is, a net loss of sovereignty.²⁸

Market reform has also led to cuts in subsidies for daily food items, leading to a proliferation of spontaneous public rioting in urban areas among poor constituencies largely dependent on such subsidies to offset their meagre incomes (as in Senegal). In fact, the overnight abolishment of price subsidies diminishes the purchasing power of significant portions of the domestic salaried work force. Such draconic interventions cause hyperinflation and mostly lead to loss of public confidence in the economic policies of the incumbent elites. In the short term such interventions may restore foreign credibility, but on the domestic political scene such measures undermine government legitimacy (as with the Chomorra government in Nicaragua). In the long term such measures often prove inadequate, as the necessary complementary economic measures are not implemented for lack of monetary means. The financial precariousness of many Third World regimes leads more often than not to a recurrent pattern of devaluation and forced acceptance of price deregulation. As a result, such types of market reform have become highly unpopular, both among incumbent elites and their constituencies in poor countries. The devaluation of the West African CFA currency in January 1994 did not yield the expected benefits for the countries concerned. By 2000, exports had not yet increased to the point of compensating for the loss of purchasing power, and in fact the region has collectively become impoverished.

Section C-III Bilateral Economic Interventions

US Economic Interventions in Central America

With regard to the economic external interventions in Central America, it is crucial to understand the nature of US dual policy in the region. In fact, US economic aid to the region outstripped that of any other donor during the 1980s and 1990s.²⁹ Economic support of regimes went hand in hand with military support and followed the Cold War logic to a great extent. In annexe VI, various country chapters' data are presented that demonstrate the validity of this statement. US economic aid in general far outstripped military aid, especially in the early 1980s when the capital flows from the US to individual

28) Mohammad Waseem, in chapter on Pakistan, *South Asia: Regional Report*, Part II, p. 321.

29) See Annexe VI, External Economic Interventions.

countries reached their peak (see annexe VI). El Salvador received nearly half a billion dollars in economic aid in 1985 alone. Whereas previously economic as well as military aid was comprised of modest financial contributions donated to friendly regimes, the general trend underwent significant changes when the Reagan administration assumed power in the US. In absolute terms, it can be concluded from the available evidence that El Salvador, as well as Nicaragua, in the first half of the 1980s relied heavily on external support from the US and COMECON (the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance) respectively, confirming the puppet regime status of both regimes (see annexe VI).

A clear example of the concurrence of US military and economic aid has been the US support to the contra movement via Honduras (see annexe VI). External economic aid in this particular case was geared towards buying off the internal elite, as most of the money disappeared among the higher echelons of the political and military elite. This aid thus served to circumvent constitutional provisions of the Honduran state and served to 'buy' the right to erect military bases and build airstrips. Honduras, as it were, became an American military base from which the contra war was organized logistically and materially. In Central America the economic support of the superpowers, but notably the US, was the expression of a political strategy to contain communism. This aid was aimed at targeting strategic goals in line with the major policy orientation. Economic aid hence became the non-military corollary of an American strategy in Central America. The enormous amount of economic aid far outweighed the amount of military aid, but was meant as a political bonus for compliance with US strategic interests in the region. This can also be inferred from the fact that aid to all Central American states boomed in the early 1980s after the Sandinista ascendancy to power. During the same period, economic assistance to Nicaragua by the communist COMECON economic bloc also reached its peak. The substantial amount of US aid apparently aimed at strengthening regional allies in order to promote economic stability. Some observers point to the case of Costa Rica, where the opening up a second military front by Eden Pastora was more or less condoned, allegedly related to some form of US economic 'bribery' of the Costa Rican government.³⁰

US economic support must be seen in conjunction with private corporate economic interests in the region. In the 1950s and 1960s, American fruit companies played an important role with regard to the various violent conflicts in Honduras, Nicaragua and Guatemala. The crises in Guatemala cannot be understood without taking into account the role played by the international fruit companies. These companies pressured Arbenz to stop even modest reform, since this was at variance with their corporate interests. When Arbenz expropriated some banana land, the companies charged exorbitant compensation, frustrating the regime's capacity to implement agrarian reform.

30) Eden Pastora, a defected member of the Sandinista movement, organized his troops at the Caribbean coast and operated from Costa Rican territory.

In Honduras, the banana companies have continuously played an important role in domestic politics. They have resisted agrarian reform in collaboration with the oligarchy, fuelled xenophobic feelings towards the Salvadorean immigrant community prior to the Soccer War, bribed military men and politicians in order to avoid taxation, and even structured anti-communist labour movements such as ORIT to counter the formation of more extremist labour organizations (see also the chapter on political factors, the sections on power-sharing, repression and reform, and the cases of Honduras and Ghana).

The Role of France in West Africa

The francophone countries in West Africa are closely linked to France. From early independence, France sought to maintain close political and economic ties with its former colonies in West Africa. The French-speaking states were engaged in reinforcing their common institutions such as the franc zone (*Union Monétaire Ouest Africaine*, UMOA) and in creating fresh organs to respond to emerging needs and challenges. The creation in 1959 of the *Union Douanière des États de l'Afrique de l'Ouest* (UDEAO) and its successor the *Communauté Economique de l'Afrique de l'Ouest* (CEAO), founded in 1973, was driven by the logic of maintaining bloc solidarity. Until the creation of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in 1975, which theoretically bridged the linguistic divide in the region, the most important state in the area – Nigeria – was excluded from its multilateral framework for cooperation and diplomacy. In weaving a network of functional cooperation organs between themselves, the French-speaking West African states, with the backing of the regional power France, which encouraged these initiatives, were motivated by the necessity to check the real and the potential influence of Nigeria in the region. In fact, the decision to create the CEAO was a direct response to the Nigeria-Togo initiative of 1972 that was to lead to the establishment of the ECOWAS, which itself was considered by France and its leading partners in West Africa as a privileged instrument for the hegemonic ambitions of anglophone Nigeria in the region.³¹

Substantial bilateral economic support by the French has always accompanied geopolitical interest in the sub-region and must be viewed in a similar vein as the US's or Soviet Union's superpower strategies. Through the offices of the European Union, France currently continues to serve its political client states. In the case of Niger this has led to substantial and continuous aid for Niger's fragile state bureaucracy, thus serving to prop up a client state in order to fend off external aggression, with the aim of maintaining privileged economic and political ties with Niger. Senegal has been a showcase for democracy in the region for a long time and has always maintained close

31) This paragraph is largely based on Emeka Nwokedi, 'Perspectives on Armed Conflicts in West Africa', *West Africa: Regional Report*, p. 13.

political ties with its former colonizer. France's excessive external influence was strengthened through the empowerment of Jean Colin, a former French colonial administrator, who opted for Senegalese citizenship after independence. Colin held many ministries and the post of Secretary-General to the President, and through his personal ties with the Élysée palace in Paris (the French presidential residence) had an overwhelming impact on the Senegalese state from 1983 until his dismissal in 1991.

Bilateral Economic Initiatives in Central America: The Central American Common Market

Economic arrangements between countries sometimes also give rise to interstate tensions and impact on domestic security settings. The Central American Common Market (CACM), an economic project aiming to integrate the economies of the Central American countries, had proven to be successful to some extent, although from the outset it became clear that industrialized countries such as El Salvador and Guatemala profited more from this economic project than countries that depended mainly on agriculture. In fact, this discrepancy between regional economies fuelled resentment, especially between Honduras and El Salvador. With hindsight, economic analysis of the CACM's workings demonstrated that the Honduran criticism on the regional market arrangement was largely misplaced.³² In fact the CACM notably provided a larger internal regional market for domestic industrial and agricultural products but not for agricultural produce. However, the perceived marginalization of the agrarian economies led to the eventual downfall of the CACM, precipitated by the Soccer War. The failure of regional economic integration forced each individual country in the sub-region to compete on the international market. Because of the CACM's demise, comparative advantages could not be cashed in as most economic structures remained focused on the production of similar agricultural outputs, reinforcing the predominant agro-export model and the traditional oligarchic elite groups associated with them. The destruction of the CACM has probably forestalled economic change and innovation, thus contributing to the emergence of the economic crisis during the so-called 'lost decade' of the 1980s. This period of prolonged economic crisis correlates with the most violent phase of Central America's conflict cycle.

Development Aid

Development aid provided by individual donors and multilateral agencies furthermore exerts considerable influence on targeted government departments such as education, health and agriculture. However, this issue requires an

32) David Mares, 'Analysis of Contexts, Causes and Trends', *Central America: Regional Report*, p. 378.

exhaustive analysis of development aid and has not explicitly been the focus of this study. Some general observations are presented here.

In general, development aid interventions have a long-term structural character and tend to follow a dynamic of their own. Although one might conclude that the lack of state resources did have some impact on the conflict cases of Senegal and Niger (see the chapter on socio-economic factors, the sections on regional economic dynamics, and West Africa), there is not enough evidence to support the view that development aid played a decisive role in these internal conflict cases. For the time being, sufficient empirical data are lacking and conclusions have to be drawn with the utmost restraint. By contrast, it may well be that development aid sometimes helped to neutralize the worst effects of economic crises and hence promoted political stability.

The international donor community moreover tends to support peaceful developments and to reward peaceful settlements between protagonists hitherto involved in violent confrontations. For example, Niger received additional relief funds for the nomadic Tamajaq at a point in time when a negotiated settlement had been reached by the contending parties. Benefits from such agreements, when explicitly mentioned by sponsors during a negotiation process, tend to be important incentives for parties to a conflict. It seems, however, imperative to review the implementation of the projects that are financed with donor funds during the post-war period, as in many cases promises fail to materialize on the ground and beneficiary communities may develop new grievances. For example, the land transfer programme in El Salvador was a critical condition for the rebel movement to accept the Peace Accords of 1992. In 1995, however, less than 50 per cent of the beneficiaries had received land. This was caused by a combination of factors, among which lengthy bureaucratic procedures and a lack of political will to carry out the programme stood out prominently.³³

Conclusions section C-III: External Economic Interventions

As a rule, external economic interference by major powers in conflicts in the regions and countries under study has apparently never led directly to the outbreak of violent conflict. In some conflict cases massive economic support has propped up conflict parties and led to a prolongation of the stand-off between the contending parties. However, superpower economic support has been a corollary of military and political interventions, in some cases severely impacting on fragile regional security settings and domestic conflicts. In these cases, the sheer magnitude of economic aid overshadowed the volumes of military assistance, creating an enabling environment in which actors could plan and execute substantial military campaigns against their adversaries. The

33) Manuel Rojas Bolanos, Thania Pleitez and Margarita Mooney, chapter on El Salvador, *Central America: Regional Report*, p. 144.

ideological background motivating superpower assistance can safely be regarded as an important cause of some domestic conflicts, notably those in Afghanistan, Nicaragua and El Salvador. France, the Soviet Union and the US propped up regimes in areas that they considered of vital geostrategic importance. Economic aid was basically the material component on which their entire foreign intervention strategy was built.

Multilateral interventions – in particular the IMF/WB adjustment policies – have had an uneven impact on recipient societies. The structural adjustment programmes imposed by the IMF impacted severely upon the state sector within some of the local economies, in turn leading to economic hardship for the majority of the population. The direct link with violent conflicts, despite the occurrence of violent incidents because of sudden price fluctuations for staple food and subsidy cuts on imported goods, cannot be inferred from the available evidence. Nevertheless, such assistance propped up incumbent elite groups, which were able to reassert their authority on the domestic economy and manage to impose macroeconomic reforms in order to access foreign credit facilities. Their success in establishing a good performance within macroeconomic parameters reinforced regime credibility and survival. In such particular cases, the credits provided for by these internal banking institutions by and large served to service existing patronage networks on which political power centred.

Some scholars assume that democratic governments as a matter of fact tend to be more vulnerable to the destabilizing effects of external economic interventions than firmly entrenched autocratic regimes that do not depend on popular support for their political survival.³⁴ By prescribing certain reforms, donors have demonstrated an insensitivity to the domestic social and political realities of some client states in South Asia. This insensitivity has at times undermined democratic governance and/or contributed to political conflict.³⁵ This conclusion may hold some general validity, because nowadays lending institutions focus too narrowly on governments' and political elite groups' macroeconomic performance. Even if such states perform well on these indicators, there is no guarantee that external economic assistance will not be abused by such elite groups. Ultimately, the genesis of violent conflict may partly be motivated by the negative impact of foreign economic assistance on specific sub-groups in society.

34) G.H. Peiris, 'Theoretical Formulations', *South Asia: Regional Report*, Part II, p. 570.

35) G.H. Peiris, 'Theoretical Formulations', *South Asia: Regional Report*, Part II, p. 571, final conclusion.

VI Towards a Multi-Factor Dynamic Perspective

Introduction

The Relevance of the Dynamic Conflict Model

When one compares all of the country chapters and regional analysis, it becomes clear that the ideal type model of conflict dynamics adopted from Bloomfield and Leiss¹ (1997) does not apply to all conflict cases. First, the implicit contention that the four phases follow each other time-wise in a logical order and that each conflict follows such a sequence by necessity cannot be upheld. In fact, in some cases conflict does not cross the threshold of violence, as defined in our definition of conflict. In Honduras, Bangladesh and Ghana many violent incidents have materialized throughout the period of investigation, but large-scale organized violence did not occur. In the cases of the Punjab and Biafra, the settlement phase was never reached because one of the conflict parties was crushed militarily and a settlement imposed, instead of mutually reached. Conflicts of a protracted nature, such as the Casamance conflict in Senegal and the Kashmir dispute between Pakistan and India, seem

1) Lincoln P. Bloomfield and Allan Moulton, *Managing International Conflict: From Theory to Policy. A Teaching Tool using CASCON* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997).

to alternate between tensing, escalating and de-escalating phases, that is, repeatedly going back and forth through violent and less violent episodes. Nevertheless, the model may help in gaining insight into the alternating intensity of conflicts and in recognizing distinct phases in their life cycle, as well as in analysing the interplay between different factors.

Another important feature that can be deduced from the study of conflict dynamics is the changing intensity of demands from parties in conflict. In general, one perceives positions of contending parties as fixed and rather inflexible. In reality, we have witnessed a wide variety of fluctuating demands during the course of conflicts. With regard to the issue of changing demands, it can be concluded that the intensity of the conflict is sometimes reinforced by the hardening of positions of parties in conflict because of their unwillingness to compromise. This also has an important impact on the course and trajectory of conflicts. Aggravating factors tend to reinforce this process. In this regard external military aid stands out, as well as the availability of arms often resulting from such types of aid. The findings also indicate that contingent population groups across national borders contribute to the duration of conflict, as the West African cases of Senegal and Niger testify.

Transitions from One Phase to Another

A salient methodological question concerns the transition from one phase in the conflict cycle to another. The transition from a non-conflict situation to the tensing phase is in fact partly theoretical. In reality, many types of social conflict exist permanently and continuously but their number and intensity vary over time. The distinction between both situations, however, is important and should give insight into issues on which potentially violent conflicts thrive. It is therefore important to link underlying features of society to disputes between groups in society. The social stratification of society and the way in which access to productive resources and social services is organized are pivotal to the understanding of many such conflicts.

Group Mobilization and Violent Conflict

The trajectory of the emergence of large-scale violent conflict necessarily has to pass through a phase of mass mobilization into violent behaviour.² In fact, no violence will materialize if nobody shows up to take part in the hostilities. Although this seems a rather obvious conclusion, commonly accepted among conflict researchers, it moves attention away from the background ideas on which conflict thrives towards the dynamics that lead to the emergence of violent conflict. Crucial within conflict dynamics seems to be the process that determines a violent course of action, that is, the decision of a group of people

2) See Ted Robert Gurr, *Why Men Rebel* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1970).

to engage in organized violence against a protagonist group or against the state. The question seems to be how, in the context of this chapter, various political, socio-economic and external causes of conflict are 'translated' into so-called mobilizing factors.

A mobilizing factor motivates groups of people to engage in collective violent action. Such mobilizing factors can be related to underlying causal or pivotal factors and consequently may provide insights into the emergence of violent conflict within states. However, much confusion seems to exist about the difference between such mobilizing factors and so-called 'triggers'. As can be inferred from the conflict histories (see chapter II on overview of conflicts), sudden events may 'trigger' the outbreak of large-scale violent conflict. Triggers, however, cannot be labelled as causes of violent conflict in and by themselves. In fact, only with hindsight can specific events be designated as having triggered subsequent violent conflicts. Triggers include a wide variety of single events such as the assassination of a labour union official, a politician or a natural disaster. By contrast, mobilizing factors can sometimes be directly related to group grievances or discriminatory policies or other socio-economic, political or cultural patterns that impact upon a specific group or a specific community within a state. Mobilizing factors are also often manipulated by political entrepreneurs to motivate a specific constituency around a pertinent issue. It can tentatively be inferred from the various conflict histories that religion, ethnic identity or language stand out in group mobilization.

