

# Global Transformations and New Conflicts

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## **1 Introduction: The Altered Global Character of Violent Conflicts**

This article argues that the source of most contemporary violent conflicts is the profound erosion of the legitimacy of political authority, which is in part the heritage of authoritarianism and of the failure of earlier emancipatory projects, and is linked in turn to the impact of globalisation. Thus an important component of what is new about such conflicts since the end of the Cold War is their altered global character. They have certain distinctive features, although their evolution can be traced through earlier conflicts, particularly the struggles for national liberation in the 1960s and 1970s and the 'low intensity' warfare of the 1980s. To some extent, this reflects a change of perception after the end of the Cold War. During the latter, the East-West conflict in Europe dominated the way war was perceived, at least by the major powers. Armed conflicts, which took place outside the main theatre of imagined war, were either invisible or interpreted through the lens of the Cold War paradigm.

In one sense, it could be argued that, once the veil of the Cold War was lifted, it was possible to focus attention and to reorder priorities so as to address directly the character of these wars. Certainly, there has been an explosion of international concern and interest by international agencies like the World Bank, United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), non-governmental organisations (NGOs) like Médecins Sans Frontières, International Alert or Human Rights Watch, and global think-tanks like the International Crisis Group or the Carnegie Endowment for Peace, as well as by the global media. This is reflected in the new discourse of humanitarianism – the growing international concerns with human rights, peacekeeping, complex political emergencies, etc.

But this change of perception was in itself a reflection of the changing world and indeed has contributed to certain new features of the conflicts of the 1990s. It is often stated that nowadays conflicts are 'civil' or 'internal'. These terms seem inappropriate to describe the new conflicts, not simply because they spill over borders, but because they derive from a nation-state-centred view of the world which does not

easily fit the current conjuncture. Although the conflicts are often localised, as indeed are all wars since fighting has to take place somewhere, they involve a global array of actors, as well as major powers and international agencies, diaspora groups, foreign arms salesmen, mercenaries, various underground criminal networks, and neighbouring states.

Global and regional interconnectedness has not only influenced the genesis of the conflicts but also deeply affects their dynamics. Of course, it was always true that conflicts all over the world involved outside actors; what has changed is the way in which global links are more rapid and pervasive so that the term 'outsider' is perhaps no longer even relevant. Even where in remote areas no direct international presence can be observed, as, for example, in the mountain areas of Afghanistan or Sudan, it can nevertheless be argued that the escalation of the conflict has to be understood at least in part in terms of the impact of global processes.

As we shall argue, two aspects of the end of the Cold War were particularly important in shaping conflicts. One was the loss of whatever legitimacy remained to populist projects around ideas of socialism or non-alignment, thus undermining cohesive ideas, which helped to sustain state authority. The other was the dismantling of Cold War apparatus, particularly but not only in Eastern Europe, flooding the 'market' with surplus weapons and redundant soldiers.

Though we contend that recent conflicts are 'new' (Kaldor 1999) or, as others have put it, 'post-modern' (Duffield 1998) – not only chronologically, but also substantively distinct – it does not follow that they all have identical characteristics. They have been moulded by common global processes, yet their relationships to the latter differ, and give rise to certain important variations between conflicts, which we do not have the space to explore here (but see Cliffe and Luckham 1999 for an attempt to spell out some of these differences). Some of these variations flow from globalisation itself – the contradictory process of growing global interconnectedness, involving integration and fragmentation, homogeneity and diversity, inclusion and exclusion.

## 2 Genesis I: Delegitimated Authority in the Context of Globalisation

Some commentators have described the new conflicts as the 'New Barbarism' – a kind of Hobbesian anarchy or reversion to some imagined state of nature (Kaplan 1994; van Creveld 1991). Others have suggested that their main rationale is economic; in an environment of high unemployment, inequality and resource depletion, it is suggested that loot, pillage, and unequal terms of trade are the motives for violence (Keen 1998; Duffield 1994). While it is true that contemporary war in many ways resembles and indeed often involves organised crime, i.e. violence for private gain, by and large the new conflicts are struggles for power. By this we mean struggles for control over or access to the state, even as the state itself is being marginalised by globalisation. The violent nature of these struggles implies, *a priori*, a breakdown in or the non-existence of democratic forms of governance.

We argue that democratisation is an answer to this type of conflict in both a procedural and substantive sense. That is to say, democracy is both an alternative procedure for managing conflict and a more inclusive political demand to be counterpoised to the demands of the conflicting parties. Without a widespread popular commitment to democratic rules and norms, both prevention and resolution face grave obstacles. This argument is not obvious. Many of the conflicts of the 1990s have developed during the transition from authoritarian to democratic forms of governance. Indeed, the fragile and unstable character of the democratisation process may actually give rise to new conflicts (Stewart and O'Sullivan 1999). This has led some policymakers to suggest that the emphasis on democratisation in the early 1990s was misplaced. Examples like China or Uganda, they argue, seem to show that greater or lesser restrictions on freedom may make possible needed economic reforms and lay the conditions for a more stable democratisation process in the future. We reject this argument.

The fundamental causes of conflicts are to be found in the heritage of authoritarianism and repressive political culture. In particular, the conflicts which emerged during the 1990s, stemmed from a crisis of

state authority, a profound loss of legitimacy that became apparent in the post-colonial states in the 1970s and 1980s and in the post-Communist states only after 1989. Part of the story of that crisis is the failure or exhaustion of populist emancipatory projects such as socialism or national liberation, often implemented within an authoritarian framework. But this failure cannot be disentangled from the impact of growing global interconnectedness. On the one hand, it became impossible to insulate these populist projects from the outside world, to sustain experiments in a closed society. On the other hand, disaffection with the consequences of those projects – authoritarianism, unfulfilled promises, etc. – contributed to an opening up of societies and a speeding up of globalisation.

Much has been written about the erosion of state autonomy in the context of globalisation, though much of the literature refers to advanced industrial countries (Held 1995, 1999). The crisis of state authority in the South and the East could be viewed as an extreme manifestation of this process of erosion of state autonomy. One aspect of this process is of particular importance and that is the way in which the monopoly of legitimate organised violence, which Weber considered to be the definition of the state, starts to break down. Norbert Elias described the monopoly of organised violence as a 'socio-technical invention of the human species', which laid the basis for the 'relatively peaceful collective life of large masses of people' (Elias 1987: 180). In other words, what he called the 'civilising process' – the removal of violence from the everyday life within states – was to be explained by the concentration of the means of violence in the hands of the state. This domestic 'civilising process' was contrasted with international relations, where the rule of force prevails. This contrast between domestic civility and international anarchy has been one of the defining features of an international society ordered by nation-states. This is why internal conflicts are described as 'civil', even though they be anything but civil in their conduct.

For Elias, the monopoly of organised violence was inextricably linked to the concentration of taxation in the hands of the state, what he called the fiscal monopoly. 'The society of what we call the modern age is characterised, above all in the West, by a

certain level of monopolisation. Free use of weapons is denied the individual and reserved for a central authority of whatever kind, and, likewise, the taxation of property or income of individuals is concentrated in the hands of a central social authority. The financial means thus flowing into this central authority maintains its monopoly of force, while this, in turn maintains the monopoly of taxation. Neither has in any sense precedence over the other; they are two sides of the same monopoly.' (Elias 1982: 104)

A crucial point about this monopoly process was the balance between the interests of the ruler (private) and the interests of the members of what Elias called 'state-regulated society' (public). The shift from a private to a public monopoly, from absolutism to the nation-state, was part of the process of state-building and of concentrating the means of violence and of taxation; for it required a complex and specialised administrative apparatus and social interdependence, that in turn, restricted the power of the ruler. Thus, at least in the West, the 'civilising process' required a sharp distinction between internal and external and between public and private. From this also followed the strict distinction between the soldier and policeman as legitimate bearers of arms, 'who were held in high esteem' (Elias 1982: 104) and the criminal (violence for private gain) and terrorist, rebel or insurrectionist (non-state violence for political ends).

