
THE CONFLICT-DEVELOPMENT NEXUS: A SURVEY OF ARMED CONFLICTS IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA 1980-2005

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Abstract

This paper surveys the nexus between development and armed conflict in sub-Saharan Africa from 1980 to 2005. It focuses on war trends, impact of war on development, socio-economic structures as war risks, and policy responses. Several findings emerge that challenge widely held state-centric assumptions that underpin contemporary analyses, data collection and policy priorities. These wars defy conventional analytical frameworks as they commingle state and non-state actors and political with economic and private motives. As the findings illustrate, the state is not a sufficient unit of analysis: more research, data collection and policy attention should be directed to non-state actors and wars and sub-national and cross-border impacts. War is development in reverse, yet in many of these wars, the national economy continued to grow and social indicators improved. At the same time, the destructive impacts were localised, implying that development gaps and horizontal inequalities worsened. Structural risk factors – horizontal inequalities, youth bulge and unemployment, environmental pressure and natural resource dependence – have played a causal or perpetuating role in the wars surveyed. Economic, social and governance reform policies can play a role in conflict prevention by addressing these risk factors, yet at present national and international policy priorities do not systematically address these risks.

Introduction

Sub-Saharan Africa is at the core of today's global challenge of armed conflict, a challenge that is inextricably related to development. Most of the world's armed conflicts of recent decades have occurred in the region (Human Security Report Project 2006). Continued violence in several countries, the tenuousness of the peace in others and the legacy of violence pose significant peace, security, and development challenges both within states and for the continent as a whole. The purpose of this article is to provide an overview of the nexus of poverty/development and armed conflict in Africa. After reviewing trends, the paper explores two sets of links between conflict and poverty: the consequences of war on development and poverty, and socio-economic structures as risk factors for war. The final section considers how these links have been addressed in development policy by examining recent Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs).

Trends

Since 1980, more than half of the countries of sub-Saharan Africa have experienced armed conflict, sometimes multiple conflicts taking place simultaneously in different parts of the country and sometimes lasting for decades. Appendix 1 charts 126 wars in 32 countries

recorded in the UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset.* There was a general rise in the number of wars in this period, but a decline in the last four years (2002-2005) from 14 to six (Human Security Report Project 2006) with a corresponding decline in the number of battle deaths from 8,200 to 2,400 (Lacina & Gleditsch 2005; Human Security Report Project 2006). This trend should be treated with caution because it covers only four years, and many of the political, social, economic, and structural factors of war are still unresolved.

All but six of these 126 armed conflicts were intrastate or civil wars. Many continued for decades interspersed with repeated attempts at settlement and often involved multiple parties pursuing different goals. Others, less intense 'minor wars', lasted two years or less (Gleditsch *et al* 2002; Harbom *et al* 2006). The majority have been driven by attempts to control the state and only a few involved secessionist groups (Gleditsch *et al* 2002). Many wars have spilled across national boundaries and developed into sub-regional conflicts, including those in the Great Lakes, Southern Africa, Mano River Basin and Central East Africa.

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Today's armed conflicts in Africa defy the analytical frameworks used in the study of war and security. These conflicts correspond more closely to the concept of 'new wars' as they are motivated by both political and private

economic objectives, commingle state and non-state actors with local and external allies, and involve violence perpetrated against unarmed civilians by state armies, non-state militias and organised criminal networks (Kaldor 2007; Reno 2005). Kaldor notes that

... although most of these wars are localised, they involve a myriad of transnational connections so that the distinction between internal and external, between aggression (attacks from abroad) and repression (attacks from inside the country), or even between local and global, are difficult to sustain (2007:2).

Non-state wars

Most definitions of war, including the UCDP/PRIO dataset used in this paper, include formally organised contested combat against the state. This excludes armed conflicts between non-state actors such as communal violence, conflict between rival guerrilla groups and warlords, state-sponsored violence against unarmed civilians, and acts of terrorism. Data on non-state conflicts have begun to be collected only in recent years. From 2002 to 2005, there were 77 non-state conflicts in sub-Saharan Africa compared with 17 state-based conflicts. The number of fatalities was smaller – 12,834 compared with 20,655 (UCDP Non-state Dataset 4.1) These non-state wars differ in character from state wars; they may be 'low intensity', employing unconventional weapons and tactics without regard for traditional political or military codes of conduct (WHO 2002).