As a result, such patterns of group mobilization are not automatically linked to 'underlying' causal factors. In some cases, ambitious political entrepreneurs successfully mobilize a group based on common ethno-linguistic characteristics, whereas in reality group grievances centre on socio-economic deprivation or lack of access to government jobs. Consequently, the reasons to engage sometimes in violent confrontations with other groups or the state itself can be based on perceived deprivation or perceived discrimination. The question about what constitutes the causal factors that lead to violent conflict can therefore be answered by the statement that such factors seem to be as much a matter of group perception as of real grievances that can be determined by neutral and 'objective' analysis.

This analysis will present a tentative description of various phases within an ideal type of conflict dynamics. The focus in this chapter hence lies with the transformation from underlying or pivotal factors to 'mobilizing factors' and on an attempt to try to unravel why in some cases such patterns lead to violent conflict whereas in others violent conflict is avoided.

As can be inferred from the various case studies presented in the preceding chapters, the predominant conflict-related factors are linked to the issues of state legitimacy, power-sharing or exclusion and the concomitant issue of property rights regarding crucial livelihood entitlements of indigenous communities or non-state actors. Furthermore, exclusive coercive state policies and externally enforced resource extraction, without attendant compensation, fuel tensions between state elites and sub-state actors. Exclusive elite

ideologies, reflecting top-down management of the local economy and exclusion of specific groups within society, have hence, time and again spawned strong resistance within states. Extremist responses to such oppressive state policies have led to the emergence of secessionist movements and/or alternative socialist or communist opposition within states. Such dynamics have now and then provoked external political and economic interventions by superpowers, notably during the Cold War. Dominant states have sometimes intervened in their respective sphere of influence to ensure continuing predominance in a specific region or country to the detriment of local interest groups.

In many conflict cases, a step-by-step pattern can be witnessed in which actions of a specific actor are followed by a reaction from another actor. In the research sample one can observe the predominance of a pattern that revolves around a first round of actions initiated by state actors meddling in local and regional settings followed by response from resident groups.

A) The First Phase: State Ideologies Imposed and State-Initiated Resource Extraction Implemented

Post-colonial independence has been imposed in numerous cases on many distinct ethno-linguistic groups despite their desire to become independent or to acquire substantial autonomy. In some cases such groups repudiated the legitimacy of the newly emerging state. In some cases the forced appropriation of local resources formed the logical expression of perceived legitimate control and property rights of the states involved. In the absence of genuine legitimacy, such initiatives, when operated by governments, sometimes in close collaboration with other powerful external actors, have clearly antagonized local resident groups. This has clearly been the case in the various conflict cases in India (Punjab and the north-eastern states), the Chittagong Hill Tracts conflict in Bangladesh, the extraction of uranium in the Tamajaq heartland in Niger, the expansion of export fisheries and tourism in the Casamance region in Senegal, and oil from the Niger delta in Nigeria (see chapter III on socio-economic factors, the section on the state versus sub-state actors). State interventions in existing patterns of land distribution (see chapter III on socio-economic factors, the section on resource-related conflicts) can also be categorized as external resource extraction, as mostly powerful groups in local societies benefit from such practices.

In other cases state policies have impacted strongly on traditional livelihood practices, either through state control on economic transactions or through structural changes such as land-rights reform or decisions regarding the allocation of government services. In fact, in many such cases the state failed to address existing imbalances without proper compensation for affected groups. This has clearly been the case in South Asia with the introduction of proportional representation in the civil service for all population groups, strongly disfavouring groups that hitherto predominated in those sectors.

Groups such as the Mohajir community in Pakistan, the Tamil community in Sri Lanka and the Hindu high-caste groups in India lost out to other groups, although they had depended strongly on the public sector.

Constitutional land reform has impacted strongly in West Africa, as many resident population groups were suddenly deprived of acquiring new land through traditional bush reclamation practices. The state thus became the proprietor of all waste and fallow lands, undermining the existing communal land rights' system. In yet other cases, the state initiated blatant clientelist policies benefiting dominant groups. Examples of such policies of favouritism can be found in all regions, such as the case of the Punjabis in Pakistan, the Bengal immigrants in the CHT area in Bangladesh, the Hindu Bengalis in Assam in India, the Hindu traders in the Indian Punjab, the Zarma minority in Niger, the Wolof in Senegal, the Hausa and Fulani in Nigeria and the Creole elite groups in all of the Central American states. Although such patterns of co-optation by dominant groups and exclusion of other constituent groups within states has not been researched in detail, the overall pattern of government resource distribution among constituent groups within states highlights their existence.

Finally, states proved unable in some cases to protect fragile groups, lifting protective measures for specific minorities. In the CHT region in Bangladesh, the status of Totally Excluded Area was lifted in 1964, facilitating government-sponsored migration of lowland Bengali peasants³ to the detriment of the local indigenous communities. In the case of Niger, the failure to compensate the drought-stricken herdsmen frustrated the efforts of the Tamajaq herdsmen to rehabilitate their livelihood systems. In these latter cases, the state failed to provide necessary support, hence compromising state legitimacy.

To conclude, in the initial stages of most conflicts the state itself initiated a process leading to the conflict by imposing specific interventions to the detriment of local resident groups. The legitimacy of the state itself has often been called into question by the affected population groups in most post-colonial states. When such states initiated a process of resource transfer to enable the maintenance of crucial state institutions, the material presence of the state became visible to these reluctant constituencies. In a post-colonial context in which taxation of the formal economy could not yet sustain state bureaucracies and state elite groups, raw materials or agricultural produce were mostly expropriated or taxed, without taking into account local claims to the benefits reaped from these resources. The newly independent states either deliberately withheld compensatory measures or failed to develop adequate policies to address the interests of all of the constituent sub-state groups involved. Instead, numerous patrimonial and clientelist systems evolved in

3) Aftab Ahmed, *Ethnic Turmoil in the Chittagong Hill Tracts Region of Bangladesh*, paper presented at the International Workshop on Causes of Conflict, held at Hotel Tourmaline, Kandy, Sri Lanka, 3-5 March 1997, p. 9.

which politicians co-opted specific groups and powerful domestic elite groups. Political compliance was bought by sharing out the benefits of the state's resources to only a limited number of regime supporters.

B) The Second Phase: Articulating Grievances or Aspiring to Participate in Decision-Making

The responses of local population groups to these varied forms of state resource appropriation, unbalanced government policies and selective service allocation have been quite diverse and have shifted over time. In a number of cases the initial response of affected groups was to seek non-violent interest articulation at the highest policy level, either through local representatives in parliament or by sending delegations to the central authorities. Such non-violent response initiatives, however, did not materialize in all of the regions and countries studied, explaining the rather rapid degradation of specific disputes into violent opposition in a number of cases, whereas in other cases such mechanisms at least provided a platform for negotiations between the actors involved. As was elaborated in the chapter on political-military relations, the prevailing political culture, expressed notably in the way in which disputes are handled, provides the enabling environment for either consensual decision-making or confrontation. In countries where adequate formulae for power-sharing are lacking and where the state is perceived as illegitimate, disputes about resource appropriation are hence translated in narrow partisan terms and quickly lead to deteriorating relations between contending interest groups (see the chapter on political factors, the section on power-sharing and limited power-sharing arrangements). However, as can be inferred from the analysis of political factors, specific combinations of repression and limited reform may forestall the emergence of violent conflict, even for substantial periods of time

Globally, three response patterns emerged from our research sample: 1) *non-violent interest articulation* through the expression of group claims and the demand for compensation; 2) seemingly *direct violent opposition* towards the external actor(s); and 3) *apparent indifference or indolence about external interventions*. Although the first category did not contain a violent dimension at the outset, the nature of the counter-reaction either leads to compromise and accommodation or to different types of repression and accommodation and eventually to degeneration into violent confrontation. However, such initial non-violent responses provide an interesting insight into the dynamics of interaction between the contending parties in various parts of the world.

1) Non-Violent Interest Articulation

In India, the example of the Nagas demonstrates the persistent effort to safeguard Nagaland from political domination by the federal state, as the Nagas feared becoming a minority within their own homelands. Whereas under

British rule the Nagas had managed to remain more or less independent, notably through restrictive administrative measures such as acquiring the status of Totally Excluded Area, the post-Partition period resulted in a gradual loss of such privileges. In June 1947 the Nagas reached a nine-point agreement with the Governor of Assam province (the Hydari Agreement), to which Nagaland then belonged, containing all types of judicial, legislative, land rights, taxation and other vital governance issues beneficial to the aspirations of the Nagas.⁴ Ultimately, however, the Naga community could not become formally independent from the emerging Indian union, as the successive leaders of India held divergent views on the rights of Naga self-determination. In fact, India never considered independence for Nagaland as a realistic option (see the chapter on political factors, the section on contested sovereignty and secessionist movements). Nevertheless, the Naga case demonstrates how, seen from the long-term perspective, Nagas expressed their demands mostly in a non-violent fashion during the initial stages of interaction between the Naga community and the Indian union.

Many more such examples can be found in our research sample. In India, the Sikhs' continuous search for greater autonomy within the Indian union has historically passed through various phases of non-violent interest articulation. The long-standing wish to found a Sikh-speaking state was finally conceded in 1966. In 1973, the so-called Anandpur-Sahib resolution was adopted by the Sikh political movement, Akali Dal, comprising an extensive set of mostly long-standing and genuine grievances of the Sikh community. However, the declaration was widely perceived as a political manifesto calling for an independent Kalistan and not as a somewhat inconsistent set of both socio-economic requests and political aspirations. The declaration essentially coupled identity-related political principles safeguarding Sikh identity and socio-economic recommendations aimed at undoing the capitalist and monopolist tendencies caused by the 'green revolution'.⁵

In Sri Lanka, a gradual shift in the aspirations of the Sri Lankan Tamils can be observed between 1972 and 1976, from demands for structural changes and constitutional reform to an increasing tendency to erect an independent Tamil state. The crucial issue here was the constitutional reform initiated by the Sri Lankan government in 1972, consolidating the predominance of the Sinhala language and Buddhist religion without conceding undisputed minority

4) Mahendra P. Lama, *Identity-Based Politico-Armed Conflicts in North-East India*, paper presented at the International Workshop on Causes of Conflict, held at Hotel Tourmaline, Kandy, Sri Lanka, 3-5 March 1997, pp. 3-5.

5) Mahendra P. Lama, *Armed Conflicts by the Haves: A Case Study of Punjab*, paper presented at the International Workshop on Causes of Conflict, held at Hotel Tourmaline, Kandy, Sri Lanka, 3-5 March 1997, pp. 11-12.

rights to the Tamil language and religion, in fact confirming the second-class status of Tamils inside Sri Lanka.⁶

In another region, West Africa, although genuine political interest articulation at the highest levels has been rather few and far between, similar dynamics can be observed. In Niger, during the National Conference held in 1991, the Tamajaq community tried to rehabilitate their constituency and demanded government support in order to counter the effects of the subsequent droughts and their aftermath (massive population displacement, decimation of herds, loss of capital assets). The apparent inability of the newly emerging leadership to compensate the Tamajaq, in conjunction with the blunt refusal to condemn the excessive use of force against some Tamajaq during violent incidents that took place in Tchén Tabaradene (an administrative centre), eventually provided an incentive for more pronounced opposition towards the state.⁷

To conclude, such historical processes, leading from political interest articulation towards increasing polarization and extremism, seem to emerge in different cultural settings, regardless of specific historic or cultural features of the communities concerned. In most of these cases, specific ethno-linguistic communities perceived interference by the government as an infringement on their autonomy and felt that they were either targeted or that the state tampered with their rights. The common ground in all of these cases furthermore seems to be the insensitivity and/or unwillingness of the incumbent national elite to compromise with these groups.

2) 'Direct' Violent Response

The sudden outburst of Diola violence in the Casamance in the early 1980s, which reflected discontent with the cumulative impact of government policies regarding land appropriation around the regional capital Ziguinchor and the coastal areas, seemed to appear out of nowhere. Although the violent skirmishes between Diola protesters and the gendarmerie of 1983 can be viewed as the result of previous rounds of non-violent protest, it was found, by and large, that the lack of institutional venues for consultation between the administration and the population resulted in these spontaneous, direct, violent actions.⁸ In this case it needs to be emphasized that the indigenous Diola community stands out as a rather egalitarian and socially unstratified society,

6) Kingsley M. de Silva, *Separatism in Sri Lanka*, paper presented at the International Workshop on Causes of Conflict, held at Hotel Tourmaline, Kandy, Sri Lanka, 3-5 March 1997, pp. 7-8.

7) Hamidou Arouna Sidikou, 'Les Causes des Conflits au Niger', *West Africa: Regional Report* (Port Harcourt (Nigeria): Centre for Advanced Social Science; and The Hague: Netherlands Institute of International Relations 'Clingendael', 1998).

8) Ferdinand de Jong, 'Causes of the Casamance Rebellion in Senegal', in *West Africa: Regional Report*, pp. 220-221.

and was not effectively integrated in the national polity. The application of the new constitution, transferring previously communal land rights to the state, had a profound impact on local customs and resource management in the Casamance region. The apparent 'spontaneous' reaction of part of the Diola community has to be seen as a reaction against what was basically perceived as a non-legitimate state.

The materialization of radical power transitions based on underlying socio-economic motives sometimes also led to 'direct' violence between contending interest groups. The January 1966 *coup* in Nigeria was widely perceived as the elimination by the Igbo of the Fulani elite's hold on the federal government in their thrust to achieve power at the centre. This *coup* was reversed in July 1966 with the return of northern elites to power. In fact, military *coups*, reflecting attempts at power transition between regional and ethnic blocs, represented a struggle over vested economic interests, namely the federal control over oil exploitation in the Niger River delta area. The ensuing civil war between the dominant northern elite and the secessionist Igbo represents a clear example of a zero-sum political power struggle, rooted in the struggle over vital resource control.⁹

In the South Asian context, a radical political movement in Sri Lanka – the *Janatha Vimukhti Peramuna* (People's Liberation Front) – aimed to overthrow the incumbent government by means of a violent insurrection. The JVP movement initially aligned politically with the United Left Front (ULF), helping them to assume office in 1970. The JVP leadership was disappointed by the United Left Front's failure to implement socialist reform aiming to redress existing socio-economic inequalities. The JVP increasingly used extra-parliamentary methods to put the ULF government under pressure, using aggressive anti-government propaganda and taking recourse to violence and crime in its quest for guns and money.¹⁰ After the arrest of the JVP's leader and the subsequent declaration of a state of emergency, the JVP initiated an all-out offensive against government forces. The violent attempt by the JVP movement to enforce radical change forced the ruling elite to retaliate militarily in order to survive. Such ideological threats to state survival, even though they are 'legitimized' by genuine socio-economic grievances, hence inevitably provoke violent repression by the incumbent state elite.

3) *Apparent Indifference or Indolence about External Interventions*

In some cases, population groups apparently did not react in a substantive manner to demonstrate their unease or discontent with interventions by state

9) Emeka Nwokedi, 'The Dynamics of Conflict in Nigeria', *West Africa: Regional Report*, p. 149.

