



MEDICAL PEACE WORK

MPW Course 4: Structural violence and the underlying causes of violent conflict



General objectives

In this course you will examine the interconnections between poverty, development and violent conflict.

You will become familiar with the terminology of development and core issues such as poverty, inequality and health. You will then look at the underlying causes of structural violence at local and global levels and at the relationship between

direct violence and a range of economic, social and political issues.

You will be given the chance to explore your understanding of these relationships by applying your knowledge to real world case studies of violent conflict. Finally you will analyse possible solutions to the problems of structural and direct violence.



Education and Culture

Leonardo da Vinci

THE MEDICAL PEACE WORK TEXTBOOK, 2ND EDITION

Course 4: Structural violence and the underlying causes of violent conflict

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Chapter 1: An overview of development



Intermediate objectives

By the end of this chapter you will be able to:

- describe and evaluate the core measures used to examine poverty, inequality and health,
- critically describe the concept of structural violence,
- suggest ways in which development might be linked to both structural and direct violence

Lesson 1.1: Violence and development

Author: Michael Rowson

The purpose of this lesson is to give you an overview of some of the debates about violence and development that we will consider in more detail in the rest of this course.

Introduction

Our lesson begins by looking at a core concept used across all the chapters in this course – structural violence. We show how the idea of structural violence is being used (especially in the field of health) to encourage a focus on the underlying causes of poverty and disease.

Structural violence

In **Course 1, Chapter 1**, you can read that direct violence can be described as ‘the violation of basic needs through intentional use of physical or psychological power’. But you can also find there that violence is not limited to violent events. People can be killed, psychologically harmed, maldeveloped or deprived through violent socioeconomic or political structures (Galtung 1996). This type of violence has been called structural violence.

We then introduce the concept of development and look at its relationship to structural violence and direct violence. This gets us to the heart of some of the most interesting and provocative debates about the state of the world today. Do poverty and inequality cause violent conflict? Can development promote peace? Or is the opposite true, that development has meant the Westernization and plundering of Third World nations, and is leading to increasing levels of marginalization, oppression and violence?

Examples of structural violence might include:

- the 2.5 billion people who live on less than US\$ 2 per day
- the 30-year difference in life expectancy between those living in Africa and those in rich nations
- the 800 million people who have no access to essential health services.

Learning objectives

By the end of this lesson you will be able to:

- critically assess the term ‘structural violence’
- summarize the different uses of the term ‘development’
- describe some of the different ways in which development might be related to structural and direct violence

We normally associate the word violence with some kind of intentional (and visible) use of force, but the notion of structural violence does not require us to see the harm in operation or to say that someone intended its use. In fact, what causes the poverty or ill health, or denial of services – the violent processes in our examples above – is either hidden from our immediate view, or we choose to ignore it.

As the anthropologist Nancy Scheper-Hughes suggests: ‘Structural violence erases the history and consciousness of the social origins of poverty, sickness, hunger, and premature death, so that they are simply taken for granted and naturalised so that no one is held accountable except, perhaps, the poor themselves’ (Scheper-Hughes 2004:14). The goal of those who use the concept of structural violence is to highlight ‘the history and social consciousness’ of poverty, premature death and disability and to locate the causes of this type of violence.

Structural violence and health

In the field of health this task involves advocacy about the importance of addressing the social determinants of people’s health.

Health research – and somewhat inevitably, clinical practice – is dominated by a focus on individual level risk factors for disease: for example, the effects on health of genetic make-up or personal behaviours such as smoking, drinking or sexual activity.

However, we also know that patterns of health around the world are shaped by social, political and economic conditions (Irwin et al. 2006). Poverty, gender inequality, and marginalization on account of ‘race’ or sexuality, for example – all forms of what we have called structural violence – determine wellbeing and access to health-sustaining services. As a result, there is increasing focus on these ‘upstream’ causes of disease.

The term ‘structural violence’ has been used to throw light on a number of different contemporary health issues, such as why prisoners in Russia have higher rates of TB (Farmer 2005); why African-American women suffer disproportionately from HIV/AIDS (Lane et al. 2004); and why migrant populations suffer more from schizophrenia (Kelly 2005). All such analyses point to the need to tackle the deep-seated social causes of ill health – in other words, the origins of structural violence – in order to improve population health.

Do you think ‘structural violence’ is a useful term?

The idea of structural violence is a powerful one. The term ‘violence’ may appeal to your sense of the enormity of the deprivations that many people in the world suffer. Politically speaking, it dramatically reframes the problem of poverty into an issue of violence. The focus it brings to the social determinants of health is welcome.

On the other hand, you might object to a concept that blames ‘social structures’ for people’s destitution or ill-health. You might question whether it helps pin down any more exactly how different groups of people become sicker or poorer. We already have concepts such as poverty and social exclusion to help us do that. And you might also argue that it suggests that poor and marginalized people are entirely at the mercy of social forces, when in fact all human beings have some degree of control over their circumstances.

Structural violence, direct violence and development

We will now look at another controversial term – ‘development’ – and its relationship to both structural and direct forms of violence. Thomas (2006) notes how the term is commonly used in three different ways:

First, as a vision of how we would like the world to be. The three dominant visions of development described by Thomas are:

- A | as ‘following in the footsteps of the West’, or the pursuit of economic growth, industrialisation and democratization;
- B | as the fulfilment of human potential and the promotion of fairness and sustainable living;
- C | as a reordering or amelioration of the chaos caused by rapid economic and social change.

Second, development may describe a process of historical change. Here again there are competing explanations – modernization theorists argue that the spread of capitalism across the world is inevitable and welcomed by different societies as it is enriching and liberating. On the other hand, structuralist theorists argue that capitalist development causes deep social conflict.

Third, development may simply be equated with the actual interventions undertaken by governments, international bodies and aid agencies that aim to promote development.

In the discussions below, we will see how development – in the three senses Thomas uses – is related to both structural and direct violence. The different senses will be highlighted in bold.

What is the relationship between development and structural violence?

Most of our visions of development focus on the idea that development should alleviate conditions of structural violence. However, even a glance at the history of development shows that structural violence is frequently a by-product of the historical process of social, economic and political change. Take the case of industrialization.

Historically, most countries have had to industrialize in order to become wealthier and healthier. But industrialization has great social and environmental costs. For a start, it is accompanied by urbanization, which often creates a slum population among whom disease is rampant; working conditions for those lucky enough to be employed may be poor; and the industrial process itself may create environmental damage.

The uncomfortable conclusion is that development is a process that can simultaneously both create and destroy the conditions that allow structural violence to flourish.

‘Economic development as a long-term process of structural change, as a historical process, poses awful and awesome moral and political dilemmas which, even to be confronted adequately, require hard and informed thinking and, for the policy makers themselves, considerable moral and political courage and self-discipline,’ says Gavin Kitching (Kitching 1989:195). ‘Development is an awful process. It varies only, and importantly, in its awfulness.’

Kitching seems to argue that change, disruption and different kinds of violence are at the heart of the process of development. Pretending that we can make everyone better off without someone else suffering avoids the deep moral choices that political leaders face every day. The question is, who should win and who should lose during the changes brought by development? The common vision of development – that it should alleviate structural violence – is thereby undercut by its constant ‘violence-creating’ reality.

What is the relationship between development and direct violence?

You may have already sensed that there are a number of ways in which the different meanings of the term development relate to direct violence.

War as a fight for a development goal

Thomas (2006), for instance, suggests that visions of development are often expressions of political ideologies and may therefore also be motivating forces for different sides in a conflict. Some of the armed conflicts we will discuss in **Chapters 2** and **3** have participants who explicitly put economic, social and political change at the heart of their reasons for fighting.

To illustrate this idea, take a look at the excerpt in Box 1 from a speech made by the former UK prime minister, Tony Blair, just after the events of 11 September 2001 in the US and just before the invasion of Afghanistan.

Box 1: Tony Blair's vision of development

'I believe this is a fight for freedom. And I want to make it a fight for justice too. Justice not only to punish the guilty. But justice to bring those same values of democracy and freedom to people round the world.

'And I mean: freedom, not only in the narrow sense of personal liberty but in the broader sense of each individual having the economic and social freedom to develop their potential to the full. That is what community means, founded on the equal worth of all.

'The starving, the wretched, the dispossessed, the ignorant, those living in want and squalor from the deserts of Northern Africa to the slums of Gaza, to the mountain ranges of Afghanistan: they too are our cause.

'This is a moment to seize. The kaleidoscope has been shaken. The pieces are in flux. Soon they will settle again. Before they do, let us re-order this world around us.'

Speech to UK Labour Party conference, 2 October 2001

Blair's vision of development here is clear: it is about the fulfilment of human potential. He implies that war ('a fight for justice') might be necessary to bring it about. At any rate, either by war or by the peaceful means of promoting development interventions, we intend to 'reorder this world around us'.

Note that both the overthrow of the Taliban in Afghanistan and the subsequent invasion of Iraq were promoted – especially by the US administration – as a fight for a very specific vision of development: the goal of spreading democracy, to free people from the chains of autocratic regimes.

At other times development interventions – such as trade policy – have been seen as an instrument to be used in the prevention of war: 'I reasoned that if we could get a freer flow of trade [...] so that one country would not be deadly jealous of another and the living standards of all countries might rise, thereby eliminating the economic dissatisfaction that breeds war, we might have a reasonable chance of peace' – Cordell Hull, US Secretary of State 1933–44 (Brown 2004:107).

Hull is expressing the widespread feeling that the collapse of world trade and the international depression of the 1930s had led to the rise of Nazism and the Second World War. More interconnectedness between nations and economic prosperity would therefore diminish the likelihood of violent conflict. His words echo a school of thought that modern, liberal democracies never go to war with each other. As capitalism and liberal democracy ('development') spread across the world (as part of a historical process or deliberate intervention), so the likelihood of peace increased. The European Union provides a good example of the theory: set up after the devastation of the Second World War, it has brought economic and political security to the continent.

Development as a trigger for war

Some people, however, suggest that development is causing violent conflict. In a book provocatively titled *Victims of Development*, Jeremy Seabrook provides many examples of how Western commerce and political intervention create not only structural violence but also direct violence as they widen inequalities around the world:

‘Nothing now apparently stands in the way of Western expansionism in the world. Nothing can prevent its violent incursions into lives and livelihoods, its evictions and uprootings of people, its forcible refashioning of custom and tradition, in order to maintain the flow of wealth from global poor to rich [...] we can expect to see only intensified social dislocation, further excesses of violence, secessionism and terrorism, casteism and class conflict, kidnappings, bombings and repression’ (Seabrook 1993:14).

Some commentators even believe they have identified direct links between development aid interventions and outbreaks of war. Peter Uvin, basing his analysis on the genocide in Rwanda (we will examine this in detail in **Chapter 3** and an e-learning case), suggests that the ‘game’ of development, played out in almost ritualistic manner between governments, bilateral agencies and international organizations (with increasing NGO participation), ‘often contributes to exclusion, inequality, frustration, cynicism and a potential for conflict’ (Uvin 1999:49).

Does development stimulate armed conflict?

Cramer and many others have also picked up on our earlier point when discussing structural violence, namely that ‘the fundamental upheaval of capitalist development must be central to most modern violent political conflict’ (Cramer 2005:18). As a process of historical change development is a hugely disruptive process that often pits groups of people against each other. In this sense, armed conflict is perhaps an inevitable outcome of societal transition. This is a pessimistic view; a more positive conclusion would be that although development produces conflict, it does not necessarily have to produce violent conflict. In other words, the changes wrought by development could be managed better.

Conclusion

Pause for a minute at this point. Do you find yourself identifying more strongly with the opinions in some quotations than others?

It would not be surprising if you did, as these are strong statements that respond to our deep feelings about the nature of the world. They represent different political perspectives, and you will no doubt side with some more than others.

You should, however, remember these different relationships between development and structural and direct violence as we continue through **Chapters 2** and **3**. You will hear frequent echoes of the different opinions presented in this lesson.

The debates about the relationship between development and violence are complex. We pick up some of the issues we have raised here in **Chapters 2** and **3**. The rest of this chapter will focus further on aspects of structural violence – especially poverty, inequality and premature death and disability. It will also give you the understanding of the theoretical basis of these concepts that you will need to explore the relationship between poverty and inequality and collective violence in **Chapter 2**.

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Lesson 1.2: The scale and impact of poverty

Author: Michael Rowson

Poverty is directly linked to ill health. It is also linked – though in complex ways – to the causes of violent conflict. This lesson examines the different ways we think about poverty and measure it. We will chart the shift from understanding poverty primarily as a lack of money or goods to seeing it as an inability to lead lives that people have reason to value. We will examine trends in poverty and show that the way we measure poverty is directly linked to how we think about tackling it.

Learning objectives

By the end of this lesson you will be able to:

- describe trends in poverty at global and regional levels
- explain the differences between approaches to poverty reduction based on income and human development.

Definitions of poverty

Poverty is often defined in terms of a person's income or expenditure. For example, the World Bank has set the international poverty line at an expenditure level of approximately **US\$ 1.25 per person per day**.

This figure is supposed to represent the minimal amount needed for a person to fulfil their physical needs; they are considered to be living in **absolute poverty** if their income falls below this. The poverty line is calculated using **Purchasing Power** Parities, which take into account differences in prices in goods in different countries, and so allow us to compare poverty levels internationally.

*Now look carefully through the information presented in Table 1, which shows the numbers of people living in poverty in different regions (World Bank 2008). It also shows the percentage of the total population living in poverty, which we call the **headcount index**.*

Table 1: Regional Poverty Estimates 1981–2005. Numbers of poor people living on under \$1.25 per day (millions) and percentage of population living under \$1.25/day (headcount index %)

REGION	1981	1984	1987	1990	1993	1996	1999	2002	2005
PEOPLE LIVING ON LESS THAN 2005 PPP \$1.25 A DAY (MILLIONS)									
EAST ASIA & PACIFIC	1,071	947	822	873	845	622	635	507	316
CHINA	835	720	586	683	633	443	447	363	208
EUROPE & CENTRAL ASIA	7	6	5	9	20	22	24	22	17
LATIN AMERICA & CARIBBEAN	47	59	57	50	47	53	55	57	45
MIDDLE EAST & NORTH AFRICA	14	12	12	10	10	11	12	10	11
SOUTH ASIA	548	548	569	579	559	594	589	616	596
INDIA	420	416	428	435	444	442	447	460	456
SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA	212	242	258	298	317	356	383	390	388
TOTAL	1,900	1,814	1,723	1,818	1,799	1,658	1,698	1,601	1,374
PEOPLE LIVING ON LESS THAN 2005 PPP \$1.25 A DAY (%)									
EAST ASIA & PACIFIC	77.7	65.5	54.2	54.7	50.8	36.0	35.5	27.6	16.8
CHINA	84.0	69.4	54.0	60.2	53.7	36.4	35.6	28.4	15.9
EUROPE & CENTRAL ASIA	1.7	1.3	1.1	2.0	4.3	4.6	5.1	4.6	3.7
LATIN AMERICA & CARIBBEAN	12.9	15.3	13.7	11.3	10.1	10.9	10.9	10.7	8.2
MIDDLE EAST & NORTH AFRICA	7.9	6.1	5.7	4.3	4.1	4.1	4.2	3.6	3.6
SOUTH ASIA	59.4	55.6	54.2	51.7	46.9	47.1	44.1	43.8	40.3
INDIA	59.8	55.5	53.6	51.3	49.4	46.6	44.8	43.9	41.6
SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA	53.4	55.8	54.5	57.6	56.9	58.8	58.4	55.0	50.9
TOTAL	51.9	46.7	41.9	41.7	39.2	34.5	33.7	30.5	25.2

Summarizing the information

There is a lot of information in this table. What key points did you note? Write them down now.

Here are a few of the points you may have noted:

- You should be able to see that overall poverty levels – in this case the numbers of people living on under \$1.25 per day – have decreased over the last 20 years, from around 1.9 billion people in 1981 to nearly 1.3 billion in 2005.
- The headcount index (in this case measuring the proportion of the world's population living on less than \$1.25 a day) has also decreased globally, from 51.9% to 25.2%.
- However, it should also be clear that it is poverty reduction in China that has driven much of the fall in the absolute numbers and the headcount index.

Region by region

East Asia (driven by poverty reduction in China) has seen a spectacular fall in both the numbers of people living in poverty and the proportion of the population who are poor.

In South Asia the total numbers of poor people have remained stagnant (or risen slightly); but the headcount index has declined by about 20 percentage points.

Sub-Saharan Africa has seen a dramatic increase in absolute poverty levels from 212 million in 1981 to 388 million in 2005. In this case the headcount index has remained stubbornly high, with over half the continent's population living below the absolute poverty line (reaching nearly 60% during the stagnation years of the 1990s).

The absolute numbers of poor people in India are greater than in the whole of sub-Saharan Africa, yet much of the international community's focus is on increasing aid to Africa, whereas India is seen as rich enough to help its own population.

Eastern Europe and Central Asia have seen sharp increases in poverty rates (at low levels) in the wake of their transition from communism to capitalism.

Latin America and the Caribbean and the Middle East and North Africa regions have seen absolute numbers of poor people stay steady (at low levels) and moderate declines in the headcount index.

Think about why poverty has increased or decreased in these different regions. What are the key factors?

One factor you may have noted is population growth. In South Asia the headcount index fell quite steeply between 1981 and 2001, while absolute numbers of poor failed to shift. This is because economic growth has been lifting an increasing percentage of a (growing) population out of poverty. In sub-Saharan Africa, on the other hand, population growth has been considerable but economic growth has been weak and failed to reduce poverty – so both the numbers of people in poverty and the headcount index have increased. The headcount index started to decline after 2000, however, with economic growth triggered by China’s demand for natural resources from Africa (see also [Lesson 2.4](#)).

Yet these explanations do not tell us why economic and population growth rates have risen or fallen. For this reason, we will look more closely at the causes of success and failure in poverty reduction in [Lessons 2.1](#) and [2.2](#).

Some people argue that the \$1.25 per day poverty line is set too low to measure the real extent of absolute poverty. Applying a \$2 per day absolute poverty line globally produces the results shown in Table 2.

Table 2 Numbers of poor people and headcount index for \$2/day, by region

REGION	2005 (MILLIONS)	2005 (%)
EAST ASIA AND PACIFIC	729	38.0
CHINA	474	36.3
EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA	42	8.9
LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN	94	17.1
MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA	51	16.9
SOUTH ASIA	1092	73.9
INDIA	828	75.6
SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA	556	72.9
TOTAL	2564	47.0

Source: World Bank (2005)

Note that large swathes of the developing world’s population are still living on abysmally low incomes – nearly half, according to this table. In regions such as South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, where around three-quarters of the population live on less than \$2 per day, this situation can be described as one of ‘generalized poverty’. Most people are in an extremely vulnerable position. China again stands out as the country that has succeeded best in reducing the number of poor people living on under \$2 per day.

Limitations of income/expenditure-based poverty lines

The international poverty line is a convenient way of taking snapshots of poverty in different countries and looking at trends over time. However, it is a very blunt instrument for measuring a complex phenomenon. A number of different factors affect its usefulness as a tool for policy-makers.

Can you think now what factors might affect the usefulness of the international poverty line as a tool for policy-makers?

You may have thought of the following factors:

- It does not show movement across the poverty line – who lives in permanent and who lives in temporary poverty.
- It does not reveal the distribution of income within the household.
- It only values goods that are delivered on the market. In many poor countries, people grow food and rear animals for their own consumption, a process not captured by the measurement of the purchase of goods sold as commodities (although sometimes national accounts adjust for this).
- The focus on income or expenditure leads to a focus on lack of money as the central expression of what it means to be poor (Kanbur and Squire 2001; UNDP 1997).
- The next section takes up this last point. We will consider whether poverty analysis needs to move beyond lack of money to consider other dimensions of the experience of poverty.

A human development perspective

Let us look more closely at a standard definition of absolute poverty: ‘a condition of life so characterised by malnutrition, illiteracy, and disease as to be beneath any reasonable definition of human decency’ (World Bank, cited in Kanbur and Squire 2001).

This definition does not spotlight lack of income as a characteristic of poverty. Rather, it concentrates on what it means to be in a state of poverty – to lack food, to be uneducated, to lack access to health care.

So why don’t we measure who is poor in these ways too?

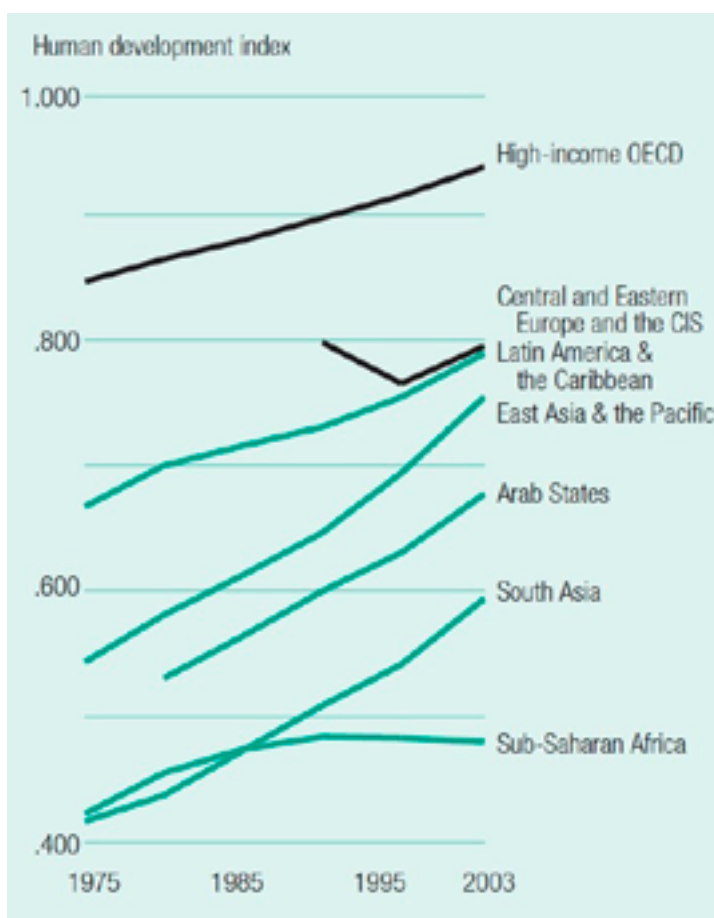
In fact, the human development reports of the UN Development Programme (UNDP) do exactly this. Underlying their approach is an idea in development – called the **capability approach** – which suggests that poverty lies ‘in the lack of real opportunity people have to live valuable and valued lives’ (UNDP 1997:16). The

capability approach looks at the key functionings that people can achieve. Being healthy or literate might constitute core **functionings**, but there are others as well, such as living a life free of political persecution.

The annual UNDP human development reports chart progress in many similar areas. They also try to go beyond assessments of countries' wealth or poverty in financial terms, by combining in one index some key indicators of core functionings like life expectancy, literacy and educational enrolment rates with countries' national income. Through a complex equation that weights these different factors, it then comes up with the **Human Development Index**. This ranks countries by their achievements in all these areas combined. It goes from 0 to 1, with 1 being the highest attainable level of 'human development'.

Now look at Figure 1. You can see the various regions of the world ranked on the Human Development Index (HDI).

Figure 1: Human development improving in most regions (UNDP 2005)



How do the trends in human development – which, remember, capture life expectancy and literacy as well as national income – reflect the trends in Table 1?

Broadly speaking, they seem to reflect the trends well. Regions which have seen poverty decrease – such as East and South Asia – have also seen improvements in their HDI. Sub-Saharan Africa and Eastern Europe and Central appear to have not made much progress in reducing income poverty, and indeed have been hit by stagnation or reversal in their HDI. This shows the clear link between progress in reducing income poverty and tackling ill health, for example. The unsanitary conditions of poverty are a breeding ground for disease.

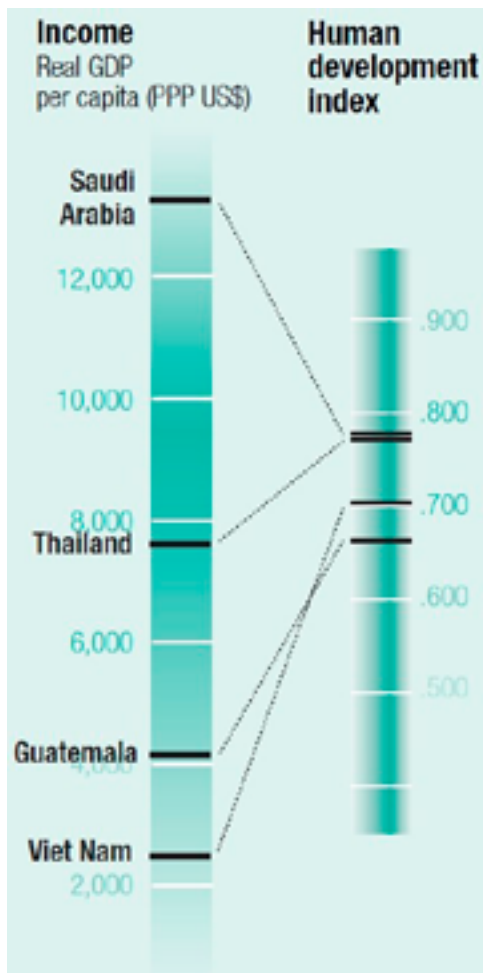


Figure 2: The relationship between income per capita and human development (UNDP 2005)

Now look at Figure 2.

This figure shows that countries with very different incomes achieve similar index rankings. Vietnam, for example, is about half as rich as Guatemala, but its ranking is higher than Guatemala's.

Without necessarily knowing anything about these two countries, can you explain why Vietnam, although it is about half as rich as Guatemala, is ranked higher?

We know that the non-income components of the index are life expectancy and literacy/educational enrolment rates. We can therefore infer that the Vietnamese government has probably devoted more of its (smaller) income to promoting better health and literacy. There may be other factors involved. We shall explore this issue further in **Chapters 2** and **4**.

However, even where poverty levels have not declined that much – as in Latin America, the index still picks up an improvement in the broader ‘human development’ situation.

Limitations of the human development approach

The human development perspective gives us more insight into the wellbeing of societies and their people than a purely monetary focus. However, the HDI has limitations. Is it valid to try and add income to life expectancy and some measurement of educational attainment? And why choose these factors as key to a society's wellbeing?

Conclusions

Measuring poverty will always be controversial. How we measure it is based on how we define it: a human development approach, for instance, defines poverty broadly, so we must therefore measure it broadly. This is very demanding in terms of gathering data, but it can be a fruitful way to approach poverty because it recognizes the different components of people's livelihoods. It also gives policy-makers more levers with which to tackle the complex problem of destitution.

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Lesson 1.3: The scale and impact of inequality

Author: Chris Willott

Inequality is an important concept and, as we will see in the coming lessons, is closely related to both poverty and violent conflict. However, the precise relationships between them are complex and are influenced by social and political factors. This lesson examines the concept of inequality, how it is measured, its causes and effects, and recent trends in inequality.

Defining inequality

Inequalities represent differences in income, health, ownership of land, access to power and so on. They are sometimes classed as avoidable or unavoidable. An example of an unavoidable inequality might be that not all people have the physical capacity to become fast runners. An avoidable **inequality** – which some call an inequity – might include sharp differences in incomes or life expectancy.

However, there are always debates about whether inequalities are avoidable. Inequalities in income may be attributed to the supposed inherent laziness of poor people, while life expectancy differences are sometimes driven by behavioural patterns (such as smoking) over which people exercise some degree of personal control.

On the other hand, it can also be argued that individual behaviour can only account for a proportion of the differences in life expectancy between rich and poor that afflict most countries, and that unhealthy habits like smoking, drinking and risky sexual behaviour are deeply socially patterned, suggesting that people do not have as much control over their choices as some think. So is a life expectancy inequality in which smoking plays a role a truly avoidable inequality?

Inequality is studied by social scientists because they are interested in such debates. The works of philosopher John Rawls are particularly important. He outlined his theory of 'justice as fairness' in *A Theory of Justice* (Rawls 1971).