Casualties and human costs

Conventional definitions of casualties only count deaths on the battlefield. While the 126 wars described earlier resulted in approximately one million such deaths, the toll would be multiples of this number if all 'war deaths' were counted (Lacina & Gelditsch 2005). Battle death estimates do not include victims of state-sponsored violence against unarmed civilians, such as the Rwandan genocide in which 800,000 people perished, and communal violence between non-state groups, such as the 1994-1995 ethnic violence of northern Ghana that saw 15,000 fatalities (Jönsson 2007). It also excludes the depredations of militias on

Table 1: Comparison of State-Based and Non-State Conflicts in Sub-Saharan Africa 2002-2005 (> 25 battle deaths per year)

Countries with Non-state-based Armed Conflict	No. of Conflicts Between Non-state Warring Parties	Fatalities Non-State Conflicts	Number of State-Based Conflicts	Fatalities State-based Conflicts
Burundi	1	97	2	2,440
Cote d'Ivoire	4	583	2	1,200
Democratic Rep. of Congo	6	5,298	0	0
Ethiopia	8	517	3	2,210
Ghana	1	36	0	0
Kenya	1	68	0	0
Madagascar	1	79	0	0
Nigeria	17	3,050	2	552
Somalia	25	1,944	1	--
Sudan	7	688	4	8,028
Sudan, Uganda	1	142	--	--
Uganda	5	332	3	6,225
Total Sub-Saharan Africa	77	12,834	17	20,655
Total Global Non-state Conflict	101	17,832	--	--

Source: UCDP Non-State Conflict Dataset v. 4.1

unarmed men, women and children that have characterised much of the violence in Sierra Leone and Angola. Many other non-combatants have died of malnutrition and disease. For example, between 1998 and 2004 in the Democratic Republic of Congo, an estimated 3.9 million people died from all conflict-related causes of mortality (Coghlan *et al* 2006). Lacina and Gleditsch (2005) found that battle death estimates as a proportion of total war death estimates – which include civilian battle deaths, fatalities from disease and famine provoked by war, and deaths due to criminal and unorganised violence – range from less than 2% in Ethiopia to 29% in Mozambique.

Rape, deliberate mutilation, forced conscription of children and the use of landmines – in addition to death and injury – exact long-term costs and inhibit recovery from war. The overall legacy of violence constrains post-conflict reconciliation and political accommodation. Violent armed conflict ignites humanitarian crisis and disrupts human security in all its personal, economic and political dimensions (Collier *et al* 2003; Stewart *et al* 2001).

Massive dislocation of people from their homes, livelihoods and communities is another human cost; over the survey period (1980-2005), more than four million Africans fled their countries (UNHCR 2007). In some dramatic cases, as much as 40% of the population of Rwanda fled their homes in 1994, and 14% of Burundi's people in 1993. In 2005, there were an estimated 12.1 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) in 20 African countries – more than twice the total for the rest of the world – including 5.4 million in Sudan, two million in Uganda and 1.7 million in the DRC (Eschenbächer 2006). Unlike refugees, IDPs do not cross international borders. As of 2005 in sub-Saharan Africa, there were 1.9 million people in 17 protracted refugee situations, defined as situations where 25,000 or more people are in exile and reliant upon external assistance for at least five years (UNHCR 2006).

Large-scale forced migration increases mortality and morbidity (WHO 2002; Van Damme 1995). Protracted refugee encampments create security problems and conflict between

burdened host countries and their neighbours. Refugee populations may include those sympathetic to the irredentist challenges of ethnic minorities in the host country. Camps often harbour insurgent militias and facilitate small arms trafficking, drug smuggling and other illicit trade (Jacobsen 2002; UNHCR 2006). In host countries, concentrations of refugees may exacerbate environmental problems, including deforestation and pollution and overuse of land and water (Jacobsen 2002, 1997; Black & Sessay 1997; Black 1994).

Consequences of Armed Conflict on Poverty and Development

Civil wars have been called 'development in reverse' (Collier *et al* 2003:13). They divert resources from productive economic activities and from public expenditures for social goods that advance development. They incur direct human costs as described above, and longer-term developmental costs through loss of household assets, destruction of infrastructure essential for both human well-being and for successful agriculture and commerce, as well as loss of confidence in institutions, leading to lawlessness and capital flight (Stewart *et al* 2001).

However, evidence from the 126 wars in this survey shows that the consequences of armed conflict on development are far from simple; the costs not only vary from one country to another, but are also uneven within countries. Within a given country the population does not always suffer the cost of war equally, and in the aggregate, the economy does not