10) G.H. Peiris, *Insurrection and Youth Unrest in Sri Lanka*, paper presented at the International Workshop on Causes of Conflict, held at Hotel Tourmaline, Kandy, Sri Lanka, 3-5 March 1997, pp. 6-7.

elites or other powerful interest groups in society. The Mayan population of Guatemala are a case in point. As was analysed in chapter III on socio-economic factors, the Mayan population remained aloof from the internal conflict for a substantial period of time. The history of colonial conquest and the subsequent systematic marginalization and decimation of Indians in the Americas at large and also within the Central American region have resulted in a seemingly passive and indolent attitude by the Mayans. However, it can also be argued that their strategy of bypassing the dynamics of the 'Latino' society around them has permitted the very survival of Indian culture until the present. The Mayan attitude to live 'parallel' lives suited the dominant elite groups for a long time. The armed confrontation between guerrillas and the army in the 1960s was eventually perceived as a problem between *ladinos*. The Mayan population thus did not seek to promote its own interests, either through 'normal' venues of political lobbying or through more violent methods, until the 1970s. During this period, external changes provoked a change in the Mayan attitude. In order to promote agricultural modernization, the Guatemalan government sought to expand large plantations mostly on the southern coast of Guatemala and also promoted extensive cattle ranching. The combination of these changes in the regional economy and the increasing land pressure on the central highlands, leading the subdivision of already small plots of land among the indigenous, provided incentives for seasonal labour migration among the Mayans. Many Mayans became seasonal labourers in the agricultural export sector. As a result, indigenous Mayan community life was disrupted and increasing contact with the outside world contributed to awareness of the Mayans' marginal position in Guatemalan society and led to their increasing radicalisation.¹¹ The imminent destruction of the Mayan subsistence economy and subsequent loss of cultural autonomy provided the building blocks for outside political mobilization by members of the resistance movement URNG.

In the South Asian region, notably in India, the issue of low-caste Hindus demonstrates the complexity and diversity of group response to political and socio-economic oppression. In some states of the Indian federation, systematic violence is perpetrated by a great number of high-caste Hindus, notably landholding elite groups, against low-caste groups in order to maintain the existing social stratification. Despite the fact that the so-called *dalits* are protected by the Indian constitution and all types of legal guarantees, the reality has clearly time and again demonstrated the tenacity of the prevailing hierarchy throughout India, notably in Bihar and Orissa. The oppression of low-caste people and untouchables is pervasive in everyday life. Many famous politicians (such as Gandhi) and community leaders have taken up the defence of these

11) H. Rosada and M. Mooney, chapter on Guatemala, in *Central America: Regional Report* (San Jose (Costa Rica): Arias Foundation; and The Hague: Netherlands Institute of International Relations 'Clingendael', 1998), pp. 201-202.

poor and oppressed segments of the Indian population, leading to an improvement in their socio-economic position. Nevertheless, violence against *dalits* continues unabated. Whereas violence results from many causes, land-related conflicts have been identified as the most important. Disputes related to land reform, irrigation rights and land alienation have time and again led to atrocities against the *dalits*.¹² The response by low-caste people and untouchables has varied but remains overwhelmingly passive in nature. In fact, alternative venues for conflict resolution remain structurally weak, as most government institutions are imbued with caste prejudice and unsuitable for the execution of even-handed interventions. Oppressed low-caste Hindu groups hence so far have not been able to organize a more systematic response towards the unjust treatment that is bestowed upon them. Only when outsiders mingled among the powerless and marginalized peasants and introduced ideology-based mobilization and leadership, did violent peasant movements emerge, but they have been strongly repressed and seem to have petered out in the course of time.¹³

To conclude, although it seems that in some cases specific population groups did not react promptly or with sufficient persuasive power, a gradual change is observed in the course of time. Eventually, if sufficient pressure is exercised upon such groups, or when their livelihood systems become increasingly threatened, patterns of group mobilization may ultimately materialize.

C) The Third Phase: Responses by State Authorities and Other Dominant External Actors

In general, responses by central authorities or dominant national or international interest groups can be ranked on a continuum between sheer repression and accommodation. As a result one can distinguish a mix of both repression and accommodation in each individual conflict case. Moreover, a small number of states apparently managed to steer clear of major violent conflicts during the period under scrutiny (in fact control cases), and such mixtures are equally found. It is therefore highly instructive to identify a number of specific configurations of repression with accommodation.

State responses to group mobilization and interest articulation are tentatively categorized in three broad response patterns, following the subdivision used in the section on power-sharing from chapter IV on political factors. A distinction is made between state repression by violent means,

12) Ajay K. Mehra, *Caste Conflict in India*, paper presented at the International Workshop on Causes of Conflict, held at Hotel Tourmaline, Kandy, Sri Lanka, 3-5 March 1997, p. 7.

13) These violent peasant uprisings materialized in a village called Naxalbari in the Darjeeling district in West Bengal and have subsequently been called the Naxalite uprisings.

selective repression of specific interest groups in society combined with the application of gradual reform, and, finally, states that seek to apply policy reform in order to compensate groups and build genuine state legitimacy.

State Repression

In most conflict cases the reaction of incumbent state elite groups has been of a violent nature. Elite groups in most repressive states are not interested in entertaining an open dialogue with representatives of other sub-state actors, and normal venues for negotiation are ignored. In many cases, the impossibility of participating in political decision-making has contributed to the emergence of armed resistance movements. Once such groups became active militarily, violent repression by the state-controlled security forces or by private armed factions ensued.¹⁴ Although this is generally the privilege of any state, as they have a monopoly on the use of violence, in the context of repressive and exclusionist states violence against any form of opposition was often the sole expression of state discourse towards the population.

Military oppression of opposition and revolutionary groups in Central America was nearly always executed by the army in conjunction with all types of right-wing militia groups and vigilantes. Instead of seeking some form of political compromise with moderate elements within the revolutionary forces, state elite groups sought to crush these forces militarily. Force was mostly applied indiscriminately, without even making a distinction between civilians and armed rebels. This has resulted in a pattern of state-induced terror inflicted upon the majority of the civilian population. Overt force was used in El Salvador, Nicaragua and Guatemala to crush the respective revolutionary movements. In Nicaragua the inability of the Somoza regime even to co-opt the emerging new economic elite groups led to the integration of a broad variety of opposition groups and the eventual downfall of the regime. In El Salvador a military stalemate gradually evolved, as neither the revolutionary coalition nor the military and vigilante groups could secure a military victory. In Guatemala the massive counter-insurgency that resulted in the killing of an estimated 100,000 Mayans, the destruction of hundreds of Mayan villages and the displacement of more than one million refugees resulted in the military defeat of the revolutionary movement, which however managed to continue to operate small-scale guerrillas intrusions.¹⁵ Eventually, in a long-term perspective, the military response of state elite groups proved insufficient to eradicate all guerrilla activities and hence the option of a negotiated settlement was entertained (culminating in the Esquipulas peace negotiations).

14) A plethora of names has been used to designate such forces: vigilantes, civil defence forces, and death squads, etc.

15) Hector Rosada and Margarita Mooney, chapter on Guatemala, in *Central America: Regional Report*, p. 189.

In other regions, some states equally sought to defeat internal opposition forces. Successive military governments in Ghana smothered all popular protest with a display of brutal repression, thus supporting the widespread perception of the 'predator state'. In Nigeria, the predominance of northern military and political power instigated a culture of violent repression of other ethno-linguistic groups under the pretext of securing federal unity against secessionist tendencies. Consequently, in Nigeria all efforts at interest articulation by ethno-linguistic communities were ultimately met by federal military responses. So far, the culture of state repression has been able to contain internal opposition in these countries. In Pakistan, the Punjabi-controlled state and the army have put down internal opposition forcefully. The aspirations of Sind and Baluchistan for greater regional autonomy and decentralization of state power have been crushed violently, thus compromising future efforts at non-violent conflict resolution. As a result, the state has enraged disenfranchised regional elite groups in these cases, strengthened internal dissent and put state legitimacy in jeopardy.

Selective Repression with Mild Reform

Broadly speaking, in a great many cases the state elites (whose interests largely overlap with those of dominant socio-economic groups) resorted to more elaborate response mechanisms combining both targeted violent repression towards specific groups and regions with socio-economic reform policies aiming to defuse popular discontent among contending interest groups. Although this strategy deserves a much broader and comprehensive analysis in the framework of this chapter, a few examples will be highlighted and some general observations drawn. Interestingly, such selective strategies of co-optation and exclusion (even including military oppression) can be observed in all of the regions, albeit with region- and even country-specific features. In Central America the Honduran case has already been highlighted (see the chapter on political factors, the section on power-sharing and exclusion). Honduras is an important example, as it is geographically located amid a cluster of countries that have experienced violent internal conflicts. Because of a combination of selective internal repression and the application of modest land reform, Honduras managed to escape the conflict logic of the sub-region. Many observers also point to the 'soothing' role of the intervening superpower, the United States, which had a vested interest in maintaining stability, since it used Honduras as a military base from which interventions were planned and logistically supported (notably during the Sandinista-contra confrontation in the 1980s). Modest land reform (see chapter III on socio-economic factors, the section on land reform in Honduras) combined with the selective repression of migrants through the so-called *Macha Brava* militias resulted in a safety-valve scenario, protecting the military government and the interests of the traditional landed elite groups and foreign companies. Internal conflict was furthermore siphoned off through the short interstate war with El Salvador. Interest

articulation of labourers was mediated through the 1959 labour code, allowing only one union per company to operate. The labour union federation CTH (Confederation of Workers) was carefully co-opted by the government and helped to channel workers' discontent in a non-violent manner.¹⁶ All of these factors enabled Honduras' elite groups to maintain their relative power position and to dilute popular protest through targeted socio-economic reform, albeit in modest proportions.

In the West African region, the government of Senegal tried to combine suppression of the Diola secessionist movement MFDC by a donor-sponsored socio-economic development scheme. An ambitious regional development programme was initiated, largely funded by USAID. The programme aimed to transform subsistence rice cultivation into large-scale export production and tried to develop a number of alternative sources of income for the rural population of the Basse Casamance region, in which the Diola predominate. Simultaneously, a selective campaign was unleashed against suspected protagonists of the MFDC. However, the government-sponsored development programme failed to address, even marginally, the most important socio-economic grievances espoused by the rebel movement MFDC. Consequently, the crucial issue of land appropriation by the state for tourist resort development was not addressed, nor was attention given to the highly conflict-prone export fisheries' development, from which only migrant groups profited. The rather unfocused and general development programme only benefited scores of expatriates, experts and administrative staff appointed through widely prevalent clientelist practices. The repressive methods resulted in widespread resentment among the Diola, whereas the socio-economic development scheme did not yield substantial results and failed to redress negative popular perceptions about government intentions.¹⁷

In the South Asian region the socio-economic development policies of Bangladesh's military government aimed to gain popular support among the indigenous Pahadees of the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), in order to boost state legitimacy and undermine violent opposition in this remote mountain area. To this effect both administrative reform and targeted development interventions were launched in the CHT region. As can be inferred from the analysis (see the chapter on socio-economic factors, the section on resource-related conflicts, Box 3.1), quite a substantial programme was initiated, resulting in a division among the Pahadee community. Some hardline factions explicitly denounced socio-economic government programmes as the ultimate 'smooth' weapon to destroy Pahadee culture and as a coercive policy to assimilate Pahadee culture into the mainstream lowland Bengali culture.

16) Fernando Zeledon Torres, chapter on Honduras, in *Central America: Regional Report*, pp. 263-264.

17) Ferdinand de Jong, 'Causes of the Casamance Rebellion in Senegal', *West Africa: Regional Report*, pp. 225-236.

However, it needs to be stressed that the Pahadee community is comprised of a large number of distinct tribes, thus facilitating government intrusion in the region and reinforcing the 'divide and rule' tendencies resulting from the mixed policy of repression and socio-economic development. There are about fourteen distinct ethnic communities, which are all said to have distinctive ethno-linguistic identities that are markedly different from the people of the plains of Bangladesh.¹⁸ The fact that some communities, such as the Chakmas, have been affected more severely than others has added an additional dimension to the regional picture. Hence, the Bangladeshi governments were quite successful in the application of a particular mix of repression and reform.

From the three examples highlighted it can be tentatively inferred that no standard options exist for state elites regarding the adoption of a two-pronged strategy of selective repression and targeted socio-economic reform. However, more often than not such strategies have effectively curtailed the propensity towards violent conflict in different countries, under different regime types and different socio-economic circumstances. Nevertheless, the socio-economic policies accompanying selective repression need to address and help resolve, at least marginally, some of the major issues at stake in order to be successful. The Casamance case, among others, demonstrates that a failure to do so might further undermine the legitimacy of external interventions.

Attempts at Reform and Compensation without Violent Repression

Only in rare case did a state elite try to incorporate the interest of disenfranchised groups and to develop and apply institutional reform without taking recourse to violent repression. Only in Costa Rica has a gradual and constant process of reform been implemented, enabling interest articulation of weak groups to become ingrained in the political culture. In fact, the success of Costa Rica in avoiding violent conflict lies in its capacity to emphasize social spending as a share of overall public spending. Education and health thus receive a substantial proportion of the yearly budget, largely to the benefit of poor groups in society. It is generally agreed that the combination of two complementary strategies have facilitated the stability of Costa Rica: first, a strategy aimed at economic diversification was implemented from the 1950s, sustained by improved quality of the labour force; and second, the application of state-financed 'cushions' guaranteed social peace.¹⁹ Nevertheless, the overriding factor seems to have been the incorporation of workers' unions in government-initiated formal negotiation structures, thus institutionalizing and co-opting workers' interest articulation within national decision-making. The

18) Aftab Ahmed, *Ethnic Turmoil in the Chittagong Hill Tracts Region of Bangladesh*, paper presented at the International Workshop on Causes of Conflict, held at Hotel Tourmaline, Kandy, Sri Lanka, 3-5 March 1997, p. 3.

19) Jaime Ordonez, chapter on Costa Rica, in *Central America: Regional Report*, p. 321.

Costa Rican example demonstrates that conscious and consistent policy choices, despite relatively low aggregate levels of income, can help to shape the enabling environment for social stability and help preclude the eventual emergence of possibly violent interest struggles between various groups.

D) The Fourth Phase: Escalation or De-Escalation

The response trajectory of affected groups depends on many factors, but hinges strongly on the ability and willingness of central authorities to engage in political dialogue. Moreover, the ability to organize and to engage in sometimes violent confrontations with strong external actors or local contending groups differs widely among groups. The responses of specific groups are furthermore hardly uniform: factionalism thrives in every conflict setting and many communities are deeply divided over a uniform and appropriate strategy to face external threats. Nevertheless, some general tendencies surfaced during the research. In many cases, non-violent options for conflict resolution became unlikely once states became repressive or when extremist militias retaliated militarily. Moreover, once such movements gained momentum, they had a vested interest in eliminating moderate elements within their respective communities. More often than not, such moderate elements became the prime targets for militia violence. The end result seems to be a continuing tendency towards intransigent extremism, often firmly rooted in identity-based rhetoric. Thus the armed wing of the Chakma resistance movement in Bangladesh attacked moderate representatives of the Pahadee community; and the LTTE in Sri Lanka became renowned for its successful elimination of almost all moderate Tamil opposition representatives. The LTTE started its violent campaign by eliminating moderate TULF party members in the early stages of the conflict.²⁰ In other cases, factional infighting is rampant and all pervasive, and has led to a splintering of armed resistance, largely to the detriment of the affected ethno-linguistic communities concerned. In West Africa, both among the Diola and the Tamajaq, various factions have gradually emerged. In the Casamance region the cleavage between the northern wing of the MFDC and the southern wing has weakened MFDC cohesion and allowed the government to apply 'divide and rule' tactics. A separate agreement with the northern wing was reached, whereas the southern wing remained vehemently opposed to any dealing with the government short of recognizing MFDC claims to regional self-determination. In Niger the initial Tamajaq rebel movement FLAA (*Front de la Libération de l'Air et de l'Azawak*) split into various factions in 1992

20) Kingsley M. De Silva, Table 6.7 in chapter on Sri Lanka, in *South Asia: Regional Report, Part II* (Kandy (Sri Lanka): International Centre for Ethnic Studies; and The Hague: Netherlands Institute of International Affairs 'Clingendael', 1998), pp. 386-389.

because of the differences in social organization and origin of Tamajaq groups, greatly weakening the bargaining position of the FLAA.²¹

A New War Logic: Predatory Policies and War Economics

In general, the tendency towards factional differentiation has in turn provoked the emergence of alternative motives for engaging in violent confrontation with the state and other actors in the regional context. A new war logic has evolved in which actors seek to derive economic benefits not solely to sustain the war effort but in order to acquire wealth and political power. The obliteration of state legitimacy and the ruthless efforts of numerous state elites to appropriate resources set within the homelands of many constituent ethno-linguistic communities has resulted in a loss of legitimacy and provided fertile grounds for recruitment by protagonist armed factions. The combined impact of globalization, the crises of the state, and the increasing use of mercenary armies and so-called security firms by state elites has led to violent resource-related struggles inside poor states.²²

Consequently, in a number of states, notably in sub-Saharan Africa, open state repression and violence implemented by the security forces was directed by local leaders against internal opposition groups, sometimes aiming at specific ethnic groups and thus creating cleavages among groups on the basis of access to or denial of scarce state resources. Such overt and crude clientelist policies had a tremendous impact on the internal security setting of many so-called weak states. This is well documented in Liberia under Samuel Doe by Ellis, who explains that Doe was the first Liberian leader deliberately to divide the population and demolish the existing all-encompassing patronage network of the True Whig Party.²³ Army officers and common soldiers increasingly applied tactics of ordinary plunder and looting in order to supplement their meagre incomes, openly condoned by the strongman in power. This in turn spiralled to a breakdown of law and order, leading to the proliferation of all types of armed bands and groups, hence compromising state legitimacy. Under the cover of international recognition of state sovereignty, and despite the fact that their leaders inflicted suffering upon the population, a resource struggle evolved between various armed factions in which the state elite was just one faction among a whole range of actors. Easily exploitable resources – such as timber, wildlife, minerals, gold, diamonds and oil – became the prime targets for these armed groups in order to secure an income. The local elite groups

21) Hamidou A. Sidikou, 'Les Causes des Conflits au Niger', *West Africa: Regional Report*, p. 94.