Learning objectives

By the end of this lesson you will be able to:

- explain the meaning of inequality and some of the ways in which income inequality is measured
- comment on trends in income inequalities at country and global levels.

He argued that if humans were able to construct principles of justice from behind a veil of ignorance – in which ‘no one knows his place in society, his class position or social status, nor does anyone know his fortune in the distribution of natural assets and abilities, his intelligence, strength, and the like’ – most people would choose a society in which everyone was treated equally, and would adopt a position that would maximize the position of the poorest.

Rawls therefore argued that social and economic structures and policies should be arranged so that:

- they are to be of the greatest benefit to the least advantaged members of society;
- offices and positions must be open to everyone under conditions of fair equality of opportunity.

You may make your own judgements about when inequalities are avoidable and whether we should attempt to reduce them.

Through these principles, Rawls constructs a philosophical argument for reducing inequality.

Now, we will move on to examine two distinct types of inequality: first, inequality between people living in the same society, and second, inequality between societies.

Inequality within societies

The most common tool used to measure economic inequality within societies is the Gini coefficient. Its value ranges from 0 for a perfectly equal society, where all income is shared equally across the whole population, to 1 for a perfectly unequal society, where one person owns everything.

Figure 1 shows the Gini coefficient in different countries, with green shading corresponding to countries with lower levels of income inequality, and red for those with higher levels.

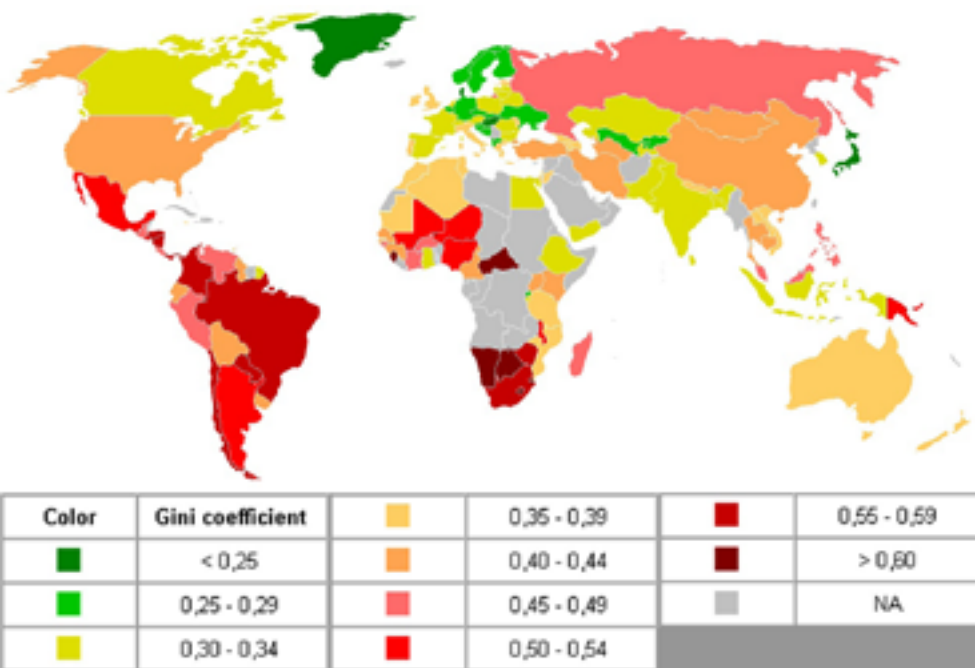


Figure 1: National Gini coefficient values around the world

Can you see the marked differences in levels of income inequality across the world in Figure 1?

There are interesting trends within and between regions.

- In general, the countries of Europe and the former Soviet Union, with the notable exception of Russia, have the lowest levels of income inequality.
- Both Africa and Latin America have generally high levels of income inequality, though, as noted above, there are exceptions.
- There is considerable diversity in Asia, with some regions, including the Indian subcontinent, Indonesia, Japan and South Korea, having relatively low inequality, while inequality is higher in China and much of South-East Asia and the Middle East.
- Interestingly, this map illustrates that relatively income-equal countries such as Rwanda, Ghana, Canada and Indonesia are often neighbours of income-unequal countries. Regional patterns and trends are difficult to identify.

Time trends in within-country inequality are summarized below. There is a lot of dispute about the quality of data used to construct the Gini coefficient, especially for developing countries. For example, while India is recorded as having a relatively low coefficient, more accurate measurement would probably raise it substantially.

Global inequalities

It has been argued that better-off citizens in most of the developing world have fewer opportunities than the poor in rich countries (World Bank 2006). The logical conclusion is that inequalities between countries are greater than those within countries. This does not mean we should ignore within-country inequality, but that both types of inequality should be recognized.

There are three ways of measuring global inequality.

- The first method is to forget that countries exist, and simply calculate the inequality in the distribution of each person in the world's income, adjusted for purchasing power parity. Strictly speaking this is the measure known as global inequality (although we call all these types of measure 'global inequality' in everyday language).
- The second method is to calculate the inequalities between countries by assigning each person the mean income of his/her country instead of his/her own income. Known as international inequality, this measurement is weighted by population size.
- The third method is to assign each country its own mean income, regardless of the size of the population. This is how we assess inter-country inequality.

Given the number of ways we can measure inequalities across the globe, you can imagine there is considerable disagreement about whether the world is more sharply divided than before. The use of different types of inequality data can lead to different conclusions about what policies should be pursued to defeat world poverty.

Does global inequality matter?

Broadly, there are two views on this question. One is that global inequality is irrelevant, for two reasons. The first is that there is nobody to address the problem – if it is a problem. There is no global government that can fight global inequalities (the UN, which might come closest to such a global government, has very little power to promote the economic reform necessary to affect inequalities significantly at the national level). Inequality within nation states, on the other hand, matters because it forms part of national discourse, and governments and political parties may make their response to inequality part of their political platform.

Second, it is argued by some (both in relation to national and global inequalities) that only changes in absolute income, rather than inequality itself, really affect people's lives. Growth in the absolute income gap between an average African and an average European would not affect either to any great degree, and is thus unimportant.

The opposing view is that global inequality does matter. Again there are different reasons for why this might be the case. The first is a simple ethical case: it is unethical for some to live in plenty while others live in poverty. The idea of a just and fair society is the foundation of western political philosophy and central to most of the world's great religions (World Bank 2006).

Second, there is a more pragmatic case for why global inequality matters, prompted by globalization and greater access to information such as through the Internet. The economist Simon Kuznets argued that 'it is only through contact that recognition and tension are created' (Kuznets 1965 [first published in 1954]:173–4). The increasing contact between global communities may facilitate an increase in feelings of deprivation and despondency, which in turn may lead to greater social unrest as awareness grows of the greater wealth in other communities. Inequality, therefore, may increase people's feelings of despondency and deprivation, which may lead to greater social unrest. We will examine this relationship in more detail in **Chapter 2**.

Why inequality matters

Evidence suggests that changes in income inequality at national level have virtually no correlation with economic growth. Among growing economies, inequality tends to decline as often as it rises. However, there are some inequalities – in power, assets, and access to markets and services – that are detrimental to economic growth.

- A reduction in power inequalities is likely to give rise to the sort of institutional development that facilitates the lowering of income inequalities (pro-rich and thus undemocratic institutions emerge and persist in societies where power is concentrated in the hands of an elite).
- Inequalities in access to resources can result in lower productivity, reducing economic growth. This is because those at the bottom of the socioeconomic hierarchy often lack the wealth or the social status to invest, resulting in underutilization of resources. Redistribution of access to resources or influence, such as through the promotion of micro-credit schemes and improving women's land rights or access to employment, are potential remedies.
- Inequality may produce violent conflict, as we will see in **Lesson 2.4**.

Trends in income inequality

Understanding whether inequality has been increasing or decreasing over time depends largely on which definition we use of inequality – global, international and intercountry. Intercountry inequality grew considerably between 1950 and 2000, especially since the 1980s, but international inequality has been decreasing. This is mainly due to the income growth of some populous countries, notably China and India, alongside slower average growth in other developing countries and declines in output in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union.

It has only been possible to examine global inequality since the mid-1980s – measured, remember, by obtaining data on individuals' incomes around the world, and lining them up from poorer to richer regardless of their nationality. It requires the use of household surveys of individual income that only became available in developing countries at this time.

According to the available data, global inequality did not change significantly between 1986 and 2000, but would have increased were it not for the growing incomes of China and India.

In terms of within-country (or intracountry) inequalities, among the 73 countries for which data is available, an estimated 42 saw income inequalities rise between the 1980s and the mid-to-late 1990s (Cornia and Kiiski 2001). Inequality levels fell in only six of the 33 developing countries in the sample, and rose in 17. Inequality has risen particularly quickly in the former Soviet bloc and in southeastern Europe. There has also been a pronounced increase in inequality in the UK, USA, Australia and New Zealand. In Latin America inequality is high and continues to rise, while both South Korea and Thailand have seen large increases in inequality since the 1950s. For many Asian countries, notably China, Indonesia and Malaysia, inequality has followed a u-shaped pattern, where it has fallen before rising again.

Conclusion

As this lesson illustrates, inequality is a concept that is relatively easy to define, but much more difficult to measure. From this discussion, can we draw any conclusions about inequality trends? Perhaps we can. Income inequalities within countries around the world appear to be growing. The picture between countries is more difficult to judge, but on at least two of our three indicators, inequalities also appear to be growing, especially if India and China are taken out of the equation. You might want to keep these trends in mind when we discuss the role of inequality in stimulating and sustaining civil war in **Chapter 2**.

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Lesson 1.4: What is health?

Author: Michael Rowson

In this lesson we will briefly consider some of the different meanings of the idea of 'health', and look at some of the best-used statistics to describe it. We will focus mainly on the developing world, where most large-scale violent conflicts occur. The definitions in this lesson will be used in several other MPW courses.

What is health?

Most people appear to like the sound of good health: in some countries, wishes for good health are a common toast at celebrations. In **Lesson 1.2** on poverty we saw that social scientists think health is one of our core 'functionings'. In that context, measures to reduce the burden of ill health can be considered (alongside increasing wealth) as key anti-poverty actions.

Learning objectives

By the end of this lesson you will be able to:

- outline different perspectives on the notion of health
- recognize data that measure health in different ways
- explain how different health indicators tell us different things about our societies.

What does health mean and how might we begin to measure it? Pause for a moment and jot down your own views about what health means.

The notion of health of course varies across time, space and culture. In popular Western usage the idea of healthiness was closely connected with a common-sense idea of lack of limiting physical illness. More recently this common-sense notion of health has expanded to include mental wellbeing.

Different communities around the world commonly use wider definitions of health and wellbeing (see Box 1, Bristow et al. 2003). Many show that lay people's understandings of the idea of health are just as rich and complex as those of professionals – see, for example, the accounts of health and illness by people living in East London, UK (Cornwell 1984). These understandings are often encompassed an individual's relationship with society, and with the environment around them.

Box 1: Some indigenous people's perceptions of wellbeing

'Wellbeing means that my body and mind are happy and well and that I have a good appetite, that I eat and sleep well and have no problems in the family or in the village.'

– Cham Heb, 20, mother, Tampoeun ethnic group, Prak Village, Samaki commune, Rattanakiri Province, Cambodia.

'I think that wellbeing in our house and home and also with our neighbours is when there is peace and happiness – and also when we love ourselves. It's like God says to us, you shouldn't only want your own wellbeing, you should also think of your neighbours. You have to think of your neighbours, whether they have enough food to eat, or maybe they're suffering. It is important to think of them. You have to share the happiness that you may have with your brother.'

– Juana Tzoy Quinillo, 55, traditional birth attendant and curer, Pachojob', K'iche' ethnic group, Santa Lucia la Reforma Municipality, Totonicapán Department, Guatemala.

'Wellbeing is to live like other people and to fit in with them. Proper houses, water and nice clean clothes would make me happy and is what I need to be well.'

– Jamba, traditional leader, San ethnic group, Uzera, Tsumkwe West, Namibia.

'Wellbeing, for me, is utz'ilal. It's when we're not fighting with our family, in the home. It also means peacefulness when we go to sleep.'

– Irma Pu Tiu, Madre Vigilante, K'iche' ethnic group, Gualtux, Santa Lucia la Reforma Municipality, Totonicapán Department, Guatemala.

Interestingly, the constitution of the World Health Organization – written in 1948 – defines health as 'a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity'. This definition seems ahead of its time in some ways, but the emphasis on social wellbeing – or peace – reflected the mood after the Second World War (Saracci 1997). In 1986 the WHO Ottawa Charter on health promotion emphasised that peace is a necessary prerequisite for better health.

Pause here for a moment. What do you think about WHO's broad definition of health? Can you think of any criticisms that might be made of it?

In many ways the WHO definition reflects the broader meanings of health that are in wide use around the world. It might be criticized from an operational perspective – the quest for health becomes boundless (Saracci 1997). In effect, it equates health with happiness, and suggests that any disturbance to happiness will become a health problem. Trying to gain the unobtainable – happiness – will, as a result, divert resources from the attainable quest for the gradual realization of equity and social justice in health.

On the other hand, others argue that advances in brain science make happiness objectively measurable – that happiness and health are closely correlated and that our happiness varies according to our social circumstances (Layard 2006). Perhaps there is a reason to equate health and happiness after all.

Further debates

Four further important points are often raised in these debates about the nature of health.

- First, anthropologists have noted that what might be described as an ‘illness’ in one culture is considered ‘normal’ in another, for example, malaria is often considered normal in places where it is endemic (Scrimshaw 2001).
- Second, in some countries or communities achieving higher life expectancy and freedom from disease are not among people’s perceptions of what escaping from poverty is about (Jackson 1998). Health is not always a priority. However, it is always important to raise questions about such studies: are people taught by social rules and customs not to value their health? Or are they – perhaps because of illiteracy – prone to fatalistic attitudes to life and death?
- Third, the economist Amartya Sen has drawn attention to this issue through discussion of the fact that in poor countries self-reported (or subjective) health status is often higher than in richer countries, despite these countries having higher (objectively-measured) burdens of disease. He says higher levels of literacy and better access to health services in richer countries tend to make people more aware of their health problems, which leads to them reporting worse health (Sen 1999). Self-reports of health status are very useful and widely used, but must be interpreted with care.
- Fourth, women and men may differ in their reporting of illness – the frequency with which they deny illness differs from culture to culture, and often depends on their need to continue working either in the family or in their jobs (Scrimshaw 2001)

These further points show that it is sometimes difficult to measure objectively – or even grasp an idea of – health and wellbeing. It depends on our culture, on our position in society, and on how the measurement takes place. In the next

part of the lesson we will consider some ‘objective’ measures of health of great importance in the developing world, which will often be referred to in these courses. We will also look at some data to see if health – and therefore peace in its broadest sense, as defined in **Course 1** – is spreading in the world today.

How healthy is the world?

In this section we will consider some standard measurements of health in the developing world: life expectancy, healthy life expectancy, and child and maternal mortality.

Life expectancy: One of the most common measures of health in the developing world. It is measured using data from what are called life tables: from these we can calculate a person’s life expectancy at different points in time, for example, at birth or at age 30.

*Look at Figure 1.
What can you see?*

There has been a sharp improvement in life expectancy at birth in most parts of the world. The only exceptions are sub-Saharan Africa, where some countries have been severely hit by the AIDS pandemic, and

the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, which were hard hit by their disorderly transition from communist state rule to the free market.

You should also have noted that the inequalities between countries that we saw in **Lesson 1.3** are replicated in the field of health – and they are shocking. On average, people in Africa live 30 years less than people in high-income countries.

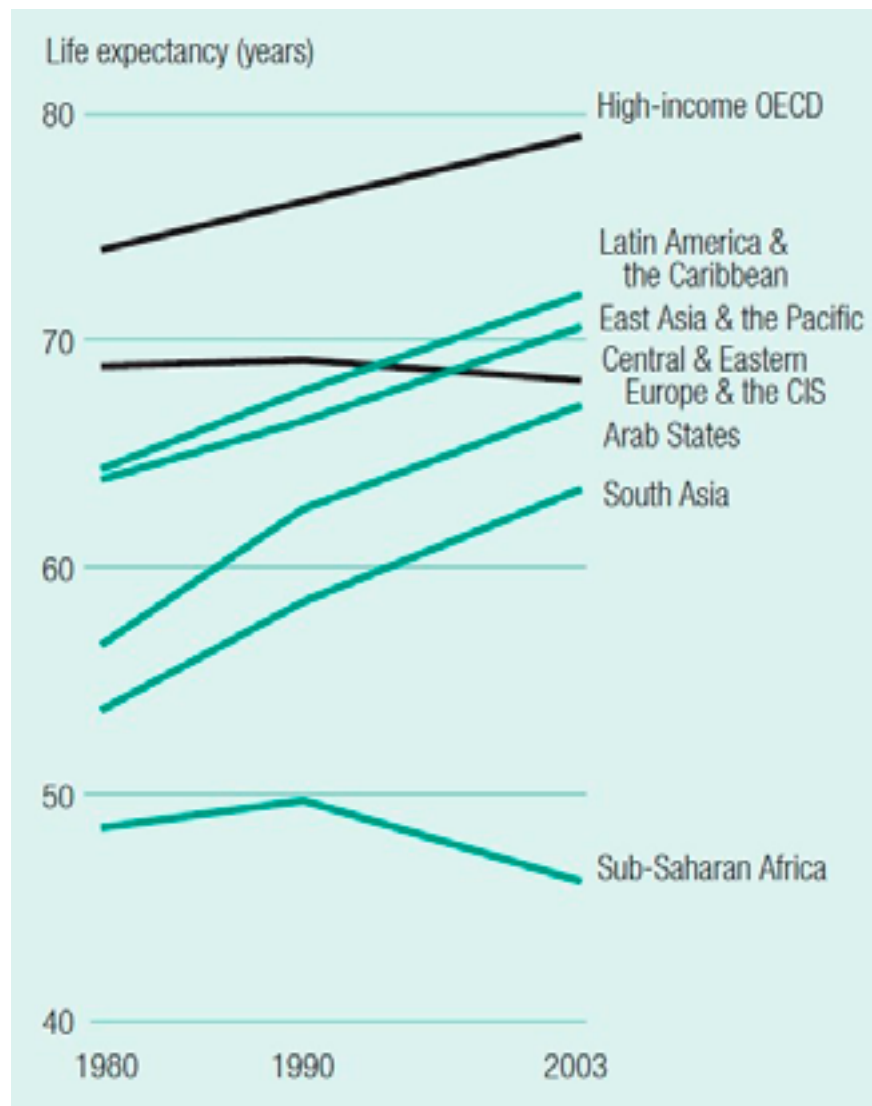


Figure 1: Regional trends in life expectancy at birth (UNDP 2005)

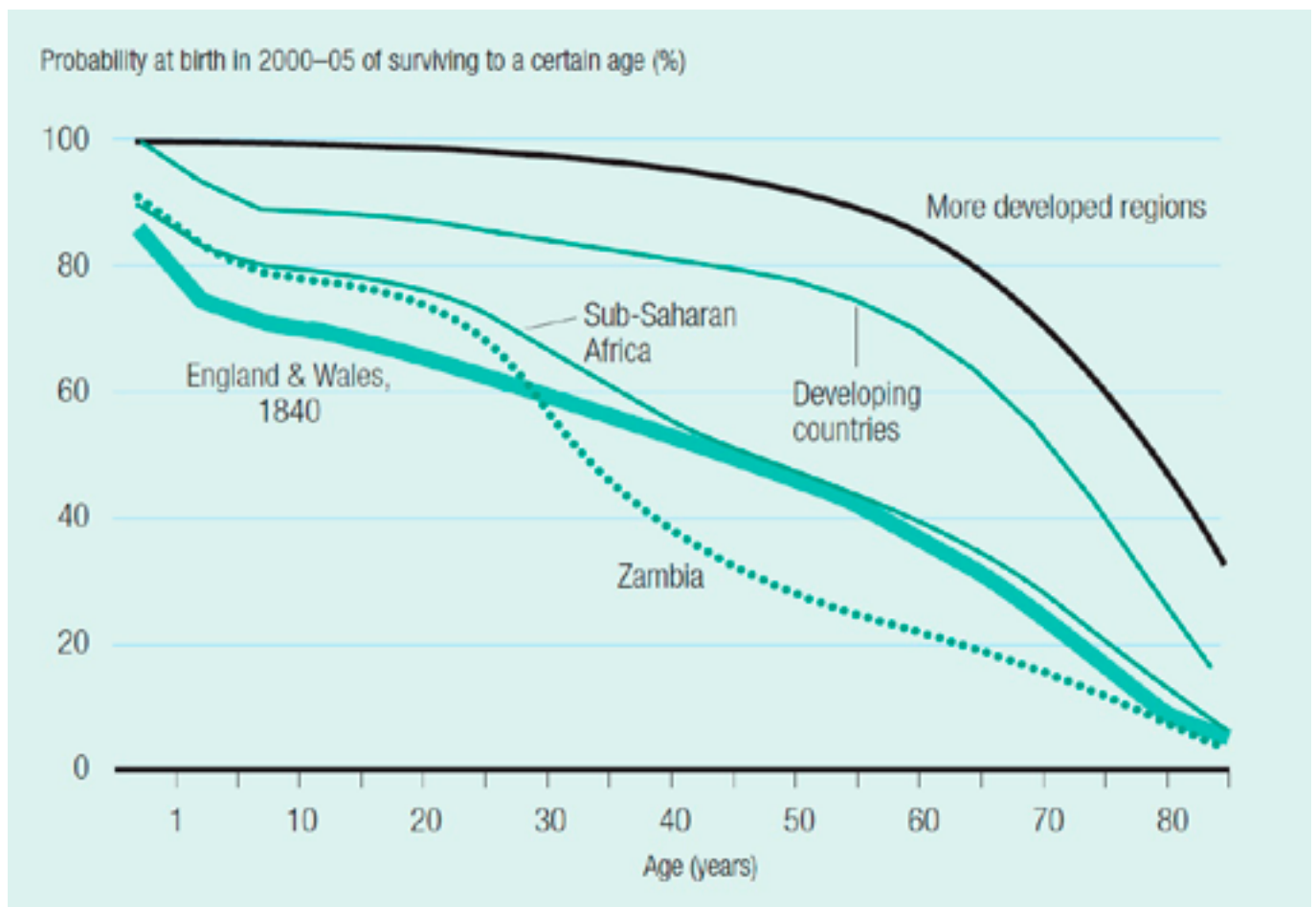


Figure 2: Probability of survival in sub-Saharan Africa compared with 1840s England (UNDP 2005)

Now look at Figure 2. It is complicated, so pause for a moment and make sure you understand it.

Look first at the thin black line on top marked 'developed regions'. It shows how a child born today in high income countries has a 60% chance of surviving until 75. The probability is 40% in all developing countries (the next line down). Note the sudden dip in the survival chances of young children on the developing country line. We will soon come back to this when we look at the child mortality rate, but you

should be able to see that increases in life expectancy could still be made in the developing world if the burden of child deaths was reduced.

The line for sub-Saharan Africa seems to echo the gradient of the developing countries line. But suddenly, at around age 25, a divergence appears. This is the impact of HIV/AIDS, which is hitting the young adults of Africa particularly hard. Zambia follows a similar route, but is among the Southern African countries which have a particularly high prevalence of the disease, so the chance of a child born in Zambia surviving to 30 or over is lower than that of a child born in England in the 1840s.

Healthy life expectancy

Healthy life expectancy (HLE), or as it is also called, health-adjusted life expectancy (HALE), is a measure that adjusts life expectancy values to reflect the number of years in a person's life that are actually lived in good health. Table 1 shows some HLE values for the UK, where life expectancy may be increasing but HLE does not appear to be increasing as quickly (www.statistics.gov.uk). The table also reveals that women live longer but spend more of their lives suffering from chronic illness and disability.

	WOMEN		MEN	
YEAR	1981	2001	1981	2001
LIFE EXPECTANCY	76.8	80.4	70.9	75.7
GENERAL HLE	66.7	68.8	64.4	67.0
% LIFE IN 'GOOD' OR 'FAIRLY GOOD' HEALTH	86.9%	85.6%	90.0%	88.5%

Table 1: UK trends in life expectancy and HLE 1981–2001. Source: www.statistics.gov.uk

What Table 1 does not show, hidden by these broad population averages, is a difference in HLE of 16.9 years between those in richer and poorer parts of the population (POST 2006). This is an inequality that can surely be classified as an inequity, following the terminology used in **Lesson 1.3**.

However, this national inequity is of course dwarfed by the global inequity in HLE. There is an enormous difference between the world's highest HLE (77.7 years among Japanese women) and the world's lowest (27.2 years among men in Sierra Leone (Mathers et al. 2004)). This in part reflects the impact of the violent conflict in Sierra Leone.

Child mortality

Worldwide about 10 million children under five die every year, largely from diseases that are easily preventable. Most deaths are concentrated in South Asia and Africa (Black et al. 2003). We measure child deaths by the under-5 mortality rate (sometimes abbreviated to U5MR), which shows the number of child deaths per 1000 live births in a given year. U5MRs fell across the world during the last century, but the rate of decline slowed around the year 2000.

Note that there is a 100-fold difference between the highest U5MR, 320 per 1000 in Sierra Leone – and the lowest, 3 per 1000, an honour shared by Singapore and Sweden. While some very large countries like India and Nigeria experience the largest number of child deaths in absolute terms, small war-affected countries dominate the list of countries with the highest rates (Table 2).

Maternal mortality rate and ratio

The maternal mortality ratio, the ratio of maternal deaths to births, is the most common indicator used in this field (Ronsmans and Graham 2006). There are around 529 000 maternal deaths annually and again, inequalities across the world are staggering. Expressed as a probability of the likelihood of dying in childbirth, women in Afghanistan and Sierra Leone face a 1 in 6 chance of dying in childbirth, while in Sweden it is 1 in 30 000 (Ronsmans and Graham 2006). The links with war-affected countries are obvious.

You will also come across other terms:

- The infant mortality rate (IMR) is the number of deaths of children under one year per 1000 live births
- The perinatal mortality rate (PNMR) is the number of deaths of viable foetuses from 24 weeks in the womb until 7 days after birth per 1000 live births
- The neonatal mortality rate (NMR) is the number of deaths during the first 28 completed days of life per 1000 live births.

Each rate reflects something different about the organisation of a society. The PNMR perhaps most strongly shows the strength of obstetric and midwifery care. The U5MR perhaps shows the influence of the social environment on health better than the IMR, as the child that has been weaned will be more affected by sanitary and other environmental conditions than an infant being breastfed. Differences in maternal mortality rates/ratios reflect access to emergency obstetric care as well as other basic health system functions, including antenatal services.

COUNTRIES RANKED BY UNDER-5-YEAR MORTALITY RATE	UNDER-5-YEAR MORTALITY RATE (PER 1000 BIRTHS)
SIERRA LEONE	316
NIGER	270
ANGOLA	260
AFGHANISTAN	257
LIBERIA	235
MALI	233
SOMALIA	225
GUINEA BISSAU	215
DR CONGO	205
ZAMBIA	202

Table 2: Countries with the highest child mortality rates. Source: Black R, Morris S, Bryce J (2003)

Conclusion

In this lesson you learned that while there may be different concepts of health, it is valued highly in most communities and nations around the world. You will use some of the information about basic health and economic indicators gained in **Chapter 1** to evaluate evidence about the relationship between poverty, inequality, health and violent conflict in **Chapter 2**. In **Chapter 4** you will also see that many countries have managed to reduce their child and maternal mortality rates despite being very poor.

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Chapter 2: Poverty, inequality and violence



Intermediate objectives

By the end of this chapter you will be able to

- debate the underlying causes of structural violence at local and global levels;
- explain how ethnicity, poverty, inequality, development, politics and international factors may (or may not) predispose countries towards civil war;
- evaluate the strength of different claims about which factors cause civil war.

Lesson 2.1: Origins of structural violence (1): local forces

Author: Michael Rowson

This lesson returns to a concern expressed in our discussions of structural violence in **Lesson 1.1**: how can the origins of structural violence be uncovered when they appear to be ignored or even accepted by society at large?