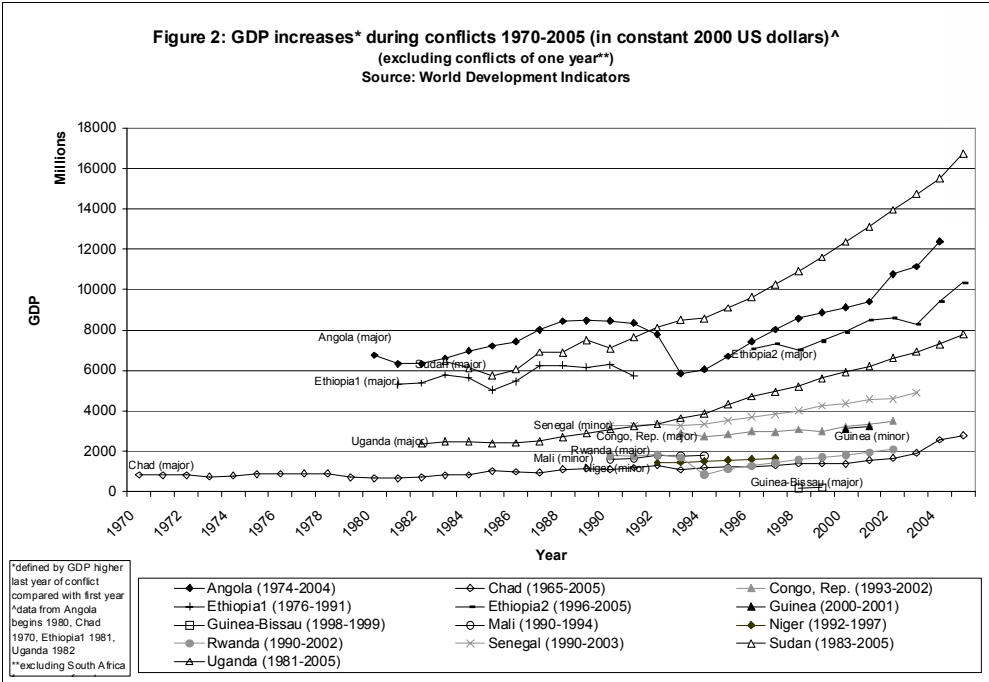
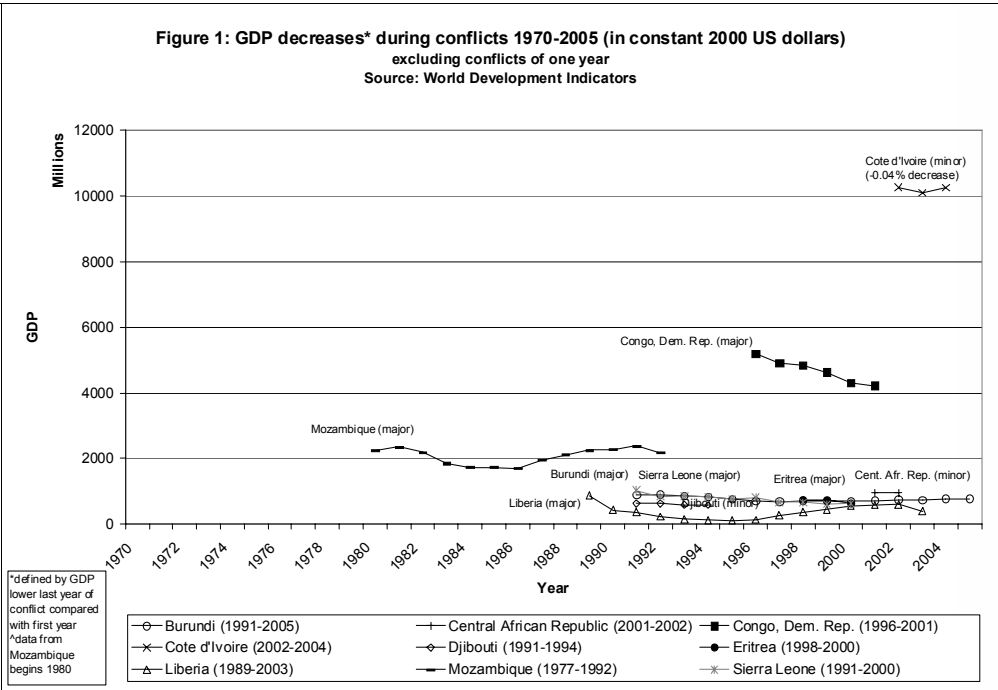
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always falter. Figures 1, 2 & 3 show the evolution of economic output (GDP) and human survival (under-five mortality rate – U5MR) during war years. They show a precipitous economic decline in Liberia, Sierra Leone, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Eritrea, Burundi, Djibouti and

Mozambique among other countries. Only nine of the 22 countries for which data are available show GDP that was lower at the end of the war than at its onset. For some, such as Angola and Rwanda, there were dramatic declines at the height of the fighting followed by recovery. But several countries sustained GDP growth while fighting continued, such as Sudan, Chad, Senegal, Ethiopia, and Niger.

Some examples illustrate why war does not always lead to decline in national development. Oil in both Sudan and Chad has fuelled economic growth even though armed conflicts have left thousands dead and millions displaced. In Uganda, Guinea and Uganda, the fighting has been geographically isolated – in the south and southeast in Guinea and in the north in Uganda – without compromising overall growth at the national level. These positive macro-indicators are pernicious in that they mask both widening inequality and human suffering.