The 'civilising process' was never complete even in the West; indeed, of its nature, it is a process that has to be continually reproduced. As Bauman pointed out in his seminal book *Modernity and the Holocaust*, the Holocaust itself was evidence that the Hobbesian world had 'not been fully chained' (Bauman 1989). But it was even less complete in the South and East. Administrative apparatuses were established by colonial administrations, which concentrated and centralised the means of violence and the means of taxation but, in the former colonial empires, the civilising process did not extend much beyond an urban-based Europeanised elite. In Africa, as Mamdani (1996) explains, the colonial empires introduced what was known as 'differentiation' between European and native authorities. European authority, which was urban-based, derived from civil law and the language of

individual rights. Native authority derived from customary law, which was reinvented by Europeans together with selected traditional rulers, using the language of community or tribe and maintaining a variety of authoritarian and coercive practises, which subverted liberal institutions in colonial and post-colonial states. Likewise, in Latin America, even after independence, Koonings and Kruijt argue, the progress and liberalism of the elite, the 'adherence to European civility' was founded on a 'logic of exclusion', on coercion, clientilism, and forced labour in the rural areas and repression in the towns. 'There was iron-clad civility for the privileged few, and violence against the underprivileged masses was a routine affair.' (Koonings and Kruijt 1999: 7). In Eastern Europe, the Russian and Ottoman empires retained their absolutist features, in which power was centralised and concentrated, but the balance between public and private was never fully resolved. Authority depended on coercive and repressive practises based on communitarian forms of social organisation, in which, as in the other colonial empires, violence was a part of everyday life.

The post-colonial and Communist states, which succeeded the empires, can be viewed as another stage in the state-building process, an attempt to extend the ownership of the state beyond the privileged few, at least in theory, and to build further the administrative apparatus of the state and the concentration of means of violence and taxation, although this was largely undertaken from above. Democratic forms prevailed during decolonisation, yet many post-colonial states experienced periods of military rule, violence and repression. Some states were dominated by or, in the case of Communist states, monopolised by, single parties, in which independent organisations for youth, labour or women were incorporated. Civil society was weak, and in the case of Communist states more or less non-existent. Despite populist ideologies of socialism and anti-colonialism, political culture was paternalistic, authoritarian and shored up by the cult of leadership.

What is new about the crisis of state authority in the 1980s and 1990s is not simply the uncompleted character of the 'civilising process' but, rather, something that could be described as its opposite: the unravelling of the process. The combination of

globalisation and privatisation can give rise to transformations that are almost the reverse of the process through which modern states and national economies were constructed. The more extreme cases, especially those involving armed conflicts, are often characterised in terms of state 'decay' or 'collapse' (Zartman 1995). This, however, does not capture fully the complexity of situations in which states do not so much disappear, as 'work' in ways that no longer seem to conform with international norms and practices of statehood (Chabal and Daloz 1999).

In this process of state unravelling, the monopoly of violence and taxation becomes eroded and the balance between public and private and internal and external starts to shift. The balance between public and private changes as a consequence of the legacy of authoritarianism, the longevity of ruling groups or the failure of populist projects. In particular, centralised economic systems often tend to generate shortages of resources, which are rationed according to privileged and personalistic networks. The terms neo-patrimonialism or prebendalism are often used to describe the privatisation of the state, the function of the state as a private instrument of the ruler rather than a public instrument for managing society (Jackson and Rosberg 1982). Those with access to state power gain certain privileges in a situation of scarcity, including access to international institutions. A position in the government becomes a source of patronage rather than a way of carrying out particular policies. Increasingly, the state loses its claim to sovereignty, in the sense of being responsible for governing society. Rather it becomes a dominant, often exclusive, organisation with certain significant advantages, most notably international recognition.

In Africa, this tendency has been noted by many scholars, and terms like quasi-state or shadow state (Reno 1998, 1995; Jackson 1990; Hibou 1997) have been introduced as a way of describing the institutions, which are recognised as states but operate as personalised apparatuses of power. But it has been no less important in Eastern Europe. In Bosnia or the Southern Caucasus, the last years of Communism witnessed the development of exclusive networks of party leaders, enterprise managers and security services who made links

with murky members of a newly emerging criminal or semi-criminal underground.

Nevertheless, it should be stressed that the impact of globalisation and privatisation is Janus-faced. Privatisation breaks down authoritarian tendencies. Globalisation can bring positive external pressures for reform, particularly democratisation. On the one hand, external donors and outside powers have pressured governments to introduce political reform as a precondition of economic reform, to reduce corruption, increase respect for human rights, and introduce democratic institutions. On the other hand, support from outside powers and international NGOs for civil society has helped to strengthen domestic pressures for democratisation.

Yet it can be argued that it is in those situations where domestic pressures for reform are weak that the opening up of the state both to the outside world and to increased participation through the democratisation process is most dangerous. In a number of countries, as we have argued elsewhere (Luckham, Goetz and Kaldor 2000), the process of democratisation is largely confined to elections. Many of the essential prerequisites of democratic procedures – rule of law, separation of powers, freedom of association and of expression – are not in place. And even where procedures are more or less in place, decades of authoritarianism may have left the political culture vulnerable to populist ideologies based on the appeal to various forms of exclusive prejudices. Terms like virtual democracy, semi-democracy, or choiceless democracy have been used to describe societies characterised by elected authoritarian leaders.

### **3 Genesis II: Globalisation, Privatisation and the Contradictions of Development**

Growing interconnectedness at the economic and social as well as political levels has shifted the balance between internal and external, and that between public and private. Dependence on international donors and foreign investors has tended to restrict economic and social policy choices and negotiations with the representatives of international institutions to bypass the domestic legislative process. Increasing insertion in global political processes through summits and other

kinds of links at lower levels of policy-making has tended to alter the relative influence of domestic and international constituencies. The old model of a strong, proactive 'developmental state' (Robinson and White 1998), promoting investment and growth within national economies, has been a chimera in all but a handful of newly industrialising countries (and even the latter were severely shaken by the East Asian economic crisis of the late 1990s).

Expanding transnational networks at a societal level have similar consequences. These can range from non-governmental aid, which bypasses the state, to the growing political and economic influence of diasporas (e.g. workers sending remittances from abroad, or lobby groups in advanced industrial countries), or to transnational criminal networks linked up to a growing black or grey economy. Finally, access to global electronic media can increase the distance between those who have access to internet and satellite television and those who do not; it can offer new opportunities to educated young people but also increase the sense of exclusion and frustration.

This combination of privatisation and globalisation has tended to be associated with corruption and clientilism. The latter in turn tend to erode the tax revenue base because of declining legitimacy and growing incapacity to collect tax and because of declining investment (both public and private) and, consequently, production, reinforcing the dependence on external sources of funding. Reductions in public expenditure, as a result of the shrinking fiscal base as well as pressures from external donors for macro-economic stabilisation and liberalisation (which also may reduce export revenues), further erode legitimacy.