Introduction

In **Chapter 1** we identified levels of poverty, inequality and premature death as markers of structural violence, and we looked at some indicators of the depth of deprivation in these areas faced by people in different parts of the world. Yet numbers cannot convey the meaning of poverty: think instead of 'social inferiority, isolation, physical weakness, vulnerability, seasonal deprivation, powerlessness and humiliation' (Chambers 1983).

As a poor woman from Moldova explains: 'Poverty is pain; it feels like a disease. It attacks a person not only materially but also morally. It eats away one's dignity and drives one into total despair' (Narayan et al. 1999:6).

Explanations such as these perhaps best describe structural violence in all its misery. In this lesson we will examine how forces operating at community and national levels perpetuate structural violence. In the next lesson we will turn to global influences on the level of structural violence.

Causes of structural violence/poverty

Obviously what counts as structural violence or poverty varies for different people living in different times and places. Increasingly, poor people's own sense of the causes of poverty has come to shape our understanding of the forces that affect their lives. Their experiences are reflected in the writings of Chambers (Chambers 1983) and the World Bank (World Bank 2000; Narayan et al. 2000).

Most people argue that a number of factors interact to cause poverty:

- lack of income and assets
- powerlessness
- vulnerability.

Learning objectives

By the end of this lesson you will be able to:

- identify some of the causes of poverty
- explain some of the links between structural violence and direct violence.

Income and assets

Lesson 1.2 gave you an overview of the importance of income for poor people and, perhaps more importantly, its role as an instrument for obtaining things that people have reason to value, such as essential goods and services like food, medicine and education.

The poor also lack what are known as assets: tangible and intangible goods, states of being and relationships on which we all depend.

We can divide assets into different categories (World Bank 2000):

- human assets, such as the capacity for basic labour, skills and good health;
- natural assets, such as land and cattle;
- physical assets, including infrastructure like roads and water supplies and all kinds of household goods;
- financial assets, such as savings and access to credit;
- social assets, such as networks, contacts and reciprocal obligations that can be called on in time of need, and political influence over resources.

The ability to use one's labour power to earn a living is a fundamental asset of the poor. The possibility of obtaining work and the wage a person can earn are strongly influenced by level of education, so the possession of basic skills is a core human asset too (and important for its own sake). Similarly, having good health is vital if to earn an income and enjoy life to the fullest extent possible, as this Egyptian woman explains: 'We face a calamity when my husband falls ill. Our life comes to a halt until he recovers and goes back to work' (Narayan et al. 2000:98).

Access to land is particularly important for the rural poor. It enables the cultivation of food and grazing of cattle and thus sustains their livelihoods and food intakes. But, in the majority of countries, the poorest 20% of the population holds a small proportion of land, often less than 5%. This type of unequal land distribution is an important factor in explaining the extent of poverty (WHO 1997).

Another natural asset might be the ownership of livestock – cattle and other animals can generate income and provide food. Many rural households have no livestock.

Infrastructure, such as roads, health centres and schools, also represents potential assets. Roads are very important for opening up rural areas to trade; and in both rural and urban areas, schools and health facilities help the poor to survive, work and learn new skills. Conversely, isolation is an important problem

for the poor. In Zambia, approximately 20% of rural households live more than one kilometre from the nearest water source, and this is likely to be polluted. During the dry season women can spend up to five hours a day fetching water (Oxfam 1995).

Access to credit (needed for diversification, expansion and maintaining levels of consumption) is also often limited, because poor people often cannot afford to borrow at high interest rates. As banks consider it too risky to lend to them, they are at the mercy of unscrupulous money lenders. Perhaps as little as 5% of farmers in Africa and 15–20% in Asia are able to benefit from formal credit.

The rest are excluded from credit markets or forced to borrow at excessively high interest rates. This applies especially to female heads of households, who often do not have the land rights which could provide collateral for borrowing (WHO 1997).

‘Poor people cannot improve their health status because they live day by day, and if they get sick they are in trouble because they have to borrow money and pay interest,’ said a woman, Tra Vinh, Vietnam (Narayan et al. 2000:98).

Social assets such as patronage and networks of obligation among families and communities are also vital resources in times of stress. But they are put under greatest pressure at these times as well, and may break down through such factors as war, natural disaster and economic collapse which drive people from their localities.

Vulnerability

Vulnerability means that a person is susceptible to being affected by sudden change. Vulnerability can be triggered by outside events (such as economic crisis, floods, war or famine), or by personal crises (for example, sickness or becoming old and no longer able to work). At times of vulnerability people use coping strategies to deal with insecurity.

They commonly draw on their assets, such as selling an animal, sending another member of the household out to work, or borrowing money to maintain consumption. Households and individuals may be able to deal with periods of vulnerability and eventually earn enough to buy a couple of chickens to replace the ones they sold, or pay off a loan. However, assets might not be replaced during longer periods of economic crisis, or after the death of the household wage earner, and may be eaten up completely, making people more vulnerable and pushing them deeper into poverty.

Although we describe the poor as a vulnerable set of people, the two terms are not interchangeable. Vulnerable people (such as the elderly or people with severe mental health problems) may or may not be poor.

Powerlessness

Powerlessness is common among the poor. Because they have little bargaining power they have little or no ability to negotiate good wages; they must accept being evicted from their property by landowners because they do not have access to justice; and they must accept the demands of moneylenders for exorbitant interest payments, because they have no choice but to borrow and other forms of credit are unavailable.

A striking finding from the World Bank's Voices of the Poor survey (Narayan et al. 1999, 2000) was that poor people were very often disempowered by their contact with health service providers. They often faced high payments for care relative to their income, bribery and physical or verbal abuse. We are all vulnerable when ill, but to have your social sense of powerlessness reinforced at the same time increases our vulnerability. This sense of being vulnerable to the whims of the powerful is at the very heart of the experience of poverty (Mackintosh 2001).

Reflections

Here are some general points for you to think about.

First, all the underlying causes of structural violence outlined above have a significant gender dimension. For instance, women's access to assets is often far more restricted than men's; their ability to fall back on their own assets during times of crisis may therefore be limited (Agarwal 1992). Similarly, women's inability to be heard fairly in justice systems where male values predominate contributes to their social powerlessness.

Second, inequality in the distribution of assets and income between certain groups in societies, what we will call 'horizontal inequalities' in **Lesson 2.4**, may be a significant factor leading to direct violence. As in the case of Rwanda, structural violence and the humiliating experience of poverty may – with the help of other factors – create the grounds for armed revolt and murder (Box 1) (Uvin 1998).

Box 1: Rwanda – from structural to direct violence

In his groundbreaking work on the genocide in Rwanda, Peter Uvin (1998) identifies a number of mechanisms by which the local forces of structural violence we outlined in this lesson may lead to direct or acute violence. 'A population that is cynical, angry, and frustrated', he argues, is 'predisposed to scapegoating and projection, vulnerable to manipulation, deeply afraid of the future, and desperate for change' (Uvin 1998:110).

Box 1: Rwanda – from structural to direct violence (*continued*)**Increases in inequality**

There appears to have been a sharp rise in income and asset inequalities in Rwanda in the years preceding the genocide. Surveys indicate that access to land was becoming increasingly unequal, while the income share of the richest decile increased from 22% in 1982 to 52% in 1994.

Disempowered by the state

Strict restrictions on population movement – especially between rural and urban areas – kept the rural population impoverished as ‘opportunities for education, health care, small enterprise and commerce, and social mobility were highest in urban areas’ (Uvin 1998:116).

Aid projects increased inequality

Many aid projects meant to empower the rural poor ended up concentrating resources in the hands of the wealthy.

Impunity and corruption

Justice in Rwanda was uneven and arbitrary. Criminals regularly escaped prosecution if they were influential, belonged to the right group or could pay. Entry to secondary and tertiary education and access to government jobs depended on influence and social position. As a result ‘people lose faith in the system, become cynical, and are easily tempted to break the law themselves’ (Uvin 1998:127).

Humiliation

As inequalities developed, so attitudes hardened among elite groups against the vast mass of poor rural Rwanda farmers, who were treated in a condescending, paternalistic and humiliating manner. This was reinforced by systems of top-down development, including obligatory community labour, projects which did not reflect the needs or views of their so-called beneficiaries, and a focus on ‘innovative’ farmers which tended to exclude other, poorer farmers.

As Uvin noted, harm was done in Rwanda by treating people in an infantilizing, condescending manner, by limiting their options, and by stripping them of their dignity and creativity. ‘Disempowering people, even in the name of development, is not neutral. It has impacts on their minds and bodies’ (Uvin 1998:135). He concludes that when people experience structural violence they try to regain their dignity, and may resort to violence to do it. Combined with a poisonous atmosphere of anti-Tutsi racism, the daily indignity of poverty in Rwanda helped lay the ground for genocide.

We will return to these issues in **Lesson 3.3**. We will also consider the relationship between poverty and violent conflict more closely in **Lesson 2.4**.

Finally, we should also note that violent conflict is often a powerful factor leading to the disruption of people's incomes and assets, and increasing their powerlessness and vulnerability. Violent conflict can also, however, contribute to rearrangements in the social order that may improve people's position in society. For example, war has sometimes laid the ground for land reforms which have benefited the poor. In this sense violent conflict sometimes transforms social situations.

Conclusion

You should see by now that poverty is a multidimensional phenomenon. People who are poor do not just face a lack of money. A whole range of daily acts of discrimination, humiliation and sometimes physical injury and illness make up the experience of being poor. You will be asked to think more about what could be done to challenge these features of structural violence in **Chapter 4**.

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Lesson 2.2: Origins of structural violence (2): global forces

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This lesson explores the notion that the shape of people's lives today is determined not just by the local forces of power and exclusion examined in **Lesson 2.1**, but also by global forces. We show this historically, first by looking at the legacy of colonial rule in developing countries. More recently, and especially in the last 30 years, the world as a whole has been reconfigured by globalization, a process which has many dimensions. In this lesson we concentrate on the effects of economic globalization on poverty, inequality and health.

Learning objectives

By the end of this lesson you will be able to:

- explain the influence of colonial rule on the shape of developing country economies today;
- debate how economic globalization may be linked with increases in structural violence.

Colonial rule

Until the middle of the 20th century, colonization was the dominant form of relationship between the rich countries of the industrialized world and the poorer countries of the developing world. Colonization, which occurred in waves from the 16th century onwards – starting in Latin America, proceeding to Asia and finally to Africa in the 19th century – was partly driven by the economic needs of European countries that were industrializing over the same period.

Colonial rule left an indelible mark on many of the world's poorest countries, and can be described as an apex of structural violence. Colonization has a wide range of influences, as Bernstein (2000) describes:

- **Patterns of labour and migration:** in colonial territories people were sucked into wage labour rather than subsistence production as they were swept into the economic machinery of industrialization. The most repressive forms of labour – slavery and indentured labour – were also important components of colonialism and led to waves of migration around the world. Africans were transported to the Americas, Chinese immigrant labour swept across South-East Asia and the Americas, and Indians came to Eastern and Southern Africa.

- **Patterns of land use:** land was turned over from subsistence farming to the production of crops and other commodities that could be purchased by consumers in the colonial motherlands, where industrialization and rising incomes were creating demand for 'exotic' goods such as tea, coffee, timber, sugar and spices.
- **Patterns of trade:** many colonies became suppliers of raw materials to European countries and served the economic demand for commodities as living standards rose there. India's flourishing cotton industry before widespread colonization was destroyed by the British as it was a competitive threat to cotton manufacturers in the north of England in the 19th century. Economists still talk about the 'colonial trading pattern' when referring to the industrialized world's relationship with the nations of Africa, which continue to depend heavily on the supply of primary goods to other countries for much of their national income. Industrialized countries have also continued to try to block industrial development in less developed nations when it becomes a threat to their own interests.
- **Territorial division:** the colonized lands were carved up by the colonizing powers, regardless of existing ethnic or tribal divisions of territory. Nowhere was this more apparent than during the 'Scramble for Africa', when virtually the entire landmass was parcelled out between the European powers in the late 19th century. The legacies of these arbitrary divisions are still noticeable in long-lasting violent conflicts in Africa and the Middle East.
- **Social and cultural norms:** Christianity made inroads in many countries and missionaries poured out of the industrializing world to take the gospel to the 'uncivilized'. Basic education and health services were also provided in the colonies, but these were largely for the use of the colonial administrators and, where necessary, to secure the productivity of workers (Stewart 2002). They did not extend to the general population, although increasingly, especially in Africa, clinics and hospitals run by missionaries extended their services to indigenous people. Education was steeped in the discriminatory values of the colonizing powers, but was also a double-edged sword, because it brought with it the ideas of the European enlightenment such as human rights and political freedom. These views were effectively used by movements of oppressed people in the colonized countries to fight for their liberty during independence struggles that took place throughout the first half of the 20th century.

Understanding the impact of colonialism is important for our understanding of violence. It was a process that often involved great direct violence, with long-lasting repercussions for political relationships and violent conflicts. It was also a process of structural violence, as the world was reshaped economically to suit the interests of the colonizers. The effects of this also continue to linger, as we shall see as we discuss the most recent and significant economic force shaping the world today – globalization.

What is globalization and why is it happening?

Economic globalization can be described as ‘a process of greater integration within the world economy through movements of goods and services, capital, technology and (to a lesser extent) labour, which lead increasingly to economic decisions being influenced by global conditions’ (Jenkins 2004). Economists sometimes consider globalization to have occurred in three waves. On the graph in Figure 1 you can see three important measures of globalization plotted across the course of the last century – levels of cross-border financial flows (foreign capital stock), trade in goods (the export measure), and immigration to the US.

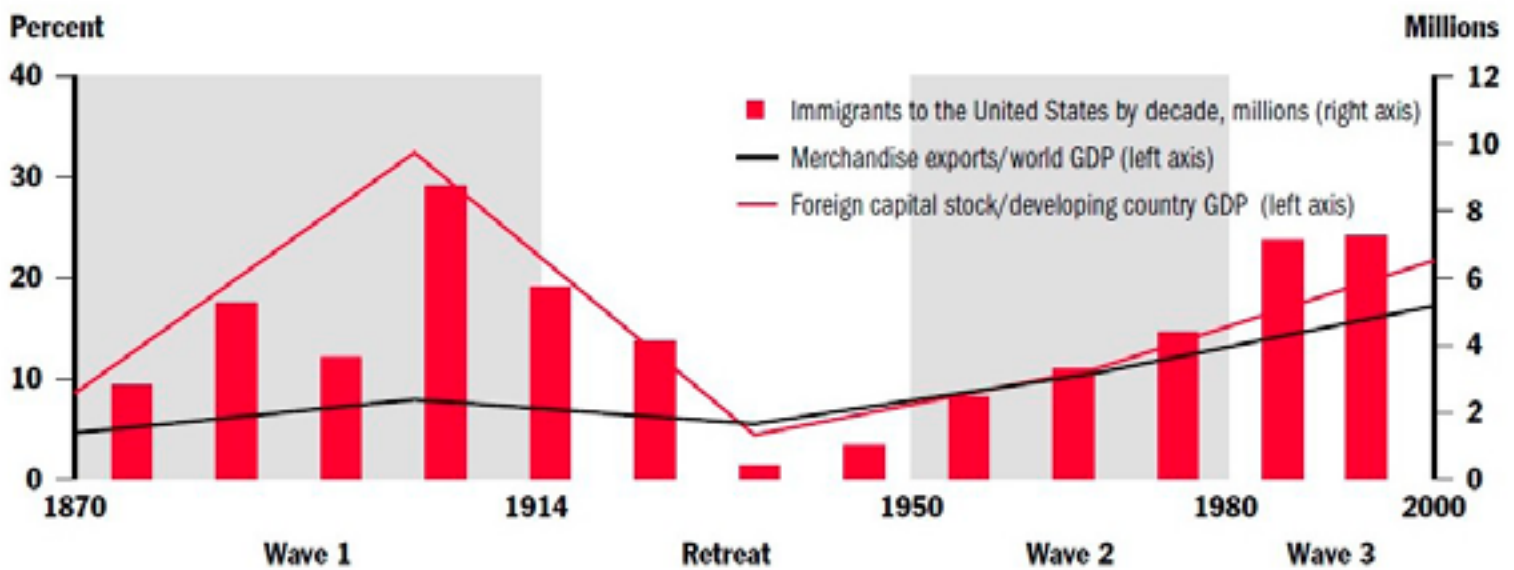


Figure 1: Waves of globalization (World Bank 2001).

You can see that a very marked first wave of globalization occurs until around the time of the First World War. At this point violent conflict and political instability in the economic powerhouse of Europe led to the closing of borders between countries, and the great depression of the 1920s led to further protectionist measures to prevent cheap imports from driving domestic manufacturers out of business. The second wave of globalization began after the Second World War, and appears to accelerate by some indicators at the beginning of the 1980s, when the third wave begins.

Why does globalization happen? Partly it is a result of the way capitalist development works. Businesses are constantly searching for profitable markets, and this drives them beyond national borders when domestic markets are saturated. Partly it results from technological change. Developments such as satellite technology and the Internet have helped to compress time and space, facilitating global financial trading in real time for instance. Transport costs have also been slashed in the last 50 years.

Globalization is also a result of deliberate efforts by governments to tear down barriers to trade and movements of capital. You will recall Cordell Hull's words from **Lesson 1.1** about the determination of policy-makers, after the Second World War, to make trade between nations flow freely as a contribution to lasting peace. In 1944, the Global Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) was launched to promote more trade – this became the World Trade Organization (WTO) 50 years later (Box 1).

Box 1: The World Trade Organization

(updated from Koivusalo M, Rowson M 2000)

The WTO came into operation in 1995 and is the legal and institutional foundation of the multilateral trading system. Based in Geneva, it provides the principal contractual obligations that determine how governments frame and implement domestic trade legislation and regulations. It is the platform on which trade relations among countries evolve through collective debate, negotiation and adjudication.

Its main functions are:

- administering and implementing the multilateral and plurilateral trade agreements which together make up WTO
- acting as a forum for multilateral trade negotiations
- seeking to resolve trade disputes
- overseeing national trade policies
- cooperating with other international institutions involved in global economic policy-making.

By 2010 there were 153 country members. WTO is headed by a ministerial conference which meets at least every two years and can decide on all matters under any of the multilateral trade agreements. Between meetings, day-to-day operations, notably dispute settlement procedures and trade policy review, are overseen chiefly by the general council and a number of subsidiary entities. All WTO members belong to these bodies, in which decisions are generally reached by consensus; when this is not possible, decisions are taken by a majority vote, on the basis of 'one member, one vote'.

Economic globalization and structural violence

Globalization's effects on poverty, inequality and disease – the core components of structural violence identified in **Chapter 1** – are complex and debated (Rowson 2007). Strong claims are made about the benefits and dis-benefits of globalization.

Supporters of globalization

Richard Feachem (former head of both the Health, Nutrition and Population Division at the World Bank and the Global Fund for AIDS, TB and Malaria) has produced compelling arguments that support the relationship between globalization and improved health. He has suggested that 'globalization, economic growth and improvement in health go hand-in-hand. Economic growth is good for the incomes of the poor, and what is good for the incomes of the poor is good for the health of the poor. Globalization is a key component of economic growth. Openness to trade and the inflow of capital, technology and ideas are essential for sustained economic growth' (Feachem 2001:505).

What is your initial reaction to this argument? Does it seem logical, or are there any holes in the logic?

You may well be convinced by the power and logic of this argument which draws a direct link from globalization to economic growth to health. Putting aside the evidence for these links (which we will examine next), you might be sceptical that links between such complex phenomena could be made so easily.

Evidence

The key to whether Feachem's argument is robust or not is, as he argues, the evidence for the relationship between just one aspect of globalization – openness to trade – and growth.

However, economists have debated this for years without coming to firm conclusions. On the one hand, East Asian countries appear to have done extremely well from increased trade on world markets. Using their comparative advantage of an abundance of unskilled labour, coupled with improvements in education and good economic management, they have managed to use trade and access to world markets to increase employment opportunities across their populations, including among the poor. These factors have contributed to large declines in absolute poverty in several countries, and especially in China.

However, openness to trade in African countries has had rather different effects. Poor producers depend on the export of low-value primary commodities (such as coffee, cocoa, maize and so on – the colonial trading pattern described above), whose price is volatile and tends to fall over time. Until around the year 2000 African countries had extremely poor growth rates and absolute poverty rose. After 2000, rapid Chinese industrialization and a consequent need for mineral resources (such as copper) to support this have led to some reduction in poverty, but this has been fairly marginal (see trends described in **Lesson 1.2**).

In Latin America, a more economically advanced region, exporters faced strong competition from East Asian countries in manufactured goods, and have failed to generate wealth from the creation of new industries and services. As a result, poverty rates have been stagnant across the region.

So the link between globalization (increased trade) and economic growth and poverty reduction is not automatic. Another example have been rising food prices again prompted by increased demand from wealthier populations in countries like China (and a range of other reasons, including speculation on global commodity markets for agricultural products). While these have benefitted some agricultural producers in poor nations, consumers have suffered. For poor people, food makes up a large proportion of their spending, and sudden rises in the price of food have pushed people into poverty in low-income countries.

Now look back at Feachem's argument on the relationship between economic growth, poverty reduction and health. Here again a causal link appears to be made.

Evidence we encountered in **Lesson 1.4** showed that there had been a strong decline in child mortality in the developing world in the second half of the twentieth century. With good reason, we might be tempted to link this with reduced poverty in some developing countries. But again, the picture is more complex than broad statistics can show. In fact, there has been a marked slow-down in the rate of improvement in child mortality in some of the developing countries that are the highest performers in terms of economic growth – including the two with the largest populations, India and China (together containing around a third of the world's people). Both countries have opened up to the global economy. Both have enjoyed periods of economic growth. Yet both countries have experienced slower improvements in the infant mortality rate in the last 10–20 years.

This suggests that firstly, gains in economic growth in India and China which are partly associated with globalization have not been used to support more rapid health improvements. Second, it may also be suggestive of a change in

emphasis on the part of policy-makers in these countries – away from policies that support populations towards policies that respond to (global) market incentives (Dreze and Sen 2002).

Some go further and suggest that globalization actively reorients government expenditures in all countries away from investment in the social fabric and towards attracting foreign investment and trade. Some economists challenge this, arguing that openness to world trade and the instability this brings forces countries to spend more on welfare states to protect their population (Rodrik 1998). The arguments continue, especially around the ability of the poorest countries to create appropriate safety nets in resource-constrained environments.

Opponents of globalization

Echoing some of the criticisms of the pro-globalizations arguments we have just discussed, other commentators have suggested that globalization has had strong negative effects on health in many countries (People's Health Movement, Global Equity Gauge Alliance and Medact 2005). This is argued to come through both a lack of relationship between economic growth and health, and through globalization's tendency to increase the gap between rich and poor. However, the evidence on this latter point is also strongly contested.

First, as you saw in **Lesson 1.3**, the measurement of income inequalities is quite variable and different methods produce different results. Second, drawing out the health implications of these changes may be difficult.

Evidence

Can you remember what we said about the different trends that were observable when economists try to measure whether the different types of global inequality have increased or decreased?

We concluded at the end of **Lesson 1.3** that the weight of evidence showed that global inequalities (between countries, and the people of the entire world) have been stable or increasing during this third wave of globalization. Where global inequalities were measured as declining, this was due to the fast growth of India and China: a positive trend, but despite their size these countries do not represent the whole developing world, and the picture is less rosy elsewhere.

That lesson also showed that there has been a widespread rise in within-country income inequalities in the era of globalization. This is in part due to a set of

policy stances associated with globalization. To understand this, let us remind ourselves of the definition of economic globalization set out at the beginning of this chapter – as a process whereby (national) economic decisions are increasingly influenced by global conditions.

Some analysts have noted how the threat of global competition has been associated with a reduction in the power of trade unions and reductions in the welfare state – key planks of protection for low-income workers – as governments call for ‘more flexible’ labour markets. As mentioned before, the association between economic globalization and the size of welfare states is the subject of some debate, but there have been battles over the power of trade unions and labour market regulations in many developed countries, and this helps to explain why income inequality has increased in some. This is worrying, as increasing income inequalities probably lead to social disintegration and poorer health (Wilkinson and Pickett 2009).

Reflections

We have just looked at some complex points about the impact of economic globalization on structural violence. In summary:

- overall, economic globalization has been good for some developing countries (and already developed nations) who have exploited gains from trade;
- economic globalization is not necessarily good for everyone in those countries, as inequalities have risen and health indicators have stagnated;
- there have been losses in some countries, and for their people, especially in sub-Saharan Africa.

In other words, levels of structural violence may be both diminished and increased by the same process of global market integration. Historical factors may influence the results of economic globalization. Certainly Africa’s late escape from colonial rule hindered its ability to develop and emerge from the colonial trading pattern.

Yet domestic and contemporary factors matter too: poor governance and violent conflict are also internal factors that hinder some countries’ ability to cope with external change. Good economic governance in East Asia, and perhaps a more favourable external environment, have helped it to cope with economic globalization. Structural violence is not an inevitable outcome of greater integration in the world economy.

There is another, buried story in what has been said so far. At certain points you may have picked up hints that economic globalization may have links with direct violence.

- If economic globalization is leading to increased inequalities within countries, and if these inequalities cause social tension, then outbreaks of violent social conflict may result.
- The risk of instability associated with economic globalization may already be leading to social conflict or to countries taking compensatory measures to reduce that risk.
- More optimistically, increased trade may create the conditions necessary for world peace!

We will explore these points further in **Lessons 2.4, 2.5** and **2.6**.

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Lesson 2.3: Underlying causes of civil war (1): ethnicity

Author: Michael Rowson

This lesson is the first of a group that covers some of the key underlying factors that influence the development of civil war – such as ethnicity, poverty, inequality, politics and international influences. These lessons are accompanied by further case studies in **Chapter 3** on contemporary armed conflict in Iraq, the Niger Delta region of Nigeria, and Rwanda. You must study all the lessons in this chapter in order to complete the e-learning case on the Rwandan genocide.

Learning objectives

By the end of this lesson you will be able to:

- describe primordial and constructivist views about the nature of ethnic identity;
- critically assess the extent to which ethnicity is a driver of civil war.

Clashing perspectives

Any attempt to examine the causes of a particular civil war will be controversial, as different sides in a conflict will naturally draw on different grievances to explain violent actions. This clash of perspectives extends to those who look across civil wars to try and find common themes about why they break out. The following quotation, from a landmark World Bank report on civil war, encapsulates the intensely political nature of this subject. Any reader looking at the literature on the causes of civil conflict will immediately notice that different authors take profoundly different views of why such conflict begins.

‘Most people think that they already know the root causes of civil war. Those on the political right tend to assume that it is due to long-standing ethnic and religious hatreds, those in the political centre tend to assume that it is due to lack of democracy and that violence occurs where opportunities for the peaceful resolution of political disputes are lacking, and those on the political left tend to assume that it is due to economic inequalities or to a deep-rooted legacy of colonialism. None of these explanations sits comfortably with the statistical evidence’ (Collier et al. 2003:53).

Do you have an instinctive idea where you stand in this debate?

The quotation also highlights another issue we will discuss throughout the next lessons: how we measure what causes civil war. The World Bank report appears to put the emphasis on 'statistical evidence' for which underlying factors occur most frequently in different cases of war. However, as we shall see, accurate measurement is often thwarted by lack of data.

Attempts to predict the outbreak of civil war through one well-known model are about as accurate as tossing a coin (Cramer 2006). The alternative – detailed case studies of individual conflicts – can be very enlightening, but may lack the explanatory power of statistical isolation of cause and effect across a range of conflicts.

What is civil war?

The first controversy comes when defining what actually constitutes a civil war (for a comprehensive review see Hanlon 2006a). Some analysts argue that a country's army must be involved in the dispute; others point out that this leaves out fighting between militias. Alternatively, the numbers of people being killed is used as a guide to whether war has taken place. However, the cut-off point in terms of deaths between states of 'war' and 'not-war' varies considerably for different groups of researchers. The focus is generally on battle-related deaths, but we also know that because conflict disrupts basic economic and social systems so deeply, there will be deaths through accidents and sickness that are conflict-related but not necessarily counted as part of the war.