Civil war is development in reverse, but the country is not the best unit of analysis. By disaggregating development indicators along regional or group lines, it is possible to track the deleterious consequences that conflict may have on some segments of a country's population despite positive aggregated indicators for the country as a whole. From 1990 to 2004, while armed conflict raged in northern Uganda, the country's human development index (HDI) improved from 0.411 to 0.502, childhood immunisation rose from 45% to 87%, and access to clean water improved from 44% to 60% (UNDP 2007). Yet these national numbers severely misrepresent the stark and widening regional inequalities. In 2005-06, Uganda's national poverty rate was 31.1%, while northern Uganda's poverty level was



60.7% (Uganda Bureau of Statistics 2006). In addition, the under-five mortality rate remains three to four times higher in the northern conflict areas than in the non-conflict areas (WHO 2005) and the adult literacy rate, which stands at 77% in central Uganda, is a mere 47% in northern Uganda (Nawaguna 2007).

Figure 3: Under-five mortality rate decreases* during conflict 1970-2005

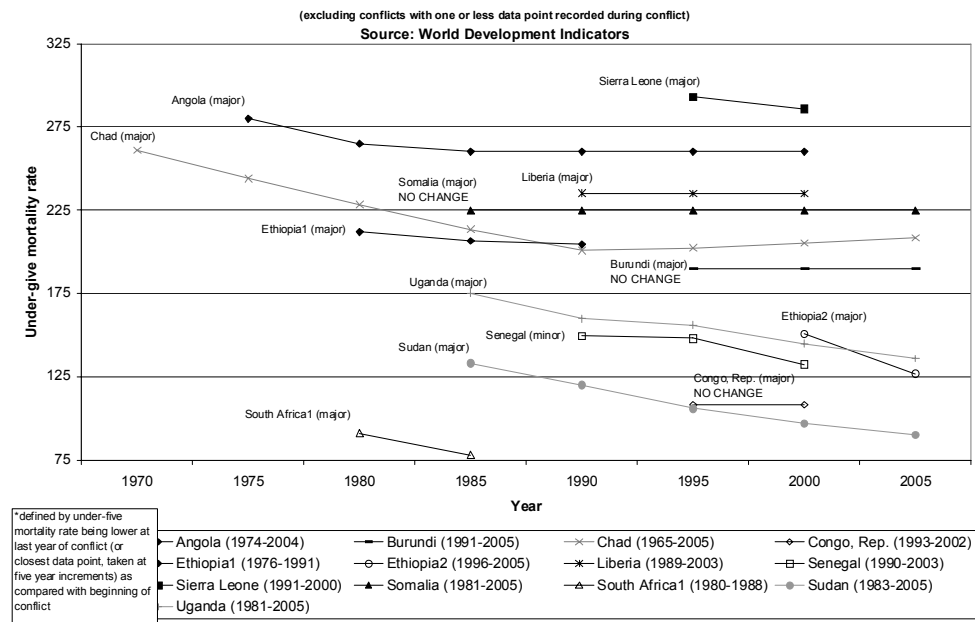
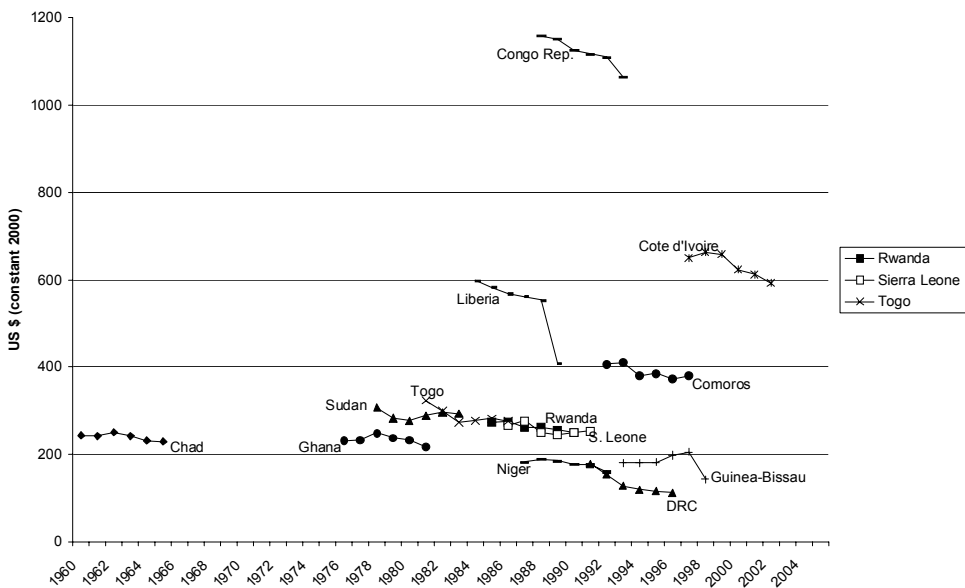