In such a context, a growing informal economy along with increased inequalities, unemployment and rural–urban migration, combined with the loss of legitimacy, weakens the rule of law and may lead to the re-emergence of privatised forms of violence, organised crime and the substitution of 'protection' for taxation, vigilantes, private security guards protecting economic facilities – especially international companies – and paramilitary groups associated with particular political factions. In particular, reductions in security expenditure, often

encouraged by external donors for the best of motives, may lead to break away groups of redundant soldiers and policemen seeking alternative employment.

In sum, the conflicts of the 1990s have reflected the maladies of global and national development. Many writers stress the economic factors that contribute to conflicts – factors, which are often exacerbated by global interconnectedness (Fitzgerald 1999; Woodward 1996). Some have used the terms ‘structural violence’ (Galtung 1976) or ‘silent violence’ to refer to various forms of physical insecurity arising from impoverishment and human misery. Horizontal inequalities between groups, the frustrations of young unemployed people, relative deprivation and unfulfilled expectations, the depletion of resources providing a livelihood have all been cited as ‘root causes’ of conflict, associated with failures of development policy (Stewart 2000). Nevertheless, silent violence does not always turn into open physical violence. There are many poor countries that have not experienced conflict, as well as conflict-torn countries that have been relatively well off.

Some recent analyses, therefore, give more stress to the economic factors which provide the incentives for (usually) men to arm themselves and fight: ‘greed’ rather than ‘grievance’ in the parlance of recent debates (Collier and Hoeffler 2000; Berdal and Malone 2000) propels contemporary conflicts. As Fairhead (2000: 151) hypothesises, ‘conflicts are less generated by resource poverty than by resource wealth’. Indeed, struggles to appropriate natural resource rents have been central in conflicts such as those in Angola (oil and diamonds), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (diamonds and other minerals), Liberia (timber, rubber and diamonds), Sierra Leone (diamonds), Indonesia (oil), Azerbaijan (oil) and Colombia (oil and drugs). Yet in none of these countries can it be said that the conflicts originated only or even mainly from struggles over resources. Their sources were much more complex, although resource rents undoubtedly increased the stakes and shaped the subsequent course of the conflicts.

Indeed, in our view greed and grievance are complementary rather than competing explanations, and neither can be considered

separately from the state’s loss of legitimacy and capacity to manage development. Resource-rich countries often experience what Karl (1999) terms ‘the paradox of plenty’: extremes of wealth alongside continuing poverty and immiseration; private accumulation and public squalor; the diversion of resources to arms spending and other non-productive expenditures; swelling debt burdens and economic stagnation; large-scale corruption and clientilism; centralisation of power, yet declining state effectiveness; and the absence or weakening of democratic accountability. Such conditions add to the incentives for elites to use violence to appropriate power; whilst at the same time fuelling the rage and frustration of the poor and socially marginalised.

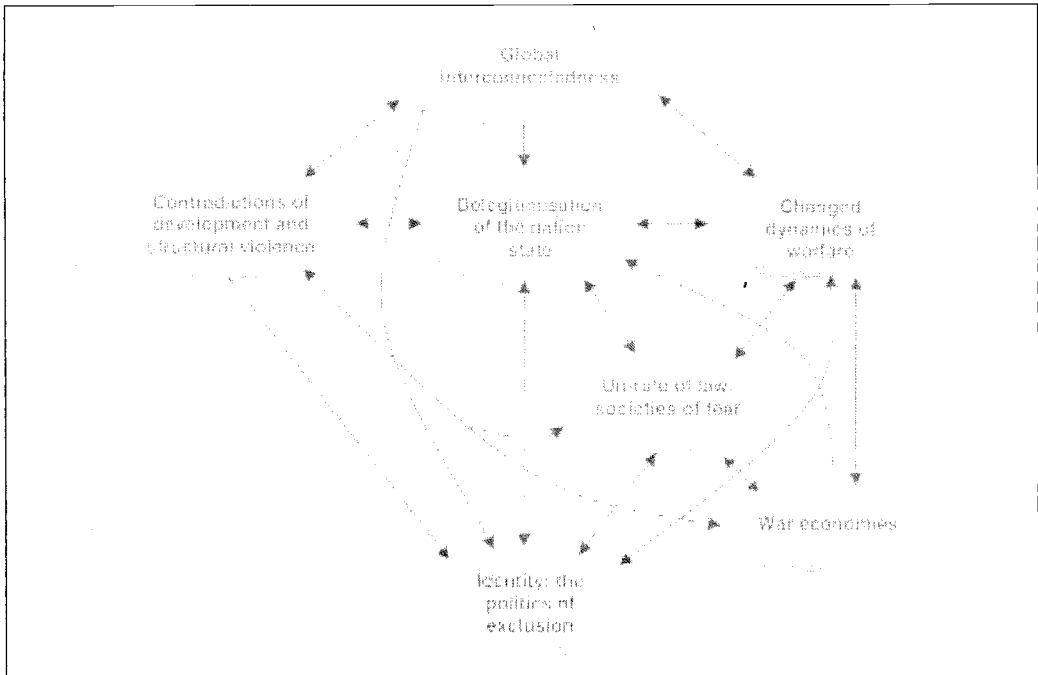
But in both resource-rich countries and in those trapped in cycles of poverty alike, it is state’s loss of accountability and legitimacy, and its inability to respond to the concerns of the poor, underemployed and minorities that feed conflict – along with its failure to halt the privatisation and informalisation of violence. Moreover, as we will argue below, this ‘uncivilising process’ tends to be reinforced by the dynamics of the conflicts themselves, which have the effect of further reordering political, economic and social relationships in a negative spiral of incivility. Figure 1 provides a stylised conceptual map of these relationships generating and sustaining conflicts.

#### **4 Genesis III and Dynamics I: Identity: the Politics of Exclusion**

Most new conflicts could be said to be procedural rather than substantive. This is not to say that there are no substantive grievances. Rather we mean that the conflicts are about access to state power and the opportunities for personal enrichment, jobs and status which derive from state power. Here we may note an apparent paradox: that despite the decreasing relevance and viability of the state in the globalised context, the majority of violent conflicts continue to be waged to secure or retain control of the state.

For as the state becomes privatised, that is to say, it shifts from being the main organisation for societal regulation towards an instrument for the extraction of resources by the ruler and his (and it is almost

Figure 1: Genesis and Dynamics of Conflict



always 'his') privileged networks, so access to state power becomes a matter of inclusion or exclusion, even, in the latter case, of survival. This also explains what Christopher Clapham (1996: 239) calls the 'sense of *ownership* of the state' in post-conflict situations – even in the guerrilla wars he describes, where the protagonists took up arms for substantive goals like social justice or national liberation. The right to a position in the state is justified not in programmatic terms or in terms of ability but with reference to participation in the 'struggle'. In today's Kosovo, for example, political competition is based not on different policy choices, but on the differing role played by the various parties in the campaign for independence. A position in the state is a 'reward' rather than an opportunity to improve society.

The political actors in the conflicts are both states and political groups – minorities, rebels, secessionists, and insurgents – who are struggling to improve their access to the state or to establish a breakaway state. As the administrative apparatus and the legitimacy of the state are eroded, so the difference between the state and so-called insurgent

groups narrows. The rival political groupings will generally put emphasis on alternative forms of legitimation, often based on markers of racial, ethnic, linguistic or religious identity. Thus political and military mobilisation tends to be based on identity, and conflicts to involve demands for secession, power-sharing or redistribution based on identity.