As a result of these classification problems, there is controversy about whether the number of civil wars has been declining or increasing over the past half-century. Hanlon uses a more comprehensive definition of civil war to try and avoid these issues: 'Civil war is collective killing for some collective purpose, mainly within one country, and where the fighting is primarily between people of that country' (Hanlon 2006a:22).

However, as Hanlon acknowledges, the meaning of phrases such as 'collective purpose', or 'within one country' is not always entirely clear. Was the 'civil war' in Yugoslavia within one country or between different countries? What is the collective purpose of the civil war in Iraq, when there are so many groups with disparate agendas? And should it be classified as a civil war at all, when it was started by an external intervention led by the United States, whose army continued to occupy the country for a long time? Such questions bedevil the measurement of civil war, let alone its underlying causes, to which we will now turn.

Ancient hatreds? Civil war and ethnicity

The first US President Bush famously referred to the conflict in the former Yugoslavia as driven by ‘age-old animosities’ (cited in Hanlon 2006b), and this was often how the world at large perceived the civil wars that appeared to break out so frequently at the end of the Cold War. The genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda, the Chechen uprising in the Russian Federation, and the fighting between Croats, Serbs and Bosnians and later between Serbs and Kosovans all seemed to tell the same story – that ethnicity is a key driver of violent conflict.

Such a view is based on what Hanlon calls a ‘primordialist’ view of ethnicity. In this view ethnic groups are clearly delineated and identifiable – they change little over time, and race and religion are seen as prime markers of ethnic identity (Hanlon 2006b). Kaufmann notes the power of ‘ethnic and national identities [...] in determining an individual’s willingness to sacrifice himself[...]’ (Kaufmann 2007:46). When group interests diverge within a multiethnic society, conflict is likely to break out along the lines of these inherent divisions.

This idea retains a powerful hold on the imagination of both the public and policy-makers. A key theme in recent studies of conflict has been the ‘ethnic security dilemma’. This posits that when governments collapse and ethnic groups are left to fight over power and resources, the different groups behave like states in the international system: they rely on their own resources and provide for their own security in a way that threatens everyone else’s (Kaufmann 2007).

Michael Ignatieff vividly described the dynamics of this situation in the Balkan conflict. ‘No one in these (Yugoslav villages) could be sure who would protect them. If they were Serbs and someone attacked them and they went to the Croatian police would the Croats protect them? If they were Croats, in a Serbian village, could they be protected against a night-time attack from a Serbian paramilitary team, usually led by a former policeman? This is how ethnic cleansing began to acquire its logic. If you can’t trust your neighbours, drive them out. If you can’t live among them, live only among your own. This alone gave respite from the fear which leaped liked like a brush fire from house to house’ (cited in Holsti 2000:255–256).

This has led those who argue for recognition of this ethnic security dilemma to recommend partitioning ethnic groups after conflict – as happened at the end of the war in the former Yugoslavia, and as happened in some parts of Iraq (in 2007 the US army built a partition between a Sunni and Shi’a district of Baghdad, although there is much debate in Iraq and elsewhere about this move – see [Lesson 3.3](#)).

Changing identities

Nevertheless, most societies are ethnically mixed but live relatively peaceably (Collier 2007). Statistical models in fact suggest that the more ethnic diversity there is in a society, the more peaceable it is, although where one ethnic group dominates the risk of rebellion increases (Collier et al. 2003). However, analysis is compromised by the complexity of measuring ethnicity – in Afghanistan there are an estimated 50 to 100 ethnic groups, and even in an ethnic conflict as seemingly straightforward as the one in Rwanda, there is ‘no racial or linguistic or religious basis for the Tutsi/Hutu ethnic distinction’, making it difficult to score in models (Cramer 2006:176). Furthermore, it is not always easy to understand the role played by ethnicity in conflict, as the case of Angola shows (Box 1).

Box 1: What does ethnicity mean? The case of Angola (Cramer 2006:176).

In Angola it is easy to divide the population into three main ethnic groups, the Bakongo, the Mbundu and Ovimbundu, each of which maps roughly onto the constituencies of the FNLA, the MPLA, and UNITA respectively. However, there is little mileage in explaining the war as an ethnic war. The overlap map of liberation movements and ethnic groups is not very exact, and in any case, many people in Angola had very little sense of ethnicity during the colonial period. Ethnic identity was not institutionalised in the same way it was both before and during the Belgian colonialism in Rwanda, for example.

During the war – despite some efforts by leaders to play the ethnic card – for many people ethnicity faded rather than sharpened as a source of collective identity, as a result of mass migration to cities, the increasingly widespread use of Portuguese, and the fact, for example, that there were Ovimbundu fighting in the government’s armed forces as well as for UNITA. Further, there was considerable internal conflict within Ovimbundu areas rather than a homogeneous and instinctive reflex of support for UNITA.

To summarise, ethnolinguistic diversity is unstable within countries over time, it is inconsistent as a driver of political allegiance across countries, and it is not even clear how precisely it can be measured.

Ethnic conflict may have appeared to reach its apogee in the 1990s, but according to some databases the number of conflicts declined during that decade (although, as noted, this depends on how conflict is defined). King argues that only in Africa and Eurasia did the number of conflicts increase during the 1990s, and that the peak of conflict in the second half of the twentieth century actually occurred at the time of decolonization in the 1950s and 1960s (King 2007). However, these conflicts were rarely referred to as ‘ethnic’ in nature.

King also notes that the end of the Cold War reduced many internal conflicts as belligerents were no longer bankrolled by superpowers seeking to gain geo-strategic advantage. Furthermore, some of the most bloody of the Cold War conflicts, such as Pol Pot's genocide in Cambodia (which left up to three million dead), or Suharto's massacre of a million 'communists' in Indonesia, cannot be described as ethnic in nature (Hanlon 2006b).

This type of consideration has shifted the focus away from ethnicity as a direct cause of civil war, and has also led to criticism of the primordial view as simplistic. Instead, some commentators concentrated on how ethnic identity is used by politicians or militia leaders to mobilize populations for war. In their view, ethnicity is often used as a propaganda tool, or becomes much more salient during and after conflict (Collier 2007). Ethnicity can seem deeply rooted, but that is often because history is rewritten or used in the run-up to war to make it appear so. Serbian nationalism was whipped up in the 1990s by reference to medieval battles, and the South African apartheid state created tribal identities to sow division amongst non-whites and deflect protest away from the regime (Hanlon 2006b). In other words, ethnicity can be seen as an important contributor to the course of a civil war, but is not necessarily a primary cause.

This kind of analysis – which some label 'constructivist' (Hanlon 2006b) – is based on different theoretical propositions from the primordial view. It starts from the idea that identities are actively 'constructed' and are in fact very open and fluid. Many of us change how we identify ourselves in society – and even hold simultaneous senses of our own identity: you may, for example, be middle-class, British and a man and identify more strongly with one or other of these aspects of your identity in different situations. Ethnicity, 'race' and religion are no different.

To what extent do you think the constructivist view is a realistic one?

The constructivist approach has its merits in drawing attention to other important causes of civil war, such as the role of politics in rousing passions about ethnic identity. Arguably, however, it can also lead us to underestimate how fixed group boundaries actually are. We all know of examples where ethnic groups are discriminated against – and it is precisely the fact that members of these groups are unable to 'switch' to a better-off group that generates frustration and resentment, sometimes leading to violent conflict (Stewart 2001).

Conclusion

Primordial views of the role played by ethnicity in conflict tend to be downplayed in academic and policy debate today. Instead, analysis focuses more on how ethnicity is constructed and used by leaders to mobilize populations. Nevertheless, this suggests that ethnicity is a powerful motivating force. What it does not tell us is why ethnicity becomes bound up with violent conflict at one time, and not at another. For explanations of this we must look at other factors – such as inequality, or lack of political rights – which might combine with ethnic identity to cause conflict.

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Lesson 2.4: Underlying causes of civil war (2): poverty, inequality and economic development

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It is commonly assumed that grievances related to a lack of economic development or to wide income inequalities stimulate violent conflict. In this lesson we explore why, if this is the case, all poor, unequal countries are not at war, and how economic development may both stimulate and undermine forces of violent conflict.

Learning objectives

By the end of this lesson you will be able to:

- describe how poverty, inequality and economic development may drive civil war;
- critically assess the role played by each of these factors as underlying causes of violent conflict.

Introductory exercise

Pause for a moment before reading on. Can you suggest some reasons why (A) poverty and inequality might be linked with violent conflict; and (B) poverty and inequality may not be linked with violent conflict.

Make two short lists, and check back at the end of the lesson to see if all the issues you raised have been covered. Add any points that you had not at first considered.

Poverty and underdevelopment

Low levels of per capita income are widely seen as a key risk factor for civil war. Seven of the 10 poorest countries have experienced large-scale conflict. This is not to deny that war and political instability occur in richer countries – think of the war in the former Yugoslavia or ‘the troubles’ in Northern Ireland. However, there are a number of explanations for why the risk of civil war might be higher in low-income countries.

The most basic is collective grievance – that where deep poverty is ‘generalized’ or widespread, there will be a strong demand for change, and this demand may take a violent form. Looking at complex humanitarian emergencies, and

especially their conflict dimension, Nafziger and Auvinen (2003) note that most of the African and Asian countries that experienced emergencies in the early 1990s had suffered low or negative economic growth.

Where there is widespread hunger, population displacement and disease, the probability of violent conflict increases. Long-term deprivation and lack of growth leads to 'dog-eat-dog' behaviour, weakens community redistribution from the better-off to the poor, diminishes the willingness and ability of the state to provide public goods, and 'may also spur elites to expropriate assets and resources of weaker social communities violently' (2003:36).

However, they also state that 'a short-term income reduction is more important than protracted income decline or stagnation' in analysing the conflict dimensions of humanitarian emergencies (Nafziger and Auvinen 2003:31). A sudden reversal of growth leading to a sharp change in people's expectations can be particularly important in creating the conditions for violence. They cite the example of El Salvador, which experienced rapid growth in the 1970s but descended into civil war after sudden economic reversal from 1979–1982.

If slow or absent economic growth is responsible for increasing the risk of civil war, then renewed economic development should lower the level of risk. Collier et al. (2003) use statistical analysis to show that economic growth, sustained over time, can reduce the risk of conflict in the poorest countries (Figure 1).

Risk of civil war (percent)

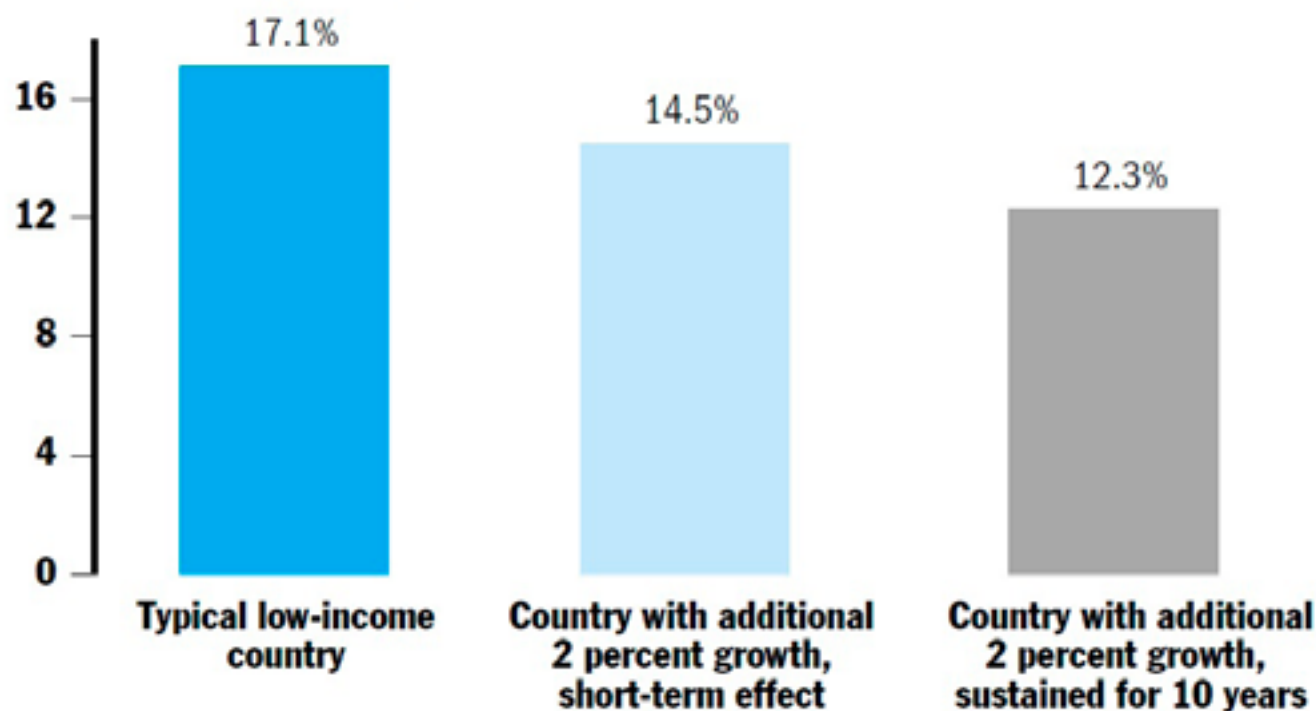


Figure 1: Improved economic performance and the risk of civil war (Collier et al. 2003).

On the other hand, poverty is clearly not destiny when it comes to civil war. The fact that many poor countries are not consumed by civil violence undercuts the notion that there is a direct link between high prevalence of absolute poverty and violent conflict. Commonplace understandings about the ‘fatalism’ of the poor may actually hold a grain of truth (Cramer 2006), and shared poverty may not be a socially destabilizing influence (Nafziger and Auvinen 2003).

Economic development – turning interests against passions?

Figure 1 shows how growth in income reduces the risk of conflict. As we saw at the beginning of this course, it was assumed that economic development would, in the words of the economist John Maynard Keynes, ‘turn interests against passions’ (cited in Cramer 2005). That is to say, economic development would inevitably bind more and more people into denser sets of economic relationships with each other, making it less likely that any group would spoil stable economic cooperation by resorting to violence.

But this is only true if economic interests are paramount. We have already seen in [Lesson 2.3](#) that group identities such as ethnicity can have a force of their own. More to the point, in some cases economic development can bring conflict to the surface. This is particularly the case where development is based on the production of natural resources such as oil and diamonds.

The natural resource curse

Many of the poorest countries of the world are dependent on exporting their natural resources as they strive to prosper. As well as oil and diamonds, natural resources include commodities such as timber; minerals such as copper, silver, gold and coltan (the metal used in mobile phones); and agricultural products such as coffee. However,

some statistical evidence suggests that countries that gain a greater percentage of their national wealth from exporting natural resources are at greater risk of civil war (Figure 2).

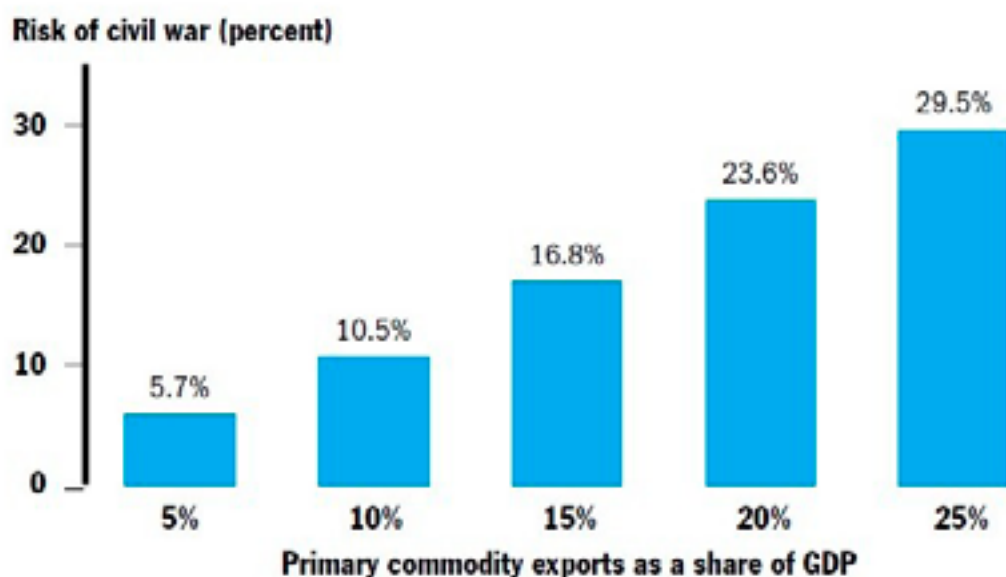


Figure 2: Natural resources and the risk of civil war for low-income countries (Collier et al. 2003).

Natural resources must be carefully managed if they are to generate economic growth and reduce poverty, and if violent conflict is to be avoided. Some resources (such as oil) require high levels of technology and relatively less labour in their production. This tends to lead both to domination of the sector by foreign companies and to a lack of local job creation. This can be offset by governments either producing the commodity themselves, or taxing its producers and using the resources to create other economic opportunities or public services such as health and education. But there is a tendency for this not to happen, and for the resources generated by natural resource production to become concentrated in the hands of a few powerful people, in government or business. This money can be used to oppress populations or wage war.

Rebel groups can also use natural resources to their financial advantage. Diamond and timber production do not require complex technology, and this has allowed rebel groups in several countries to use them to finance their activities. Similarly, drug production has financed rebels in countries such as Afghanistan and Colombia, where the FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Columbia) guerrilla movement makes around US\$ 500 million every year from control of this type of high-value illegal activity. Generally rebel groups do not produce the crops themselves, but extort money from producers by levying informal taxes. The Revolutionary United Front in Sierra Leone financed itself through informal taxation of coffee producers, before moving on to diamonds (Collier et al. 2003).

Where high levels of technology are needed, rebel groups have targeted the multinational corporations that control it, extorting money by threatening expensive infrastructure and kidnapping employees, as they often do in Nigeria's Niger Delta state (see **Chapter 3, Lesson 3.2**). Rebel groups have even sold extraction rights in advance for resources they do not yet control in order to finance a war to take control of them (Collier et al. 2003). Laurent Kabila reportedly made millions of dollars from selling extraction rights in the Democratic Republic of Congo to Zimbabwean firms. Subsequently his rebel forces made a successful attack on the capital Kinshasa, and he became president.

Fuelled by the rapid economic development of China and its consequent need for resources (see **Lesson 2.2**), countries in Africa are benefiting from natural resource windfalls but these are not necessarily used for peaceful means, as Box 1 explains.

Box 1: Scramble for Africa (Turner 2007)

With oil, gas, timber, diamonds, gold, coltan and bauxite, Africa is home to some of the largest deposits of natural resources in the world. Revenues from their extraction should provide funds for badly needed development, but instead have fuelled state corruption, environmental degradation, poverty and violence. Rather than being a blessing, Africa's natural resources have largely been a curse.

Box 1: Scramble for Africa (continued)(Turner 2007)

The 19th-century scramble for Africa saw the great powers rush to control land so they could exploit natural resources. Today, there is a new scramble for Africa taking place, and the continent has again become a vital arena of strategic and geopolitical competition between the US, France, Britain, China and India. The key question for many is: will the exploitation of Africa's rich resources benefit anyone other than the continent's elites?

Oil is perhaps the most important lure, with competition between foreign states and companies to secure resources so intense it attracts more than 50 per cent of all foreign direct investment.

Military bases

As is often the case with oil, military involvement follows closely behind trade, and in February (2007) the US set up an Africa command (Africom). It has established bases in and signed access agreements with Senegal, Mali, Ghana, Gabon and Namibia. Africa is becoming strategically important to the US because of its oil production and China's increasing influence in the region.

French oil companies such as Total, locked out of the Middle East due to France's opposition to the Iraq war, have made large investments in Francophone countries such as Cameroon, Chad and Gabon.

The new entrant to the scramble is China. Despite its large land area, it is a resource-poor country and Africa offers the natural resources vital to fuel its rapidly growing economy. China looks to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Zambia for copper and cobalt, to South Africa for iron ore and platinum, and to Gabon, Cameroon and the Republic of the Congo (Congo-Brazzaville) for timber. For oil, it has been wooing Nigeria, Angola, Sudan and Equatorial Guinea. China is now the second largest consumer of crude oil after the US, and was responsible for 40% of the global increase in demand between 2001 and 2005. It imports 25% of its crude oil from Africa.

The global demand for natural resources will bring benefits such as foreign direct investment (FDI), increased exports and good balance of trade figures for Africa. But what kind of cloud accompanies this silver lining? One of the main concerns is that the scramble for Africa is fuelling corruption, environmental degradation and internal dissent. Salil Tripathi, senior policy adviser at peacebuilding NGO International Alert, says: "Unless properly managed, the windfall gains from resource extraction cause more problems. It reduces a state's incentive to impose a free and just taxation system, and encourages corruption and acquisition of weaponry."



Box 1: Scramble for Africa (continued)(Turner 2007)

In Equatorial Guinea – where US companies such as ExxonMobil and Chevron are active – president Teodoro Obiang Nguema has been heavily criticised over torture, electoral fraud and corruption. Despite this, he was welcomed at the US State Department by the secretary of state, Condoleezza Rice, in April (2006) and described as a “good friend”.

Arms sales

China is also willing to work with repressive regimes, particularly Zimbabwe and Sudan. Its support, including arms sales, to the repressive regime in Khartoum, has come under the spotlight. Sarah Wykes, a senior campaigner at Global Witness, an NGO that campaigns for better natural resource governance, says: “Sudan has purchased about \$100m in arms from China and has used these weapons against civilians in Darfur.”

The focus on natural resources as a source of conflict has also led some to argue that civil war and other types of conflict are primarily caused by economic opportunism – or ‘greed’ – rather than grievances. Yet they can coexist: rebel groups initially motivated by specific grievances can descend into criminal activities, driven by the need to raise money. As a result, ‘the organization starts to attract more criminal types and fewer idealists, [and] it may gradually change its character’ (Collier et al. 2003: 89). We will come back to this question as we examine the evidence for the most commonly cited source of ‘grievance’ – entrenched inequality.

Inequalities and violent conflict

Many claims are made about the relationship between inequality and conflict, at both hypothetical and empirical levels (Cramer 2005). Many are contradictory, suggesting we should proceed cautiously when discussing this issue. Cramer says researchers have advanced three different sets of explanations for the relationship between income inequality and conflict. These are encapsulated diagrammatically in Figure 3. As you are thinking through these different explanations, remember that they represent ‘ideal types’ representative of the relationship between inequality and conflict, rather than an exact depiction of what may occur in any individual country. Reality is complex, and simplifying models such as these help us to think about potential relationships between different variables.



Figure 3: Representations of the relationship between violent conflict or political instability and inequality

The first hypothesis suggests that there is a linear relationship between inequality and conflict, and that as inequality increases so does the risk of conflict. This hypothesis conforms to commonsense understandings of the relationship, but as we shall see, it is not one that is necessarily supported by evidence.

The second hypothesis suggests the relationship between the two variables is U-shaped. At low levels of inequality, hope for the future is limited and a ‘free-for-all’ conducive to conflict exists. As inequality grows, conflict diminishes as people see opportunities for economic and social mobility. This process reverses once higher levels of inequality are reached, as mobility again becomes limited in the wake of higher and higher concentrations of income and wealth, leading to increased instability.

In the third hypothesis, which this time posits an inverted-U shape relationship between conflict and inequality, conflict rises as inequality increases, but declines when inequality becomes more extreme, perhaps because higher inequality leads to the concentration of resources in the hands of the state and elites who can repress dissent more easily.

What similarities and differences can be drawn from these hypotheses?

There are perhaps more differences than similarities! Firstly, there is no shared understanding of the relationship between increases in inequality and conflict or political instability, as hypothesis one assumes. The latter two hypotheses in fact suggest that the relationship changes over time. Secondly, you should note that hypotheses two and three directly contradict each other on what happens to the relationship as time goes on.

Empirical evidence

Alessina and Perotti's 1996 study of 71 developing countries found that income inequality tends to lead to increased instability, as measured by the number of deaths per million resulting from domestic disturbances and assassinations and by the number of successful or unsuccessful coups (cited in Nafziger and Auvinen 2003). Nafziger and Auvinen's own study of the relationship between war/complex humanitarian emergencies and inequality found a similar relationship. Sometimes, as they note, the sources of inequality may be deeply rooted in a country's history, as in El Salvador (Box 2).

They suggest that rising inequality provokes conflict by intensifying the experience of relative deprivation on the part of the worst-off, even if they are not absolutely poor. When disparities lack legitimacy among the population, the risk of political disintegration increases. These views accord most closely with hypothesis one.

Box 2: Roots of conflict in El Salvador (Nafziger and Auvinen 2003:91)

Pastor and Boyce trace the roots of El Salvador's political emergency, a civil war from 1979 to 1992, to the late 19th century, when state decree abolished communal land and forcibly evicted indigenous communities. Their land was converted to latifundia, large (primarily coffee) estates owned by about 60 families who formed the ruling oligarchy and created nearly the most unequal land distribution in the world.

El Salvador's agrarian structure is indicative of the tensions that contribute to political violence: a highly unequal land distribution combined with a proletarianized labour force, maintained in the face of popular resistance by "intimidation, bloodshed, and other forms of organized violence" perpetuated by the ruling oligarchy that controlled the state.

On the other hand, Collier and colleagues (2003) report no effect of either income or land inequalities on the likelihood of conflict occurring; if income is unequal, however, a conflict will tend to last much longer. In fact they imply that grievances such as inequality are probably a cover for greed: 'all rebel groups provide a litany of severe grievances, many of which are undoubtedly genuine; however, for such grievances to explain rebellion they should be significantly more than those of groups in other societies that resort to less violent political processes' (Collier et al. 2003: 65–66).

This view again to some extent supports hypothesis 1 (a conflict will be longer-lasting in situations of high inequality), but actually undermines all three hypotheses by suggesting that there is no observable empirical relationship. Cramer also notes how contradictory the evidence is: data for

both land and income inequalities are notoriously poor and definitions of what constitutes conflict vary, so researchers using the same data set may obtain divergent results. He questions whether inequality can adequately explain the outbreak of conflict: ‘historically, inequality varies very little and very slowly, and yet violent conflict and political violence appear to fluctuate more widely’ (2005:10). However, this does not mean that there is no relationship between inequality and conflict, just that other factors may mediate the relationship. We will now turn to a discussion of these factors.

Horizontal inequalities

The existence of sharp income (or land) inequalities probably cannot light the spark of conflict alone. Nevertheless, a recent school of thought has proposed another way in which inequality does matter. Our examples so far have talked about ‘vertical’ income inequality, where we are looking at the differences between individuals from top to bottom of the income scale. But what if we think not about individuals, but instead about inequalities between culturally defined groups of people? Some call these ‘horizontal inequalities’ to differentiate them from vertical inequality (Stewart 2001).

The notion of horizontal inequality is powerful because it connects group identities (which as we saw in the previous lesson can be strong mobilizing forces) with grievances based on political power and economic resources. Group identities can include differentiation based on ethnicity, religion, class, clans and factions (see Table 1) (Nafziger et al. 2000). Conflict can break out when particular groups feel they are denied access to power and resources.

Table 1: Sources of group differences as factors in violent conflict (Nafziger et al. 2000)

SOURCE OF GROUP DIFFERENTIATION	EXAMPLES WHERE GROUP DIFFERENCE HAS PLAYED A ROLE IN CONFLICT
RELIGION	ENGLISH CIVIL WAR (1642–1651), NORTHERN IRELAND
CLASS	CAMBODIA, EL SALVADOR, FRENCH, RUSSIAN AND CHINESE REVOLUTIONS, NICARAGUA
ETHNICITY	RWANDA, BURUNDI, ZIMBABWE
CLANS	SOMALIA, AFGHANISTAN (TO SOME EXTENT)
FACTIONS	SIERRA LEONE, LIBERIA

Take the case of Sri Lanka, where the civil war recently ended. The conflict is group-based and organized around three main identities: the majority population who are Sinhalese, a substantial minority of Tamils (just over 12% of the population) and a smaller minority of Muslims. Tamils prospered under British colonial rule and gained access to government employment and education, for example, holding about 40% of university places in sciences, agriculture, engineering, medicine and veterinary sciences (Stewart 2001).