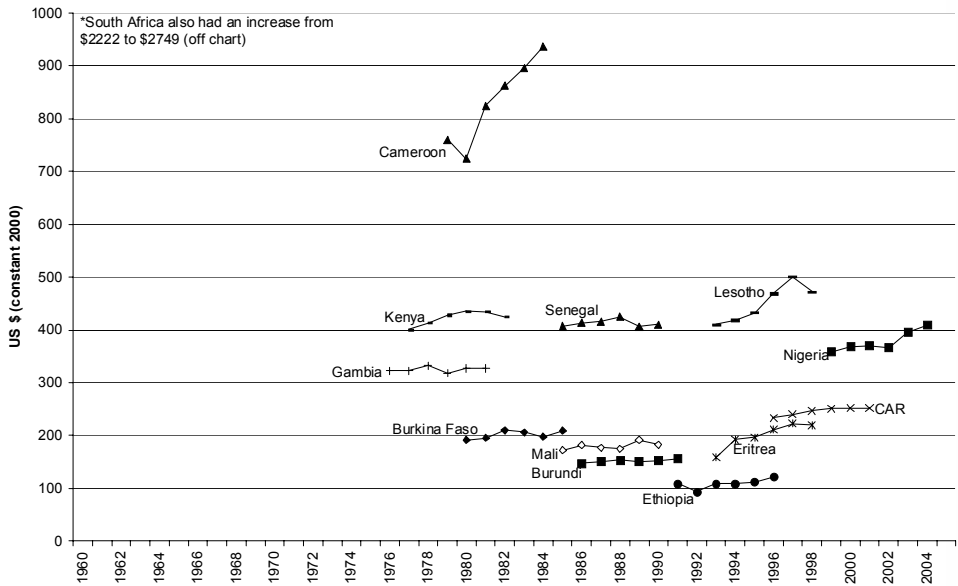
Figure 5 Per Capita GDP declines 5 years prior to onset of armed conflict



Structural Conditions and War Risks

Traditionally, studies of armed conflicts relied on historical and political factors to explain why wars emerge, persist, recur and end. However, in response to the increasing concentration of civil wars in poor countries, new research in the 1990s began to focus on socio-economic conditions that are associated with the frequent occurrence of war. This rich and diverse literature of cross-country statistical and qualitative studies emerged. The research identified a series of social and economic conditions that may exist in a country

Figure 6: Per Capita GDP increases during 5th years before onset of armed conflict



and that appear to favour the emergence of armed conflict. They identify several socio-economic factors that raise risks of conflict. It is important to point out that these factors are not mutually exclusive and may coexist and be mutually reinforcing (Fukuda-Parr 2007; Murshed 2007). Moreover, while political and historical factors may be the proximate factors that drive war, structural risks are root causes. Were these factors relevant for the 32 countries surveyed in this paper considered here?

Chronic poverty

Studies found strong correlation between per capita income and incidence of conflict, implying that GDP growth would help reduce war risks (Collier *et al* 2002). All of the 32 countries are among the world's poorest countries with large proportions of their population surviving in extreme poverty. For these countries, 2005 per capita GDP ranged from \$91 to \$997 and HDI in 2004 ranged from 0.311 to 0.532. The proportion of people surviving in extreme poverty measured by the international threshold of \$1 a day ranges from 15% to 78% for the 21 countries for which estimates are available from 1996-2005. In this respect, these 32 countries are no different from the other 12 countries of the region that remained conflict-free but which are also poor.

A more interesting question is whether economic decline and a general worsening of poverty precede the onset of war. Often, historical accounts of civil war give serious economic mismanagement and misrule as some of the causes of an insurgency, such as in DRC, Liberia or Sierra Leone. Economic decline prior to the onset of war was registered in 13 of the 32 countries, where per capita income was lower at the onset of war than five years previously (Figure 5), and for nine others, GDP growth averaged less than -1% annually over that period. But this was not a generalised pattern; in 13 countries, per capita GDP was higher at the onset of the war than five years previously (Figure 6), and average annual growth rate was over 1%. Under-five mortality rates were also improving during the years preceding the war for most countries.

Over-dependence on natural resources

Collier and Hoeffler (2002) argue that over-dependence on natural resources increases war risks, with greatest risk reached when primary commodities comprise a 32% share of GDP. Several of the 32 countries are highly dependent on natural resource exports, including Cameroon, Congo Republic, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau and Liberia, where primary commodity exports exceed 15% as a share of GDP. If oil is included, Angola, Nigeria and the Congo are also highly resource dependent. However, the majority of the 32 countries are not so highly dependent on primary commodity exports. In 2000, Cote d'Ivoire's share of primary commodities to GDP was 31.6% (UNCTAD 2003); two years later war broke out.