22) P.S. Douma, *The Political Economy of Internal Conflict* (The Hague: Netherlands Institute of International Relations 'Clingendael', 2000).

23) See Stephen Ellis, 'The First of the Warlords', *The Mask of Anarchy* (London: Hurst & Company, 1999).

engaged in survival had no interest in long-term structural engagements regarding state-building.

To conclude, the implosion of weak states and the dismantlement of weak state bureaucracies ultimately resulted in overt predatory economies and increased inter-group competition over scarce resources, such as the command over the state itself, allowing international credibility and the generation of external resources. As a result, raw power struggles between contending sub-state groups and elites materialized, such as in the case of Afghanistan after the Soviets withdrew in 1989.

Attempts at De-escalation

Finally, states have in some cases tried to reverse the trajectory towards violent conflict and the trend towards greater extremism among some armed factions. Thus, in Sri Lanka the effects of reforming the constitution were reversed a few years later and the discriminatory impact of proportional representation in higher education was undone. Nevertheless, the LTTE had already gained momentum and the formal reversal of negative policies did not have a significant impact on the dynamics of the internal war. Ultimately, therefore, such efforts to undo the negative impact of selective policies can be safely designated as 'too little, too late'.

Once the response by threatened minorities or distinct sub-state actors has deteriorated into violent opposition towards central authorities, it has proven to be very difficult indeed to reverse the trend.

Conclusions about a Multi-Factor Dynamic Perspective

Historic events, such as internal violent conflicts, are not the outcome of a deterministic development path of unfolding events that supposedly evolve along specific patterns of action and reaction and inevitably either lead to conflict or to de-escalation of tensions between interest groups. The degree to which states are capable of generating sufficient resources in order to satisfy different constituencies and the political willingness to do so determines to a large extent the outcome of domestic disputes mostly waged over material resources and their distribution among the various communities. Therefore, although resource availability at face value plays a crucial role, the political decision-making process determines the allocation of such resources or the distribution of incomes generated through their exploitation.

Although the analysis outlined above gives the impression of a step-by-step escalation without options for settlement and structural changes, it is important to bear in mind that sometimes different steps are present in specific situations and also that leaps back and forth take place in a context-specific dynamic fashion. Ultimately, the analysis can be used to emphasize the potential mobilizing role of resource-related issues within a specific political

context. It seems likely that once a certain momentum has materialized within the conflict dynamic, in which escalation towards violent confrontation takes place, that other, potentially more powerful mobilizing principles are employed in order to face an uncompromising external actor. Nevertheless, sometimes this order is reversed, when political entrepreneurs start a long and mostly violent campaign to achieve economic and political autonomy, often under the pretence of representing the interests of a specific constituency. In the latter case, even well-intended genuine efforts by the central government to incorporate and satisfy group demands might prove to be insufficient to counter the ambitions of new and upwardly mobile political elites.

Violent conflict can consequently be seen as the ultimate strategy for resource protection, resource extraction and resource appropriation by the various contending factions engaged. Once states and dominant elites have lost credibility and legitimacy in the eyes of their citizens, resource-related conflicts easily escalate. In the contemporary context of resource-related violent conflicts, local user groups' entitlement rights are largely ignored, as new emerging war economies deliberately target livelihood systems of local communities and employ tactics of human cleansing and cultural destruction. Such a gloomy conclusion highlights the relevance of political dialogue and a willingness to compromise between state elites and sub-state interest groups. The confrontation between elite groups' exclusionary policies and the claims for power-sharing and resource distribution by all constituent groups within a given polity has set the scene for many domestic violent conflicts in the South. If such conflicts are to be resolved structurally, state legitimacy and genuine resource distribution among constituent groups stand out as pivotal issues to be addressed.

The impact of notably external actors also needs to be taken into account in order to complete the picture of violent domestic conflict. External political and economic meddling in internal conflicts interferes with patterns of domestic political interaction and resource-related struggles between groups, and can thus tilt the balance towards escalation or de-escalation. Powerful foreign interest groups often have a vested interest in the maintenance of specific political regimes in poor states in the South: under the cover of violent conflict it has proven possible to exploit resources and ship them out at relatively low costs. Violent conflicts can ultimately serve as a convenient cover-up for unregulated and cheap resource exploitation to the detriment of the affected countries and indigenous communities concerned.

VII Summary, Major Findings and Conclusions

Political Factors

Different colonial histories and the relatively short period of independence of the countries investigated proved to be important factors for the institutional capacity of states and their capacity to contain conflict. Many of the conflicts studied centred around the political problem of creating or sustaining new states with plural ethnic, religious or cultural societies. They nearly always result from the colonial state systems, which had also been transformed by the post-colonial domestic elite. It was found that incumbent elite groups had in many cases failed to adapt the inherited state structure in order to promote state legitimacy effectively among the constituent units.

In South Asia, India and Sri Lanka had inherited rather efficient state bureaucracies, whereas Pakistan and later Bangladesh had to confront huge challenges in this regard. This difference initially impacted strongly on the capacity of these states to forge national unity and to bolster institutional capacity. Gradually, because of their exclusionist policies, also India and Sri Lanka had to face internal opposition. In West Africa, post-colonial states eventually became merely replicas of the old extractive colonial state systems. In fact, incumbent elites replicated colonial strategies aiming primarily at resource extraction, without developing efficient government institutions. States in Central America have a longer post-colonial history, but nevertheless

failed or did not want to develop sufficient institutional capacity to address exclusionary policies. As a result, the settler-state characteristic of most states persisted, relegating some groups to the status of second-rate citizens and privileging the mixed-blood groups (Creoles).

Even governments that were initially conceived as secular and non-partisan mediators between the various sectors and groups of society have been favouring certain sectors of society (usually their own groups and allies), while excluding or even repressing other ethnic, religious or political groups. The problems that these governments were and are facing are often a result of lack of institutional capacity. This capacity not only refers to state strength or effective rule, but also to acceptance of the concept and authority of the state by all of the groups within it.

Institutional capacity thus encompasses more than just the monopoly over the use of violence. But even in this field the governments of some of the countries investigated seemed unable to perform adequately. The case of Afghanistan can in this regard be referred to as a failed state that has nearly lost its capacity to command internal sovereignty. Other states investigated also showed serious weaknesses and omissions in this regard. In some countries the state is no longer in control of certain areas, which are governed by criminal gangs and 'extortion lords', such as in parts of Bangladesh and Pakistan. In other states we find serious shortcomings in the judiciary, while elsewhere the state fails to deliver basic goods and services to particular areas or sometimes even to the population at large. In Guatemala the indigenous population hardly receives any government support, while in West Africa resources are lacking to maintain a minimum delivery of social services. These weaknesses have impacted on the perception of the state among sub-groups, have led to grievances and subsequently have helped to contribute to the mobilization and the likelihood of violent conflict.

The findings furthermore indicate that institutional presence and strength to control populations, territories, and to implement policies are not sufficient. If a political system is characterized by exclusion and lacks fair and equal access to decision-making and resources at the political centre, a potential for mobilization among excluded groups as well as for violent opposition movements will be created. Under these circumstances ethnic and related cultural identities can easily become politicized, resulting in the emergence of violent rebellions or secessionist tendencies. The easy answer to this problem would seem to be democracy. The studies, however, provide the sobering insight that both authoritarian states and democratic regimes face internal conflict because of these reasons, for example Pakistan as well as India. Democracy and democratization do not seem to guarantee the absence or prevention of violent conflict, since even in democratic systems populist rhetoric can dominate the political agenda. This applies especially to democracies where majorities can be found for exclusionary policies towards minority groups in society, such as seems to have been the case both in India and Sri Lanka. This may especially happen where democratization takes place

along ethno-linguistic or religious fault lines. Policies of power-sharing and devolution of power should be strengthened in order to guarantee the rights of minorities within states as well as their access to decision-making in the centre. The findings indicate that in cases where these aspects were not taken into account, or implemented in too late a stage, conflict could break out and escalate easily.

The findings indicate that for any regime the aspects of consensus, authority, loyalty and consent are important for regime legitimacy and regime survival. A legitimacy deficit can result in violent conflict. This also applies to democracies, where the (for example ethnic) majority is not prepared to share power with minorities or to form coalitions. The mere fact of formally having a democratic order does not yet imply equal access to resources and opportunities for all to participate effectively in politics. The way that democratic governments guarantee the rights and opportunities of minority groups is highly significant when it comes to preventing conflict. When democracies become 'exclusionary' democracies – as happened in India and Sri Lanka – minorities may feel that they have no alternatives than violent opposition to voice their discontent. In Sri Lanka attempts were eventually made to stem the tide and to try to re-establish legitimate authority over all of the groups. Unfortunately, it seems that such policies may well fail to reach their aim, as the conflict dynamic has spun out of control. The timeliness of implementing laws that guarantee minority rights and equal position within the state proved to be an important factor. In some African countries it was prohibited in the constitution to organize political parties along ethnic lines. These cases, however, indicate that neither the suppression of sub-state identities nor types of one-party systems provide an answer to this problem, besides both having other disadvantages from a democratic point of view. The failure of both democratic and authoritarian systems indicates that simple power-sharing systems do not suffice.

Power-sharing has been applied in different ways in the various countries studied. Again, there seem to be no clear-cut formulae that determine a specific outcome. Only outright repression or very limited forms of co-optation seem to lead to violent confrontations between elite groups and other sub-state actors. Such policies surely fail to address the aspirations of the majority of groups and sectors. Some mixed forms of both repression and limited political reform, surprisingly, seem to have precluded violent conflict, as has been testified by the cases of Honduras and Ghana. However, it is difficult to predict whether such arrangements will hold in the long run. Inclusive forms of power-sharing may at face value seem to be a guarantee for peaceful negotiations between groups, but in reality there are many differences between states that advocate such an approach. Again, the element of time seems important, since both India and Sri Lanka seem gradually to have developed less transparent and limited forms of power-sharing. This has antagonized certain groups and provoked violent conflicts, for example the Nagas and Assamese in India and the Tamils in Sri Lanka. Nevertheless, the concept of power-sharing needs to

be analysed more thoroughly at various levels in order to understand such patterns of transformation.

The issue of legitimacy is not limited to ethno-linguistic, religious or other types of cultural factors. In yet other countries, military dictatorships or authoritarian regimes that lacked legitimacy and only served the interests of those in power and their immediate friends and allies have been seen. Notably, in a number of Central American states (Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador) an alliance between military and economic elite groups has materialized, commonly referred to as the military-oligarchic regimes. In West Africa military regimes themselves developed into economic elites and took over control from civilians for substantial periods of time. In some cases, such as Nigeria and Ghana, these regimes even turned into so-called predatory states that extracted resources and exploited and suppressed their populations. It will be evident that such behaviour undermines the legitimacy of the political centre, and ultimately even the whole concept of the state itself may be endangered.

With regard to the political factors, the findings also indicate the importance of having a close look at the actors involved. The central role of the state and the effect of state policies on the origin of conflict have already been indicated. The state, by consequence, is central to any solution of these problems. The role of the state, however, cannot be separated from the role of non-state actors and that of external actors (neighbouring countries and the international community). The state's capacity to deliver seems, for example, to have eroded even further as a consequence of the IMF and World Bank-sponsored structural adjustment programmes.

On the intrastate level, governments are often confronted with more or less evolutionary developments – indicated in the research as power transitions – which might lead to violent conflicts as they fan tensions among groups in society. In the case of demographic- and migratory-induced power transitions, newcomers eventually take over power at the political centre to the detriment of the old elite. This process can easily lead to violent conflicts, as the case of the north-eastern Indian states has demonstrated. In some cases, changes in the economic power structure may lead to power transitions. This has clearly been the case in Nicaragua, where a new economic elite emerged which played a decisive role both in the ascendancy to power of the Sandinistas as well as in engineering its downfall. The way in which these processes develop depends to a large extent on the way in which these groups are included in the process of policy-making in the centre. If gradual and emancipating power transitions are based on exclusionary ideologies and policies, and if power-sharing fails, minorities within states will become threatened and may as a result aim for autonomy, violent resistance or secession. In other cases, elites that feel threatened may resort to repression or violent action to defend their position or to react against the relative deprivation that they are undergoing. However, from a policy point of view, power transitions seem to be amenable to a certain degree of engineering and management.

Socio-Economic Factors

A clear and persistent relationship between poverty and conflict could not be demonstrated in any of the regions or countries investigated. In India, for example, violence occurred in poverty-stricken areas such as Bihar, as well as in economically advanced areas such as the Punjab. Conflict could also occur among better-off groups as well as less-privileged ones. Poverty, however, did seem to function occasionally as a mobilizing factor, especially when poverty coincided with ethnic, linguistic, religious or other characteristics of groups in society, and when the backwardness of these groups was perceived as a result of identity politics and conscious, discriminatory government policies. On the one hand, this seems to indicate that the dynamics of differentiation *vis-à-vis* other (competing) groups in society matters more than absolute levels of poverty. On the other hand, the dynamics matter even more when they overlap with the political dimension of conflict, that is, exclusionary policies.

Patterns of inequality between rich and poor regions cannot be directly related to patterns of violent conflict. Even where patterns of regional inequality coincide with the presence of distinct ethno-linguistic identities, no consistent causal pathway to violence can be ascertained. However, when resources are taken into account, notably land, the findings indicate that if scarcity operates in a specific geographical configuration (a distinct ethno-linguistic group inhabiting a specific region), the likelihood of violent conflict *vis-à-vis* other groups becomes a likely outcome. If resource extraction is managed by incumbent state elites to the detriment of local constituencies inhabiting such regions, and if such extraction is disadvantageous to local beneficiaries, violent conflict may be the end result of a process of local interest articulation. In fact, such patterns of exploitation without compensation can be used as powerful mobilizing factors.

The phenomenon of relative deprivation stands out as an important mobilizing principle. This process, in which groups that were earlier predominant and that are losing their erstwhile more powerful positions to other contenders for power and resources, creates tensions that can turn violent, as was evidenced in more than one case. Again, it is the dynamic element that turns inequality into a risk factor. This also has to be seen in connection with the institutional capacity of the government, since the state is often unable to distribute social services and jobs. Its performance in the delivery of goods, services and jobs can alter situations of socio-economic inequality. However, attempts by the government to alleviate inequality between distinct groups in society can also work as a double-edged sword. Those who lagged behind will welcome such measures. Those who perceive this as a zero-sum game will try to wreck such policies, especially when it affects their privileges. This has notably been the case in Pakistan where the Mohajir community felt marginalized by the state, and also in Sri Lanka where the Tamil minority lost its erstwhile privileged position in the state bureaucracy. The state thus has to strike a delicate balance in dealing with

these issues in order to prevent perceptions of forced affirmative action at the cost of other groups.

Economic factors, in and by themselves, cannot be directly related to the outbreak of violent conflict. The regional overview of economic dynamics reveals different dynamics of growth and decline, irrespective of the conflict dynamics. However, if economic stagnation or decline overlaps with other developments, such dynamics may sometimes contribute to the genesis of violent conflict. The JVP uprisings in Sri Lanka show that a stagnating economy and a shrinking labour market in combination with the effects of a demographic youth bulge can result in economic deprivation and alienation. In this way economic decline and stagnation provide mobilizing incentives for extremist leadership.