At Independence, the majority Sinhalese population took steps to reverse the pro-Tamil discrimination. Sinhala became the official national language, educational quotas were imposed and economic policies put in place to promote investment in disadvantaged regions. 'From 1963 to 1973, the incomes of Sinhalese rose while those of Tamils fell quite sharply, eliminating the previous differential between the groups. By the end of the 1970s, differentials in access to education had been eliminated... civil service recruitment policies [...] favoured the Sinhalese [...]. In 1977/8 no Tamils succeeded in the Ceylon [sic] administrative service examinations' (Stewart 2001:21; emphasis in original).

The reversals in Tamil privilege were thus sometimes extremely sharp, fuelled demands for an independent Tamil state – and eventually led to the beginning of civil war in the 1980s.

Table 2: Examples of horizontal inequality (adapted from Stewart 2002)

CATEGORIES OF DIFFERENTIATION	SELECTED EXAMPLES
POLITICAL PARTICIPATION	
PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNMENT	FIJI, BURUNDI, BOSNIA AND HERZOGOVINA, UGANDA, SRI LANKA
MEMBERSHIP OF ARMY AND POLICE	FIJI, NORTHERN IRELAND, BURUNDI, KOSOVO
ECONOMIC POWER	
ASSETS:	
LAND	FIJI, CAMBODIA, EL SALVADOR, HAITI
PRIVATELY OWNED CAPITAL	MALAYSIA, SOUTH AFRICA, BURUNDI
GOVERNMENT INFRASTRUCTURE	CHIAPAS, MEXICO, BURUNDI
AID	AFGHANISTAN, SUDAN, RWANDA
NATURAL RESOURCES	LIBERIA, SIERRA LEONE

EMPLOYMENT AND INCOMES:	
INCOMES	MALAYSIA, SOUTH AFRICA, FIJI, CHIAPAS
GOVERNMENT EMPLOYMENT	SRI LANKA, FIJI
PRIVATE EMPLOYMENT	FIJI, UGANDA, MALAYSIA, RWANDA
ELITE EMPLOYMENT	SOUTH AFRICA, FIJI, NORTHERN IRELAND
UNEMPLOYMENT	SOUTH AFRICA, NORTHERN IRELAND

SOCIAL ACCESS AND SITUATION	
EDUCATION	RWANDA, BURUNDI, HAITI, SOUTH AFRICA, NORTHERN UGANDA, KOSOVO
HEALTH SERVICES	BURUNDI, NORTHERN UGANDA, CHIAPAS
SAFE DRINKING WATER	UGANDA, CHIAPAS
HOUSING	NORTHERN IRELAND
POVERTY	CHIAPAS, UGANDA, SOUTH AFRICA

Table 2 shows some other ways in which horizontal inequalities have provoked conflict in different countries. However, like all the theories of conflict we are discussing, it too cannot account for all instances of conflict. While Stewart (2001) acknowledges that wealthier groups may sometimes provoke conflict for fear of losing privileges, there is also a sense in which the horizontal inequality paradigm cannot account for the political persecution and murder of people who represent no threat to the established order. Think of the Jewish population of Nazi Germany and other European countries during the Second World War, or Muslims targeted during pogroms in Gujarat state, India in 2003. This shows – yet again – that the group element of this discussion can have a life force of its own, and does not necessarily need real grievances or material interests to motivate it, although sometimes fictional grievances propel violence.

Conclusion

There is no simple relationship between poverty and inequality and violent conflict. As we can see from the other lessons in this chapter, each variable associated with the incidence of war or political instability is not a complete explanation for war. Yet while ‘greed’ surely sometimes motivates rebel groups

(and governments) to arm themselves to fight, this review has also shown that in many ways poverty, underdevelopment and wide disparities in access to economic and political power are key underlying causes of conflict – necessary but by no means sufficient conditions.

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Lesson 2.5: Underlying causes of civil war (3): political factors

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In this lesson we will move into the arena of politics and governance and their role in provoking or constraining civil conflict. We will cover three major themes: the relationship between state power and the incidence of civil war; the role of the 'social contract' in preventing armed conflict; and the relationships between democracy, political change and civil war.

Learning objectives

By the end of this lesson you will be able to:

- describe what is meant by the idea of a social contract
- assess the relationship between democracy and the outbreak of armed violence.

State strength

In contrast to economists and their focus on individual and collective economic incentives for violent conflict, political scientists put political actors firmly on centre stage. The state is their key unit of analysis. Looking at the origins of complex humanitarian emergencies (including ones involving armed conflict), Kalevi Holsti says they 'do not occur randomly through time or location' (2000:240). Most take place in states that are relatively new and/or weak.

It is perhaps surprising that it is governments that tend to take the lead in provoking these conflicts, by initiating the killing (for example in Rwanda in 1994), or by responding massively to relatively minor rebellions (Kosovo). Even where secessionist movements begin the violence (as in Nigeria, Sri Lanka, Eritrea, Croatia or Bosnia), it is often in response to pogroms organized or tolerated by government. Holsti concludes that 'it is usually the politics of governments, often lacking legitimacy and therefore highly insecure, rather than random or spontaneous violence between communities that precede most humanitarian emergencies' (Holsti 2000:259). States can fall into these insecure positions almost by historical accident, as well as by inept governance. In the mid-20th century, a wave of new states was created by the collapse of colonial rule in Asia and Africa. These new states had not been prepared for a handover to indigenous rule, and even during the 1950s 'colonial officials denied that their native populations were ready for self-government' (Holsti 2000:244). Where the colonizing powers had ruled indirectly through native surrogates (often a favoured ethnic group), society had been deliberately divided and was often primed for conflict. Arbitrary territorial divisions

had further complicated the question of exactly who would be regarded as citizens of these new states, and it was difficult for incoming governments to find the legitimacy to rule.

Of course, it is not just former colonies that are at risk of civil conflict – any state that dramatically changes shape or comes into being for the first time is in danger of succumbing to violent conflict. The break-up of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia are two recent examples of such changes leading to war.

Holsti describes states as being on a continuum between strong and weak, their strength determined by five key factors:

- their capacity to extract resources from their populations;
- the extent of provision of government services in return for tax extraction;
- the degree of social control the government is able to exercise;
- the extent to which the population is disarmed; and
- the degree to which national legislation is effectively applied throughout the territory.

Nevertheless, ‘the critical dimension of state strength is legitimacy which is an idea or feeling. It is a measure of citizens’ attitudes towards the state, whether they withhold or grant the “right to rule” to those who act in the name of the state’ (Holsti 2000:243). We should remember that all states are weak at first – civil war is not unique to the developing world. In Europe, dynastic and nation-building wars were fought over hundreds of years to make the continent we know today. Similarly, the United States fought a civil war during its unification process. This is not to say that civil war is acceptable, just that it has regularly been a part of state formation. Knowing that war is a possible danger during periods of rapid change might help to prevent violent conflict.

The social contract

New states can create legitimacy and avoid armed conflict by building up a social contract between rulers and ruled. Addison and Murshed (2006:137) define the social contract as ‘the set of rules, formal and informal, that guide the behaviour of citizens, entrepreneurs and governments and allow conflict to be expressed and resolved peacefully rather than violently’.

Those rules – which are both written and unwritten – may be formulated and expressed through different types of institutions (Addison and Murshed 2006), including:

- political bodies: for example, parliaments or assemblies of elders
- moral codes: religious faiths or cultural traditions
- economic processes: property rights, access to capital, trading in markets.

Can you think of written and unwritten elements of the social contract operating in your own society?

A striking (and, it must be said, extreme) example of a broken element of a social contract was given by an Iraqi man interviewed by a British newspaper a year after the invasion and the country's descent into civil conflict. He said that before 2003 he could walk safely to a café with no fear that he would lose his life. However, law and order and the accepted norms of behaviour had broken down to such an extent that even buying a drink had now become an activity whose end could not be predicted.

Note that what had broken down were the guarantees of protection usually given not just by the state, but also informally by fellow citizens. In other words, social contracts are not just made between governments and people, but between the people of a country too.

A functioning social contract ensures that agreements will be honoured in the future (Addison and Murshed). In other words, it increases trust in a society. However, if society is threatened by economic or political collapse, or outside invasion, the social contract may break down as people begin to see little point obeying the rules, whether written or unwritten.

Take the experience of many poor post-colonial states in the developing world.

After independence, many of their governments realised the risks they faced in taking over divided, impoverished societies. Several actively attempted to build social contracts by offering public services free at the point of use to the population in return for collecting taxes.

However, the international economic crisis in the 1980s affected many of these countries very badly, especially those in sub-Saharan Africa. Government revenues fell and public services collapsed. Civil servants and other public sector workers had to struggle to survive, as wages were not paid. Some began to act corruptly and service users suffered as a result.

Poverty among the general population also grew, as did petty crime. Various parts of the social contract were being broken, and in some countries this led to a spiral of decline and eventually violent conflict (see Box 1 for the case of

Côte d'Ivoire). Rebuilding social contracts after war might therefore take a long time and involve many different processes. Using the extract from Addison and Murshed in Box 1, let us bring in some of the themes we have discussed in the preceding chapters through a series of questions. The answers will appear at the end of the box.

Questions

- 1 | *Which hypothesis of the relationship between income inequality and conflict (Lesson 2.4) does this explanation of civil war in Côte d'Ivoire appear to support?*
- 2 | *What horizontal inequalities appear to have been in operation in Côte d'Ivoire? How did President Houphouët-Boigny act to reduce them?*
- 3 | *Were natural resources a curse or a blessing?*
- 4 | *Does the example of Côte d'Ivoire suggest that a strong state can prevent violent conflict?*

Box 1: Civil war in Côte d'Ivoire (Addison and Murshed 2006:149–150)

Côte d'Ivoire produces 40% of the world supply of cocoa. The economy boomed during the 1960s and 1970s when world cocoa prices were high. Houphouët-Boigny, the country's first and long-serving president, built a successful post-independence social contract that contained regional tensions.

His government redistributed the country's cocoa wealth via a tax on cocoa exports, to reduce inequality between the rich Christian south – the cocoa-producing area – and the drier, poorer Muslim north. Houphouët-Boigny co-opted leaders from the different ethnic groups into the government and civil service, thereby providing them with patronage opportunities to spread the country's wealth. Public investment in education provided a steady flow of young graduates from all ethnic groups into well-remunerated jobs in an expanding public sector and a vibrant private sector.

However, overproduction and the collapse of world cocoa prices in the 1980s led to an economic slump, which dragged down public revenues via the export tax on cocoa. The price shock was compounded by a badly designed adjustment programme.



Box 1: Civil war in Côte d'Ivoire (continued) (Addison and Murshed 2006:149–150)

Instead of devaluing the CFA franc – the currency of Côte d'Ivoire and other members of the CFA franc zone – the government, with the backing of the IMF, the World Bank and France, attempted to resolve the crisis by fiscal restraint, leading to deep cuts in public expenditure. This failed to restore growth, and eventually the CFA franc was devalued, thereby encouraging an export recovery in the early 1990s. By this time the damage had been done to both the patronage system and to the employment prospects of young people, who became increasingly frustrated. They provided ready recruits for ethnic demagogues, particularly those stoking up hatred against the north as well as the millions of migrants from Burkina Faso, Mali and Guinea who had settled in Côte d'Ivoire to work in the booming cocoa economy of the 1970s.

Houphouët-Boigny died in 1993, and succeeding presidents reversed his policy on immigrants and barred them from owning land. People from the north who shared the same ethnicity as the migrants from Burkina Faso and Mali also became targets of discrimination and were denied public jobs. Alassane Ouattara, a leading opposition figure with a power base in the north, was barred from the 2000 presidential elections.

During the election campaign supporters of the then president, Laurent Gbagbo, attacked and killed supporters of Ouattara. Northerners in the army then rebelled and civil war began in 2002, drawing in mercenaries from Liberia and other parts of West Africa. The rebels seized northern Côte d'Ivoire. Acting under a UN mandate, French peacekeepers intervened and separated the two sides, creating a buffer zone, and a peace treaty was signed in 2003 calling for the creation of a temporary power-sharing government and new elections in 2005.

Answers

- 1 | The fact that a reduction in inequality between regions was pursued initially appears to have led to a reduction in the risk of violent conflict would support hypothesis one. However, the scenario also tell us that opportunities opened up for people to become socially mobile: when this was no longer possible – due to economic crisis – tensions increased again as inequalities then hardened once more. This appears similar to hypothesis two.

- 2 | The horizontal inequalities were spatial and religious: between the Christian south of the country and the Muslim north. Houphouët-Boigny attempted to reduce them by channeling tax resources from cocoa production into the public sector and expanding employment opportunities for all. He also brought members of all ethnic groups into government, a way of redistributing resources through patronage.
- 3 | Natural resources – in this case cocoa – were a blessing at first as they generated wealth that could be redistributed. However, over-reliance on cocoa production meant that this dependence became a curse once world market prices fell and revenues collapsed. Note that the government of Côte d’Ivoire could have acted earlier to reduce this dependence, in the years of prosperity, by building up a more varied economic base for the country.
- 4 | The example of Côte d’Ivoire does appear to suggest that a strong government – indeed a dictatorship – may be necessary to take the type of actions necessary to reduce inequality. However, this example also shows that changes in the international economic environment can quickly undermine any such benefits. The relationship between authoritarian rule and violent conflict is discussed further below.

Democracy, authoritarianism and violent conflict

So far it seems that strong states tend to avoid conflict, as do countries that have more discussion and debate and functioning institutions. This might appear on the surface to be a contradiction – can strong states afford to be democratic? Researchers have investigated the relationships between democracy and armed conflict in detail. Hegre et al. (2001), for example, look at the relationships between democracy, political stability and civil war in 152 countries from 1816–1992. They find, along with much of the rest of the literature, that political stability is associated both with mature democracy – as experienced in the countries of the industrialized world and developing nations like Costa Rica, Botswana and India (Addison and Murshed 2006) – and with autocracy. This suggests that there is an inverted-U relationship between democracy and conflict: as societies democratize they can become more violent, but as democracies mature, levels of violent conflict decline once more (Hegre et al. 2001).

Semi-democracies which are ‘partly open yet somewhat repressive’ invite violent rebellion; equally, political change towards democracy or away from it can push dissatisfied groups towards violence (Hegre et al. 2001). For example, suddenly introducing the institutions of democracy, such as elections, can produce a swift reaction from groups who feel oppressed. In Bosnia, the 1992 plebiscite on independence led the minority Serb population to fear it would be repressed for ever by the dominant Muslim majority. Elections can become a tipping point or trigger for violence rather than social reconciliation.

This should not necessarily lead us to believe that authoritarianism is better. In the view of Hegre and colleagues, authoritarian rule is almost inevitably challenged, and it is better to weather the changes democracy brings: ‘the most reliable path to stable domestic peace in the long-term is to democratize as much as possible’ (Hegre et al. 2001:44).

Holsti’s table of political risk factors for violent conflict is a useful summary of these points (Table 1). Risk increases as you move from left to right in the table. But it also suggests that being a weak state is not a necessary prelude to violence – exclusionary policies, lack of legitimate policies and tipping events are among other key factors that combine with state weakness to lead countries on the path to war.

Table 1: A probability/process model of humanitarian emergencies (Holsti 2000:257)

BACKGROUND CONDITIONS	EXCLUSION POLICIES	TIPPING EVENT(S)	OUTCOMES	HUMANITARIAN EMERGENCIES
NEW STATE	INFORMAL (E.G., ELECTION FRAUD)	DEATH / ASSASSINATION OF A LEADER	POLITICIDES CIVIL WAR	VIOLENT (WAR CASUALTIES, REFUGEES, DISPLACED PERSONS)
MULTI-COMMUNITY STATE, PARTICULARLY WITH GROUP IMBALANCE	FORMAL (CONSTITUTIONAL) DISTINCTION AMONG COMMUNITIES	ARMED RESISTANCE SUDDEN POLITICAL CHANGE(S), POST-REVOLUTION OR POST-INDEPENDENCE	ETHNIC CLEANSING	COMPLEX (CASUALTIES, REFUGEES, DISEASE, HUNGER)
COLONIAL LEGACY	EXPULSION	RIOTS	ARMED SECESSION	
WEAK LEGITIMACY	SEGREGATION EXPROPRIATION DEATH SQUADS	COUP ATTEMPTS ELECTIONS STATE COLLAPSE	GENOCIDE	

Conclusion

Political change can drive countries towards civil war in many different ways. We have highlighted the key issues of state weakness, lack of experience of democracy or sudden movements towards or away from it, and a breakdown in relationships of trust. Political issues, like all the others we have discussed, are interwoven with economic motives and ethnic and other identity issues in the build-up to violent conflict. Politics does not play a sole, determining role. Nevertheless, rebuilding political institutions is an important part of recovery from civil war.

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Lesson 2.6: Underlying causes of civil war (4): the international dimension

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This lesson considers the role of international factors in influencing violent conflicts at national level. It examines a number of different mechanisms through which this influence is felt, and looks at political and economic factors in turn.

Learning objectives

By the end of this lesson you will be able to:

- describe the different international political and economic factors that can influence whether civil war breaks out;
- discuss how aid, trade and foreign investment can reduce or promote conflict.

International political factors

You saw in **Lesson 2.2** that colonial rule had profound economic, social and political impacts on the countries of Asia, Latin America and Africa. In **Lesson 2.5** we looked at political factors such as democracy and the social contract and their relationship to civil war. We will now draw out some key sets of international factors – colonization, the Cold War, and the ‘war on terror’ – and their effects on those political relationships.

Effects of colonization

Territorial division

The arbitrary imposition of boundaries on colonized territories with no respect for pre-existing social patterns often flung different groups of people together for the first time. For example, ‘there was no reason why a Muslim Hausa in northern Nigeria should feel any affinity to, or identity with, a southern Christian or animist Ogoni except that they in common had been colonial subjects of the British Crown’ (Holsti 2000:245). Nor was there any intention that colonies should become states governed by ‘natives’, so there was no preparation or debate about the nature of citizenship. When rapid decolonization occurred from the 1940s to 1960s, social contracts between rulers and ruled were often weak or absent.

Sharpening of ethnic identity

In line with the early 20th-century European obsession with ‘race’ and notions of racial superiority and purity, colonial rulers picked ‘favoured’ ethnic groups to whom they offered preferential social and economic status. Well-known examples include Belgian patronage of the Tutsi in Rwanda, and British favouritism towards the Tamils in Sri Lanka. Post-independence governments sought to reverse the gains made by these relatively privileged minorities – increasing the risk of collective violence when this was done in a strongly discriminatory manner.

Large-scale migration

Massive movements of people within and between countries were provoked by the slave trade, bonded labour and the introduction of capitalist relations of production. They led to widespread and rapid social mixing in societies and communities which were previously more homogeneous (Holsti 2000). Arguably this made the production of common citizenship a more complex process, although we also learned in **Lesson 2.3** that a diversity of ethnic groups may make political violence less likely.

Top-down politics

Colonial rule was rigidly centralized, creating a tradition of what Holsti calls ‘politics from the top’. Again, this militated against the development of citizenship, social contracts and the emergence of a vibrant civil society that could provide checks and balances on the political system.

Economic relationships

Colonial powers plundered countries’ resources and, through an unequal system of world trade, locked them into dependent trading relationships with developed countries. Even today, many of the poorest countries still rely for a substantial proportion of their national income on trade in primary commodities. Prices for some of these goods (such as food, tea and coffee) can be low and unstable, leaving countries caught in a poverty trap that may lay the ground for armed conflict. Conversely, countries that export higher-value minerals, but have little other economic base or no solid political system, can attract the attentions of ‘conflict entrepreneurs’ or be prone to high levels of inequality, which may again be conducive to violent conflict. Although most developing countries had decolonized by the 1970s, colonial rule cast these types of shadow. Moreover, former colonial powers can still fight proxy wars in developing countries, as in Guinea-Bissau (Box 1).

Box 1: Colonial rivalry in a post-colonial era (Hanlon 2006a: 115–116)

Tiny Guinea-Bissau was a Portuguese colony and neighbouring Senegal was a French colony. Guinea-Bissau joined the French-dominated CFA franc zone and the government tried to build closer links with Senegal, while a faction linked to the military, with covert Portuguese support, backed the Casamance separatist movement in Senegal. After an attempted military coup, neighbouring Senegal and Guinea-Conakry both sent in troops to support the government. The 1998–1999 war left several thousand dead and large areas of the capital city of Bissau in ruins.

The Cold War

The rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union during the Cold War was another international event that profoundly shaped the path of many developing countries. To many, the defining aspect of the Cold War is the nuclear standoff between the two protagonists: in the public imagination it was a no-casualty war. However, how the Americans and Soviets sought to shore up their international support by sponsoring regimes throughout the developing world is often overlooked. A number of armed conflicts or ‘proxy wars’ were fought between the superpowers using government armies and private militias, for example in Angola. Both sides backed repressive regimes, liberation movements and insurgency groups with little thought for the human rights consequences.

The ‘war on terror’

Geostrategic interests are again firmly in the minds of the US and other developed countries as they allocate aid to the developing world. Global Health Watch reports how donor assistance from the US to Indonesia, India, the Philippines and Pakistan has increased since the events of 11 September 2001, including boosts in military aid (People’s Health Movement, Global Equity Gauge Alliance and Medact 2005). US aid to Africa has also risen and it is providing weapons, vehicles and military training to anti-terrorism squads in Mali, Niger, Mauritania and Chad. Humanitarian aid from all donors, destined for crises in Africa and elsewhere, has been diverted to Afghanistan and then to Iraq, as has (in the latter case) funding for debt relief. In the UK, security concerns were explicitly put at the heart of aid policy after the change in government in 2010. Political objectives can still override developmental ones when the international situation demands it.

International economic factors

Do you recall the comment made by Cordell Hull, US President Roosevelt's secretary of state, in [Lesson 1.1](#)? 'I reasoned that if we could get a freer flow of trade [...] so that one country would not be deadly jealous of another and the living standards of all countries might rise, thereby eliminating the economic dissatisfaction that breeds war, we might have a reasonable chance of peace' (quoted in Brown (2004:107)).

The experience of the Great Depression and the collapse of world trade between the first and second world wars led many to argue that intercountry rivalry could be reduced if there was more trade between them. American journalist Thomas Friedman has recently popularized this notion by proposing the Golden Arches theory of conflict: no two countries with a McDonalds franchise have ever gone to war with each other.

The theory does not hold water: the US invaded Panama in 1989 and NATO bombed Serbia in 1999 – all sides in these conflicts had branches of the fast food restaurant. Nevertheless the idea has a kernel of truth. A free trade area – the European Union – was created after the Second World War to bind formerly warring countries together, and it appears to have worked to date.

We also know from [Lesson 2.2](#) that rapid international economic integration – or globalization – can be a powerful force for change at national level. Some commentators see only benefits: it increases economic growth, creates employment and allows public services to be expanded. In this positive view of globalization, an increasingly powerful private sector and civil society will also emerge to counterbalance the arbitrary power of the state. Violent conflict within countries is therefore more likely to be the result of bad government policies and corruption – internal rather than external factors (FitzGerald 2001).

Others think globalization can do exactly the opposite: produce rising inequality, social dislocation and conflict within countries. Companies move quickly to where costs are lower, creating unemployment as they go, leading to social dislocation. There are reductions in public services as countries compete to offer tax breaks to foreign firms (FitzGerald 2001). In other words, the social contract is threatened by the effects of external economic forces.

As you saw in [Lesson 2.2](#), questions about the truth of many of these sweeping statements about globalization cannot be resolved empirically. Here we are going to focus our examination by looking at two mechanisms of influence: how international aid and foreign investment and trade can feed into conflict.

Foreign investment and trade

The first category of external financial contribution to civil war comes through foreign investment and trade. FitzGerald (2001) argues that multinational corporations operating in the industrial and service sector require stable investment

climates to operate, so foreign investment in these areas will typically ‘fade away’ when armed conflict breaks out. However, foreign investment in natural resources is more conflict-tolerant – private investors in this sector are used to taking risks in dangerous environments, and the infrastructure needed to make operations work is generally not as complex as in industry and services.

Yet this type of foreign investment can be manipulated by different sides in an armed conflict. For example, when direct funding from the US and South Africa for the rebel group UNITA was cut off in Angola, it was replaced by revenue from international diamond sales until UN sanctions forced major diamond buyers to withdraw. The Angolan government, meanwhile, sold oil-drilling licences, raised loans by mortgaging future oil production, and financed rearmament by selling equity stakes in drilling blocs to military equipment suppliers (Fitzgerald 2001).

Fitzgerald also notes how trade in armed conflict situations quickly shifts from ‘formal’ (taxed and legal) to ‘informal’ (untaxed and criminalized) channels, and that foreign investors can make large financial gains from participating in it. Again, natural resources are a particularly vulnerable sector, with private foreign entrepreneurs operating outside the law and backed by private armies profiteering from high-value, low-infrastructure activities such as gem-mining or logging. The whole nature of international trade may become criminalized, with high-value exports such as narcotics smuggled out of the country to provide finance for armed factions. Strong diaspora networks and offshore centres that make tax and legal evasion easier can facilitate informalized international trade.

International aid

Military aid to the developing world declined with the end of the Cold War but appears to be rising again, particularly in South and South-East Asia, the Middle East and Africa, in the ongoing ‘war on terror’. As well as being used to buy arms and other military equipment directly, aid plays other roles in sustaining conflict.

Mary Anderson brought this point home to donors very effectively (Anderson 1999, cited in Hanlon 2006b). She made five important points.

- Aid resources are often stolen by warriors and used to support armies and buy weapons.
- Aid affects markets by reinforcing either the war economy or the peace economy.
- The distributional impacts of aid affect inter-group relationships, either feeding tensions or reinforcing connections.
- Aid substitutes for local resources required to meet civilian needs, freeing them to support conflict.
- Aid legitimizes people and their actions or agendas, supporting the pursuit of either war or peace.

Her book had great impact because the conflicts that broke out in the 1990s showed both governmental and nongovernmental donors how easily their actions might support warring parties instead of peace. After the genocide in Rwanda, for instance, aid donors who set up camps in Zaire for Hutu fleeing the advance of the Rwandan Patriotic Front forces also harboured the Interahamwe militias who had led the killings of Tutsis. Uvin notes that aid played an important role in the origins of the genocide – by affecting intergroup relationships and legitimizing those in power (to use Anderson’s terms). **Lesson 3.2** on Rwanda has more on these issues.

Aid can support intergroup inequalities and thus lay the ground for armed conflict (Brown and Stewart 2006). Taking the examples of Ghana (where armed conflict has not yet broken out) and Nepal (where it has), they suggest ways in which aid has aggravated horizontal inequalities and how it could be used to reduce them.

Aid and horizontal inequalities in Ghana and Nepal

Ghana

Aid appears to be worsening horizontal inequalities by favouring the largely Christian south of the country and neglecting the poor, mainly Muslim north. This repeats a pattern evident from colonial times, when the south was favoured because the climate was more favourable for growing cocoa, the main export crop. In the post-colonial era, government investment and industrial development has also been concentrated in the south (this is very similar to the pattern found in Côte d’Ivoire, a neighbouring country, which we looked at in **Lesson 2.5**).

Aid flows form a significant part of government expenditure (35% in 2003) and this total has been growing – but little appears to be directed at reducing horizontal inequalities.

This is for three reasons:

First, despite much poverty-reduction rhetoric from donors, there was a weak link between targets and expenditure, which undermined planned investment in the north.

Second, horizontal inequalities were not directly addressed by development plans – instead they were subsumed into broader poverty-reduction efforts.

Third, development plans tended to put the focus on increasing exports, which again favoured the south. Furthermore, in 1994–2005, the three northern regions received just over 1% of all available private foreign investment projects.

This bias encouraged brain drain from the north to the south, further depleting the skills base in the poorer region.