The majority of current conflicts are, in this sense, identity conflicts. Yet not all multi-ethnic states have succumbed to violence: many, like Tanzania, Malaysia or the Ukraine, have found ways of accommodating differences through non-violent political processes. Nor has all violent conflict stemmed from the hegemonic projects of dominant groups, or from discrimination against minorities. (These points are elaborated further in Luckham, Goetz and Kaldor 2000: 45–53). Even where there are substantive grievances about language rights, for example, or discrimination in the allocation of resources, the key demands usually are about privileged access to state power. It is a preoccupation or priority for political status rather than the concerns of everyday life. Thus, Kurds in

Turkey are fighting for autonomy for Southeast Turkey, and not only for language rights or other forms of cultural recognition. The Kosovar Albanians wanted the status of a republic and later independence; concerns about human rights violations and discrimination in education or employment were subsidiary. The turning point in the struggles of the Tamils in Sri Lanka was when they began to demand an independent Tamil Eelam.

These preoccupations with status make use of the language of international law. The principle of territorial integrity is counterpoised against the principle of self-determination. These abstract arguments usually take precedence over issues of tolerance, individual rights, economic and social well-being.

We take the view that these identity-based conflicts are politically constituted in the sense that they are constructed or accentuated for purposes of political mobilisation. They make use of pre-existing cleavages based on tribe or nation or religious community that have often been accentuated by various practises during the previous decades. Thus in Eastern Europe, communitarian forms of social organisation based on religious communities that were later fused with the concept of nation characterised both the Ottoman and Russian empires. In the Communist period, the idea of nation was kept alive both by administrative arrangements, based on titular nationalities, as well as population censuses categorised by nation and identity cards. And in the last decades of Communism, the deliberate fostering of national sentiment was used both to bid for resources by regional bosses and as a way of rationing resources. Something similar took place in Africa, where the concept of tribe was reconstructed by the colonial empires as a basis for indirect rule through native authorities and later, in the post-colonial period, exploited by authoritarian leaders as the inclusive anti-colonial project began to lose its appeal.

This re-emergence of ethnicity from above was often linked to a parallel process from below. The growing informal economy is often organised around ethnic networks, both in the cities of the North and in the South and East (Sassen 1998). Both in Africa and Eastern Europe, ethnic identity

was initially strongest in the countryside; towns were often secular and cosmopolitan. Yet the explosion of urban populations as rural sources of income are depleted has often led to a new ethnicisation within the towns, as people from the same families, clans or ethnic groups provide informal safety nets. In addition, informal networks for smuggling, money-laundering, and other forms of semi-legal or illegal trading are often based on ethnicity. In a sense, it could be said that it is the politicisation of the various clientilistic links between the political class and the new informal economy that provides the basis for mobilisation based on identity. Koonings and Kruijt (1999) offer a similar analysis of the basis of populism in Latin America in the informalisation of politics.

Identity-based conflicts or conflicts based on forms of exclusion are deliberately fostered through contemporary techniques, especially the electronic media, and, indeed, war itself. Constructions of the past are developed and disseminated through radio, videos and television. Thus hate radio was of key importance in Rwanda. In Serbia, people were continually reminded of the injustices of the past – the defeat of the Serbs by the Turks in 1389 and the fascist Croat treatment of Serbs during the Second World War. In societies accustomed to a dominant collectivist ideology and with little experience of contestation, ethnicity, with its we-them connotations, represents a suitable vehicle. The effect of television and radio in speeding up mobilisation, especially in the countryside or among newly arrived urban migrants who do not have the reading habit, should not be underestimated. There is an important contrast here with nineteenth century ‘imagined communities’ which were propagated through the print media and involved the intellectual classes. The more populist electronic media are designed to appeal primarily to the least educated members of the public. In general, it is states that control the radio and television. But non-state groups can make use of other forms of media, such as diaspora broadcasts through satellite television, which were important in Kosovo, the circulation of videos, or local radio in areas under political control.

Likewise, as we argue in the next section, war itself is a form of mobilisation creating or reinforcing ‘fear and hate’. Whether or not substantive grievances



propel the early stages of a conflict, the experience of violence and counter-violence usually has a dramatically polarising effect and displaces substantive concerns with the need for identity-based survival. Some of the most violent conflicts have occurred between groups with relatively minor cultural differences and past histories of inter-communal cooperation, as in Bosnia, Rwanda or Somalia (the latter was once held to be the only country in sub-Saharan Africa where there was little risk of inter-communal conflict because of the ethnic, linguistic and religious homogeneity of its population). Ignatieff (1999) terms this the 'narcissism of difference', i.e. the tendency, of even the most insignificant markers of cultural difference to assume exaggerated importance in situations of conflict.

Identity has to be contrasted with ideology. Identity politics is about labels – and the right to political power and personal security on the basis of labels. In one sense, all wars involve identity. But in earlier conflicts, identities tended to be linked to geo-political interest or to ideas about how society should be organised, often based on nostalgic representations of the past. In the seventeenth century, for example, religious conflicts were about breaking the power of the Church and the role of individual. Indeed, nineteenth-century European or twentieth-century post-colonial national movements were about nation-building – establishing a framework for development and democracy. Nations were consciously constructed on the basis of ethnically mixed populations. The concept of Britain, for example, or Italy (where only 10 per cent of the population spoke Italian at the time of independence), or of Nigeria or India constituted attempts to integrate society and could be compared with contemporary efforts to construct a concept of Europe.

In contrast, the current preoccupation with identity is often fragmentative. Conflicts about religious identity in places like Northern Ireland, India or Bosnia are about the rights of different religious communities, of people with different labels, to political power; and there is no attempt at conversions. One partial though important exception is wars about Islam. Said Said (1997) distinguishes between missionary wars – where the aim is the establishment of an Islamic state and the

introduction of Islamic rules governing society – and conflicts involving Islam as an identity, as in Bosnia, for example, or India. Missionary wars could be said to be substantive, while identity wars are about procedures, about access to state power. Another important new aspect of these reconstituted identities is their global character. Improved travel and communication has enabled the development of global networks, which are often based on ethnicity. In many of the new conflicts, there is an important diaspora influence. While the goals are about territorially-based political entities, the politics involves not only the virtuality of media representations but also the fantasies of people living abroad, who left in different periods and who often have a disproportionate influence as a consequence of wealth, size or skills. In the war in Bosnia, many workers in Germany joined the fighting at weekends. For these weekend fighters, war was an adventure, like taking part in a play or film that could be abandoned at will, not an enforced everyday experience. In a sense, Zionism, both in its exclusive claims and in the powerful impact of the diaspora, anticipated some of the features of contemporary identity politics.

Not all conflicts are equally much about identity, of course; and identity politics may be linked in a variety of ways with the maladies of development analysed earlier. Richards depicts the origins of the conflict in Sierra Leone in terms of the 'intellectual anger of an excluded educated elite', who have been able to mobilise a 'large pool of modernised rural-based youth with few prospects of continuing education and progressive employment through established channels' (1996: 27–8); although since then the warfare has been defined more and more by struggles to appropriate the country's natural resources, in particular diamonds. Several state and non-state armed formations have joined the fray, some, like the ethnic militias, mobilised around communal identities, others not (Ero 2000). In a sense, the warfare in Sierra Leone, because it is less obscured than some other conflicts by questions of identity and self-determination, exposes the raw nature of procedural conflicts that emanate from delegitimised predatory states.