Over-dependence on minerals can be a risk factor in two ways. The first is that groups take up arms to seek control of a country's natural resources. The second is that once war starts, control of mineral resources becomes a lifeline for the warring parties. In Sierra Leone during the civil war (1991-2000), RUF rebels financed their insurgency through profits from the diamond trade. In Angola's civil war (1975-2002), both the government and rebels sustained themselves by exploiting natural resource wealth (Gamba & Cornwell 2000). The National Union for the Total Independence of Angola rebel group did so with diamonds and the ruling Popular Liberation Movement of Angola did so with oil (Le Billon 2001; ICG 2003; Sherman 2000). In the civil war of Cote d'Ivoire, where primary commodity exports reached almost 32% of GDP in 2000, the role of natural resources (i.e. cocoa) in sustaining violence is more ambiguous. In addition to the examples listed above, it is clear that competition for control of the oil wealth has been a factor in the conflicts in Nigeria's oil-rich Niger Delta.

Horizontal inequalities

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frequently where vertical inequalities are high. On the other hand, there is more evidence associating horizontal inequality – inequality between groups with ethnic, religious or linguistic ties – with conflict (Stewart 2002, 2004). Grievances over historical exclusion from economic, social and political opportunities and power provide

incentives for insurgency, and the appeal to group loyalty and identity can be a powerful means to mobilisation. These disparities provide explanations for ethnic wars that go beyond historic enmity between groups (Stewart 2002, 2004).

Countries in sub-Saharan Africa are characterised by a multiplicity of identity groups with legacies of unequal political and economic power.(UNDP 2004). It is widely held that horizontal inequalities are widespread in African countries where ethnicity became politically and economically salient in colonial and post-colonial times. Available data consistently show sharp inequalities when data disaggregated by ethnicity are available for economic and social indicators such as income, educational attainment and access to high-level jobs, as well as in political indicators such as representation in the executive, legislature, military and other institutions of the state. For example, in Namibia the HDI was estimated for six linguistic groups and ranged from a high of 0.960 for German speakers to a low of 0.326 for San speakers (UNDP 2004). Disparities are sharp not only between

racial groups but also among Namibia's African populations: HDI for Oshiwambo speakers is 0.641, twice the index for the San speakers (UNDP 2004).

However, such data are not consistently available. This survey reviewed two databases that assess the extent of horizontal inequalities that are politically salient in the context of their potential for armed conflict. First, the Minorities at Risk Project's Aggregate Differential Index (ADI) is a composite of 18 cultural, political, and economic indicators that rate differential treatment based on group identity (Minorities at Risk 2005:5). Scores are available for 26 of the 32 countries; Burundi, Cote d'Ivoire, Sudan, Liberia, Mali, Ethiopia, Djibouti, and Uganda score particularly high – above 10 – on a scale where the maximum possible score is 18 (Minorities at Risk Project 2007). Second, the Failed State Index uses a composite of 12 sub-indicators. One is a measure of horizontal inequality – 'Uneven Economic Development along Group Lines'. Two others indicate the level of political mobilisation based on group disparity: 'Uneven Legacy of Vengeance-seeking Group Grievance, or Group Paranoia'; and 'Rise of Factionalised Elites'. Most of the 32 countries score high on uneven economic development; 22 of them are at the 'warning' level while nine others – Comoros, Angola, Djibouti, Eritrea, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique and Senegal – fall just below the cut-off. Ghana, Mali and Senegal show low scores in political mobilisation (rise of factionalised elites), but the political salience of group inequalities is evident in all the countries according to this index (Fund for Peace 2007).

While these databases confirm the presence of group exclusion and their political activation, they do not show whether this was a factor that drove past wars. Academic and policy literature that examines the causes of wars in 32 countries identifies horizontal inequality or group exclusion as a factor in several of them.

The war in the southern Casamance region of Senegal is an example of horizontal inequalities as a factor in mobilising violence. Home to the Diola ethnic group, a distinct cultural group, the Casamance region also has the highest poverty and infant mortality rates in the country (Senegal PRSP 2002). Other examples include conflicts in Burundi, Central African Republic, southern Christians in Chad, Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Djibouti, the Afar and Somali liberation movements of Ethiopia, Liberia, Mali, Rwanda, Sudan, Togo, and Uganda. However, it is important to note that group exclusion does not appear to have been a major factor in many other countries such as Mozambique, Sierra Leone, Guinea, Somalia, Cameroon, and Guinea Bissau.

Neighbourhood spillovers

Wars have taken on sub-regional dimensions as neighbouring countries become embroiled in supporting various warring parties. Neighbouring countries serve as safe havens for rebel groups, receive influxes of refugees, incite support among ethnic groups that inhabit

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more than one state, and provide opportunities for smuggling of weapons or natural resources. Warring parties receive direct material and political support from states and other groups. For example, Chad provided refuge for thousands of people displaced by violence in the Central African Republic and Sudan; the governments of Eritrea and Somalia supported opposing sides

in the war in Ethiopia; the governments of Senegal and Guinea sent troops to Guinea-Bissau; Ethiopia, Eritrea, Yemen, Djibouti, Egypt and Sudan have sent arms to various

warring groups in Somalia (ICG 2007; Webersik 2004); and finally, the wars in Sudan and Uganda have fed on each other.