Commenting on the way that aid has not dealt with this geographical divide, but actively reinforced it, Brown and Stewart say that ‘the persistent and sharp horizontal inequalities are clearly undesirable in themselves and offer potential for support for violent conflict, which may emerge, not from the North as initiator, but from other fault lines in Ghanaian society. Any such initiators would find it relatively easy to mobilise deprived Northerners behind their cause’ (2006:26).

Nepal

In Nepal, deep differences between caste and ethnolinguistic groups have also created horizontal inequalities and facilitated the emergence of conflict between the government and Maoist insurgents. Economic and social indicators such as per capita income, adult literacy and land ownership indicate that the Brahmin, Chhetri, and Newar caste and ethnic groups are strongly favoured over other groups, and particularly over Muslims and dalits. The pattern is repeated in the political sphere, where the Brahmins are particularly favoured. Brown and Stewart note that ‘spatial horizontal inequalities’ in human development and land ownership correlate well with the intensity of the Maoist insurgency at district level.

Only recently have aid donors started to take these horizontal inequalities seriously, despite the government’s own attempts to address them since the mid-1980s. Brown and Stewart argue that ‘even after the outbreak of the insurgency in 1996, country assistance strategies continued to focus on typical issues of macro-economic stability and revenue collection and privatisation. Donor concern over horizontal inequalities only emerged after the conflict reached such intensity that the fundamental development of the country was endangered and the body of evidence that horizontal inequalities were a major cause of this conflict became incontrovertible’ (2006:34).

Some multilateral institutions, such as the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank, have now imposed targets for addressing caste and ethnicity-based inequalities. These issues are also being addressed in the country’s poverty reduction strategy, whose formulation involves both donors and domestic stakeholders.

Conclusion

This lesson has shown how international investment can easily support war. Given that this has been so much discussed, it is inexcusable for donors or private business to say they were not aware of what they were doing. This could create a self-defeating pessimism about, for example, giving aid in war-torn countries, but that would often be equally harmful. Outside actors – whether humanitarian or commercial – have to go into the situation with their eyes open, and be prepared to ensure that their actions do not support war.

This assumes that outside actors do not want to support war – but with trade and investment networks being increasingly informal and even criminalized, participants may not care about such niceties, or even benefit from the instability. Civil war may simply be another way in which groups of people struggle for survival, but the moral implications for peasants trying to survive in a conflict zone by marketing their produce without paying taxes are very different from the implications for bigger-scale private entrepreneurs (foreign or domestic) who are deliberately fuelling the war economy by trading with warring parties.

We have also seen how there is a long history of outside political interests supporting division and conflict between groups as part of their own geostrategic concerns. The so-called war on terror marks a new stage in this history.

Exercise

This has been a complex lesson that identified many types of international factor that influence the risk of violent conflict within particular states or regions.

The table below gives a summary of the different factors. Referring back to what you have just read, fill in the empty second column with specific examples of wars in which these different factors have played out. Do that before you read further.

INTERNATIONAL FACTOR	EXAMPLE
COLONIZATION	
GEOPOLITICAL INTERESTS OF OUTSIDE POWERS	
PRIVATE FOREIGN INVESTMENT AND TRADE	
INTERNATIONAL AID	

When you have done the exercise, look at some possible answers below, based on this chapter and other lessons in this course. You may have thought of others.

INTERNATIONAL FACTOR	EXAMPLE
COLONIZATION	COLONISTS' FAVOURITISM TOWARDS PARTICULAR ETHNIC GROUPS STORES UP CONFLICT FOR THE FUTURE: E.G. SRI LANKA, RWANDA, KENYA
GEOPOLITICAL INTERESTS OF OUTSIDE POWERS	WAR IN GUINEA-BISSAU
PRIVATE FOREIGN INVESTMENT AND TRADE	DIAMOND SALES IN ANGOLA DRUG PRODUCTION IN AFGHANISTAN AND COLUMBIA MINING CONTRACTS IN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO DIMINISHED CONFLICT IN EUROPE?
INTERNATIONAL AID	RWANDA, GHANA AND NEPAL, THROUGH STRENGTHENING HORIZONTAL INEQUALITIES OR DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY AIDING SPECIFIC SIDES IN A CONFLICT.

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Chapter 3: Case studies



By the end of this chapter you will be able to

- begin to apply your knowledge of the underlying causes of violent conflict to the real world.

It comprises three case studies of violent conflict in Nigeria, Rwanda and Iraq.

Lesson 3.1: Underlying causes of violent conflict in the Niger Delta

Authors: Nnanna Onuoha Arukwe and Chris Willott

Introduction

The Niger Delta is said to be the third largest delta in the world, with a 70 000 sq km sedimentary basin of global ecological value, rich in wetlands and biodiversity. Its population is estimated at 20 million, with around 50 ethnic groups, and over 7525 communities who speak around 260 dialects. The region accounts for over 90% of Nigeria's proven gas and oil reserves (Croft and Concannon 2006).

The region has a long history of inter-communal and anti-colonial violence. However, violence has reached new heights in recent times, in the form of rebellion against the Nigerian state, including ethnic unrest, inter-ethnic and inter-communal clashes, destruction of crude oil production and transport facilities, kidnapping of expatriate oil workers, raids on banks and bases of Nigerian military and security personnel, attacks on buildings owned by government and Nigerian government officials, and frequent shoot-outs between militants and members of the Nigerian police and military.

An examination of the conflict in the Niger Delta reveals that it has both economic and sociopolitical dimensions.

Economic causes

The key economic cause of conflict in the Niger Delta is extreme poverty amid apparent plenty. For example, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) calculates that Nigeria earned over US\$ 350 billion (€245 billion) in oil revenues between 1965 and 2000, with billions more being earned since 2000 owing to soaring oil prices, at a gross rate of over US\$ 120 million (€84 million) daily. Yet the people of the Niger Delta are being impoverished by pollution, corruption and conflict.

The villages of the Delta, like many across Nigeria, lack basic amenities such as running water, sanitation, health care and schools. Cities like Port Harcourt and Warri overflow with slums. People feel a deep-seated sense of marginalization, and blame the government and the oil companies (Nkoro 2005). Human Rights Watch (1999) says the Delta remains poorer than the national average,

Learning objectives

By the end of this lesson you will be able to:

- describe the different underlying causes of the violent conflict in the Niger Delta.

with most people in the oil-producing rural communities living in very bad conditions. The World Bank (2002) estimated that over 58% of the population were living on under a dollar a day.

The paradox of extreme poverty amid apparent wealth appears to some to be as much a national as a regional phenomenon (for example, the Technical Committee, International Conference on the Development of the Niger Delta 2001). Indeed, Canagarajah and Thomas (2001:145) suggest that, at the national level, the huge financial rewards of oil exportation have had ‘very little impact on the population’s welfare’.

Exploitation of natural resources, including non-petroleum activities such as logging and fishing, has socioeconomic and ecological impacts on the Delta. The appropriation of oil and gas from the region is aimed at earning money not only for the Nigerian state but also for transnational oil companies such as Shell, Chevron, ExxonMobil, Agip and Total, and hundreds of smaller companies which, some allege, turn a blind eye to the corruption that engenders the theft of Nigeria’s oil wealth (Mouawad 2007).

Sociopolitical causes

Inter-ethnic and communal violence is a significant dimension of the conflict. In their competition for national resources, Nnoli says factions of the privileged classes may employ both institutional and non-institutional means to limit competition in order to favour one faction or a combination of factions (Nnoli 1980). Institutional methods include the formation of ethnic and communal unions and the politicization of ethnicity. Nepotism and violence are some of the non-institutional methods. As the Delta has one of the densest concentrations of ethnic nationalities in Nigeria, some violent conflict might be expected, but it is exacerbated by the extreme corruption, exploitation and inequality created in the management of Nigeria’s oil industry, as multiple groups in the Delta articulate their desire for autonomy (Smith 2007).

On the other hand, Nkoro (2005) sees the major historical cause of conflict as Nigeria’s establishment of a federal constitution, enabling majority ethnic groups to marginalize minorities, as in the Delta. Omorodion (2004) presents a different view, that the conflict can be attributed to the legacies of imperialism and neocolonialism. In Nigeria this is seen in the failure of the government to include local communities in negotiations; appropriation of exploration rights to oil multinationals; and enactment of land use and mineral decrees that exclude people on the margins of economic and political power.

Meanwhile James says the cause of the conflict is lack of leadership. ‘The travail of the region, the socio-economic disequilibrium, militant anxiety and the secessionist agitations [...] are direct consequences of bad governance’ (James 2007).

Similarly, ANEEJ (2004), examining the management of oil revenue in the Niger Delta, argues that the cause of the conflict is the lack of transparency and accountability on the part of government and multinational oil firms in the management of the revenue. For Lindsay (2006), the conflict is a direct result of progressive devastation of the environment arising from the operation of the oil multinationals led by the Royal Dutch Shell, which continue to provoke young people to violent militancy.

Elusive solutions

Solutions to the conflict remain elusive. The situation deteriorated after the election in 2007 of Umaru Yar'Adua as president, with many more kidnappings of foreign oil workers. Optimism rose again after the 2010 election of Goodluck Jonathan, a native of Bayelsa, one of the core Delta region's six states. This took place alongside a 2009 amnesty in which Delta militants handed over their weapons in exchange for a pardon from the president and a financial reward. However, neither event has yet brought about an improvement in the region's fortunes.

Greater emphasis is needed on the social and environmental costs of the oil industry to the people of the Delta, though it is questionable whether the oil companies or the Nigerian government are able or willing to address these concerns. Indeed, in 2010 there was widespread outrage at a United Nations decision to exonerate Shell for its part in causing pollution in the Delta. A study funded by Shell argued that it had caused only 10% of the oil spills damage in the Delta, with the other 90% due to local people stealing oil and sabotaging pipelines (Vidal 2010).

Conclusion

The Niger Delta conflict can be seen to arise from a combination of many factors. Its impoverished and marginalized communities feel they do not receive a fair share of revenues from oil extracted from what they perceive – with some justification – as 'their' land. Both the Nigerian Federal government and the transnational oil companies, who together have overseen a lack of economic and social development combined with environmental degradation, are culpable.

When examining the work of the Nigerian government, it is important to take into account the legacy of colonial rule. This acted to over-centralize decision-making and allow those with access to power to exclude less powerful groups, more or less with impunity.

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Lesson 3.2: Rwanda – what caused the genocide?

Author: Michael Rowson

This lesson delves into Rwandan history to uncover the underlying causes of the 1994 genocide (see Box 1 for a timeline). In doing so, it raises a number of the issues we looked at in **Chapter 2**.

Learning objectives

By the end of this lesson you will be able to:

- describe the underlying causes of the Rwandan genocide;
- apply your knowledge of the underlying causes of civil war in previous lessons to the case of Rwanda.

Introduction

This lesson summarizes the work of a number of different scholars, who all take different approaches to the Rwandan genocide.

After you have worked through this lesson, please log on to the e-learning case to hear more about the genocide itself and to reflect further on the most important causes of the catastrophe. You are also encouraged to consult the references at the end of the lesson to deepen your understanding.

Why genocide?

Rwanda is a small country in Central Africa. Around 800 000 of its people died in an organized extermination campaign in April–June 1994, aimed primarily at the Tutsi minority ethnic group. The rate of killing during this time surpassed that of the Nazis in their murder of Jewish people during the Holocaust.

In **Chapter 2** we looked at the underlying causes of civil war. But are the events in Rwanda best described as a civil war? Let us turn to the broad definition we cited in **Lesson 2.3**:

‘Civil war is collective killing for some collective purpose, mainly within one country, and where the fighting is primarily between people of that country’ (Hanlon 2006:22).

Collective killing did take place in Rwanda, with the collective purpose of wiping out one group, the Tutsi. The conflict was primarily between people of that country (or exiles from it). Nevertheless, it would profoundly misrepresent

what happened in Rwanda to describe it as a civil war. For a start, it can barely be described as a fight – it was a murderous slaughter of men, women and children on account of their membership of an ethnic group. These people were defenceless and were not involved in combat. In terms of international law, this makes it a genocide.

However, genocide is perhaps the most extreme outcome of some of the processes that underlie violent conflict, as described in other lessons. So it makes sense to use the example of Rwanda to highlight some of the themes in **Chapter 2**.

Who are Hutu and Tutsi?

Scholars trying to answer this question have been driven back to the pre-colonial era of Rwandan history (Box 1). It is fraught with uncertainty and interpretative difficulties, as before the mid-19th century they mostly have to rely on oral testimony.

Box 1: Rwanda timeline

Pre-15th century: mixture of ‘Twa’ hunter-gatherers and ‘Hutu’ agriculturalists populate area now known as Rwanda; later, ‘Tutsi’ pastoralists arrive

14th–16th century: foundation of Rwandan kingdom through amalgamation of local chieftainships led by a royal class

15th century: sharp increase in migration of ‘Tutsi’ pastoralists

15th–19th century: political and cultural coexistence and assimilation of different groups; conquest of surrounding areas, incorporation of peoples as ‘Hutu’; gradual association of Hutu with inferiority

1860 King Rwabugiri centralizes state, changes nature of cattle clientship and introduces labour service, both to detriment of Hutu. Ethnic distinctions harden

cont. next page

Some historians have focused on the supposed presence of physical differences between Tutsi and Hutu. One missionary in the colonial period was greatly impressed by the Tutsi who, he imagined, were closer to Europeans in their ancestry:

‘We can see Caucasian skulls and beautiful Greek profiles side by side with Semitic and even Jewish features, elegant golden-red beauties in the heart of Rwanda and Urundi’ (cited in Prunier 1995:7).

This quotation is representative of popular discourse about inherent racial traits in 19th-century Europe. But it is not really possible to tell Hutu and Tutsi apart with any certainty on the basis of physical appearance (Mamdani 2001).

More sophisticated arguments focus on unseen biological differences between Tutsi and Hutu to suggest that each group must have evolved in a different physical environment (Mamdani 2001).

For example, very few Tutsi have the sickle cell trait common to Hutu, and many Hutu cannot digest lactose while Tutsi can. Mamdani says the presence of sickle cell trait is now linked to living in a malaria-ridden environment, while lactose tolerance is a trait of ‘milk dependent nomadic desert populations’. Some historians argue that this biological evidence supports the idea that the nomadic Tutsi migrated into the malarial region of Rwanda in the 15th–16th centuries.

Yet biological evidence might also be used to prove that a stable distinction cannot be drawn between Hutu and Tutsi: one third of Hutu are lactose tolerant like Tutsi (Mamdani 2001).

Available historical records do not prove the migration hypothesis, although most commentators suppose there was some degree of migration into the area by Tutsi cattle-herders during the 400 years before colonization. Hutu had probably migrated to the region centuries before, with the indigenous group being the minority Twa who now make up just 1% of the population (Uvin 1998).

The Tutsi appear to have established themselves at the head of a royal dynasty in the 16th–19th centuries which eventually came to control the area we now think of as central Rwanda (Pottier 2002). The term ‘Hutu’ came to cover the different peoples conquered and incorporated into Tutsi rule as the centuries passed. There is some evidence that the name Hutu gradually became associated with an inferior social position.

Migration and conquest has therefore taken place over centuries and substantial intermixing between groups undoubtedly occurred. Nevertheless, as Mamdani notes, ‘if you go to Rwanda or Burundi, the purity of social definition is striking: everyone you meet identifies as either Hutu or Tutsi; there are no hybrids, none is “Hutsi”’ (2001:53). What happened to make the distinction so sharp?

Box 1: Rwanda timeline (*continued*)

1897–1916 Germans colonize Rwanda: indirect rule through local Tutsi chiefs

1916 Belgians occupy Rwanda and continue to favour Tutsi

1959 ‘social revolution’ leads to majority rule, land reform, wave of Tutsi emigration

1961 Kayibanda takes over as head of a Hutu government

1962 formal independence from Belgium

1963 Tutsi exiles launch massive raid, many Tutsi in Rwanda killed in retaliation

1972 genocide of up to 200 000 Hutu in Tutsi-governed Burundi

1973 Juvenal Habyarimana leads bloodless coup in Rwanda

1989 collapse of international coffee agreement leads to destitution for many

1990 Rwandan Patriotic Front invades, is beaten back

1991–94 small-scale massacres of Tutsi; Arusha peace process, democratization

1994 President Habyarimana killed in plane crash; genocide begins

There is growing consensus that the roots of division lie towards the end of the pre-colonial era, from the 1860s onwards, when King Rwabugiri ascended the throne. Before that, political identification appears to have been with lineages or neighbourhoods rather than ethnicity. In fact, lineages and neighbourhoods were often ethnically mixed (Pottier 2002). From this time on, however, Rwabugiri consolidated the power of the Tutsi court over the areas it controlled, and extended its reach through invasion. In the areas under the monarchy's control two forms of social relations were introduced which shored up ethnicity – ubuhake (**cattle clientship**) and uburetwa (**labour service**).

Ubuhake entailed ceding of the use of cows to clients who in return were subject to 'arbitrary forms of exploitation' (Mamdani 2001:65). Under Rwabugiri, all wealthy lineages or those with cattle became Tutsi. Few Hutu were allowed into the cattle contract, and all poor Hutu were forced into the uburetwa, a form of labour service under which peasants devoted one day in five (eventually two or three days in every six) of unpaid work to local chiefs (among whom Tutsi predominated). 'It was through uburetwa that social relationships took on a strong ethnic character before the European colonists arrived' (Pottier 2002:13). This emerging ethnic distinction was reinforced by marriage, which was strongly patriarchal: the wife took on the group identity of her husband, and any children the identity of their father (Mamdani 2001).

Accentuating difference: the arrival of the colonizers

The arrival of the colonial powers in Rwanda at the beginning of the 20th century – first the Germans and then the Belgians – substantially reinforced ethnic divisions. The Europeans, with their theories of racial superiority and fantasies about Tutsi physiognomy, were happy to rule Rwanda indirectly through their preferred indigenous group. Tutsis were systematically favoured and discrimination became entrenched in most areas of public life. For example, Western-style schools were opened for sons of Tutsi chiefs, whom the Belgians saw as 'born leaders'. The process was accelerated in the 1930s when the government ceded control of education to missionaries. Now admissions were mainly restricted to Tutsi, and if both Tutsi and Hutu children were educated, Tutsi were given a 'superior' education in French as part of a separate stream.

The colonizers also abolished the tripartite system of chiefdoms which had previously helped to maintain some ethnic balance, with Hutu as 'chiefs of the land' and Tutsi as 'chiefs of the cattle'. This structure had allowed ordinary people to play chiefs off against each other and provided a means of appeal against injustices. Now the chiefdoms were Tutsi-ized and the Belgians gave power to the Tutsi chiefs to implement directives and issue by-laws, and some measure of local judicial power. By the end of Belgian rule, Tutsi held 43 of the 45 chiefdoms.

Perhaps the most pernicious move was to back these reforms with an important administrative detail that would have far-reaching repercussions: the colonizers introduced identity cards that classified every member of the population by their ethnic group – Tutsi, Hutu or Twa.

Ethnicity or not?

Mamdani draws the following conclusions from his discussion of ethnicity. Firstly, Hutu and Tutsi most likely had separate historical origins. The term ‘Hutu’ was probably a catch-all word used to describe several different groups living in the area of Rwanda. The description ‘Tutsi’, on the other hand, may have had a prior existence as an ethnic identity describing nomadic pastoralists. However, Tutsi has also become a ‘trans-ethnic’ label as a result of intermarriage.

Secondly, a common cultural community was created by Hutu and Tutsi through cohabitation, intermarriage and cultural exchange over centuries. However, over the last 150 years Hutu and Tutsi emerged as what Mamdani calls ‘state-enforced political identities’ (2001:74): changes in the meanings of the terms Hutu and Tutsi have tracked the history of the Rwandan state. This can be seen in the way that political changes under King Rwabugiri and the advent of colonial rule led to the weakening of the political and economic position of Hutu people, and the deliberate establishment of firm distinctions between the two groups.

In summary, according to Mamdani, the descriptors Hutu and Tutsi cannot be described either as ethnic labels, or as socioeconomic labels (because many Tutsi were relatively poor). What makes the group names political identities above all else is that ‘to be Tutsi was thus to be in power – near power, or simply to be identified with power – just as to be a Hutu was more and more to be a subject’ (Mamdani 2001:75). However, this does not mean that they stopped being widely regarded and used as ethnic labels of some kind – most importantly by Rwandans themselves.

The 1959 ‘social revolution’

By the end of the 1940s, the developing world was swept by anti-colonial feeling. The ‘master’s tools were used to dismantle the master’s house’ as liberation movements took the language of the European enlightenment – of freedom and universal rights – and turned it against colonial rule. Rwanda was no exception, and opposition to Belgian and Tutsi dominance soon arose. A few Hutu were gaining access to education, and although the school system was deeply divided on ethnic grounds, it was ‘the source of merit-based impulses that could not but generate egalitarian ideas’ (Mamdani 2001:112). Denied access to many areas of public life, educated Hutu entered the Roman Catholic church, whose foreign elite (as across much of the developing world) swung behind the idea of national liberation from colonial domination.

A second Hutu power base and source of resistance emerged in the north of the country, the last part subjugated by the central court and colonial rule. Memories of freedom and oppression were particularly fresh here, adding grist to the mill of revolutionary demands. A third source of Hutu demands came from the fiercely subjugated peasantry, triggered by economic changes whose outcome could not have been predicted. Belgian colonial rules had shifted the weight of taxation away from lineages to individuals and this broke down social structures. ‘Individuals were forced to become independent economic agents, which forced them into independent action – and independent thinking’ (Prunier 1995:42).

The Belgian colonial rulers of Rwanda were also under pressure from outside – from the ‘winds of change’ sweeping the rest of Africa, and the United Nations decolonization missions that visited during the 1950s. This led to a series of electoral reforms, including a general election in 1956. Tutsi leaders managed to hang on to power (Mamdani 2001) but in 1959 the Tutsi leader, the mwami, died suddenly and was replaced by his half-brother. This triggered an anti-monarchy uprising, clashes between members of Hutu and Tutsi political parties, killings of Tutsi leaders, and a wave of Tutsi emigration to neighbouring countries.

The next five years saw transition from colonial and Tutsi-dominated to Hutu government. Reforms (which became known as Rwanda’s ‘social revolution’) included majority rule, elections, the abolition of forced labour, land reform, and formal independence from Belgium in 1962. The period also saw swings from attempts by politicians to form governments inclusive of all ethnic groups to ones that marginalized Tutsi. Some Hutu and Tutsi politicians sought interethnic cooperation in Rwanda, but other tendencies sought separation of Hutu from Tutsi. In surrounding countries Tutsi exiled since the events of 1959 sought to return to Rwanda and regain power.

These exiles made regular armed incursions into Rwanda between 1959 and 1964, strengthening the hand of the Hutu politicians who were against inter-ethnic cooperation. Raids in December 1963 were particularly serious, almost reaching the capital and leading to intense repression of Tutsi; many people died (estimates range from 750 to 20 000 (Mamdani 2001). There was little foreign reaction as the Soviet Union and United States of America had no political interest in Rwanda (Prunier 1995).

Some people question how liberating the 1959 ‘social revolution’ was for Hutu and the extent of the inequalities it set out to correct. Prunier, for example, points out that average income for Hutu and Tutsi families (excluding holders of political office) was very similar in the 1950s – there was no deep inequality among ordinary people. This has led him to characterize the events of 1959 as more like ‘a fight between two competing elites [...] Poor Hutu were used by their new leaders as a battle-axe against a mixed body of Tutsi where [...] the poor stood by the rich on the basis of the myth of racial superiority’ (Prunier 1995:50).

Others argue that the social revolution was a real attempt to dislodge entrenched inequalities: ‘the 1959 anti-monarchy uprising was both legitimate and backed by some cross-ethnic solidarity amongst its architects’ (Pottier 2002:124). Sadly, these impulses towards multiculturalism in Rwanda were quickly lost.

From 1964 onwards, under the presidency of Gregoire Kayibanda, Tutsi were politically marginalized, though they remained present in other areas of public and commercial life. The numbers of educated Hutu swelled, but this also meant rising unemployment for the newly skilled, leading to dissatisfaction among the young (Mamdani 2001). Then, in 1972, the genocide of around 200 000 Hutu in neighbouring Tutsi-governed Burundi led to vigilante committees enforcing discrimination against Tutsi in schools, the civil service and private business in Rwanda (Prunier 1995). This stimulated further Tutsi emigration. The general discontent, however, destabilized the regime of Kayibanda, under pressure from Hutu from the north who felt marginalized, as well as from a discontented peasantry. In 1973, Major-General Juvenal Habyarimana, a northern Hutu, took over the presidency in a bloodless coup.

The road to genocide

Habyarimana’s rule had contradictory political and economic characteristics. Economically, Rwanda was relatively stable at a time of growing crisis for African nations suddenly burdened by rising oil prices and debt (Mamdani 2001). But the country was becoming dependent on foreign aid (Prunier 1995) that failed to produce development benefits (Uvin 1998; Pottier 2002). Politically, while the security of Tutsi was guaranteed from the start, their marginalization from political life continued. Furthermore, the country was run in a totalitarian fashion. Everyone had to be a member of the ruling party and the state made people spy on each other.

Rwandan livelihoods were fragile, with 60% of smallholders growing coffee. Farmers usually had to diversify their income sources to survive, so in addition to growing cash crops like coffee and bananas, they also cultivated state-owned marshland and undertook seasonal wage labour (Pottier 2002). There appears to have been a sharp rise in income and asset inequalities during the 1980s: access to land was becoming increasingly unequal, while the income share of the richest decile increased from 22% in 1982 to 52% in 1994 (Uvin 1998). In the 1980s and early 1990s, elites bought up land sold by people sinking deeper into poverty.

Development aid also tended to be concentrated in the hands of wealthier farmers (Uvin 1998). State control of population movement kept the rural population impoverished, as ‘opportunities for education, health care, small enterprise and commerce, and social mobility were highest in urban areas’ (Uvin 1998:116).

Poor people were thus already in a difficult position when economic circumstances changed dramatically at the end of the 1980s. The collapse of the International Coffee Agreement, after lobbying directed at the US government by American coffee traders, led to prices plunging by more than half, a collapse in Rwanda's export revenue, and a 40% reduction in the government budget. Increasingly, it appeared Rwanda's destiny was out of its own hands as it was buffeted by the waves of international economic change (Pottier 2002).

Many commentators have pointed to the relationship between population growth and resource scarcity as a fundamental reason for the genocide. Population density was extremely high at 422 people per sq km of arable land; in one commune in the north it was 830 (Pottier 2002). In 1984–1991 average farm production per farmer declined by a quarter, intensifying resource scarcity, although other indicators of ecological stress such as forest cover and possession of animals improved (Uvin 1998). Malnutrition rates were not increasing, and agricultural efficiency was so low that quick gains in production could have been made. How far, then, is population-induced resource scarcity an issue?

Uvin documents increasing numbers of legal disputes over land in the pre-genocide period, and opportunistic killing of landowners during the genocide (including of Hutu). However, these events alone cannot account for a genocidal process that actually started in and was mainly focused on urban areas. Furthermore, the impetus for the genocide came from the ruling urban clique, not the rural dispossessed. Uvin concludes that scarcity and population density may have played some role, but only in combination with a range of other motivating factors.

Most commentators note how deepening structural violence – whether food scarcity, poverty or inequality – was a key factor leading up to genocide. But many desperately poor people in the developing world do not attack and kill their neighbours in cold blood. Other factors must also be in play.

The deteriorating political situation

Almost simultaneous with economic collapse came political crisis. In 1990, the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), a Uganda-based militia (mainly Tutsi but with some Hutu exiles) invaded Rwanda. Government forces repelled the attack with the assistance of French troops, but created tens of thousands of refugees who fled to the cities, destabilized the country and led to fresh anti-Tutsi massacres.

There were also domestic political challenges to the Habyarimana regime. Corruption had spread during the 1980s and the justice system was deemed deeply unfair (Uvin 1998). Development resources were concentrated in the north – the area from where the president came – as were political posts. This caused discontent among people from the southern and central regions.

In fact Pottier argues that by the 1990s, the privileged class in Rwanda was Hutu, mainly northern Hutu, not Tutsi. The voices of those marginalized by the ruling party became louder when, under pressure from donors, the regime moved towards multi-party politics, a process that also helped highlight the concerns of extremists of all types.