Moreover, there are sometimes parties to the conflicts commonly characterised as identity

conflicts, which mobilise around demands for reform as a counter to more exclusive forms of political mobilisation. These parties may have substantive demands and represent an effort to reverse the tendencies towards patrimonialism. Examples might include the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) in Rwanda, whose declared goal was to build a democratic polity based on a multi-ethnic Rwandan national identity (even though its efforts to do so have been hamstrung, both because the RPF is perceived as being dominated by Tutsis, and because Hutu militias remain a threat both to the RPF Government and to both Tutsis and Hutus cooperating with it).

## 5 Dynamics II: Changed Modes of Warfare

An important feature of many new conflicts is the way in which wars are fought. Indeed, these conflicts are very different from what we are accustomed to define as warfare: that is, conflicts between military forces, generally in uniform, who are trained in the rules of warfare according to which civilian casualties should be minimised and where the decisive encounter is the battle between opposing forces. Of course, it can be argued that outside Europe and the Far East, wars were never quite like that. But even in revolutionary or national liberation struggles, the participants generally saw themselves as soldiers operating within the rules of warfare.<sup>1</sup>

There are two striking features of the new conflicts. One is the fact, noted by many observers and prompting some to describe these as 'privatised' wars, of the variety of actors engaged in violence, often only loosely coordinated. In place of the vertical hierarchies typical of war in the modern period are horizontal networks of decentralised fighting groups, sometimes with distinctive dress and sometimes not, both local and international. The second is the fact that most violence is directed against civilians. The ratio of civilian to military casualties has risen dramatically, even during the 1990s. Whereas at the turn of the century, the ratio of military casualties to civilian casualties in wars was 8:1, this ratio has been exactly reversed. Today, the ratio of military casualties to civilian casualties is 1:8 (Kaldor and Vashee 1997). There has also been an explosion in the scale of population

displacement, which, as we argue, is no longer a side effect of war but a deliberate strategy. According to one estimate, the number of refugees and displaced persons increased from around 300,000 per conflict in 1969 to 1.3 million per conflict in 1992 (Wiener 1996), and those numbers have increased further during the 1990s. We still call these conflicts wars, but they could equally well be characterised as massive organised violations of human rights.

The new conflicts borrow from guerrilla warfare the notion of controlling territory through political rather than military means and of avoiding direct engagement with the enemy. But political control depends on getting rid of all possible opponents. Since it is difficult to distinguish combatants from non-combatants, this produces large-scale population displacement. In the case of conflicts about identity, this means the expulsion of everyone of a different label – the homogenisation of the local population. The aim is to 'sow fear and hatred' rather than 'win hearts and minds'. Thus both counter-terror and 'ethnic cleansing' use similar techniques.

To achieve this goal, the new wars borrow from counter-insurgency the techniques of destabilisation; these range from mass murder through various forms of intimidation including physical intimidation such as torture and detention, psychological intimidation such as rape and destruction of cultural and religious monuments, economic intimidation through sieges, blockades and roadblocks – all directly violating the laws of war.

Where states are involved, they typically make use of a combination of military forces to carry out this strategy. Whether this is because of a reluctance to lose regular soldiers or because regular forces are not supposed to violate the laws of war, the role of regular forces is generally confined to using force at a distance, through shelling or bombing. The job of murdering or expelling people or carrying out atrocities is generally left to police or paramilitary forces. This form of cooperation was typical of Bosnia, Kosovo, Sudan and East Timor; and the genocide in Rwanda was initiated by government-created militias, the Interahamwe.

Defensive strategies aimed at defending particular areas and parts of the population, such as safe havens or humanitarian corridors, have been adopted with varying degrees of success by guerrilla groups, local self-defence forces as well as international peace-keeping forces. Ingredients for success seem to be mainly political will, although organisation and appropriate equipment are obviously relevant. There are examples where self-defence groups like the local police who successfully defended Tuzla, or reformist groups like (arguably) the RPF in Rwanda, have adopted 'hearts and minds' strategies. But, except in a defensive posture, this is very difficult to sustain because of the logic of the ways such wars tend to be fought

An important ingredient of the new conflicts is the availability of weapons. While regular forces, especially international forces, will make use of air power and armoured vehicles, in general the military technology used in these wars is often described as 'low-tech'. Although the weapons used are generally light and often simple in design, the term 'low-tech' is, however, misleading since the technology is sometimes very advanced. There have been huge improvements in small arms in the last few decades so that machine guns and rifles, for example, are much lighter, more accurate, and easier to use; even children can use them. There have been similar developments in other types of weapons used, such as hand grenades or land-mines.

Such weapons have been relatively easy to acquire in the post-war period. Former Cold War stocks are raided, as in Bosnia or Albania. They are sold on the black market, or illicit manufacturers, as in Pakistan, copy them.

Moreover, developments in civil technology have overtaken developments in military technology. This is especially important in the field of communications, where digital phones and computers can be used to coordinate disparate armed groups. In the war in Somalia, the militias were using digital phones, on which the Americans were unable to eavesdrop.

In a sense, the conflicts in themselves represent a form of political mobilisation. For the young men mobilised to fight, the war offers adventure, a cause,

status and the opportunity for gain, in place of the frustration of idleness. But the violence sharpens cleavages and develops its own momentum of revenge and blood feud, even where hatred had not existed before. 'Societies of fear' as Koonings and Kruijt (1999) term them, in which terror is banalised, are thus constructed and spread through war.

## **6 Dynamics III: Political Economy of War**

The political economy of the new wars is almost the exact opposite of the total wars of the twentieth century. Those wars strengthened fiscal and military monopolies and provided a narrative which helped to underscore legitimacy. The tools of central planning, nationalisation, welfare, and public investment were developed through the social re-ordering that took place during those wars. They were totalising, centralising and autarchic. All resources were mobilised for the war effort.

In contrast, the new wars contribute to the unravelling of the formal sector, both political and economic, and the expansion of what might be called an informal political economy, based on coercive relations, often linked to identity, and weak or non-existent regulation. The new wars are decentralised, participation is low and unemployment (both formal and informal) is generally high, and the various actors are heavily dependent on external assistance.

The decline of the formal economy, already initiated by economic stabilisation programmes and market reform, is accelerated. This may be the result of exposure to international trade or falls in domestic demand, especially investment, in the context of restrictions on public expenditure; it may be the result of physical destruction as a consequence of war; or it may be the consequence of disruptions to trade and transportation as a result of the war. Agricultural production is likely to be severely disrupted because of lack of inputs and disruptions to trade and transport; it is likely to be restricted to subsistence farming. In general, this means that tax revenue falls dramatically and is insufficient to finance the regular forces.

In this situation, there are five main sources of revenue for the various warring parties. First what

Duffield (1994) terms 'asset transfers', i.e. the negative redistribution or seizure of assets from civilians. This includes various forms of loot and plunder, as well as manipulation of the terms of trade through blockades and sieges, so that people are forced to exchange their possessions for necessities. In Sierra Leone, the term 'attack trade' is used to describe commerce in the war zones.

Second, 'taxation' of humanitarian assistance by the warring parties as the price for safe passage has become practice among both official agencies and humanitarian NGOs. While the levy varies, in Somalia as much as 45 per cent has been considered acceptable. This has given rise to an often bitter debate about whether, in dealing only with symptoms, humanitarian assistance reinforces conflicts and encourages what De Waal (1997) terms 'famine crimes'.