Environmental pressure related to migration

Although the African continent is sparsely populated when compared with other regions of the world, environmental stress and demographic pressures are present in a number of countries that experienced violent conflict. Mounting demographic pressure is one of the indicators of the Failed State Index; all the 32 countries score above six, and several above nine (Chad, DRC, Ethiopia, Lesotho, Niger, Somalia, Sudan). Several conflicts have been triggered by rival claims to scarce land or natural resources. Although the conflict in Sudan has been commonly attributed to historical enmity on religious or racial grounds, in fact resource scarcity lies at the root of the conflict. Drought and desertification have increased pressure on water and land resources, forcing group migration into areas historically settled by others. This encroachment has created stress and led to violence (Youngs 2004:8). The Azawad conflict in Mali (1990-1996) was driven by socio-economic exclusion of the Tuaregs, but environmental stress also played a role (Minorities at Risk 2007). The desertification of the Sahel from the late 1960s to early 1970s, as well as frequent droughts in the 1980s, caused a mass migration of Tuaregs from northern Mali to neighbouring countries.

Demographic youth bulge

Cincotta (2003) demonstrates strong statistical relationship between demographic patterns and the incidence of armed conflict. His study identifies countries in which young adults comprise more than 40% of the adult population as more than twice as likely as countries with lower proportions to experience an outbreak of civil conflict. In the absence of employment, opportunity or constructive activities, young men especially are known to congregate in gangs that may evolve into politically mobilised insurgencies (Cincotta 2003). This risk factor is present in almost all countries of sub-Saharan Africa, including those that have experienced major wars, minor wars and no wars. Review of data (UNPD 2006) shows that each of the 32 conflict countries surveyed here has a youth bulge with a population aged 15-29 years comprising over 44% of the total.

History of war

Statistical analysis has shown high risk that conflict will re-emerge after an end to violence (Collier & Hoeffler 2002). This has indeed been the history of sub-Saharan Africa where formal peace agreements have failed to achieve long-lasting peace. Of the 126 conflicts being surveyed here, there were 154 cessations in fighting, but only nine of these lasted for 10 years. Peace has lasted for an additional 10 conflicts that ended fewer than 10 years ago. Of the 32 conflict-affected countries only eight have experienced peace of least ten years duration. In several countries violent state repression or conflict between identity groups has continued unabated (Gleditsch *et al* 2002; Harbom *et al* 2006).

Policy Responses to Address Risk Factors

The preceding sections illustrate ways in which armed conflict has affected the trajectory of development and vice versa. The destructive impact of wars is a source of current poverty and development challenges. Development patterns such as a history of ethnic exclusion and environmental pressure have been among the drivers of past conflicts and continue to raise political tensions. These linkages have important policy implications for development strategy

as economic, social and governance reform policies have important bearing on these structural factors. For example, budgetary allocations can deepen horizontal inequalities and group grievance; health and education policies such as measures to increase schooling of girls are central aspects of demographic change; inappropriate agricultural and rural policies can aggravate environmental pressures and competition for land. In these and many other ways, development policy can either alleviate or worsen group grievance, the youth bulge and unemployment, environmental pressure and poor governance of natural resources; it can then help reduce or exacerbate the risks of armed conflict recurring.

To assess how development policies and priorities address these links between armed conflict and development, PRSPs were reviewed where they were available. PRSPs reflect both national priorities and a degree of endorsement by the official donor community. Several of the PRSPs, notably for countries that are emerging from war following a peace settlement – such as Liberia, Guinea Bissau, Congo Republic, Angola and Djibouti – or following a decisive victory as in Rwanda, identify conflict as a major source of their development and poverty challenges. All of the PRSPs emphasise the importance of governance, but mostly not in relation to preventing recurrence of violent conflict.

Overall, there is scant treatment of armed conflict and its links to development challenges in the 18 PRSPs reviewed; four made no mention of armed conflict that had taken place or was continuing at the time, and while others mentioned the issue, only Liberia's interim PRSP of 2007 had a section devoted to an analysis of the root causes of conflict. The lack of attention to armed conflict is particularly surprising where wars were being actively fought at the time that the document was prepared and adopted: the Ethiopia PRSP of 2002 refers only to the border war with Eritrea and in the historical context of pre-1991 wars, not to the ongoing conflicts within the country; the Senegal PRSP of 2002 makes no mention of the persistent fighting in the south at the time; the Chad PRSP of 2003 refers to conflict only twice in its 142 pages, referring only to a 'climate of insecurity and impunity' in a 'conflict-ridden environment' and to 'decades of armed conflict' and its impact on armed forces. These findings are consistent with a recent study (Scharf *et al* 2008) that analysed 20 PRSP and similar documents and more than 80 UN Development Assistance Frameworks, and found less than half referred to armed violence.