The regime was now under threat from all sides, and faced the prospect of being replaced by a transitional government as part of the donor-sponsored peace process being negotiated at Arusha, Tanzania. As a result it desperately attempted to project internal dissatisfaction on to a common enemy, the Tutsi, who of course appeared even more dangerous after the RPF invasion.

Military spending rose from 1.9% of GDP in 1989 to 7.8% in 1992; foreign governments, including France and Egypt, continued to sell arms to the regime. Political parties created militias of young men – almost exclusively Hutu – who had been displaced to urban areas and had little hope for the future. Among the militias, those sponsored by the ruling party – interahamwe ('those who attack together') and impuzamugambi ('those with a single purpose') – became the most infamous killers in the genocide (Uvin 1998). Under the pretext of the threat of a new RPF invasion, the army distributed guns to one household in 10 (Pottier 2002).

As part of democratization the press were given more freedom, but the space opened by political liberalization was 'invaded by newspapers with an incendiary and racist position... more than twenty papers regularly published racist editorials and cartoons; the official Radio Rwanda often produced similar material' (Uvin 1998: 64). Readers and listeners were invited to kill Tutsi. Politicians did nothing to stop the rhetoric and some even encouraged it, while the international community – foreign governments and NGOs alike – was largely silent.

The Habyarimana regime gradually fell into the hands of extremists, who were coming to see genocide as a solution to the threat to their power. They used the highly centralized state infrastructure to draw up death lists of opponents: not just Tutsi but also moderate Hutu. They were assisted by the identity card scheme that classified everyone into an ethnic group. With a population increasingly radicalized by dire poverty and racist hysteria, the fire of genocide was prepared. All that was needed was the spark.

This came in 1994 when a plane carrying Habyarimana and the president of Burundi – on their way home from peace talks – was shot down over the capital Kigali. It is unclear who attacked the plane, but the evidence suggests Hutu extremists, perhaps aided by foreign mercenaries. Immediately, however, the Tutsi opposition was blamed, roadblocks sprang up in the capital and across the country, and the killings started. Hutu political opponents were killed in the initial wave, but the population as a whole was incited to kill Tutsi to end the 'threat' they posed to Rwanda once and for all.

A population of killers

One of the most depressing facts about the Rwandan genocide is the massive participation of the population – including men, women and children – in the killings. Doctors and nurses participated in the slaughter and allowed militias to kill patients in their beds. Priests and nuns permitted congregations to be killed. Some argue that the highly centralized state, and a centuries-old tradition of obeying orders, facilitated widespread population involvement (Prunier 1995). Certainly it was easier to distribute guns and death lists in a country with excellent administrative organization.

Yet as Uvin points out, Rwandans also have a track record of disobeying the orders of their rulers – uprooting coffee plants when they could not get enough money for their crops, refusing to participate in state-ordered labour projects and so on. In other words, poor Rwandans, like people everywhere, can choose whether or not to obey orders. During the genocide some Rwandans did so, and bravely hid Tutsi and others facing the threat of death. But what made so many people participate? – hundreds of thousands were killers or stood by while killing took place.

Religious leaders said ‘evil forces’ had taken over the people, while psychologists talked about an innate human propensity towards aggression. However, in line with a tradition of social scientific analysis of genocide and killing, Uvin suggests the reasons can be found in social structures and, most importantly, in the problem of structural violence. ‘A population that is cynical, angry and frustrated,’ he argues, ‘is predisposed to scapegoating and projection, vulnerable to manipulation, deeply afraid of future and desperate for change’ (Uvin 1998:110). These feelings of frustration were then ‘manipulated by elites under threat from economic and political processes; and the existence of a sociopsychological, widespread attachment to racist values in society’ (Uvin 1998:223).

Uvin says there are four other factors of secondary importance: the occurrence of past violence in Rwanda and Burundi; opportunism, meaning the ability of people to grab resources through murder; an absence of any international interference; and finally the colonial legacy.

You should now consider, from the material presented above, whether this is a fair analysis of the underlying causes of the genocide. You can find out more about how the genocide unfolded by doing the interactive case study on Rwanda, where you will also find questions on this material and **Chapter 2**.

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Lesson 3.3: Partitioning Iraq?

In **Lesson 2.3**, we looked at the question of ethnicity and how ethnic conflicts could be resolved. The discussion below between two journalists about how further bloodshed in Iraq could best be prevented goes to the heart of the debates you examined earlier.

At the end of the lesson, try to answer the questions and then look through the feedback.

Partition may be the only solution, **The Guardian, Saturday June 23, 2007**

Two award-winning journalists – Ghaith Abdul Ahad and Rajiv Chandrasekaran – discuss how the Iraq conflict has unfolded, and what the future holds.

Click on the link above for the original version (you can also listen to a podcast).

Ghaith Last time I saw you was, when, 2004? Baghdad was burning as usual.

Rajiv Comparatively speaking, Ghaith, those were the good old days. We could sit around a table, enjoy a cold drink and at least while away a few hours of the evening chatting, perhaps even with a bit of optimism about the future.

Ghaith So what do you think? Why did this happen in the last three years?

Rajiv I see a lot of the roots back in decisions made in 2003. I wouldn't blame the US for the civil war in Iraq, but I certainly think an awful lot of decisions made by Ambassador Bremer, the first American viceroy to Iraq, have helped to fuel the instability we see today. The commonly discussed ones: de-Ba'athification; the dissolving of the army. But it goes beyond that. It was an American effort at social engineering in Iraq. And there was a simplicity to it. It was almost binary: Sunnis equal bad guys; Shia equal oppressed. We must empower the Shia, we must marginalise the Sunnis.

Ghaith In Baghdad, in 2003 or 2004, it was kind of impossible to say that's a Sunni or that's a Shia neighbourhood.

Rajiv Or even that's a Sunni or that's a Shia person. Nobody identified themselves as that. You'd ask any man on the street "Who are you?" They would say first, "I'm an Iraqi"; then he'd say his tribe; and finally, maybe on the third or fourth try, they might identify themselves as Sunni or Shia.

Now ...

(cont.)

Partition may be the only solution (*continued*)

Ghaith Now we can draw a sectarian map of Baghdad right down to tiny alleyways and streets and houses. Everything has changed. As an Iraqi I go anywhere (not only in Iraq, but also in the Middle East), the first thing people ask me is: “Are you a Sunni or a Shia?”

Rajiv So the sectarian genie is out of the bottle. In Iraq there was historical tension between Sunnis and Shias, but also a great deal of accommodation, right? More Sunni/Shia inter-marriages than any other Arab/Muslim country.

Ghaith Now, an average Iraqi is still in this sort of delusion, and will tell you: “Oh, the Sunnis and the Shias; we’ve no problem, only militias on the street.” But I think the problem we have now on the ground is a civil war. Call it whatever you want, it is a civil war.

Rajiv We’re going to see thousands and thousands more Iraqis killed. Fundamentally these internecine conflicts don’t end until both sides’ view of their strength is commensurate with their actual strength. [It]’ll never come to any negotiated peaceful settlement until both sides see it in their interest to compromise. And we’re not there yet.

Ghaith On the ground level, at the mid-level of the commanders, [the war] is huge business. I was talking to Sunni insurgents and Shia militiamen, and they told me: “The kidnapping process, you do it in the name of Allah, and religion, and cleansing your town from the Sunni extremists, or Shia militias, or whatever you want to call it. But at the end of the day, every person you kidnap is to get money out of him.” They already call it the “spoils of war”. It’s a booming business. \$50,000 a week for a mid-level commander who is kidnapping people inside the city.

This is what I really want to know. The Americans. What’s the American psyche? How do they see it in DC?

Rajiv Both sides in Washington are thoroughly disconnected. I think they both fundamentally misunderstand. The view in the White House is, if you send more troops to Iraq and you take more forceful action against the terrorists and the insurgents ... you’ll be able to improve security. And that will then lead the political elites to come together and forge national and political compromise. And once they forge these grand compromises, ordinary Iraqis will put a degree of trust in their government; as a result, violence will attenuate, Iraq will become more stable, you’ll have a strong central government. (*cont.*)

Partition may be the only solution (*continued*)

Rajiv At the same time, what Democrats say on Capitol Hill is: “We must give a clear timetable. We must tell al-Maliki we will pull out our troops within six months if you don’t do X, Y and Z; if you don’t pass this legislation; if you don’t bring in more personnel into the military and the security forces.” Well, when you put a gun to somebody’s head like that, I think they will do just the opposite of what you want. Maliki won’t bring in more Sunnis into his cabinet. He’ll bring in his Shia cronies. He’ll circle the wagons, as they would say out west.

Ghaith Exactly. Everyone knows that at some point the Americans will have to leave, and the Shia will try to take over.

Rajiv Iraq’s leadership right now, they are all ensconced in the Green Zone. They are in many ways just as disconnected from the real Iraq as Bremer and Co were back then.

Ghaith You see these media operations by Maliki – flying in a helicopter to a street in Baghdad and having a photo opportunity meeting, just like Saddam used to, surrounded by hundreds of soldiers – half of them foreign mercenaries. The level of disconnect between the political leadership in the parliament, in the Green Zone, and the people is so obvious ... When there was an attack inside parliament killing a few MPs, people shrugged their shoulders. They couldn’t care less about those MPs.

Rajiv Let’s put something controversial on the table, and let’s debate. I see the situation as polarised ... perhaps the only reasonable approach, going forward, is to think about a degree of partition and accept the inevitability of the way things are headed.

Ghaith Sorry, I’m interrupting you before you finish your idea, but I just can’t see it happening. If it stopped the violence, I’d say let’s have it tomorrow.

Rajiv But people are already voting with their feet. They’re dividing themselves on their own, people are moving from one community to another, one neighbourhood to another in Baghdad. In some cases they’re leaving Iraq outright. This is the direction things are headed. It’s not going to be a nice, easy, clean line. I don’t mean to suggest India and Pakistan was anything like a clean, easy line – that you’d have one single border. You may well have various cantons. Or even within Baghdad, this neighbourhood’s Sunni; this neighbourhood’s Shia.

(*cont.*)

Partition may be the only solution (*continued*)

Rajiv But you'd essentially start to create various zones where one group predominates and has a degree of control, and (this is what I think) give the Sunnis a sense of at least controlling some elements of their own destiny, as opposed to feeling like they have no voice in the national government. Look, if things are left unchecked, the proxy war already taking place there will just get worse.

Ghaith The problem with this argument is it has no precedent in Iraq's history.

Rajiv The Iraqis don't want this. But I think that's because each side thinks it ultimately will emerge victorious. Give this conflict some more time, and I wonder to what degree people will embrace this [zoning] as a way to end the fighting. Right now they are not there yet. But what do you think?

Ghaith I see a de facto split in the country, I see a de facto cantonisation between Sunnis and Shia. To enshrine this in some form of process will be messy, it'll be bloody. The main issue is for the Americans to recognise they don't have an Iraqi partner. The first thing is to rebuild national consensus; this government will never do this. Second is, someone should tell the Sunnis and the Shia they'll never be able to defeat the other. What's happening is this race to taking as much land as possible before the Americans leave. Because everyone knows they'll leave, and then the real civil war will start.

Rajiv I don't think that anybody can tell each side they can't defeat each other. They'll have to come to that conclusion on their own. Unfortunately, I think it's going to take many, many more months, if not years, and it will continue to be bloody and dark and chaotic.

Chapter 4: Responses to structural violence and the underlying causes of direct violence



Intermediate objectives

By the end of this chapter you will be able to

- describe and critically evaluate different ways of addressing the underlying causes of violent conflict.
- describe and critically evaluate the different ways of addressing structural violence, and
- describe how structural violence can be tackled through the health system.

Lesson 4.1: Reducing structural violence (1): national level interventions

Author: Michael Rowson

In this lesson we will look at government policies applied at the national level that might help reduce structural violence. We will also link the discussion of the underlying causes of direct violence with measures to reduce horizontal inequalities which, you will recall, are a key trigger for civil war.

Learning objectives

By the end of this lesson you will be able to:

- describe and evaluate some of the different strategies that can be used to deal with structural violence at national and international levels.

Introduction

Think back to **Chapter 1** and to **Lesson 2.1**. There we described and discussed some of the different underlying local, national and community-level causes of structural violence – namely, poverty, inequality and ill health. In **Chapter 2** we also discussed how these deprivations might, in combination with other cultural, political and economic factors, trigger direct violence. In **Lesson 4.2** we will examine how measures taken at the international level can reduce both structural and direct violence. Finally, in **Lesson 4.3**, we focus on how health systems generate structural violence and how – conversely – they can be used to reduce it.

The poverty trap

In **Lesson 2.1** we used Chambers' idea that a number of factors interact to cause poverty. These were:

- lack of income and human, financial, social, natural and physical assets
- vulnerability
- powerlessness.

These factors frequently act together to produce vicious circles of deprivation. But Chambers also suggests that policies that try to break in at any point in these circles to alleviate particular elements of deprivation can help to turn the tide – creating virtuous circles of poverty reduction.

Now think further back to **Lesson 1.2**. There we showed that poverty could be conceptualized in a number of different ways, and highlighted two major forms of conceptualization – poverty as lack of income, and poverty as capability deprivation (we called this the human development approach).

Lack of income is a primary cause of poverty, but in common with Chambers, the human development approach recognizes that poverty has many other dimensions. Supporting people's ability to access education and health care, for example, are just as important as improving people's incomes.

In the rest of this lesson we will explore how some countries have managed to break out of the cycle of deprivation, through policies that have promoted economic growth (increasing people's incomes) and bolstered people's core capabilities.

Why economic growth is needed

Low levels of per capita income constrain economic development in a number of ways. Firstly, households use all their resources to survive, and are unable to save money to invest in building their own futures or as a buffer against the shocks that often afflict the poor, such as natural disasters and severe illness.

Secondly, in countries where most people are living below the absolute poverty line, governments cannot raise the tax revenues needed to sustain public investment in assets such as physical infrastructure (roads, telecommunications, electricity and so on), or health and education services that are critical for survival.

Thirdly, in situations of generalized poverty it is much harder to create and attract the domestic and foreign private investment needed to stimulate economic development. Entrepreneurs will not invest when people's incomes are too low to buy their goods, people do not have the basic education needed to staff factories or offices, or the public sector cannot provide the physical infrastructure they need to do business effectively.

You can see how these factors interact to block economic growth. This has led the UN's millennium taskforce to call for 'a big push of basic investment [...] in public administration, human capital (nutrition, health, education) and key infrastructure' (UN 2005:19). Although poor country governments may be able to assemble some of these extra resources through cutting waste, redistributing resources to priority anti-poverty areas, and stimulating growth, the obvious implication of the UN's 'big push' idea is that richer countries need to help poorer ones overcome their resource constraints by providing more aid (see **Lesson 4.2**).

The relationship between economic growth and health improvement

Income is important for improving health in two ways. Firstly, income has the potential to give people the capacity to exist: to buy nutritious food, live in a healthy environment, purchase health care and education, and participate in the life of the surrounding community. Secondly, as already mentioned, governments can gain greater revenues by taxing people as the average income of the population rises, giving them more money to provide health and other social services.

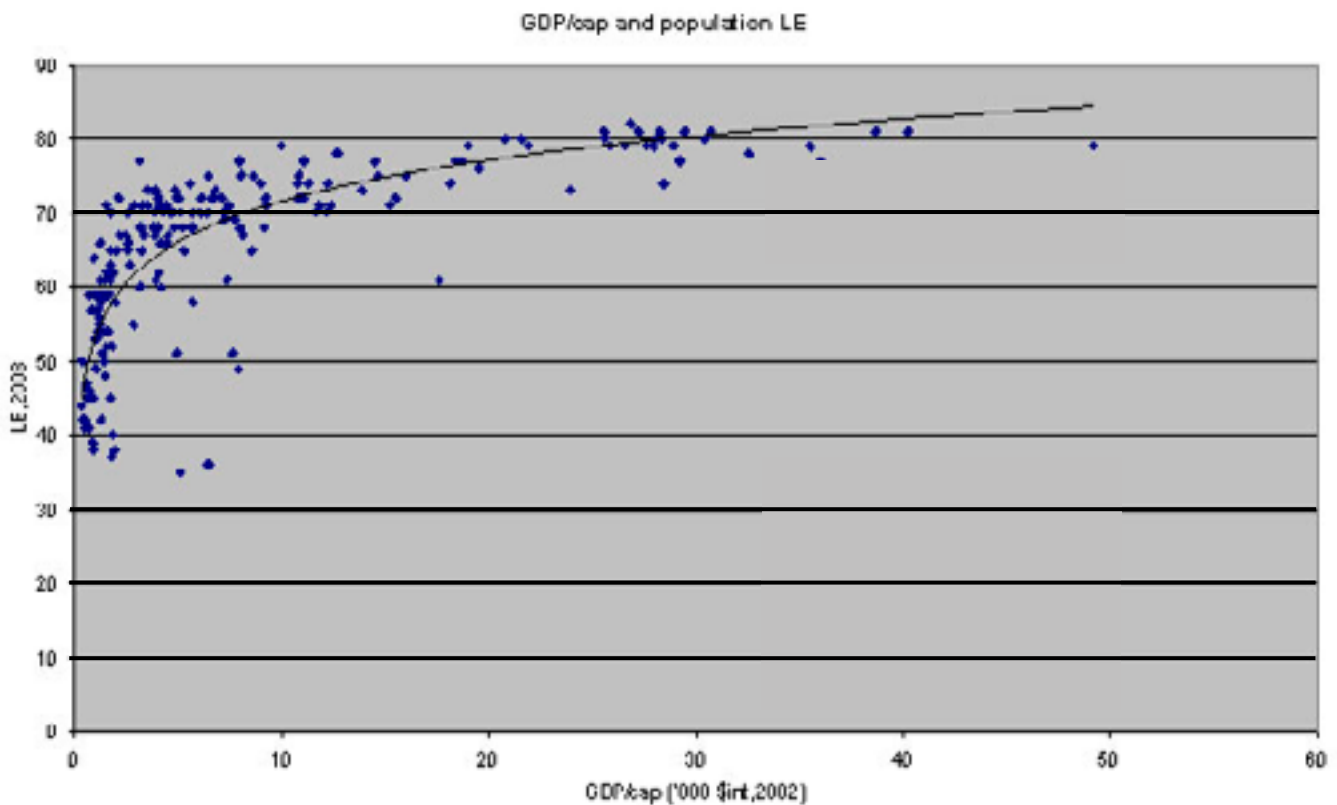


Figure 1: The relationship between income and life expectancy (Rowson 2007)

Figure 1 shows the relationship between income per capita and life expectancy (each of the dots represents a country). You can probably see that, up to a point somewhere between US\$ 5 000–10 000 per capita, life expectancy increases quite rapidly as economic development occurs. There is then a plateau where even quite large increases in income do not ‘buy’ more life expectancy. This fits well with our description of how raising incomes from low levels can create better health by providing populations with basic necessities needed to survive such as clean water and health care. After these have been put in place, there are diminishing returns to increasing income (in terms of life expectancy).

Notice, however, that some countries rise some way above the trend line and others fall some way below it. This shows that some countries do significantly better for their level of income than the general trend, and others significantly worse.

How can these outliers be explained? Firstly, average per capita income is a broad measure that conceals many different types of social organization. Because it is an average it does not tell us about the inequalities in income between richer and poorer groups in a country. Even if two countries have the same per capita income, that income might be distributed very unequally in one, with the wealthiest 20% of the population taking a far bigger slice of the national resource 'cake' than even the poorest 60%. The incidence of poverty will therefore be higher than in countries where income is distributed more evenly. Health outcomes are likely to be dragged down as a result.

Governments can influence patterns of income distribution. In very poor countries, unequal access to land is often a key determinant of poverty, and land reforms can therefore help alleviate destitution. Governments can also formulate economic policies that promote higher levels of employment (and hence better incomes) among the poor. Sen (1998) argues that these key measures were taken by many poor countries that lie above the curve –including some of the high-performing East Asian countries like South Korea. Similarly, a failure to reduce inequalities or to create employment for poor people has been a feature of the performance of countries that lie below the curve, such as Brazil and apartheid-era South Africa.

There may be a second reason for the differences seen in Figure 1. Average per capita income makes no distinction for how resources are used by populations and their governments. For any given level of wealth, governments might choose to spend their resources in very different ways: some may focus spending on the provision of health and other health-sustaining services such as water and education; others might prioritize spending on defence or other activities which produce few or no benefits for health. Anand and Ravallion (1993) argue that lower levels of poverty and higher levels of public spending on health account for much of the better performance of some countries, although there is continuing dispute about this (for the debates see, for example, Filmer et al. 1997; Wang 2003; Mackintosh and Koivusalo 2004). Because of the labour-intensive nature of health care, it is possible for low-wage economies to support quite extensive programmes of health services (Sen 1998).

Finally, a focus on average incomes may conceal deeper patterns of social organization that mediate the impact of a given level of wealth. One example particularly conducive for health is the level of female literacy (itself the result of complex interactions between government priorities, public pressure and cultural influences). Female literacy tends to benefit the health of young children, through its influence on women's ability to process health-related information and through its effects on their incomes. The dramatic gains in life expectancy in places such as China, the Indian state of Kerala and Sri Lanka have largely been won through large reductions in under-five mortality rates, which have in part been facilitated by gains in female literacy.

Another example depressing health gains in some countries below the curve – such as South Africa – is extremely high levels of HIV/AIDS. Many countries, in Eastern and Southern Africa and elsewhere, are witnessing reversals of a number of health indicators as a result of the pandemic.

These debates about the potential of economic growth to improve health are echoed in discussions about Britain's economic development in the 19th and early 20th centuries. In the 1970s, the demographer Thomas McKeown produced evidence which showed that, contrary to popular perception, improvements in health in the UK over that period were not due to scientific advances such as more efficacious medicine and surgery, or immunization, or to public health measures. Rather, it was a raised 'standard of living' that led to better nutrition.

The social historian Simon Szreter disputes McKeown's argument. He says the social disruption caused by rapid industrialization (which led to massive rural to urban migration and overcrowding in urban areas) resulted in declines in life expectancy in cities, even in the context of rising wage levels (Szreter 2004). He further argues that the mortality improvements identified by McKeown often resulted from government public health measures to improve the appalling conditions in the cities.

All these discussions show that economic growth alone is not enough to improve population health. Purposive action is needed to direct the fruits of growth towards social improvements that sustain health (Sen 1998). In fact, even a lack of economic growth does not necessarily mean health has to suffer. Even very poor countries can achieve remarkable health outcomes by prioritizing and devoting what little money is available to the task of improving health; influencing the patterns of income distribution; and utilizing their comparative advantage of low wages in labour-intensive services such as health and education.

Key health interventions

This review shows that actions outside the health sector influence health improvement as much as actions within it. However, the way resources are used in the health sector, and the types of service that are prioritized, are still important triggers for the life expectancy gains we have discussed.

A UNICEF review of lessons learned from the experience of high-performing countries concluded that they emphasized comprehensive primary health care and system-building, and focused their PHC activities on mother and child health, thus achieving large improvements in mortality (Mehrotra et al. 1998). The characteristics of health services in these countries included the following:

- Provision of universal services (as opposed to targeted services) for all, paid out of government revenues, with resources allocated towards the base of the pyramid. There is little evidence of user charges being levied at the primary level.
- Higher spending on health, more equitably distributed.
- Strong incentives to deploy health workers to rural/poor areas.
- Emphasis on training nurses, midwives, village health workers and community health workers.
- Comprehensive and widespread maternal and child health services at the primary level.
- Increasing the proportion of births attended by trained health workers. Good postnatal follow-up.
- Good referral systems and links from primary to other parts of the system.
- Excellent immunization services.
- Private sector acting in a supportive and complementary role rather than a substitutive one.
- Education (in particular of girls) hugely important for increasing the demand for and accountability of health services.
- Provision of a nutritional floor: targeted subsidies aimed at households facing food insecurity and the very young child (6 months – 3 years).
- Improved water and sanitation.
- Resolving horizontal inequalities.

These discussions about government intervention to deal with structural violence are also relevant to issues of direct violence. You will remember how in **Lesson 2.4** we discussed how horizontal inequalities – meaning inequalities between culturally defined groups of people – often played a key role in creating the grounds for conflict. They are not the only cause, but inequalities between ethnic groups, clans and classes in access to economic and social resources and political power often play a key role in triggering civil war. Interventions to promote the alleviation of structural violence also have the elimination of inequality at their heart, so dealing directly with horizontal inequalities may also prove attractive in societies where widespread conflict is likely to break out or has already broken out.

Stewart (2005) suggests that three types of policies can be used to alleviate horizontal inequalities. These include policies that:

- change processes that are discriminatory
- direct assistance towards groups that have been discriminated against
- introduce targets and quotas to correct inequalities.

All three sets of policies have been used to prevent violent conflict or to reduce and end it. Stewart gives the example of Malaysia, where affirmative action was taken after independence from British rule to correct horizontal inequalities that disadvantaged the Malay population relative to the Indian and Chinese populations. This included measures to expand Malay capital ownership, give them priority in new land settlement, introduce educational quotas and set up favourable credit policies. The policies moderated (but did not eliminate) the inequalities, and violent conflict between ethnic groups in Malaysia has been averted.

These policies have to be applied carefully: visible, direct anti-discrimination measures such as quotas can backfire. Stewart draws a contrast with Sri Lanka, which perhaps went too far in attempts to redress discrimination against the majority Sinhalese by sharply restricting access of Tamils and others to higher education and the civil service, and by changing the official language to Sinhala. The combined effect of these policies was one of the reasons for the outbreak of civil conflict in the 1980s (see **Lesson 2.4**).

Conclusion

This lesson has shown how proactive decision-making on the part of national governments can help to alleviate structural violence and the underlying causes of direct violence. The next lesson turns to examine policies at the international level.

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Lesson 4.2: Reducing structural violence (2): international level interventions

Author: Michael Rowson

This lesson looks in detail at how contemporary phenomena such as trade relationships and financial flows can have negative effects on the extent of poverty, inequality and ill health at national level, and at how this might be mitigated.

Introduction

In the previous lesson we discussed national level interventions to reduce structural violence. In **Lessons 2.2** and **2.6**, we saw that international factors also influenced the extent of structural and direct violence at national level. These included historical influences such as colonial rule. This lesson looks more closely at the negative effects on the extent of poverty, inequality and ill health at national level of contemporary phenomena such as trade relationships and financial flows.

We will sometimes link some of the issues with preventing direct violence, but this is not a comprehensive overview of how international influences on direct violence can be shaped. This is often discussed in the other MPW courses, and cross-references will be made. We will also highlight some links you can explore to find out more about these issues, or to join campaigns to ameliorate the negative role of global forces in shaping the destinies of developing nations.

Learning objectives

By the end of this lesson you will be able to:

- summarize some of the negative effects of international policies on levels of structural violence
- describe and evaluate attempts by the international community to resolve these negative effects
- suggest how the international community could go further in helping solve problems caused by international policies.

Trade

Effects of trade on livelihoods

As discussed in **Lesson 2.2**, trade between countries has increased substantially since the Second World War. Some see this as a peace-enhancing development in itself: the more countries are economically interlinked, the less likely they are to disrupt the mutual benefits that trade can bring by going to war with each other.

This assumes that trade always brings mutual benefits. Can you recall instances where trade might lead to greater poverty?

The answer – given in **Lesson 2.2** – is that countries trading low-value commodities like beverages and food may become trapped in a poverty cycle, because they cannot raise the necessary capital to start manufacturing and trading in higher-value goods (e.g. electronic equipment, other types of machinery) that can increase their national wealth and help lift people's incomes. These low-value commodities' prices are volatile on world markets, but the long-term trend has been downward.