Third, there is assistance from diaspora communities. This can take the form of remittances sent by family members working abroad, for example Somalis in the Middle East or Croatians in Germany and Switzerland; or wealthy individuals or criminal groups may provide support. In some cases, for example in the case of the Kosovar Albanians, the diaspora are 'taxed' to provide support for parallel institutions; the shift in diaspora support from Rugova's non-violent movement to the Kosovar Liberation Army was critical in explaining the escalation of the conflict. The Croatian president Franjo Tudjman was able to mobilise for his party by establishing branches in the United States and Canada.

Fourth, there are different forms of external assistance from and intervention by foreign governments. The withdrawal of superpower patrons after the end of the Cold War led the various warring parties to seek other patrons often based on identity links. Thus Serbia, Croatia and the Islamic states provided assistance to the various parties in Bosnia. The role of neighbouring states has also been critical in Africa, particularly in the case of the war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where the quid pro quo has been the allocation of mineral concessions and other revenue-earning opportunities to the military and political elites of countries such as Zimbabwe, which provide troops and military assistance.

Fifth, revenue from illegal trade in valuable commodities such as drugs, as in Colombia, or diamonds in the case of Angola and Sierra Leone. Diamonds have sustained paramilitaries and rebel groups, as well as, sometimes, flowing into the coffers of neighbouring governments: President Charles Taylor's government in Liberia is known to derive both government revenues and private profits from the export of Sierra Leone's 'conflict diamonds'.

Different types of armed forces tend to be financed in different ways, although they increasingly resemble each other. Regular forces are in theory financed by governments through public expenditure, which in turn is financed through taxation or external support, but in situations of fiscal crisis unpaid troops engage in loot and plunder. Paramilitary forces rely almost entirely on loot and plunder, as well as diaspora support or remittances from abroad. The right to be the first to loot is often payment for the infliction of atrocities. A typical pattern for the new private mercenary armies is payment in rights to the valuable commodities they protect. All types of forces tend to cream off humanitarian assistance and all tend to cooperate in the black market even if fighting on opposing sides.

All these sources of finance depend on continuing violence so that the various warring parties may develop a shared vested interest, albeit fragile, in war. This is why some authors suggest that the motivation for these wars is economic. But the point is rather that political and economic motives are increasingly intertwined. Wars can only be sustained on the basis of continuing sources of revenue, which in turn depend on continued war and coercion, on the existence of 'societies of fear'.

## **7 Legacies of Conflict: Societies of Fear<sup>2</sup>**

Conflicts, it is often said, cannot be resolved without dealing with the political and economic dislocations and social injustices that gave rise to them. If these are not addressed, the best that can be hoped for from peace agreements is an unstable truce in between periodic hostilities, as in Palestine, Sudan or Colombia. We do not disagree, but add that, especially in the new conflicts, it is not

sufficient to deal with 'root causes' alone. Conflict-resolution and peace-building need as well to be based on an understanding of the dynamics and legacies of protracted violence itself. For as Keen (1997) persuasively argues, 'war is not just the breakdown of society; it is the re-ordering of society in particular ways.'

One way of describing the societal dynamics of the new conflicts is as an acceleration of the 'uncivilising process'. Thus underlying the politics of the new conflicts is what could be described as a distorted social formation – a new set of coercive and unproductive socio-economic relations based both on the banalisation of violence and the informalisation of the economy. Indeed, if classic inter-state wars could be said to have provided a model for centrally planned economies, the new conflicts might be said to offer a model of the informal economy.

The consequence is that these are conflicts that are very difficult to contain in either time or space. The tensions that existed in a pre-war situation are rarely resolved. On the contrary, the post-war situation, the legacies of the conflict, may often serve merely to accentuate the conditions that led to war. The conflicts may have had devastating consequences for society as a whole, but they tend to strengthen those groups and networks that thrive on extremist politics and coercive economic relations. Even though these groups and networks may only constitute a minority in society, the conflicts leave a trail of dependencies which are difficult to break. Joining a paramilitary group, engaging in illegal trading and expressing support for extremist political groupings may turn out to be a matter of survival.

Moreover, this distorted social formation has a tendency to spread, through refugees, through various forms of illegal activity: trade, sanctions busting, money laundering, etc, or through diaspora networks. Indeed, it is possible to identify growing clusters of war-prone areas: the Balkans, the Caucasus, Central Asia, Central Africa, the Horn of Africa, or West Africa. In all of these regions, the conflicts, the protagonists in them, and the networks of political and economic relations sustaining them, are not confined within the boundaries of individual states

Our provisional inventory of the legacies of the new conflicts includes the following:

- *Social and political polarisation*, in particular around markers of ethnic, religious, etc., identity. Even where there is a prior history of inter-communal cooperation – as in Bosnia before the 1990s – violent conflict creates new social and political facts. Confidence-building and reconciliation by themselves are unlikely to be enough. New forms of political accommodation may also be needed. In Sri Lanka, for instance, the political reforms, which might have satisfied members of the Tamil minority before hostilities, no longer seem acceptable, especially to Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) militants.
- *Deeply entrenched socio-economic exclusion, as well as political disempowerment* (Nolutshungu 1996): of minorities, marginalised regions and war zones, women, refugees, and even former combatants, including child soldiers. Such exclusion follows from the logic of new conflicts themselves and the manner in which the combatants target civilians, and may be exceedingly hard to reverse.
- *The banalisation of violence, together with widespread impunity for acts of violence*. As terror, torture, rape, ethnic cleansing, etc. are deliberate strategies, they become normalised and their perpetrators go unpunished. This is why War Crimes Tribunals and Truth Commissions, etc. can be crucial, not only in securing justice for victims, but also in delegitimising violence itself (Pankhurst 1999).
- *The (un)rule of law* (as O'Donnell (n.d.) terms it): massive violations of human rights, acute personal insecurity, forced population movements and seizures of property, the breakdown of normal judicial and policing systems and rise of vigilantism, etc. It is all the more important to establish some kind of accountability for such violations, and to re-establish at least the rudiments of the rule of law.
- *The proliferation of predatory armed groups, for whom war and criminal activity are a source of profits (in the case of leaders) or a livelihood (for*

*foot-soldiers*). This not only determines how new wars are fought, as argued earlier, but also makes them harder to end. Demobilisation programmes only work if they assure alternative livelihoods for the foot-soldiers, which is costly and difficult in conditions of underemployment. And if the leaders are still able to control natural resource rents or to use international criminal connections, the creation of alternatives to war-related accumulation is more difficult still.

- *Criminalisation and informalisation*, as we have seen, is a feature of the new war economies. Criminal networks do not automatically disband, nor does the informal economy necessarily shrink, once hostilities end. Indeed the economic impact of informalisation may not be entirely negative. Mubarak (1997) suggests that the disappearance of the state in Somalia has been a stimulus to commercial activity: it is arguably a neo-classical economist's dream. But the costs too are high, especially the difficulties in providing public goods, like health, education and security, and of rebuilding functioning national economies.
- *Governance voids, or the disappearance of the central state*. The central state may already have vanished before conflict – as in the Congo. Nor does 'state collapse' necessarily mean a complete Hobbesian state of anarchy, as some analyses seem to suggest (Zartman 1995). Other forms of political authority may emerge, such as the parallel administrations of guerrilla armies in liberated areas, different forms of community self-help, or even the predatory shadow administrations of warlords and criminal gangs. However, conflicts usually spell the end of the developmental state, as it emerged during the post-Second World War period, and often destroy its capacity to assure routine administration, the rule of law, and security as well.
- *The entrenchment of violence and of those controlling it at the heart of the political process*. Conflicts, especially the new conflicts, tend to reinforce authoritarianism and increase the political weight of military and security establishments. They do so even in formally democratic countries, like Colombia or Sri

Lanka, all the more in those with little or no experience of democratic governance. They can also reinforce the political power of those controlling the barrel of the gun in the opposition camp, giving them a veto over peace processes (like the LTTE in Sri Lanka or the IRA in Northern Ireland), or positioning them to take control of the state when the fighting ends, like President Charles Taylor in Liberia.