External Factors

External factors mostly seem to serve as aggravating factors that may prolong conflicts once they have started or may increase the costs of such conflicts. During the period under investigation in the three regions studied, two cases of superpower meddling can be identified: the Soviet invasion in Afghanistan; and the US-supported contra war. The interventions of these superpowers had a strong impact on these conflicts once domestic belligerents had succeeded in drawing in external support.

On the aggregate level, interference between neighbouring states continues to be strongly related to the unfinished business of defining boundaries that date back to the colonial era. These lingering issues sometimes provide a readily available pretext for ambitious power elites, who seek to further their own strategic interests. Nevertheless, these boundary issues remain highly volatile and conflict-prone. In other cases, neighbours are used as convenient scapegoats to draw attention away from domestic crises or structural problems facing such regimes. Regimes also sometimes engage in external intervention in order to support kinfolk that inhabit border areas in neighbouring states.

Economic external meddling by the superpowers has as a rule been a corollary of military and political interventions. Friendly regimes were economically propped up by means of generous financial aid flows. Multilateral economic interventions have had mixed results in the three regions studied. The implementation of structural adjustment policies cannot directly be linked with the outbreak of violent conflict. In a number of cases, however, such conditions helped incumbent elites to maintain their patronage networks while simultaneously marginalizing other groups in local society. The implementation of austerity measures provided such elite groups with an excuse to withhold government services and to downsize the fragile socio-economic sector.

From a regional perspective, the external dimensions in South Asia have to do with the dominant position of India compared to its neighbours and the

fact that South Asia has always been a prime target for major external political powers. This culminated in the past in the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and US support to mujahidin forces. All of the neighbouring states are at present involved in one way or another in the Afghanistan imbroglio. This again indicates the problem of classifying conflicts as intrastate or interstate.

Another relationship that dominates the region concerns the tension between India and Pakistan. This has resulted in an arms race between the two countries, which has now entered a new level with the recent explosion of nuclear devices. This new level of nuclear threat has shifted the formerly interstate tension between these two states to the plane of a global problem. The recent attacks by Muslim extremists on the Indian parliament and the US's ousting of the Taliban regime have added a new dimension to the animosity between India and Pakistan. On a regional level, the protracted character of many conflicts in the region has created new actors. Some of these actors – such as the LTTE in Sri Lanka and some of the extremist Muslim movements in Kashmir – have strategic interests to continue violent confrontations in a bid to acquire power or profit through a whole range of illicit activities. This is a problem that requires not only regional cooperation, but also extra-regional involvement.

The regional security setting in Africa was relatively quiet in the period immediately after independence, but has witnessed a proliferation of intrastate conflicts in recent decades. The relative peace on the interstate level is remarkable, since the interstate borders were largely a result of colonial state formation and the arbitrary delineation of borders in that period. It is even more remarkable as this also resulted in incongruities between ethno-linguistic communities and problems of resource distribution between those communities. At the end of the 1980s Senegal experienced external meddling by two of its neighbours, provoking the military assault on the state's security forces by the southern rebel movement MFDC. Senegal in turn intervened in the affairs of Guinea Bissau when an internal conflict broke out. The dividing line between interstate and intrastate conflict, however, seems to have become totally blurred in Africa by the most recent developments in Sierra Leone and Liberia.

Another factor of importance in the West African region has been the influence of France. This former colonial power continues to be heavily involved in the politics and economies of most of the francophone countries, but gradually sees its influence wane. The position of Nigeria has meanwhile become more prominent as a regional superpower. In recent years Nigeria has become an important player, as can be inferred from its involvement in the various ECOMOG interventions in Liberia and Sierra Leone.

Central America's security setting has always been characterized by the continuous political and economic interference of the United States, whose influence in the region increased during the Cold War. Superpower contradictions turned into an all-out proxy war in the region after the Sandinista revolution took place in Nicaragua. Most external military support

was generally, however, in response to intrastate conflicts once they had emerged, and not so much preceding and causing them. The region has furthermore suffered from instability as a result of internal conflicts in four countries. Meddling among neighbouring states in this region is strongly related to the threat perception of the regime concerned. During the height of the conflict history in the Central American region, and in view of the relatively small size of the countries concerned and their geographical proximity, neighbours feared spillover from conflicts located in adjoining countries and consequently tried to prop up specific parties among the belligerents that could somehow help to contain such possible threats.

Conclusions

Conflicts have historical, dynamic and multidimensional causes. Analysis of the various conflict cases leads to the conclusion that complex sets of factors can be identified that can be held accountable for their outbreak, duration and eventual settlement. An important overall finding is that although there are certainly distinct causes that facilitate the emergence of violent conflict, causes can also change over time and are as much a product of the perception of the protagonist parties than objective reasons to fight one another. Causes of conflict sometimes seem to be rather ephemeral phenomena as they are the context-specific outcome of historical, political, socio-economic and cultural processes that have simultaneously shaped the course and outcome of these violent confrontations.

All of the conflicts are caused by region-, country- and even group-specific constellations of factors. Conflicts involve a multitude of actors, ranging from incumbent state elites, foreign governments, and international organizations to rebel groups. Although it is hard to determine the most important single contributing factor, the cluster of political factors stands out as the most salient with regard to the possible outbreak of violent conflict. The degree of state legitimacy and the way in which incumbent elites try to apply power-sharing formulae have time and again resurfaced as pivotal political factors.

In summary, it can be concluded that the political dimension studied in the various conflict cases was a powerful determinant of or contributor to violence. It was, in contrast, a salient and perhaps surprising result of the study that socio-economic factors in and of themselves were not such determinant or pivotal factors with regard to the outbreak of conflict. However, despite the salience of these political factors, the emergence of so-called mobilizing factors proved essential to account for the dynamics that eventually led to violent conflict. This finding implies that the presence of proximate causes is a necessary precondition needed to mobilize constituencies into possibly collective violent response towards protagonist groups or the state.

The political aspects are most salient when explaining the outbreak and course of violent conflict in the Third World. The institutional capacity of the

state and adequate processes of power-sharing and transition are important factors. The cases lend support to the notion that the likelihood of conflict diminishes with an increase of the state's institutional capacity. This not only refers to institutional presence and the instrumental strength of the state to control its populations and territories or to implement policies. This can even be achieved without popular backing and by the use of force and coercion. It rather does mean legitimacy: an evaluation of the state in terms of its performance, and acceptance among the groups and areas under its control.

Power-sharing is closely related to institutional capacity and refers to the way in which groups constituting the community of a state are represented and able to participate in politics in all of its dimensions, including access to state-allocated funds and services and decision-making at the different levels in society. The failure of states to grant rights to minority groups has led in general to violent conflict in all three regions, although in Asia and Africa these were primarily based on identity politics and in Central America more on ideological divisions. Once these violent situations have emerged, however, they are difficult to reverse, even if concessions are eventually made by the state. Although the concrete grievances, tensions and type of conflicts vary, there is strong support for the notion that lack of power-sharing – or the implementation of conscious policies of marginalization and exclusion by the state – contribute to violent conflict. When such conflicts are identity-related they become very difficult to handle. The studies also support the notion that rapid power transitions or the sudden or gradual loss of power by erstwhile predominant groups may lead to violent reactions.

Absolute levels of poverty, inequality and lack of economic growth or progress did not show a clear co-variance with the prevalence of violent conflict and armed struggle. They certainly became relevant in a number of situations, but this was nearly always in combination with other factors, such as identity politics, discriminatory or exclusionary government policies, or the relative improvement of other groups in society compared with the relative decline of one's own (that is, relative deprivation). Such issues also often required an ideological context, leadership or political entrepreneurs before people rallied around them. Poverty and inequality can therefore best be qualified as mobilizing and/or aggravating factors in combination with other factors of a mainly political nature. This raises questions as to the exact relationship between economic factors and conflict, between poverty and conflict and between such an issue as resource scarcity in the future and chances for conflict. Is there a conceivable moment when economic factors become an issue in themselves, or do poverty, inequality, economic decline and resource scarcity always have to be mediated through a process of political mobilization or incensed by identity politics, exclusion and discrimination, before they become conflict-prone? It seems that the empirical study of a great number of conflict cases, set in different regions, supports the latter view that political mobilization indeed seems to take place on the basis of perceived and real grievances among sub-state actors.

The role of external factors has been important in a number of conflicts where there was direct military interference by external powers, but in most cases the contribution of external factors has been more indirect. Military aid was mostly given once the conflict had started and, at the most, increased the duration and intensity of the conflict. Economic interference has never led to the outbreak of conflict directly, but massive economic aid has propped up the parties involved in conflict and in this manner prolonged the struggle in some cases. Superpower meddling has led to proxy wars in some instances. Mostly, however, external meddling was more diffuse, in which outside interventions and covert actions have intensified or prolonged the conflict.

In many conflicts the major issues underlying violent group strategies from time to time seemed to be converted into other issues. For instance, in the contemporary conflict history of East Pakistan and later Bangladesh, religion was first used as a mobilizing factor during the Partition and language was later used as a mobilizing factor to distinguish the Bengalis from the West Pakistanis during the struggle for Bangladeshi independence from Pakistan. However, underlying grievances could be identified in the uneven access of Bengalis to political decision-making, in view of the fact that they constituted the majority population group in the federation and that they contributed more than half of the economic output of the state. Mostly, therefore, causes of conflict seem to be related to both group grievances and to group characteristics. Such causes become 'convenient' carriers for group mobilization and seem to be intimately linked to the nature of the political discourse prevalent in a specific region or country. The most conflict-prone or volatile reasons, those that ultimately motivate groups of people into violent action, largely seem to be couched in identity-related group characteristics, such as ethnic identity, language and religion. Nevertheless, in and by themselves such characteristics did not lead to violent confrontations but mostly the **political translations of such features in terms of threats to group livelihood systems, resources, entitlements and ultimately group survival**. As a result, many conflicts emerged from the outcome of a political process evolving around resource-related issues and the distribution of government services, but were couched largely in identity-related rhetoric. It seems that patterns of action and response among state elite groups themselves, or between power elites in general and subservient groups within states concerning the way in which resources are appropriated or how the benefits derived from their exploitation are divided between them, have important consequences for the emergence of conflict-prone scenarios.

Conclusions about a Dynamic Conflict Perspective

Analysis of conflict dynamics has consequently resulted in the identification of a number of salient additional conclusions. The study on the transition from the so-called tensing phase to the escalating phase has generated some tentative insights (see chapter VI on a multi-factor dynamic). Conflict cycles consist of a

number of action and response phases that result from political decision-making and perceptions among dominant elite groups and subservient sub-state actors. Once a certain critical threshold has been passed, mostly when policies imposed by dominant elite groups are perceived as unjust, escalation towards violent confrontation gradually takes place. In order to mobilize support, potentially powerful mobilizing principles – such as language, religion and ethnic identity – are employed by leaders of affected sub-groups in order to face an uncompromising external actor.

From the Central American study we might conclude that a mixture of repression and reform can suffice to prevent the transition from tension to escalation of conflict. From this case we might infer that there are critical thresholds of repression and lack of reform that, when passed, lead to the further escalation of conflict. The lack of avenues for effective political participation of the population, combined with the refusal of the landholding elite to engage even in modest forms of land reform in the countries that have experienced conflict, have been forwarded as pivotal factors in this regard. In Honduras the selective repression of so-called extremist political movements, combined with a rather successful but gradual and limited process of land reform, as well as a bipartisan political process, have provided a safeguard against further escalation of existing social conflict within society. Nevertheless, some preconditions need to be present for such a 'model' to be effective, including the presence of uncultivated or idle lands (that is, space for expansion without fundamentally touching upon the landholdings of the elite). Another country that succeeded in containing conflict is Costa Rica, which institutionalized corporate agreements between social sectors in society and therefore possesses an inbuilt capacity for reform.

In South Asia the transition from one phase to another is less uniform in character, although some general features can be distinguished. In many internal conflicts the question of political and cultural autonomy seems pivotal, as most states feel threatened by the potentially centrifugal forces of even modest demands from distinct communities. The ways in which such demands have been handled in the recent past have proven inadequate, and have in turn often led to further escalation of demands. Many violent conflicts have emerged in which seemingly powerless minorities have taken on the state militarily (such as in Naga, Mizoram, Assam in north-east India and the Chittagong Hill Tracts insurgency in Bangladesh). In other cases the historical heritage from the undoing of the British colonial empire still lingers on and accounts to a large extent for the intractability of some disputes in the region (such as Kashmir, the China-India border dispute, and the Durand Line issue between Pakistan and Afghanistan). Socio-economic stratification and a lack of upward mobility have also led to violent conflicts (for example, the JVP uprisings in Sri Lanka, and Naxalite movements in India and Bangladesh). Finally, relative deprivation has given impetus to some specific conflicts (such as the Mohajir movements in Pakistan, and the Tamil-Sinhala conflict) or have reinforced existing conflicts (as with the Sikh Jat caste in the Punjab conflict).

States in West Africa are still involved in a struggle to obtain legitimacy from their multicultural populations. At the same time these relatively new states (independent as of the end of the 1950s and the beginning of the 1960s) prove incapable of distributing resources to all of their constituents. In West Africa the states also refuse cultural pluralism. The refusal to allow for pluralism is the result of state elite groups, which do not allow even modest degrees of cultural plurality. Again, the potential threat of centrifugal forces resulting from such pluralism leads to the use of the military for coercive unification. In several cases the use of this 'instrument' eventually paved the way for violent opposition to the state. Escalation to violence set in when economic crises stretched the clientelist capacity of ruling elites to co-opt sufficient support in society. Thus when the ecological crises impacted on specific groups in the Sahel countries, there was no concerted effort by the government to counterbalance their suffering. This factor, combined with a widely perceived image of cultural subjugation, has catapulted these groups into violent resistance, such as the Tamajaq in Niger. The Nigerian Biafra crisis evolved as a direct result of the self-proclaimed independence of this region, following ethnic scapegoating of the Igbo in other parts of the country and the intransigence of the northern-led federal government to compromise on more autonomy for this oil-rich region in the south.

In the case of Ghana, internal repression was omnipresent, widespread and directed at many different social groups in society but did not lead to unified internal violent opposition. Instead, many people fled the country to live in Nigeria and Europe, whereas other citizens developed different opting-out mechanisms that made life bearable. Repression hence sometimes seems quite effective in counteracting escalation into violent internal conflict. Repression, however, is unable to resolve the underlying tensions and perspectives on effective settlements. Repression at best forestalls violent conflict for some time. This is amply demonstrated in various cases in South Asia (as in the north-eastern states in India), as well as in Central America (for example, the Somoza regime in Nicaragua).

To conclude, it can tentatively be inferred that in general the refusal of the state elites to arrive at some type of power-sharing arrangement, even on a limited scale or regarding a specific cultural feature, heralds the escalation of conflict. Modest accommodations prove insufficient or untimely to stem the tide, thus resulting in 'too little, too late'.

Studying the transition from the escalating phase to the de-escalation of conflict and the subsequent settlement phase reveals that assessment of the contending parties' military power, as well as the contending parties' war weariness, plays an important role. In the latter case, all of the parties involved constantly lose out in terms of potential gains and benefits, as the losses inflicted are not counterbalanced by profits. From the Central American region we have learned that the development of a so-called military stalemate plays a crucial role in the willingness of the fighting parties to negotiate a settlement. In Latin America the left-wing and socialist movements of the 1960s and 1970s

finally opted for a 'bourgeois' settlement instead of a revolutionary victory. This phenomenon can be observed in all of the conflicts in the Central American region, albeit in different periods. The case of El Salvador clearly stands out, since both the government and the insurgents held possession of vast areas but were unable to secure military victory over each other.

A similar trend can be observed in West Africa, especially when looking at the Tamajaq rebellion in Mali and Niger. Both of the governments and the Tamajaq populations suffered severe material losses during the conflict and none of the parties could enforce a military victory. In this case, however, external state actors provided additional incentives to the contending parties to lay down their arms, thus facilitating and encouraging settlement. In Senegal the protracted conflict in the Casamance has also experienced various efforts at conflict mediation, but here specific sub-groups, in the Casamance as well as in the centre, are still convinced that a military 'solution' can be reached. The Senegalese military forces have tried to crush the MFDC movement militarily on various occasions, but have failed. Within the MFDC, the fragmentation into sub-groups has worsened the perspectives for negotiations and external mediation, as it has proven difficult to find common ground.