Many countries in sub-Saharan Africa are stuck in such a trade-poverty trap. In part they need good governance to create the industries needed to diversify economically. But no amount of good policy-making will help when countries are simply too poor to raise the capital to diversify. Many poor countries have also faced blocks on their ability to 'move up the value chain', from richer countries who do not want their own manufacturers threatened by cheaper imports from poorer countries. Rich nations have imposed tariffs or quotas on manufactured goods from poor countries. Even simple manufactures like tomatoes processed into tomato puree by African countries have faced such barriers (Mackintosh 2004). Richer nations have also subsidized their own farmers to such an extent that they can afford to export cheap goods to poor countries, which then undermine the livelihoods of local agricultural producers.

Negotiations have proceeded for years at the World Trade Organization to eliminate barriers to trade between all countries. It was recognized that poor countries sometimes needed to keep trade barriers to protect their own fledgling domestic industries from outside competition. Developed countries also promised to open their markets to goods from poor countries.

Despite these promises, poor countries tend to lose out in new phases of WTO negotiation. Rich countries force poor countries to get rid of their own tariffs while only slowly opening their own markets, and subsidies to European and American farmers have not been ended. Campaigning groups are protesting

about all these issues and call for fairer treatment for poor countries (*see for example Oxfam's Make Trade Fair campaign <http://www.oxfam.org.uk/resources/issues/trade/introduction.htm>*).

Trade and medicines

Trade rules also directly affect the health sector. You may have heard about campaigns to promote access to medicines in the developing world. These sprang up in response to another agreement negotiated under the WTO auspices, the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) agreement. TRIPS extended the rights at an international level of holders of patents, copyright and trademarks, guaranteeing their innovation 20 years of monopoly protection in all 150 WTO members. This allows innovators to charge monopoly prices for this period. Multinational pharmaceutical companies were among those to benefit from the worldwide extension of patent rights.

However, some developing countries have in the past ignored patent rules, and built up thriving generic industries in pharmaceuticals to help them provide cheaper drugs for their people. In this respect they followed the example of most now-developed countries, which also built up homegrown industries by copying innovators. WTO agreements have given developing countries time to adjust to the new rules, and many life-saving drugs are already out of patent protection. Nevertheless, campaigners are concerned that new drugs for HIV/AIDS, cancer and other health problems may be unaffordable due to the patent holders' monopoly guaranteed by TRIPS.

In response to campaigners, trade ministers adopted the 2001 Doha declaration on TRIPS and public health, which stressed that the TRIPS agreement 'does not and should not prevent members from taking measures to protect public health' (http://www.wto.org/English/thewto_e/minist_e/mino1_e/mindecl_trips_e.htm).

However, the US has been pressurizing countries with which it is negotiating trade deals outside the WTO to extend patent protection on new medicines for even longer than 20 years. Campaigners are protesting against such 'TRIPS plus' deals, and calling for international health bodies to examine proposals for research and development innovations that facilitate investment in drug development for poor countries' health problems (*see <http://www.msfacecess.org/>; <http://www.tac.org.za/>*).

Arms trade

The trade in deadly weapons continues to grow, contributing to direct violence around the world. According to the Commission on Human Security (<http://www.humansecurity-chs.org/>), four nations – France, the Russian Federation,



the US and the UK – are responsible for 78% of global exports of conventional weapons. Germany, the remaining major contributor, is responsible for a further 5%. Two thirds of these exports go to the developing world. Small arms are a particular threat in poorer countries: there are around 640 million small arms in the world and many are inexpensive. The Commission estimates that these weapons kill 500 000 people a year. Groups like the International Action Network on Small Arms are campaigning against the trade in small arms (<http://www.iansa.org/>). You can find out more about these and other weapons in **Course 3**.

Trade that directly finances war

In **Lesson 2.6** you learned about how trade in goods ranging from coffee to diamonds to oil is financing violent conflict around the world. The diamond industry has become a focus of attention in Africa, leading to UN action to force diamond traders to issue ‘certificates of origin’ guaranteeing that the diamonds they are selling are ‘legitimate’ (see <http://www.un.org/peace/africa/Diamond.html>). This led to the Kimberly Process Certification Scheme, launched in 2003. There are significant concerns that new ‘blood diamonds’ are entering markets because of governments’ failure to implement the Kimberly Process, and the diamond industry’s failure to regulate itself.

Global Witness, an NGO that led calls for regulation of the diamond trade, continues to campaign on the role that natural resources play in fuelling wars (see http://www.globalwitness.org/pages/en/natural_resources_in_conflict.html).

Financial flows

Financial flows to developing countries can also reduce or increase levels of structural violence. Since the 1970s, many developing countries – especially in sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America – have suffered from a huge debt burden that has limited their prospects for economic growth and their ability to invest in health and education.

The fundamental causes of the international debt crisis that unfolded in the 1970s are as follows. A combination of economic slowdown and inflation in the developed world were exacerbated when members of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) tripled the price of oil in 1973. This led to a further slowdown in the rate of economic growth, and rising inflation in developed nations and other oil-importing countries in the developing world.

The petrodollars created by the rise in oil prices were deposited in Western banks, which then lent the money to developing countries at low interest rates. For the poorest countries, official lending from developed country governments (particularly their export credit agencies) as well as from multilateral institutions

such as the IMF and World Bank also rose. A second oil price shock in 1979 was followed by dramatic increases in interest rates in the industrialized economies, as right-wing governments came to power in the US, West Germany and the UK on a platform of tackling inflation. Global recession then followed.

This was a triple blow for developing countries. Rising oil prices necessitated ongoing borrowing from foreign lenders, whose high interest rate policies worsened their burden of loan repayments. Meanwhile, less demand from the developed economies for their exports reduced the resources with which they could repay their debts. The world financial system was thrown into crisis in 1982, when the Mexican government threatened to default on its debt repayments. With several American commercial banks threatened with closure due to the threat of widespread default on loans, the US Treasury put pressure on the World Bank and International Monetary Fund to bail out developing countries with new loans that would ease what was perceived initially as a liquidity crisis (Rowson 2007).

Latin American countries suffered severe economic crisis during the 1980s, but comprehensive debt rescheduling towards the end of the decade managed to get rid of part of the debt overhang. Countries in sub-Saharan Africa faced a different problem. They had accumulated such large levels of debt that no new loans could help them to pay it off. They were effectively bankrupt, and new lending only added to their burden. The World Bank and International Monetary Fund classified the poorest countries with high levels of debt as Highly Indebted Poor Countries: 35 of the 40 HIPC are in sub-Saharan Africa. While HIPCs received US\$ 294 billion (€206 bn) in loans and paid back \$268 bn (€188 bn) between 1970 and 2002, they were still left with a debt stock of \$210 bn (€147 bn) (UNCTAD 2004).

A comprehensive cancellation scheme, the HIPC initiative, was launched in 1995 and HIPCs have seen a major reduction in their debt burden, but debt relief has not brought as many new resources for development as anticipated.

This is partly because many countries were only servicing a limited proportion of their debt anyway. And, while debt cancellation has boosted what are classified as poverty-reducing expenditures, it appears from limited evidence that benefits have been highly focused in the field of education (Rowson 2007).

Debt sustainability is still an issue for many poor countries, as they need to continue to borrow on international capital markets to fund ambitious development programmes. The international community therefore needs to look again at the loan-contraction process: to find better indicators of debt sustainability, so that it is recognized earlier when vulnerable countries are getting into repayment problems; and to ensure there is proper national parliamentary and civil society oversight of money borrowed and lent by governments (Eurodad 2007). *For more information consult <http://www.eurodad.org> and <http://www.jubileedebtcampaign.org.uk>.*

Aid

Aid plays an important role in helping countries gain access to capital to finance development. It comes from a vast range of governmental agencies including the UK's Department for International Development (<http://www.dfid.gov.uk>), the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (<http://www.norad.no/>) and the US Agency for International Development (<http://www.usaid.gov>); multilateral agencies such as the World Bank (<http://www.worldbank.org>) and the European Commission (http://ec.europa.eu/development/index_en.cfm); and nongovernmental donors such as Oxfam (<http://www.oxfam.org>).

In 2005, developing countries received about \$105 bn (€74 bn) in development aid from richer nations – projected to rise to about \$120 bn (€91 bn) in 2010. Aid has been on a rising trend since 2000 (*for aid statistics see http://www.oecd.org/department/0,3355,en_2649_34447_1_1_1_1_1,00.html*).

Recent increases in aid, however, have been driven by debt relief and development assistance to war-torn and strategically important countries like Iraq and Afghanistan, and emergency humanitarian aid. Development assistance to other parts of the world stayed roughly unchanged in the 2000s at around \$60 bn (€42 bn). The impact of the global financial crisis since 2008 has affected aid flows – as richer countries reduce their own deficits, there are pressures on aid budgets which have traditionally been a political component of government spending.

Economic studies have shown that aid does help countries to grow, and there is a vast range of examples of aid supporting interventions that tackle structural and direct violence. But aid is also controversial. You learned in **Lesson 2.6** that aid could support war (see **Course 5, Chapter 2** for more detail). Many aid programmes have supported ineffective projects and aid money has been used corruptly. In the health sector (as you will see in **Lesson 4.3**) the multiplicity of aid donors can also cause problems for recipient governments and their health systems.

Nevertheless, campaigners argue that where aid fails it needs to be reformed – not done away with. Nongovernmental agencies have called for more and better aid to the developing world, and there is a greater focus on giving poorer countries more control over their aid. A meeting of donor and recipient nations in Paris in 2005 called for more harmonization of aid and greater accountability over its use, and set out a range of recommendations to achieve these aims (*see http://www.oecd.org/document/18/0,3343,en_2649_3236398_35401554_1_1_1_1,00.html#Paris*).

A fairer international system

The examples in this lesson show that rich countries have great power in the international system. They can use aid to shape political, social and economic

outcomes in developing nations, or to further their own geostrategic interests. They dominate important international bodies like the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, where voting is based on financial clout. Even at bodies such as the UN and the WTO, where all nations are represented and decisions are formally made on a one-country one-vote basis, the power of the more developed countries can overwhelm the interests of poorer nations.

This suggests that reforms are needed to the system of global governance if structural and direct violence are to be avoided. This is well recognized in the international community. For instance, the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization has called for more democratic representation in UN and other multilateral bodies and for their increased accountability to the public at large (see <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/wcsdg/docs/report.pdf>).

Conclusion

In **Lessons 4.1** and **4.2** we focused in a general way on how national governments and international agencies could resolve some of the problems of structural and direct violence. In the final lesson we will look in detail at health systems in developing countries, how they play a critical role in the social fabric and how their proper functioning can help to reduce structural violence.

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Lesson 4.3: The importance of health systems

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This course contains discussion of the peace-building role of individuals, groups of health workers and health systems as a whole. In this lesson we take a broad perspective on what keeps health systems running and health workers in their jobs. Health services, and the behaviour of individual health workers, can play a role in reducing structural violence.

Learning objectives

By the end of this lesson you will be able to:

- describe what a health system is
- explain the problems facing health systems in low-income countries
- identify what measures could be taken to boost health systems in poor countries.

The importance of health systems

We all feel anxious and vulnerable when a serious illness strikes us or our loved ones. In the developed world, we know that when that happens, we can find advice, treatment and support from our health services fairly easily. This is not the case for many of the world's people (WHO 2005; Gottret and Schieber 2006) (Box 1).

Imagine living where there are no health services. The nearest health centre is a day's hard journey away and you will have to walk. Even if there is a clinic nearby there is no guarantee it will be stocked with medicines, or staffed by someone who can prescribe them. You don't know that you will be able to afford your treatment if it can be prescribed. And there could be the prospect of a referral somewhere else for further tests.

You might not go. You might instead rely on a healer and their natural remedy, or on pills sold in a local market. You will cope with the illness as best you can. But in all likelihood, you or your loved ones will suffer needless pain, and may even die. Health systems have a special place at the heart of our societies because of the risks associated with illness, and our fear of those risks.

Box 1: Some key facts on health system inequities

- 1.3 billion people lack access to basic health care services.
- Worldwide, 100 million people are pushed into poverty every year by health care costs.
- Developing countries bear 90% of the world's disease burden but possess just 12% of the world's health care resources.
- In the poorest developing countries, average spending on health is just US\$30 (€21) per person. In the developed world it is US\$3000 (€2100) per person.

The health system has been defined by WHO as 'all activities whose primary purpose is to promote, restore or maintain health' (WHO 2000). Health systems can play an important part in addressing the social exclusion or structural violence experienced by the poor (Rowson 2007). Health services are only one part of the health system (see Box 2). In this lesson we will focus on health services and their staff, and look at three key issues: health care financing, strengthening the public sector and supporting health workers.

The world as a whole spends US\$3.2 trillion (€2.3 trillion) every year on health care. However, 88% (\$2.8 trillion; €2 trillion) is spent in rich nations, where 16% of the world's population live. Developing countries, with 84% of the world's population and 90% of its disease burden, possess just 12% of its health care resources (Gottret and Schieber 2006).

This inequality in spending reflects the deep wealth divide between rich and poor countries. In low-income countries, average health expenditure is only \$30 (€21) per person a year. This figure is half of what WHO reckons is needed to run a minimally functioning health system, and roughly 100 times less than what is spent in rich countries with a much lower burden of disease.

Health care financing

Box 2: Elements of a health system (Mackintosh and Koivusalo 2005)

- Public health: prevention, cross-sectoral action, emergency preparedness.
- Health services: the heart of the health system – ideally provided and financed equitably.
- Human resources and knowledge: training and education of health workers; surveillance systems.
- Ethics, accountability and policy: mechanisms to ensure accountability, citizen rights and involvement of users; ethical integrity and professional behaviour; policy development and planning.

On top of this, in most low-income countries health expenditure mainly comes directly out of people's pockets when they need it. This is the worst form of health financing, as it can easily throw people into destitution – when they cannot pay, they sell their assets. Worldwide an estimated 100 million people a year are pushed into poverty by health care costs (WHO 2005).

International aid helps to increase public spending on health, but can also cause problems. Different donors may have different funding priorities and can pull governments in different directions. In addition, much aid has been directed at a few major killers, such as HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria; as a result other diseases and illnesses may be neglected and front-line workers' priorities distorted. Channelling aid programmes through vertical, stand-alone projects can also cause the health system to become fragmented and disorganized.

An essential feature of health systems development is an adequate budget that is integrated and reliable over a 5-10-year period, and which can be managed in a rational and coordinated manner. This requires greater efforts at mobilizing domestic and international resources, as well as improving coordination and management of donor and government plans.

Strengthening the public sector

Many countries have experienced a long period of underfunding of public services, leading to deterioration of facilities and demoralization of workers. In low-income countries the public sector spends on average an abysmal \$8.60 (€6) per person annually to meet health needs. Economic recession, poor governance, and fiscal austerity imposed by the International Monetary Fund have constrained government spending. As a result, an unregulated private sector has emerged to fill the gaps.

Richer countries choose to spend a greater proportion of their health budgets through governments – and they do so for good reason. Governments have the necessary oversight and authority to plan health care rationally according to population needs, keep costs down and promote social protection for the poor and vulnerable. There is also evidence that health outcomes are better when the majority of health care financing comes through government – even when other health-promoting factors such as rising incomes are taken into account (Mackintosh and Koivusalo 2005).

Yet it is a huge challenge for governments in poor countries to live up to their duties, which include achieving the Millennium Development Goals in health (see Box 3). Chronic public sector failures must be corrected. Ministries of health must rebuild their dilapidated infrastructure, inspire their workforce and develop the information systems required for effective management. At the

same time, given the extensive privatization of health care, ways must be found to shape the private sector in the public interest and to block the worst forms of health care commercialization. In particular the development of separate private insurance schemes for the rich (which will eventually make them less willing to pay taxes into the public system) and the growth of profit-maximizing clinical practice should be curtailed (People's Health Movement, Global Equity Gauge Alliance and Medact 2005).

Box 3: Tough challenges – the Millennium Development Goals and health

World leaders at the UN Millennium Summit in the year 2000 agreed on eight Millennium Development Goals. Three goals are directly related to health – and all set highly ambitious targets.

- Goal 4: Child mortality rate to be cut by 66% from 1990 to 2015.
- Goal 5: Maternal mortality ratio to be reduced by 75% over the same period.
- Goal 6: Spread of HIV/AIDS, TB and malaria to be halted and begun to be reversed by 2015.

Some countries are on track to meet the targets, but most are not, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa. Other MDGs indirectly impact on health, most notably Goal 1 on reducing poverty, but there are no goals that directly relate to strengthening health systems.

Supporting health workers

There are critical shortages of health workers in 57 countries, especially in South and South-East Asia and sub-Saharan Africa (WHO 2006).

The need to deal with the problems facing health workers in poor nations has hit the headlines in recent years because of large-scale professional migration from developing to developed nations. Migration is symptomatic of the problems we have been describing in poor country health systems. Health workers who face low wages, poor working and living conditions, and limited prospects for further training and career advancement are attracted to work abroad.

International migration is not the only symptom of a human resource crisis. Within countries, health worker migration from public to private (including non-profit) health services also illustrates the pull of better pay and conditions and a crisis in the public sector. As pressures grow on those workers who remain in the public sector, patients report problems of abuse and bullying, as well as under-the-counter charging (Box 4). Such behaviour increases poor people's sense of vulnerability and powerlessness and they will seek health care less.

Box 4 Bad experiences of health care (World Bank and WHO 2002)

A young man from La Calera, Ecuador says: 'In the hospital they don't provide good care to the indigenous people like they ought to. Because of their illiteracy they treat them badly... they give us other medicines that are not for the health problem we have.'

A man from Tanzania says: 'We would rather treat ourselves than go to the hospital where an angry nurse might inject us with the wrong drug.' Elsewhere in Tanzania, men, women and young people say over and over again that they are treated 'worse than dogs'. Before they have a chance to describe their symptoms, they 'are yelled at, told they smell bad, and [that they are] lazy and good for nothing...'

Priorities for action on health systems**1 | More funding needed for government health systems in developing nations:**

Absolute lack of finance underlies so many problems in health services in poor countries that it has to be a top priority. Domestic governments should strive to meet the target of collecting at least 20% of GDP as public revenue and then allocating at least 15% of this to health. Additional targets might be needed to ensure that investments are made at district level and in primary health care services for the most needy (People's Health Movement, Global Equity Gauge Alliance and Medact 2005).

International donors should step up their funding for health care, and provide it in a predictable long-term way in line with recipient government priorities. Large amounts of funding for specific diseases should be avoided.

2 | Abolish user charges, move towards tax- or insurance-based funding:

User charges are the worst way of financing health care. More and more countries are reducing or getting rid of fees – increasing uptake by vulnerable groups as a result. Donor support can help countries realize this goal, and take incremental steps towards being able to finance more health care from tax or population-wide insurance schemes.

3 | Better pay, working conditions and prospects for health workers:

Reversing the brain drain will not be easy, but well-judged investments in improving terms and conditions for health workers can make a difference. Developed countries such as the UK and US, who import massive numbers of health workers and save their training costs, should step up their financial investments in health systems in developing countries as restitution for what they have received from poor countries. This money could be used to improve incentives to stay for health workers in those countries. Other forms of health system support could be considered, such as encouraging more developed country health professionals to work abroad, or twinning between rich and poor health professional associations (Mensah et al. 2005).

Governments, professional associations and trade unions can play a key role in monitoring standards, helping develop ethical norms and standards for provider behaviour, and supporting the ability of civil society groups to campaign on behalf of poor and vulnerable groups.

Conclusions

This lesson has shown that health systems can play an important part in addressing the social exclusion or structural violence experienced by the poor (Rowson 2007). Health systems do not just make people healthier; they provide them with an important sense of security, especially if they work well and are financed fairly. The agenda for rebuilding health systems presented here has wide support among NGOs, governments and international agencies, but this backing has not come with funds, as donors – despite their rhetoric – still prefer to fund interventions to tackle specific diseases. Neither have developing countries done everything in their power to revitalize their health services. It remains to be seen whether political will can be mobilized at national and international levels to change this.

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Glossary Course 4

Armed conflict:

Similar to violent conflict, but denoting conflicts where parties on both sides resort to the use of physical violence and weapons.

Assets:

Tangible and intangible goods, states of being and relationships on which people depend for survival.

Authoritarian rule:

Form of government characterised by strong state control over the population and an absence of free and fair elections etc.

Capability approach:

The capability approach to poverty was first outlined by the economist Amartya Sen. It focuses on whether people have the capability to “live valuable and valued lives”. Core capabilities would include the ability to have a long life, to be educated or to have political freedom. It goes beyond income/consumption approaches to poverty by emphasising these “non-material” factors which enrich people’s lives.

Civil society:

The United Nations defines civil society as “associations of citizens (outside their families, friends and businesses) entered into voluntarily to advance their interests, ideas and ideologies. The term does not include profit-making activity (the private sector) or governing (the public sector)”.

Civil society might therefore include labour unions, faith-based groups, business and professional associations, academic and research institutions, human rights networks, consumer rights coalitions, social movements, social and sports clubs, philanthropic foundations, and other forms of ‘associational life’.

Collective violence:

Violence committed by larger groups of individuals or by states.

Conflict:

Perception of incompatible goals in a goal-seeking system. Conflict is not necessarily violent. In fact, parties who have incompatible goals may deal with them in productive and non-violent ways.

Democracy:

Form of government characterised by elections, majority rule, representation in parliamentary bodies, the rule of law.

Developed / Developing:

The terms developing and developed country refer to a state whose citizens have a low or high level of income and economic well-being. However, there is no internationally accepted definition of the term. The term developing countries is roughly equivalent to the World Bank’s

classification of low- and middle-income countries, and the term developed to the World Bank's classification of high-income countries. See <http://data.worldbank.org/about/country-classifications>.

Development:

Alan Thomas says that the term development is commonly used in three ways: as a vision of how we would like the world to be; to describe a process of historical change; and to mean the actual interventions of governments, international agencies and others make to bring development about.

Direct violence:

A deliberate act or omission, acute or chronic, causing a reduction in the physical, mental or social potential of beings (J. Galtung).

Ethnic security dilemma:

This describes a tendency – in situations where security is deteriorating dramatically – for ethnic groups to defend themselves in a way which threatens other ethnic groups.

Ethnicity:

The Office of National Statistics in the UK describes ethnicity as “a multi-faceted concept covering many different aspects of identity, including racial group, skin colour, country of birth and parental country of birth, language spoken at home, religion and nationality”. However a person's ethnicity can be often defined (by themselves and others) differently, and (subjective and objective) definitions change over time. It is a complex concept that is difficult to measure.

Health system:

The World Health Organisation defines a health system as “all the activities whose primary purpose is to promote, restore or maintain health”. The functions of a health system have been defined in a more detailed way by Maureen Mackintosh and Meri Koivusalo. At the core are health services, but these are complemented by public health functions (surveillance, prevention, cross-sectoral action and emergency preparedness); systems for training the people needed to staff the system (medical and nursing schools etc); and policy, ethical and regulatory decision-making bodies which direct the health systems and the people in them.

Health:

The World Health Organisation defines health as “a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity”.

Horizontal inequalities:

The economist Frances Stewart has described these as inequalities between culturally-defined groups of people.

Human Development Index (HDI):

The HDI is used by the United Nations Development Programme's annual Human Development Report to rank nations according to a combination of their per capita income, educational attainment and life expectancy. The ranking is based on the capability approach pioneered by the economist Amartya Sen and tries to get away from ranking countries solely according to their wealth.

Human Security:

The Canadian government defines human security as "freedom from pervasive threats to people's rights, safety and lives." Human security includes economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, personal (physical) security, community security, and political security.

Humanitarian aid:

Aid which is concerned with or seeking to promote human welfare.

Independence:

In the context of humanitarian aid this has been defined by Joanna Macrae as the 'endeavour not to act as instruments of government foreign policy'.

Inequality:

Inequalities represent disparities in income, health, education, ownership of land, access to power and so on. Some inequalities are unavoidable: not all of us have the genetic make-up that will help us run the 100 metres as fast as Olympic sprinters. But many inequalities, such as those listed above, can be avoided. These avoidable inequalities are sometimes called inequities.

Inequity:

Inequities are inequalities that can be avoided through directed human action, most notably the application of government policy.

Life expectancy:

Life expectancy is a measure of length of survival. Often expressed as an average of populations or population sub-groups, it can be calculated at birth or at any age up from birth (for example, life expectancy at age 30) to show average length of life remaining.

Maternal mortality rate:

The number of deaths of women in childbirth or pregnancy per 100,000 women of reproductive age over a period of a year.

Maternal mortality ratio:

The ratio of maternal deaths to child births.

Migrant:

A migrant is 'any person who lives temporarily or permanently in a country where he or she was not born, and has acquired some significant social ties to this country' (UNESCO).

Millennium Development Goals:

The eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were agreed at the United Nations Millennium Summit in September 2000 and nearly 190 countries have subsequently signed up to them. They set targets related to poverty, health, education, hunger and other key development issues that countries – assisted by international aid agencies – should achieve by 2015.

Mortality:

Mortality means death. Measures of rates of mortality such as life expectancy and infant mortality can be used, among other measures, to help understand the health of a population.

Peace:

Not merely the absence of violence, but a state of mutual beneficial relationships, fair structures, and a culture of peace. Peace is also a capacity to handle conflicts with empathy, creativity and by non-violent means (J. Galtung).

Poverty:

Poverty has many dimensions. It can include lack of income and material goods, as well as lack of the things that we all have reason to value, such as the ability to lead a healthy life, be educated, to have political or spiritual liberty. The World Bank has set an international poverty line at about US\$1 per day. The 1.2 billion people who live below this line are said to be in a state of “absolute poverty”, in other words “a condition of life so characterised by malnutrition, illiteracy and disease as to be beneath any reasonable definition of human decency” (World Bank). But poverty is also a relative concept: all societies - at different levels of economic and social development – have different standards for what constitutes living in poverty.

Protection:

In the context of humanitarian aid this refers to the protection efforts of humanitarian agencies in conflict areas (but not including physical armed protection).

For humanitarian agencies, protection refers to ‘all activities aimed at obtaining full respect for the rights of the individual in accordance with the letter and the spirit of the relevant bodies of law (i.e. human rights law, international humanitarian law and refugee law)’ (Inter-agency Standing Committee 1999).

Reconciliation:

Repair of broken relationships and the restoration of peaceful relationships.

Second world war:

Armed conflict beginning in September 1939 with the invasion of Poland by Nazi Germany (although Japan had invaded China in 1937). It became a ‘world war’ in a truer sense in 1941 after the bombardment of Pearl Harbour by the Japanese and the consequent declaration of war by the US on Japan and Germany. Although in terms of the percentage of soldiers killed it was a less bloody war than the first world war, the total sum of the dead – approximately 40 million – was devastating. For the first time in history in a major war the civilian dead outnumbered those within the fighting forces. The war is also infamous for Nazi Germany’s medical experiments on human beings, and its sterilisation and so-called ‘euthanasia’ programmes.

Social contract:

Tony Addison and Mansoob Murshed have described the social contract as “the set of rules, formal and informal, that guide the behaviour of citizens, entrepreneurs and governments and allow conflict to be expressed and resolved peacefully rather than violently”.

Structural violence:

Structural violence refers to socio-economic and political processes which violate basic human needs (J. Galtung).

Third World:

The term “Third World” countries originated during the cold war and was first used to describe countries which took a neutral position in the conflict between the “First World” (USA and allies) and the “Second World” (Soviet Union and allies). Later the term was mainly used to describe economically less developed countries of the southern hemisphere. In regard of the strong differences between the described countries the term it is not commonly used as a political or social concept anymore.

Violence:

Unnecessary insult of basic human needs (J. Galtung).

Violent conflict:

The use of physical and psychological force or power to ‘solve’ a conflict.

War:

Extreme form of violence. Used as a means to solve conflicts between nation states, or between groups within a nation state (civil war).

World Bank:

From the World Bank website: “The World Bank is a vital source of financial and technical assistance to developing countries around the world. [...] We are not a bank in the common sense; we are made up of two unique development institutions owned by 187 member countries: the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) and the International Development Association (IDA). [...] The IBRD aims to reduce poverty in middle-income and creditworthy poorer countries, while IDA focuses on the world’s poorest countries. [...] Together, we provide low-interest loans, interest-free credit and grants to developing countries for a wide array of purposes that include investments in education, health, public administration, infrastructure, financial and private sector development, agriculture and environmental and natural resource management.”