- *The internationalisation and regionalisation of conflicts – and of the networks of social relations sustaining them* – vastly complicate conflict-resolution and peace-building. In all war-torn regions such as the Balkans, the Caucasus, the African Great Lakes, or West Africa, it is impossible to resolve the conflicts in any one country without addressing their relationships with their neighbours, not to speak of global interconnections. Sierra Leone, for example, will remain vulnerable to rebellion so long as President Taylor is in power in Liberia and conflict diamonds continue to flow across their shared boundary. The Lusaka peace agreement, signed with the intention of terminating armed conflict in the Congo, has been frustrated by the lack of cooperation among all national governments and rebel movements who signed it – not to mention all the other armed groups (like the Interahamwe militia active in the Eastern Congo), political entrepreneurs and corporate interests manoeuvring for advantage in a highly unstable political situation. Ethnic cleansing in ex-Yugoslavia has precipitated interlocking refugee movements, which are difficult for its states and political entities to manage individually, or without the cooperation of their Balkan neighbours. And conversely, the Central American peace process has succeeded precisely because it proved possible to involve all the governments and major guerrilla movements of the region – as well as the USA – in the Contadora and Esquipela negotiations.
- *Democratisation is one of the main building blocs of a sustainable peace, as we shall argue, yet it also tends to be a casualty of violent conflict*. Violence not only increases the political power of those who control the gun. The fragmentation of political authority, which occurs in many conflicts, makes it harder to establish clear lines of democratic

accountability. Indeed, democracy loses any meaning where the state, its agencies and its services start to vanish. Lines of accountability are further blurred by the proliferation of international actors, none of whom can be held to account by the citizens of the conflict-torn societies in which they operate.

We may seem to give undue emphasis to the harmful legacies of conflicts. And it is true that old-style guerrilla or national liberation struggles often filled the void left by the retreat of the state, respected the laws of war, and imposed strict prohibitions on maltreatment of civilians (like the NRA's Code of Conduct in Uganda). Yet our point is that many new conflicts differ radically from these liberation struggles. Even the latter may be overromanticised. The liberation movements in Ethiopia and Eritrea, for instance, despite their impressive achievements, evolved a commandist style of politics, which shaped their approach to democracy and reconstruction in the post-war period, and contributed to their failure to negotiate a peaceful settlement of the Ethiopia–Eritrea border dispute. Although the SPLA in the Sudan, left-wing guerrilla movements in Colombia, the PLO and Hamas in Palestine, and the LTTE in Sri Lanka all originate from genuinely popular struggles, their tactics, financing and organisation have in different degrees come to mirror that of the paramilitary forces against whom they have fought – with a greater or lesser erosion of their claims to the moral high ground of popular legitimacy.

## **8 Building a Democratic Peace I: Ending the Violence**

Our diagram in Figure 1 summarises the argument so far. The main source of conflict is the erosion of the legitimacy of political authority, combined with the impact of globalisation and the emergence of powerful economic incentives for dissidents to take up arms against the state. Hence the diagram depicts the vicious set of relations typical of conflict areas, which reinforce each other. It is a process that is almost the reverse of the process of state-building; hence it can be described as the 'uncivilising process' in contradistinction to the 'civilising process', which Norbert Elias analysed in relation to state-building.

It follows from this argument that the key to building a democratic peace is to break through this vicious cycle, and to reconstruct relations based on agreed rules and public authority. Above all, the centrepiece of any peace strategy has to be the restoration of legitimate authority. It has to counterpoise the strategy of 'fear and hate' with a strategy of 'hearts and minds'. It should be stressed, however, that any such strategy is very difficult and likely to be of long duration. There are very few conflicts that have actually ended, and these are primarily in Southern Africa and Central America. The main lesson of the last two decades is that conflicts beget conflicts and among the causes of any particular conflict is often a previous conflict.

The implication of our argument is that ending violence is very difficult without the democratisation of politics. But violence also has to be contained if democratic politics is to find social and territorial space. This might be done through talks or through policing or through both. Talks about status while fighting continues are always problematic. In essence, these are constitutional conventions organised at gunpoint. Quite apart from the irreconcilable position of the conflicting parties, compromises that are achieved are often virtually unworkable because they try to combine these irreconcilable positions. Thus the Dayton Agreement in Bosnia, the Oslo Agreement in the Middle East, even perhaps the Good Friday Agreement in Northern Ireland (which may succeed not because of the agreement but because of a growing popular commitment to democratic politics) are all examples of monstrously complex compromises. In some circumstances, these may be the only possible ways to stop the violence. But if talks can focus on stopping violence based on the situation on the ground, on freezing conflicts or on an international presence, and if they can include representatives of alternative political groupings, this could be a more constructive approach. In other words, the value of agreements reached through diplomatic negotiations among the warring parties should be judged by the extent to which such negotiations can, in practice, contain violence, freeze conflicts, and create space for the democratisation of politics.

It follows from our analysis of the changing mode of warfare that military victory is very difficult, though

not impossible. But defensive strategies aimed at protecting civilians can succeed, although the net effect may be to freeze rather than to resolve conflicts. Although this falls outside the scope of this article, there is a need to rethink both the character of humanitarian intervention and the role of military forces in general. Humanitarian intervention cannot mean war fighting; it has to mean something more akin to policing, in which the task is to protect civilians and to arrest individual war criminals. This also requires a change in command structures so that individual soldiers feel responsible to the people they are supposed to protect and not to remote instructions thousands of miles away; this requires much greater individual responsibility. As is the case with talks, the goal of humanitarian intervention is not just to freeze conflicts and protect civilians, but also to create an environment in which there are more opportunities for democratic politics and consequently for alternative solutions.

Peace agreements seldom mark a sharp boundary or turning point between 'war' and 'peace': the diffuse, multidimensional and inconclusive character of the conflicts themselves more or less ensures this. But even if there are grounds for scepticism about international peace processes, we take issue with conservative realists like Luttwak (1999) who argue a case for non-intervention on the grounds that freezing violence cannot solve the underlying causes of conflict, and that the international community should 'give war a chance', by allowing the parties to fight to the bitter end. The logic of the new wars suggests there is no bitter end. The concept of victory is just as elusive as that of peace. And the victors may not be interested in the latter, especially if they are predatory warlords (like President Charles Taylor in Liberia) or ethnic exclusivists (like elements of the Kosova Liberation Army (KLA) in Kosovo).

It makes a considerable difference if the victors – where there are victors – demonstrate genuine commitment to building peace and restoring state legitimacy, like the ANC in South Africa (although their victory was political rather than military, and was consecrated by a negotiated settlement). Likewise peace settlements tend to be more sustainable where, like the Central American and South African settlements, they involve real rather

than paper compromises, are not imposed from outside and offer proposals for transforming the conditions giving rise to conflict.