Meanwhile, the majority of conflicts in South Asia have not yet reached a settlement phase, although promising negotiations are currently being entertained between the Sri Lankan government and the LTTE. In many cases the state chooses military action to enforce a 'settlement' (for example, the use of the Indian army in the various rebellious regions like the Punjab, and the Mohajir MQM movement by combined security forces in Pakistan), or is forced to resort to violence for self-survival (as with the Sri Lankan government during the JVP uprisings). However, in most conflict cases a further escalation of violence as a result of such interventions is witnessed. Many conflicts also seem to develop a dynamic of their own when newly emerging power elites that represent a rebellious or separatist movement tend to gain financially by the continuation of warfare through the operation of particular forms of war economy (such as the drugs trade, arms trafficking and money laundering).

Obviously, the willingness to arrive at a negotiated settlement is closely related to the perception of one's own power position in a conflict and the potential gains and losses stemming from such an agreement as opposed to the continuation of violent conflict. Internal as well as external actors should focus more closely on these perceptions and should try to influence them more effectively.

Annexe I Central America

Poverty and Income

Table 1 Structure of Income Distribution (Nicaragua)¹

	1970	1980
bottom 20%	n.d.	3.0
30% under the median	15.0	13.0
30% over the median	25.0	26.0
top 20%	60.0	58.0

1) IICA & FLACSO, *Centroamérica en cifras* (San José: Servicio Editorial IICA, 1991), p. 117, tbl. 1.1.

Table 2 Proportion of the Population in a State of Poverty (Nicaragua)²

	1980	1985
Extreme poverty	34.7	37.7
Cannot cover basics	26.8	31.0
Total	61.5	68.7
Not poor	38.5	31.3

Table 3 Income Distribution in El Salvador³ (1970 U.S. dollars)

	1961	1970	1980
Poorest 20%	5.5	3.7	2.0
30% below the median	10.5	14.9	10.0
30% above the median	22.6	30.6	22.0
Wealthiest 20%	63.3	50.8	66.0

Table 4 Growth of Poverty in the 1980s (Guatemala)⁴

	Extreme Poverty	Not Meet Basics	Total Poor	Not Poor
Total				
1980	39.6	31.5	71.1	28.9
1986/7	64.0	18.5	82.6	17.4
Urban				
1980	16.8	30.2	47.0	53.0
1986/7	55.2	11.9	67.1	32.9
Rural				
1980	51.5	32.2	83.7	16.3
1986/7	70.0	23.0	93.0	7.0

2) IICA & FLACSO, *Cifras*, p. 121, tpls. 1.9 & 1.10.

3) CEPAL, *Centroamérica: evolución económica desde la posguerra* (Mexico City: CEPAL/MEX/ODE/34, January 1980), p. 18; Subsede de la CEPAL en México, "Centroamérica: bases de una política de reactivación y desarrollo", *Revista de la CEPAL*, no. 28 (April 1986), p. 18.

4) IICA-FLASCO, *Centroamérica en cifras*, p. 121.

Table 5 National Income Distribution (Guatemala)⁵

<i>Strata</i>	<i>1970</i>	<i>1980</i>
Poorest 20%	4.9	5.3
Next 30% below median	12.5	14.5
Next 30% above median	23.8	26.1
Richest 20%	58.8	54.1

Table 6 Growth of Poverty in the 1980s (Honduras)⁶

	<i>Extreme Poverty</i>	<i>Not Meet Basics</i>	<i>Total Poor</i>	<i>Not Poor</i>
Total				
1980	56.7	11.5	68.1	31.9
1985	56.9	21.9	78.8	21.2
Urban				
1980	30.6	13.3	43.9	56.1
1985	32.0	29.3	61.3	38.7
Rural				
1980	69.7	10.5	80.2	19.8
1985	73.3	17.1	90.4	9.6

Socio-economic Inequality

Table 7 National Income Distribution (Honduras)⁷

<i>Strata</i>	<i>1970</i>	<i>1980</i>
Poorest 20%	3.0	4.3
Next 30% below median	7.7	12.7
Next 30% above median	21.6	23.7
Richest 20%	67.7	59.3

5) IICA-FLASCO, p. 117.

6) IICA-FLASCO, p. 121.

7) IICA-FLASCO, p. 117.

Table 8 Urban Income Distribution (Honduras)⁸

Quintile ^{a)}	1967	1970	1980	1990
Quintile 1 (poorest)	2.0	4.0	4.0	3.9
Quintile 2	4.6	13.4	15.0	8.3
Quintile 3	7.5	--	--	12.8
Quintile 4	16.2	27.8	28.0	20.0
Quintile 5 (richest)	69.7	54.8	53.0	55.0

^{a)} Data for 1970 and 1980 do not correspond exactly to quintiles; rather, the amount indicated for quintile 2 corresponds in fact to the 30% below the median and quintile 4 corresponds to the 30% above the median.

Table 9 Estimation of Income Distribution by Home (Costa Rica)⁹

Quintile	1971	1981	1988	1990	1994
Poorest 20%	3.3	6.8	6.4	5.7	5.8
Next 20%	8.7	12.1	10.8	12.1	11.6
Next 20%	13.3	16.7	16.2	17.0	16.4
Next 20%	19.9	24.5	23.3	24.5	22.7
Richest 20%	54.8	40.1	43.3	40.7	43.5
Gini Coefficient	0.49	0.328	0.36	0.45	nd

Table 10 Rural and Urban Poverty (El Salvador)¹⁰

	percentage of population		
	National	Rural	Urban
1980			
Extreme poverty	50.6	55.4	44.5
Can't cover the basics	17.5	21.0	13.1
<i>Subtotal</i>	68.1	76.4	57.6
Not poor	31.9	23.6	42.4
1985			
Extreme poverty	51.4	60.0	40.0
Can't cover the basics	35.4	32.0	40.0
<i>Subtotal</i>	86.9	92.0	80.0
Not poor	13.1	8.0	20.0

8) Table elaborated based on data for 1967 from *Statistical Abstract of Latin America*, vol. 24, tbl. 1985; and for 1990 and 1992 from Stat. Y.B. Lat. Am. (CEPAL).

9) Source: Juan Diego Treios, 1995 (based on original sources and CEPAL 1987).

10) IICA-FLASCO, *Centroamérica en cifras*, pp. 121, 123, 125.

Annexe II West Africa

Poverty and Income

Table 1 Income Distribution in Nigeria (1960-1990)

<i>Category</i>	<i>1960 (%)</i>	<i>1970 (%)</i>	<i>1980 (%)</i>	<i>1990 (%)</i>
Lowest 20%	7.0	8.5	9.5	5.1
Highest 10%	48.5	49.0	46.3	34.2
Highest 20%	60.9	65.0	58.6	49.0

Source: World Bank (1993).

Socio-economic Inequality

Table 2 Poids démographique des Départements et investissements réalisés de 1976 à 1990 (Niger)

Département	% population (1988)	% Total investissements 1976-1990
CU Niamey	5,5	27,8
Tillabéry	18,4	21,1
Tahoua	18,0	14,7
Zinder	19,5	12,1
Maradi	19,2	6,4
Agadez	2,8	4,5
Dosso	14,1	7,2
Diffa	2,6	6,2
Total	100,1	100,0

Source: Contribution du Ministère du Plan pour la préparation de la Conférence Nationale (Mai 1001: 120).

Table 3 School Attendance by Region, 1960 and 1970 (% of Population Aged 6 year and over) (Ghana)

Year	Accra Capital District	East-ern	Ash-anti	Vol-ta	Cen-tral	West-ern	Brong Ahafo	North-ern	Up-per
1960	47	35	33	34	28	23	20	6	4
1970	77	74	73	65	62	71	62	19	24

Source: Government of Ghana, *Information Digest* 1997.

Table 4 Government investments during VIth Plan, 1981-1985 (Senegal) (in millions Franc CFA)

Cap-Vert	155,103
Casamance	41,490
Diourbel	7,698
Fleuve	42,549
Louga	17,408
Sénégal Oriental	27,078
Sine Saloum	38,803
Thiès	68,105
Non-localized	66,896
Total	463,847

Source: Darbon (1988), p. 206.

Annexe III South Asia

Poverty and Income

Table 1 Estimates of the Rural Headcount of Poverty by the 'Expert Group' (India)

State	1073/4	1983	1993/4	% change from 1973/4 to 1993/4
Andhra Pradesh	48.4	26.5	16.0	- 66.9
Assam	52.7	42.6	45.0	- 14.6
Bihar	63.0	64.4	58.0	- 7.9
Gujarat	46.4	29.8	22.2	- 52.2
Haryana	34.2	20.6	28.7	- 16.7
Karnataka	55.1	36.3	28.2	- 48.8
Kerala	59.2	39.0	25.9	- 56.3
Madhya Pradesh	62.7	48.9	40.8	- 34.9
Maharashtra	57.7	45.2	38.6	- 33.1
Orissa	67.3	67.5	49.9	- 25.9
Punjab	28.2	13.2	12.5	- 55.7
Rajasthan	44.8	33.5	27.5	- 38.6
Tamil Nadu	57.4	54.0	32.6	- 43.2
Uttar Pradesh	56.5	46.5	42.6	- 24.6
West Bengal	73.2	63.1	40.3	- 44.9
All India	56.4	45.6	37.5	- 33.5

Source: Sen Abhijit, 'Economic Reforms, Employment and Poverty Trends and Options', *Economic and Political Weekly*, September 1996.

Table 2 Selected Socio-Economic Indicators on the States of India

State	Adult Literacy Rate (+ 15) 1991	Infant Mortality Rate 1993	Life Expectancy at Birth 1993	State Product per capita (Rs.) 1993	Human Development Index
Andhra P.	40.1	64	60.5	5,718	41
Assam	49.4	81	54.9	5,310	39
Bihar	38.2	70	58.5	3,084	34
Gujarat	56.7	58	60.0	7,175	48
Haryana	49.9	66	63.1	9,171	51
Himchal P.	50.9	63	63.6	5,979	51
Karnataka	52.2	67	61.8	6,443	47
Kerala	86.0	13	71.8	5,768	63
Madhya P.	41.8	106	54.0	4,733	37
Maharashtra	60.3	50	64.2	9,628	55
Orissa	46.4	110	55.5	4,097	37
Punjab	51.8	55	66.3	11,106	55
Rajasthan	36.1	82	57.9	5,086	37
T' Nadu	50.6	57	62.4	6,663	51
Uttar P.	38.4	93	55.8	4,273	36
W. Bengal	57.1	58	61.5	5,775	45
India	48.7	74	59.3	6,255	43

'Human Development Index' is a composite index worked out using a method similar (but modified to suit data availability) to that employed by the UNDP in its international estimates.

Source: Population Foundation of India, New Delhi, 1996.

Table 3 Income Distribution in Sri Lanka (% of total income accounted for by each income decile)

Decile	1963	1973	1978/79	1981/82	1986/87
Lowest	1.8	1.8	1.2	1.2	1.1
2nd	2.7	3.2	2.6	2.5	2.5
3rd	3.6	4.4	3.6	3.4	3.4
4th	4.6	5.7	4.8	4.5	4.4
5th	5.6	7.1	5.9	5.5	5.7
6th	6.8	8.8	7.4	6.9	6.8
7th	9.0	10.6	9.1	8.5	8.4
8th	11.5	12.7	11.4	10.7	11.1
9th	16.0	15.9	15.4	14.9	15.4
Highest	39.2	30.0	38.7	41.9	41.4

Source: Central Bank of Ceylon/Sri Lanka.

Note: The estimates are based on average monthly income per 'income receiver' (a parameter common to all the surveys from which the estimates have been derived).

Socio-economic Inequality

Table 4 Income Distribution & People Below the Poverty Line (Bangladesh)

Income Distribution	1974	1975	1981	1985	1991	1992
Ratio of highest 20% to lowest 20%		6		4.3	3.7	
Gini Co-efficient:						
- National	0.36		0.39	0.37	0.34	
- Urban	0.35		0.36	0.36		
- Rural	0.38		0.40	0.37		
Population below poverty level						
- National						45
- Rural	53		74	51		48
- Urban	81		66	56		44

Source: Government of Bangladesh, *Country Paper Bangladesh*, World Summit for Social Development, Copenhagen, Denmark, March 1985, p. 85.

Table 5 A Comparative Picture of Per Capita GDP in Different Regions of Bangladesh (at constant price in US\$)

Year/Region	1981-82	1984-85	1987-88	1990-91	1993-94
Dhaka	204	161	173	187	210
Mymensingh	136	142	151	150	165
Jamalpur	158	166	168	172	192
Tangail	151	152	159	161	178
Faridur	127	140	163	173	185
Comilla	129	140	154	165	178
Sylhet	167	165	168	184	193
Noakhali	126	136	137	143	153
Chittagong	224	245	260	267	299
<i>CHT</i>	670	501	536	545	556
Rajshahi	122	130	130	155	166
Dinajpur	137	146	151	176	177
Rangpur	123	140	143	153	159
Bogra	143	157	160	180	188
Pabna	121	125	121	134	140
Khulna	172	182	187	200	221
Barisal	149	161	181	185	187
Patuakhali	166	176	209	196	214
Jessore	127	138	161	177	190
Kushtia	131	145	161	177	183
Country Average	151	159	169	180	194

Source: Calculated from Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, *Twenty Years of National Income Accounting of Bangladesh, 1972-73 to 1991-92*, and Bangladesh Bank, *Economic Trends*, April 1996.

Table 6 Population by Ethnic Group (Sri Lanka)

(in Thousands)

	Census 1946	Census 1971	Census 1981	1989*
Sinhalese	4,621 (69.9)	9,131 (72.1)	10,980 (74.0)	12,437 (74.0)
Sri Lankan Tamil	734 (11.1)	1,424 (11.3)	1,887 (12.7)	2,124 (12.6)
Indian Tamil	781 (11.8)†	1,175 (9.3)†	819 (5.5)†	873 (5.2)†
Sri Lankan Moors	374 (5.7)	828 (6.5)	1,047 (7.1)	1,249 (7.4)
Burghers	42 (0.6)	45 (0.4)	39 (0.3)	42 (0.3)
Malays	23 (0.4)	44 (0.4)	47 (0.3)	48 (0.3)
Others	41 (0.6)	16 (0.2)	28 (0.2)	52 (0.3)

* Estimated mid year population

Percentages are given within ()

Source: Census of Ceylon, 1946, Dept. Of Census and Statistics, Statistical Abstract.

† The significant drop in the percentage of the Indian Tamil population between the census of 1946 and those of 1971, and 1981 represents the repatriation of Indian Tamils to India in terms of agreements reached between the governments of India and Sri Lanka.

Table 7 Unemployment and Ethnicity (% unemployed in the labour-force of ethnic group) (Sri Lanka)

	1953	1963	1973	1978/9	1981/2
Low Country Sinhalese	18.9	17.5	30.0	18.5	14.6
Kandyan Sinhalese	15.6	12.7	23.0	13.9	11.3
Sri Lankan Tamils	8.4	11.6	17.7	10.9	6.7
Indian Tamils	17.8	6.7	12.3	5.6	4.9
Moors	15.9	14.9	21.3	13.8	10.4
All ethnic groups	16.6	13.8	24.0	14.8	11.7

Source: Central Bank of Ceylon/Sri Lanka.

Table 8.1 Ethnic Composition of Employment in the Public Sector, 1980 (Sri Lanka)

Field	Total number	% of the total			
		Sinhalese	SL Tamils	Muslims	Others
Executive and Managerial	3,705	81.3	15.5	2.6	0.6
Clerical	72,997	83.8	13.2	2.6	0.4
Professional & Technical (1)	141,387	82.4	12.1	5.2	0.2
Service workers	27,428	86.9	9.0	2.8	1.2
Skilled workers (2)	100,841	85.5	11.4	2.7	0.4
Others (3)	22,493	90.1	6.6	2.4	0.8

Table 8.2 Ethnic Composition of Employment in Professional Occupations (public and private sectors) (Sri Lanka)

	Total number	% of the total			
		Sinhalese	SL Tamils	Muslims	Others
Doctors (4)	6,542	53.1	40.0	2.7	4.2
Lawyers	3,064	61.1	28.5	7.7	2.7
University teachers	2,205	74.6	22.2	1.3	1.9
Engineers	1,169	60.1	34.1	2.2	3.6
Veterinarians	338	51.8	42.0	2.7	3.5
Accountants	171	42.1	46.8	9.9	1.2
Architects	97	69.1	21.7	1.0	8.2

Source: Marga, 1985 (both tables).