Structural risk factors – horizontal inequality, youth employment, demographic pressures, migration, neighbourhood spillover effects and the governance of natural resources, for instance – were not given priority attention in PRSPs. Issues of unequal development along group lines and ethnic exclusion are rarely addressed. Inclusive development approaches, including equitable growth and greater sharing of power and opportunities, are not explicit

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goals, even in countries where ethnic grievances and exclusion are politically live issues. The term 'equity' most often appears in relation to gender equality. Even the interim PRSP of Liberia, which fully recognises the pattern of elite rule as a source of the war that lasted over a decade, is weak when it comes to reflecting inclusion as a policy priority. The document says little about setting priorities across regions

and activities to ensure distributional balance. While social and physical infrastructure development has been concentrated in Monrovia and along the coast, and the interior has been neglected, this strategy makes no provisions to reverse these historic imbalances; while poverty is concentrated in rural areas, the economic growth strategy does not give priority to agriculture other than the export-oriented plantation sector (Fukuda-Parr and others, 2007).

Thus PRSPs do not systematically include an analysis of the impact of conflict on development or of the root causes of conflict and grievances over issues of political, economic and social exclusion. Ongoing armed conflict in a country is systematically ignored as a source of poverty. Indeed, that both a country's governments and the donors who endorse them turn a blind eye to recent or ongoing fighting in the country inevitably has repercussions for development and poverty.

Conclusions

In surveying the nexus of development and armed conflicts in sub-Saharan Africa since 1980, several findings emerge that challenge widely held assumptions and suggest directions for reconsidering policy priorities, launching new research directions, and designing more effective policies for human security.

First, the state as a unit of analysis and focus of policy action does not match the reality of contemporary wars in Africa where the actors are both state and non-state, involve local and external allies and are motivated by political and private economic ends. Yet data

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collection, analytical frameworks and policy interventions remain state-centric. New research directions are needed that focus on non-state actors and transnational conflict networks, destructive impacts of conflicts at sub-national levels, and on the cross-border

alliances and impacts. There is a singular lack of data and analysis of non-state conflicts and the distributional consequences of conflicts. Current policy research and policy agendas for conflict prevention, peacebuilding and economic recovery continue to focus on major armed conflicts that involved the state.

Second, the survey found, surprisingly, that economic decline did not uniformly result from war; some economies grew and human outcomes improved even during conflict as impacts were confined to specific locations or as the economy was buoyed by such exogenous factors as commodity exports. More research is needed to understand how the expected consequences of conflict are contained, and their political implications. More policy attention is needed on the distributional impact of armed conflicts.

Third, the survey shows the prevalence of long-term 'low-intensity' conflicts which constitute a human security priority because their violence imposes huge human and developmental costs, and has the potential to escalate and spread. They are also a priority for conflict prevention policy. Yet low-intensity conflicts receive little policy attention, especially as a development challenge. As the conflict in northern Uganda illustrates, development disparities are both a cause and consequence of such conflicts, yet they are considered to be a domestic political/security issue and kept out of development policy priority setting. In the context of positive development trends for the country overall, the international community can be tempted to 'turn a blind eye' to these sources of human insecurity and worsening war risks. New policy approaches need to be developed in the international community to address these cases.

Fourth, structural conditions identified by recent research as risk factors are present to varying extents in most African countries and particularly in the 32 that have experienced war. Horizontal inequality and the youth bulge are relevant more consistently than other factors. While all countries are 'poor', in many cases economic decline did not precede conflict.

Environmental pressure and natural resource dependence have been factors in few of the 32 countries. The relationship between underlying risk factors and emergence of armed conflict is neither automatic nor uniform, and their presence should not be considered predictive but rather as relevant risk factors requiring attention. Since they relate to development structures, they are highly relevant to development policy, including governance reforms to promote political inclusion and economic and social policies to reduce horizontal inequality, generate employment-creating growth, promote youth employment, and manage the demographic transition. Economic growth alone will not remove these structural risks.

Fifth, neither national governments nor the international community have developed and applied systematic approaches to integrating conflict consequences and risks into development policy priorities. Major development policy instruments, starting with the PRSP, need to be more consistent in addressing conflict impacts and risks.

Finally, this survey documents and confirms the high risks of armed conflict in sub-Saharan African countries as political tensions remain unresolved and structural risk factors prevail. Perhaps most importantly, one of the most striking characteristics of armed conflict in Africa has been the fragility of peace; even where there has been an end to violence almost invariably it has resumed. These patterns point to a need for a more proactive approach to preventing conflict by addressing the structural risk factors.

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Endnote

* While governments do not collect data on war, over 60 datasets have been created by academics and NGOs to monitor regional and global trends. The armed conflict dataset maintained by the Uppsala Conflict Data Programme (UCDP) and International Peace Research Institute, Oslo (PRIO), is increasingly used in research and policy work because it is comprehensive, is updated annually, and its methodology is considered rigorous

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