- Notes: (1) includes teachers – the majority in the category
(2) defined in the source as 'production and related workers, transport workers, equipment operators and labourers
(3) consists of those not classified elsewhere
(4) all categories in 'Western' health services

This tabulation does not include the police force and those in the armed services. Their inclusion would increase the Sinhalese proportions in state sector employment.

Annexe IV Landholdings in Central America

Table 1 Classification of Parcels According to Surface Area, 1971 (El Salvador)¹

Groups by size	Farms			
	Total # (thousands)	%	Surface area (thous. ha)	%
Micro-fincas (up to 1 ha.)	132.5	48.9	70.3	4.8
Subfamily farms (up to 9.9 ha.)	118.1	43.6	323.5	22.3
Subtotal	250.6	92.5	393.8	27.1
Family farms (up to 49.9 ha.)	16.2	6.0	342.4	23.6
Mid-size multifamily farms (up to 199.9 ha.)	3.3	1.2	306.2	21.1
Large multifamily farms (more than 200 ha.)	0.8	0.3	409.5	28.2
Subtotal	20.3	7.5	1058.1	72.9

1) Carlos R. Cabarrús, *Génesis de una revolución* (1983), p. 58 (based on data from the 1971 Agricultural Census).

Table 2 The 1980 Agrarian Reform Program (El Salvador)²

	Phase I (March 1980)	Phase II^c	Phase III (April 1980)	Total
Size of holding subject to redistribution	500+ ha.	100-500 ha.	all rented lands	--
Estimated number of holdings to be affected by the reform	328	1,700	30,000	--
Estimated amount of land to be redistributed	224,326 ha.	125,500 ha.	up to 200,000 ha.	549,826 ha.
As a % of country's 1,433,000 hectares of land in farms	15.4% ^b	8.6%	13.7%	37.7%
Amount of land actually redistributed as of Dec. 1982	224,326 ha.	0	76,936 ha.	301,262 ha.
As a % of country's 1,433,000 hectares of land in farms	15.4%	0	5.3%	20.7%
Estimated number of small farmers to benefit from reform ^e	0,000	n/a ^d	125,000	185,000
Actual number of farmers who claimed under the reform	29,755	0	48,357	78,112
As a % of estimated target	49.6%	0	38.6%	42.2%

^aNever implemented / ^bActual figures / ^cOriginal estimates, probably too high / ^dNot available.

Table 3 Land Distribution by Farm Size, 1950s to 1970s (Nicaragua)³

Size (has.)	Percentage of Farms		Percentage of Land	
	1963	1971	1963	1971
0.0 to < 0.7	2.1	5.8	--	--
0.7 to < 3.5	33.7	25.9	1.6	1.0
3.5 to < 7.0	15.6	12.1	2.0	1.2
7.0 to < 35	28.1	31.7	12.0	11.1
35 to < 77	10.2	12.3	12.5	11.7
77 < 350	8.9	10.3	30.8	28.1
350 < 777	0.9	1.1	11.3	11.0
777 +	0.6	0.7	29.7	35.8

2) U.S. Dept. of State, Bureau of Intelligence & Research, *El Salvador: Brighter Prospects for Land Reform* (March 17, 1983) (table reproduced in Montgomery, p. 141).

3) Taken from Brockett, p.73 tbl. 4.1.

Table 4 Changes in Land Ownership (Nicaragua)⁴

Type and Size of Holding	1978	1980	1985
Private Property			
Unorganized			
+ 850 acres	36.2	21.5	11.9
86-850 acres	46.3	43.5	41.5
< 86 acres	17.5	15.5	9.5
Subtotal	100.0	80.5	62.9
Credit and Service Cooperatives	--	0.4	11.2
Production Cooperatives	--	1.0	8.8
State Farms	--	18.0	17.0
Total	100.0	99.9	99.9

Table 5 Land Holding in Guatemala⁵

Size of farm	Percentage of Farms			Percentage of Land		
	1950	1964	1979	1950	1964	1979
0-7 ha.	88.3	87.4	88.1	14.3	18.6	16.2
7-45 ha.	9.5	10.5	9.3	13.5	18.9	18.7
45-900+ ha.	2.2	2.1	2.6	72.2	62.5	65.1

Table 6 Parceling of Small Land Holdings (Guatemala)⁶

	0.05-0.7 ha.	0.7-1.4 ha.	1.4-3.5 ha.	3.5-7.0 ha.
1964	23.3	27.0	35.4	14.3
1979	35.6	25.9	27.4	11.1

4) Brockett, *Land, Power, and Poverty*, p. 174, tbl. 8.1.

5) Compiled based on Charles D. Brockett, 'Land, Power and Poverty: Agrarian Transformation and Political Conflicts in Central America', 1990, p. 73, tbl. 4.1.

6) Centro de Estudios Regionales, *Guatemala en la Coyuntura*, mimeograph, 1982, p. 31, an. 1.

Table 7 Agrarian Reform (Honduras)⁷

	No. Groups		No. Beneficiaries		Cultivable Area		
	Total	Ann. Aver.	Actual Total	Ann. Aver.	Actual Total	Ann. Aver.	Hectare/ Benefic.
1962-66	7	1.4	222	44.8	540	108	2.4
1967-72	167	27.8	4664	77.3	22,438	3748	4.8
1973-74	402	201.0	9780	4890.0	51,242	25,621	5.2
1975-77	439	146.3	11,988	3966.0	68,383	22,761	5.7
1978-81	435	108.8	10,028	2507.0	38,767	9692	3.9
1978-81	457	152.2	10,093	3364.3	34,066	11,355	3.4
1982-84	377	125.7	6958	2319.3	27,045	9015	3.9
1988-89	134	67.0	3817	1908.5	30,004	15,002	7.9
1990	85	85.0	1337	1337.0	7522	7522	5.6
Total	2503	86.3	58,889	2030.7	279,907	104,824	4.8

7) Hugo Noé Pino & Andrew Thorpe (coords.), *Honduras: El ajuste estructural y la reform agraria*, p. 115.

Annexe V Selected Economic Statistics

Central America

Table 1 Population Growth, GDP, and GDP Per Capita (Nicaragua)¹

	1960	1965	1970	1975	1980
Population (in thousands)	1.493	1.750	2.053	2.408	2.771
GDP (millions of 1970 dollars)	440	711	858	1.099	935
GDP per capita	295	406	418	456	337

1) 1981 Stat. Y.B. Lat. Am. (CEPAL) 183, 198.

Table 2 Growth of GDP (El Salvador) (millions of 1980 dollars)²

Year	GDP
1960	874
1965	1217
1970	2582
1975	3354
1980	3497
1985	3162
1990	3458

Table 3 Agricultural Exports as a % of Total (El Salvador)³

1970	1976	1980	1985	1990	1992
67.7	72.4	77.4	78.5	71.3	65.3

Table 4 Sectoral Share as Percentage of the GDP (El Salvador)⁴

	1970	1975	1980	1985	1990	1992
El Salvador						
agriculture	28.1	27.1	27.8	27.2	26.3	26.0
industry	18.0	19.7	18.6	17.8	18.6	19.4
services	53.9	53.2	53.6	55.0	55.1	54.5

Table 5 Sectoral Share as Percentage of the GDP (Guatemala)⁵

	1970	1975	1980	1985	1990	1992
Agriculture	29.8	30.6	27.1	28.2	28.3	27.7
Industry	19.2	19.0	23.0	19.6	19.3	19.4
Services	51.0	50.4	50.0	52.1	52.5	52.9

2) See regional data annex, tbl. 5.1.

3) Stat. Y.B. Lat. Am. (CEPAL) 1981, 1986, 1991, 1994.

4) Compiled based on data presented in IICA-FLACSO, *Centroamérica en cifras* & FLACSO, *Centroamérica en cifras*. Because this table was constructed based on four separate tables, the total sometimes fall at 99.9 or 100.1.

5) Compiled based on data presented in IICA-FLACSO and FLACSO, *Centroamérica en cifras*, 1995.

Table 6 Gross Domestic Product (Guatemala) (in millions of U.S. dollars*)

Year	GDP	Growth†
1960	1.4	ND
1965	1.8	ND
1970	4.5	ND
1975	5.9	5.6
1980	7.8	5.8
1985	7.4	-0.6
1990	8.5	2.9

* Amounts are in dollars at 1980 prices except for 1960 and 1965 which are calculated at 1970 prices.

† Growth rates for 1975 and 1980 are for the preceding five-year period (i.e., 1970-75, 1975-80); all others are annual rates.

Table 7 Sectoral Share as Percentage of the GDP (Honduras)⁶

	1970	1975	1980	1985	1990
Agriculture	30.9	25.6	24.5	25.4	22.3
Industry	21.6	23.5	23.8	23.8	24.2
Services	44.1	47.9	48.6	48.2	53.5

Table 8 Evolution of GDP and GDP per Capita (Honduras) (1980 dollars)⁷

Year	GDP (millions of dollars)	Mean Annual Growth	Per Capita GDP (dollars)
1960	499	0.9 ^a	n.d.
1965	650	--	n.d.
1970	1467	1.8 ^a	559
1975	1769	0.6 ^b	572
1980	2497	1.0 ^b	682
1985	2571	-2.4 ^b	586
1990	3156	0.1 ^b	657
1995	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.

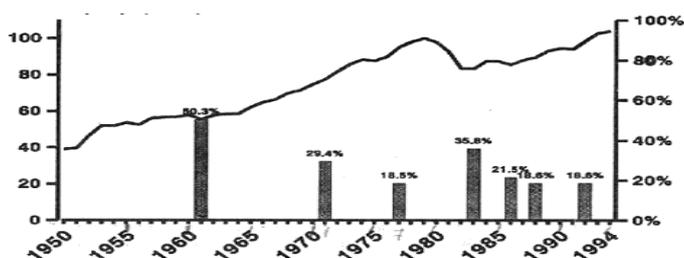
^a Data corresponds to the previous ten-year period (i.e., 1960 = 1950-59).

^b Data corresponds to the previous five-year period (i.e., 1975 = 1970-74).

6) Compiled based on data presented in IICA-FLACSO, pp. 35, 45 & 53-54; FLACSO, pp. 42, 49 & 54. Because this table was constructed based on four separate tables, the totals are sometimes off by several points.

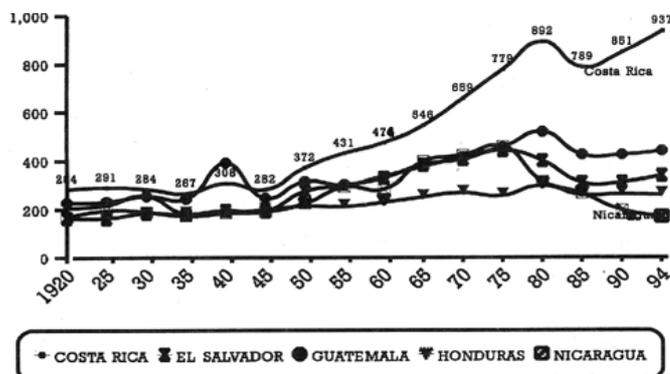
7) Table constructed based on regional data annex and complemented by IICA-FLACSO, p. 25 & FLACSO, p. 35.

Figure 1 Evolution of Poverty and Per Capita GDP (Costa Rica)⁸



The line, measured on the left side of the graph, represents the growth of the GDP per capita (1970 = 100) while the bars represent the percentage of poor families.

Figure 2 Change in per Capita Product (Costa Rica) (1970 dollars)⁹



8) Graph constructed from a combination of sources: IICE, BCCE, DGE y C, MIDEPLAN.

9) Constructed based on Bulmer-Thomas & CEPAL (1994, 1998).

West Africa

Table 9 Annual Growth Rate of Per Capita GNP of Ghana and Other Third World Countries

Period	Ghana	Africa	Third World Middle Income States	Third World Low Income States
1950-1975	0.5	2.4	2.4	1.1
1950-1960	2.1	2.4	2.2	1.4
1960-1970	0.5	2.2	2.0	1.6
1970-1975	0.7	2.8	2.9	0.2
1974-1981	0.2	1.0	4.7	4.5

Source: World Bank, World Development Report, 1982, Washington D.C. 1983.

Table 10 Per Capita Income of Ghana and Selected African Countries (US\$)

Country	1950	1975	1980
Ghana	354	427	420
Côte d'Ivoire	283	460	1,150
Nigeria	150	287	1,010
Senegal	238	341	450
Liberia	n.a.	230	530
Africa	170	308	760

Source: World Bank, World Development Report, 1982, Washington D.C. 1983.

Table 11 Macro-Economic Indicators in Nigeria 1964-1990 (values at Current Prices)

Year	GDP (in million Naira)	GDP per capita (Naira)	GDP per capita (Growth Rate %)
1963	2946	52.9	2.5
1964	3144	55.2	4.3
1965	3361	57.5	4.2
1966	3614	60.3	4.9
1967	2951	48.0	-20.4
1968	2878	45.8	-4.6
1969	3861	59.7	30.3
1970	5621	85.0	42.4
1975	21779	290.9	28.0
1980	50849	601.0	16.0
1981	50750	581.0	-3.3
1985	72360	756.0	6.8
1990	260640	2626	28.3

Sources: Federal Office of Statistics (1975); Central Bank of Nigeria (various issues).

Table 12 Average annual growth rate of gross international product according to sector (Senegal)

Sectors	1960-68	1968-74	1974-77	1977-80
Primary	3.9%	-0.9%	7.8%	-7.4%
Secondary	3.0%	4.4%	6.1%	-0.7%
Tertiary	2.6%	0.7%	3.7%	3.6%
Total	3.0%	1.1%	5.2%	-0.2%

Source: Ministry of Economy, Finance and Plan (Senegal). In: Duruflé (1994), p. 54.

Table 13 Macro-economic indicators 1975-1994 (Senegal)

	Annual averages		
	1975-84	1985-89	1990-MR
GDP Growth Rate (percent)	2.3	3.7	0.7
Agriculture growth rate (percent)	-1.2	4.7	-2.6
Industry growth rate (percent)	2.9	5.5	1.6
Investment to GDP ratio (percent)	14.6	11.6	14.1
Export of goods & NFS growth rate (real terms, percent)	4.0	1.7	1.2
Terms of trade index (annual percent change)	-1.3	0.5	0.3
Official development assistance (net) as percentage of GDP	6.5	10.5	9.0
Debt service ratio, ex post (percent)	13.7	27.3	18.1
Debt outstanding and disbursed as percentage of exports	136.2	285.2	261.5

Source: Africa Regional Database. In: World Bank (1995), *A Continent in Transition: Sub-Saharan Africa in the mid-1990s*, pp. 96-110.

South Asia

Table 14 Selected Economic Indicators

Region/ Country	GNP Per Capita (US\$) 1995	GNP Per Capita Annual Growth Rate (%)		Average Annual Inflation Rate, 1985-95 (%)	Agriculture as % of GDP, 1994	Income Share of Lowest 40% of House- holds 1981- 93
		1965-80	1985-95			
South Asia						
Afghanistan	n.a.	0.6	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Bangladesh	240	-0.3	2.1	6.4	30*	22.9
India	340	1.5	3.2	9.8	30	21.3
Pakistan	460	1.8	1.2	9.2	25	21.3
Sri Lanka	700	2.8	2.6	11.8	24*	22.0

* GDP and its components are at purchaser values

Source: World Development Report, 1997, World Bank; Human Development Report, 1996, 97, UNDP.

Table 15 Per Capita Net Domestic Product of the States in the Northeast (India)
(averages for selected triennial periods, in Rs. At constant 1970/71 prices)

	1960/61 to 1962/63	1970/71 to 1972/73	1980/81 to 1982/83	1984/85 to 1986/87
Assam	n.a.	544	554	598
Manipur	325	388	525	589
Tripura	546	501	620	644*
Arunachal Pradesh	n.a.	466	694	821*
All India	561	621	713	794

* estimate relates to 1984/85 only

Notes: Similar estimates for other states in the Northeast are not furnished in the source. It could, however, be assumed that they would not deviate much from the picture portrayed by this tabulation. These estimates are based on H.L. Chandok (1990), *India: Database: The Economy*, Vol. 1, p. 151.

Table 16 Basic Socio-economic Profile of Bangladesh

Year	Populations (million)	GDP	Growth Rate of GDP (%)	GNP per capita (US\$)
		(at current price, US\$ billion)	(constant 1984- 85 price)	(at current price)
1972	74	6.3	-	86
1973	76	9.5	9.6	125
1974	78.0	14.0	-4.1	180
1975	79.9	7.3	5.7	92
1976	78.6	7.5	2.7	92
1977	80.5	5.3	7.1	116
1978	82.5	6.9	4.8	135
1979	87	9.5	0.8	147
1980	92.9	10.4	3.4	162
1981	93.0	10.6	1.2	144
1982	95.0	12.1	4.9	137
1983	96.5	12.7	5.4	154
1984	102	14.8	3.0	164
1985	104.2	15.4	4.6	161
1986	104.2	17.0	4.2	178
1987	106.6	19.1	2.9	191
1988	115.8	20.5	2.5	201
1989	107.5	20.3	6.6	215
1990	118	21.7	3.4	220
1991	111.4	23.8	4.2	221
1992	124.9	23.3	4.5	-
1993	121.1	24.0	4.2	-
1994	123	25.7	4.4	-
1995	124	28	5.3	-
1996	125	33.4*	5.7	-

* Provisional Figure only

Source: For figures on GDP up to 1991, Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, *Twenty Years of National Income Accounting of Bangladesh, 1972-73 to 1991-92*. For the rest different recent publications of the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics.

Table 17 Real Growth Rates (Sri Lanka)

Data series	Average annual rate of change (%)	
	GNP	GNP per capita
1950 to 1978 series	3.9	1.5
1970 to 1981 series	4.1	2.5
1982 to 1995 series	4.0	2.4

Source: Central Bank of Ceylon/Sri Lanka.

Annexe VI External Economic Interventions

World Bank / IMF

Table 1 World Bank Loans/Credits to Nigeria 1958-1978

Year	Loan (\$million)
1958	28.0
1963	13.5
1964	112.0
1965	39.9
1966	29.7
1969	20.0
1970	35.0
1971	25.3
1972	59.9
1973	58.2
1975	53.3
1976	68.9
1977	31.1
1978	108.3

Sources: CBN, *Annual Report and Statement of Accounts* (various issues).

Table 2 Public External Debt, Total Balance by Type of Creditor (Costa Rica)¹
(millions of U.S. dollars)

	1983	1985	1990	1995
Total	3,405.5	3,708.8	3,258.6	
Multilateral Organizations	967.9	1,035.9	1,179.0	1,495.4
Bilateral Organizations	690.0	905.1	1,321.5	1,162.3

Table 3 Foreign Financing by Official Source (Costa Rica)² (millions of U.S. dollars)

	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987
World Bank^a	30.0	29.0	0.2	25.2	0.0	83.5	0.0	26.0
IADB	132.9	29.2	61.4	35.8	86.6	0.0	173.9	119.8
IMF^b	17.6	44.6	0.0	108.9	0.0	33.3	0.0	0.0
AID^c	14.0	13.3	50.6	212.4	168.0	217.1	159.5	174.8

^a Date corresponds to fiscal years ending on June 30.

^b Equals authorized purchases.

^c Includes ESF, AD, and Food Aid.

US Military and Economic Support to Central America

Table 4 Average Annual U.S. Aid to Nicaragua³ (in millions of dollars)

	1953-61	1962-66	1974-76	1977-78
Economic Assistance	3.14	13.64	25.53	9.29
Change over previous period		230%	39%	-75%
Military Aid	0.21	1.48	3.33	2.76
Change over previous period		543%	67%	-43%

1) Source: Central Bank of Costa Rica, International Finance Department.

2) Compiled from information taken from: Gerardo Tomossi, *Centroamérica: Deuda externa y Ajuste estructural. Las transformaciones económicas de la crisis* (1989), p. 129; World Bank, *World Debt Tables, 1986-87*, p. XXVI; and various periodicals.

3) John A. Booth, *The End and the Beginning: The Nicaraguan Revolution* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1982), p. 128.

Table 5 USSR Cooperation Assistance to Nicaragua⁴ (in millions of dollars)

<i>Kind of Aid</i>	<i>Amount</i>
Commercial	
Equipment and machinery	830.7
Primary materials (including oil)	1273.1
Economic	
Investments in projects and completed plants	159.7
Financial credits	128.2
Scientific Technical	
Advice in specific programs (mines, fishing, engineering, medicine, strategic planning)	27.5
Donations	
Food, medicine, vehicles, construction materials, and laboratory equipment	319.4
Total	2,738.5
Scientific Cultural	
Annual scholarships	
Nicaraguans graduated	450
Nicaraguans studying	522
(university, technical careers, and post-grad)	1434

Table 6 Foreign Resources Obtained by Nicaragua and Its Relation with COMECON Cooperation Assistance⁵ (in millions of dollars)

	<i>Total Resources</i>	<i>COMECON Credits</i>	<i>Donations</i>	<i>Total Donations</i>	<i>% of COMECON credit</i>	<i>% of COMECON donations</i>
1979	362.2	0.0	6.7	91.5	0.0	7.3
1980	528.7	102.0	71.5	150.0	19.3	47.6
1981	728.7	146.3	38.0	74.3	20.1	51.1
1982	597.7	725.1	62.4	98.8	37.7	63.1
1983	619.2	168.4	144.9	181.4	27.2	79.8
1984	772.5	493.4	104.0	144.3	63.9	72.3
1985	1,196.6	807.4	240.3	272.1	67.5	88.3
1986	517.9	145.8	242.5	316.7	28.2	76.6
1987	386.3	187.2	80.3	156.4	48.5	51.3
1988	801.6	465.3	58.4	269.4	58.0	21.7

4) Sojo, p. 95 (based on data from *Barricada Internacional* (Oct. 14, 1989, p. 6).

5) Alvaro Taboada, *Nicaragua: El crepúsculo de la Vanguardia: Horizontes Internos y Internacionales* (Managua: Fondo Editorial, Banco Central de Nicaragua, 1994), pp. 426-27 (based on data from the Instituto Nicaragüense de Estadísticas y Censos (INEC)).

Table 7 U.S. Aid to El Salvador⁶

<i>Year</i>	<i>Economic</i>	<i>Military</i>	<i>Total Aid</i>
1965*	18.05	1.0	19.05
1970	12.6	0.6	13.2
1975	3.9	5.5	9.4
1980	58.3	5.9	64.2
1985	433.9	136.3	570.2
1990	246.7	81.0	327.7
1995	63.2	0.4	63.6

* Figures for 1965 are based on previous four year averages.

Table 8 U.S. Military and Economic Aid to Guatemala (millions of U.S. dollars)

<i>Year</i>	<i>Military</i>	<i>Economic</i>
1965*	3.1	15.2
1970	1.4	32.2
1975	2.9	14.1
1980	0.0	13.0
1985	0.5	106.9
1990	3.3	192.6
1995	0.0	39.2

* Data for 1965 is calculated base on 1962-65 average.

Table 9 U.S. Military and Economic Aid to Honduras (millions of U.S. dollars)

<i>Year</i>	<i>Military</i>	<i>Economic</i>
1965*	1.1	10.8
1970	0.4	7.2
1975	4.2	35.6
1980	3.9	53.1
1985	67.4	229.0
1990	21.3	192.6
1995	0.3	29.7

* Data for 1965 is calculated base on 1962-65 average.

6) John A. Booth, 'Evolution of U.S. Policy Toward El Salvador', in: H. Michael Erisman (ed.) *The Caribbean Challenge: U.S. Policy in a Volatile Region* (1984), p. 127 (based on U.S. Dept. of State data).

Table 10 Aid in the 1980s (Honduras) (millions of U.S. dollars)

Year	Military	Economic
1982	31.3	80.7
1983	48.3	106.0
1984	77.4	95.0
1985	67.4	229.0
1986	61.1	136.6
1987	61.2	197.8
1988	41.2	156.9
1989	41.1	88.1
1990	21.3	192.6
1991	33.5	123.8
1992	6.4	89.3

Table 11 U.S. Economic and Military Assistance (Costa Rica) (millions of U.S. dollars)

	1965	1970	1975	1980	1985	1990	1995	Total
Economic	17.1	20.7	3.7	16.0	220.0	95.3	6.2	379.0
Military	.35	0.0	0.0	0.0	11.2	0.2	0.1	11.85
Total Aid	17.45	20.7	3.7	16.0	231.2	95.5	6.3	390.85

Annexe VII List of Research Documents

Regional Report: South Asia

Silva, K.M. de (editor), March 1998
South Asia – regional report

Country studies:

Conducted by: International Centre for Ethnic Studies, Sri Lanka

Ghosh, Partha S. and Lama, Mahendra P. (section 4 by Peiris, G. H.), March 1998
India – country paper

Khan, Abdur Rob, March 1998
Bangladesh – country paper

Rais, Rasul Bakhsh, March 1998
Afghanistan – country paper

Silva, K.M. de
Sri Lanka – country paper

Waseem, Mohammad, March 1998
Pakistan – country paper

South Asia case studies:

Apart from the country papers, the South Asia group also produced 19 case studies which resulted from an “International Workshop on Causes of Conflict and Conflict Resolution”; 15-17 July 1996

Ahmed, Aftab, July 1996
Ethnic Turmoil in the Chittagong Hill Tracts Region of Bangladesh: Modalities for the Resolution of a Conflict

Ghosh, Partha S., July 1996
Cross-Border Population Movements in South Asia and Regional Security

Ghosh, Partha S., July 1996
The Hindu-Muslim Question in India: Confrontation and Coexistence

Hasbullah, S.H., July 1996
Ethnic Conflict and Displacement in Sri Lanka

Kaushal, Neeraj, July 1996
Disputes Between Bangladesh and India

Lama, Mahendra P., July 1996
Identity-Based Armed Conflict in the North-East India: A Case Study of Gorkhaland Agitation

Lama, Mahendra P., July 1996
Identity-Based Politico-Armed Conflict om North-East India: A Case Study of Assam and Nagaland

Lama, Mahendra P., July 1996
Armed Conflicts By The Haves: A Case Study of Punjab

Mehra, Ajay, July 1996
Caste Conflict in India

Mehra, Ajay, July 1996
Naxalism and Militant Peasant Movements in India

Peiris, G.H., July 1996
Insurrection and Youth Unrest in Sri Lanka

Rais, Rasul Bakhsh, July 1996
India-Pakistan Rivalry: An Interpretation

Samarasinghe, S.W.R.de A., July 1996
Tamil Plantation Workers of Sri Lanka

Sen, Gautam, July 1996
Evaluation of Sino-Indian Strategic Parity and Indo-Pak Military Balance

Silva, K.M. de, July 1996
Separatism in Sri Lanka

Waseem, Mohammad, July 1996
Ethnic Conflict in Pakistan: Case of Mohajir Nationalism

Waseem, Mohammad, July 1996
Sectarian Conflict in Pakistan

Regional Report: West Africa

Nwokedi, Emeka (editor), April 1998
West African Regional Report on "Causes of Conflict in the Third World" project

Country studies:

Conducted by: Centre for Advanced Social Science, Nigeria and Council for the Development of Social Science Research In Africa, Senegal

Jong, Ferdinand de, April 1998
The Causes of Conflict in Africa; The Casamance Conflict in Senegal

Nnoli, Okwudiba, April 1998
The Conflict Process in Ghana, 1950-1990

Nwokedi, Emeka, April 1998
The Dynamics of Conflicts in Nigeria

Sidikou, Hamidou Arouna, December 1997
Les Causes des Conflits au Niger

Regional Report: Central America

Arias Foundation and Mares, David, 1998

Central America – regional report

Other contributors to the regional report: Pascal O. Girot, Alvaro de la Ossa and Raúl Rosende

Country studies:

Conducted by Arias Foundation, Costa Rica

Case studies into El Salvador, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Honduras and Costa Rica (Jaime Ordoñez)

The following authors contributed to the drafts of the country studies:

Justo Aguilar Fong, Juany Guzmán Leon, Abelardo Morales Gamboa, Margaret Mooney (El Salvador and Guatemala), Manuel Rojas Bolanos, Héctor Rosada, Rosa Sánchez, Joaquín Tacsan and Fernando Zeledón Torres (Honduras)

Final editing of the reports was done by the Arias Foundation under supervision of Johanna Oliver.

Synthesis Report

Douma, Pyt, Frerks, Georg and Goor, Luc van de (Netherlands Institute of International Relations Clingendael)

Causes of Conflict in the Third World project, Synthesis Report

Annexe VIII Holsti's Criteria for the Sustainability of States

In order to be able to measure state strength and the institutional capacity of the states in our research sample, Holsti's¹ set of eight criteria for legitimacy was used as a theoretical frame of reference.

The idea of the state:

- 1) There should be an implicit social contract between the state and the political community. The state has the right to extract, but it must also provide services and allow participation in decisions to allocate resources. There must be a reasonable balance between the demands of extraction, the expectations of service deliveries, and participation, that is, vertical legitimacy.²

1) K.J. Holsti, *The State, War and the State of War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

2) *Vertical legitimacy* refers to authority, consent and loyalty to the idea of the state. This type of legitimacy thus implies that large segments of the population accept the rightfulness of the state, and its authority to issue commands. A fundamental prerequisite for vertical legitimacy is the implicit bargain between the state and the political community. This bargain, however, is always a matter of judgement and perception, and may consequently change over time.

- 2) There should be ideological consensus and pragmatic politics, that is, horizontal legitimacy.³ Politics are instrumental in strong states. There are no longer fundamental debates over ways of life, definitions of community or ideological crusades that are bound to lead to zero-sum situations, and, ultimately, violent conflict.

The physical basis of the state:

- 3) There should be effective internal sovereignty. This implies that the state must provide security, law, and a reasonable amount of order. The state must be internally sovereign, have a monopoly over the legitimate use of force, and effectively control or prevent illegitimate public or private violence.
- 4) There should be international consensus on territorial limits and state sovereignty. Lack of international recognition may negatively affect domestic as well as external security of the state.

The institutional expression of the state:

- 5) There should be consensus on the political 'rules of the game'. These rules are usually summarized and specified in constitutions and contain the fundamental principles of justice that underlie the state. Such principles are usually subject to interpretation as well as to change and amendment when social, economic and political circumstances alter. Systematic violation of the principles, or neglect to change them in the face of altered circumstances, often leads to erosion of legitimacy.
- 6) There should be equal access to decisions and allocations. There can be no strong sense of community within a state if one segment of its population is proscribed from participating in politics, in all its dimensions, or is systematically excluded from state allocations of funds and services. A neutral state/authority should ensure the primacy of common citizenship and attending rights over privileges based on family, ethnicity or religion.
- 7) There should be a clear distinction between private gain and public service. For a political community it is unacceptable that leaders use the

3) *Horizontal legitimacy* refers to the attitudes and practices of individuals and groups within the state towards each other and ultimately to the state that encompasses them. The extent to which individuals and groups within a state accept each other, or marginalize, exclude, oppress, or exploit others, defines the degree of horizontal legitimacy. Ideally, no groups are excluded from seeking political power and enjoying its benefits. The state will act as a neutral authority that guarantees and ensures the primacy of common citizenship. For horizontal legitimacy it is thus essential to have a clear definition of (1) what a community consists of, and (2) the political role of the community.

state as a vehicle or platform for excessive personal enrichment at their expense.

- 8) There should be civilian control over the military. When the military takes over the state, it necessarily excludes normal political activity. When its command over the instruments of violence is furthermore particularly prone to use force against segments of the population, it becomes a security threat within the state.

At least two major conclusions can be drawn from Holsti's model. First, states will only seldom, if ever, comply with all the criteria. Using his model, states may consequently be placed on a continuum of state strength, with strong and failed states at the extremes. Most of the states will fall between the poles and may change position over time, sometimes moving to one of the extremes. Second, Holsti dismisses military power as the main criterion by which to measure state strength and its capacity to prevent state failure. He instead focuses on the capacity of the state to command loyalty and on the realm of ideas and sentiments. According to this model, totalitarian regimes, although they rank high on the institutionalization and extractive capacity, ultimately have to base their rule on fear, force and coercion. Such states, however, remain basically weak since they lack legitimacy.