But, for the reasons analysed earlier, the new conflicts cannot be relied on to produce either honourable victors or just and viable peace agreements. In the real world, negotiations may require Faustian bargains with groups and interests with little real interest in peace, reconciliation or democracy. One of the most poignant examples is Sierra Leone. A fragile and flawed national government has at different times agreed to share power with rebel groups and mutinous soldiers, and to integrate elements of both into the army, despite their involvement in appalling human rights violations and lack of real commitment to a settlement (demonstrated by the Revolutionary United Front (RUF)'s resumption of hostilities soon after the incorporation of its leaders into the government). The arguments for doing so have been couched partly in terms of *realpolitik*, and partly in terms of the need for reconciliation, even with those responsible for atrocities. The only half-way viable alternative<sup>3</sup> is to build up and retrain the national army and police with foreign assistance, a strategy that is also not without dangers, and is unlikely to succeed if the government does not also rebuild its legitimacy (not to speak of cutting off the flow of conflict diamonds and terminating Liberian support for the RUF).

Peace-building is arguably more complex in conflicts that have consumed the entire state (Somalia, Sierra Leone, the Congo, Bosnia), than in those where the central state still governs except in the conflict zones (India, Sri Lanka, Uganda, Colombia). In the former, the state itself, as well as state legitimacy, has to be rebuilt. In the latter the focus will be on managing conflicts via political processes rather than through violence. Though seemingly a more limited task, this too has its own difficulties, especially where the social fissures sustaining conflict are deep-rooted, as in Sri Lanka or Northern Ireland, or where the state's own military and paramilitary structures are responsible for much of the violence, as in Colombia or the Sudan.

In cases where states have collapsed, the freezing of conflict, protection of civilians and re-establishment of some form of law and order may need to be



undertaken temporarily by international forces, as in Bosnia, Kosovo or Somalia (though the latter and Rwanda offer many lessons about the limitations of such forces). However, both in collapsed states and in those with traditions of state violence, there is a need for what the donors now call 'security sector reform' (Hendrickson 2000), but which we prefer to call 'security sector transformation'.

Security structures – the armed forces, police, security services – must be rebuilt where they have fallen apart and restructured, and reprofessionalised where they have not. However, this restructuring should not be confined to the reprofessionalisation of armies and police forces around the old concepts of security, habits of power and ways of handling conflicts that may have encouraged violence in the first place. Security forces should in most cases give less emphasis to traditional military tasks – the protection of borders against external enemies or counter-terror – and more to guaranteeing the physical security of ordinary citizens, protecting them from violence, ensuring respect for human rights and enforcing the rule of law. This might involve a changed balance among the different security agencies: less priority for the armed forces, and more emphasis on the police, constabulary forces, the judiciary and community dispute-resolution processes. Above all it is crucial that they be subordinated to a democratically constituted authority. This requires that specific mechanisms of executive and parliamentary control should be put in place, in addition to empowering the media and civil society groups to play a role in security issues.

The marginalisation or elimination of non-state forms of organised violence, demilitarisation, demobilisation and decommissioning, are also important parts of this restructuring process, which in the end has to be initiated through agreements, though a more robust policing approach might help to create conditions in which this becomes possible. Giving such groups some stake in the political process, even if they do not command widespread support, may have to be one way in which this is achieved; though if too much is conceded, this may risk giving them a veto power over the peace-building process itself.

But in the final analysis both democratic control over state violence, and the elimination of organised

non-state violence, can only be assured if there is respect for the rule of law and a thriving democracy. In the next section, therefore, we consider ways of reconstituting democratically legitimate public authority.

## **9 Building a Democratic Peace II: the Reconstitution of Legitimate Authority**

It follows from the above that the process of building a democratic peace is only just beginning when hostilities end and peace agreements are concluded.<sup>4</sup> Reconstituting legitimate authority requires a democratic strategy to make best use of the available political spaces within flawed or limited agreements. This is so especially where governments themselves may have little or no real commitment to democracy, like the Taylor government in Liberia; where they are authoritative in only part of national territory, like the Kabila government in the Congo; where the country is effectively partitioned, like Bosnia; or where there is no centralised political authority at all, as in Somalia.

In these diverse cases, the reconstitution of legitimate authority must involve much more than a simple restoration of what went before. Two general considerations need to be taken into account. First, if most conflicts are procedural, and are related ways of establishing formally legitimate control by private or sectional interests over the state apparatus, then any alternative strategy has to be substantive as well as procedural. The restoration of legitimate authority involves both legitimation, that is to say agreed procedures about how rulers are to be selected, and legitimacy, that is to say a public consensus both about rules and rulers. In particular, a strategy aimed at legitimacy as well as legitimation has to be able to reconstruct the public character of political authority in such a way as to be able to respond to everyday concerns. The preoccupation with status has to be supplanted by a focus on substantive issues such as security, tolerance, or material well-being and these in turn can be translated into concrete measures having to do with refugee return, freedom of movement, employment opportunities and so on. Moreover, a substantive strategy cannot be achieved through institutional change alone. First and foremost it has

Figure 2: Political Actors in New Conflicts

Political Actors	Source of Legitimation	Source of Funding	Coercive Apparatus	Form of Political Mobilisation	Military Strategy
The State	Elections and/or international recognition	Tax revenues, rents from commodity exports, foreign aid	Regular forces (sometimes in combination with paramilitary groups, foreign mercenaries and private security companies)	Dominant use of electronic media; fear	Population displacement as a means of counter-terror and ethnic cleansing; intensive use of shelling and bombing as well as terror tactics
Secessionist or rebel groups	Breakaway parliamentarians; shadow elections; participation in international negotiations	Loot and pillage; 'taxation' and 'protection' of trade and humanitarian aid; Diaspora support	Guerrilla groups, paramilitary groups, warlords	Fear; material aid; magic, spirits and religion; use of videos	Combination of traditional guerrilla tactics. And population displacement in areas under control
Local Government	Local elections	Local taxation; the state	Police forces; sometimes self-defence forces	Local radio; provision of services; local activities	Defensive; local policing
Civil Society (NGOs and independent media, etc).	Self-appointed; principles and standards	Voluntary contributions; international donors	None; sometimes linked to self-defence forces	Independent radio and print media; voluntary activities; access to international institutions	Appeal to international community
International Agencies (IGOs, e.g. UN, OSCE, OAU, humanitarian agencies including NGOs)	Treaty or agreement; Security Council resolution; formal decision by relevant institution	Governmental support	Multilateral peace-keeping or peace-enforcement	International media; domestic public opinion	Maintaining ceasefires, safe havens; humanitarian corridors; no-fly zones; air strikes

to involve a change in political culture and in dominant values. Hence our emphasis on democratic politics, and on democratisation from below.

Second, the reconstruction of legitimate authority can no longer be confined to the state. As we have seen, state authority is eroded both by external actors (international and regional) and by non-state or private actors. Some of these actors need to be decriminalised and brought to account, but this cannot simply be undertaken by the state. Essentially, precisely because of global interconnectedness, political authority increasingly needs to be multi-layered. There needs to be greater accountability of external actors to the local population. This can be achieved through greater direct access to global or regional institutions to which external actors are or should be accountable, as well as greater transparency and openness in the activities of global and regional institutions. And in many cases, there needs to be greater decentralisation or devolution as well, so as to allow ordinary citizens to be closer to political authority.

In Figure 2, we list the political actors involved in the conflicts. In situations where the state itself has been heavily implicated in sustaining the conflict, the last three sets of actors – local government, civil society, and the international community – are those who would need to be primarily responsible for such a strategy.

The democratisation of politics requires a political counterbalance to the politics of exclusion. The term 'cosmopolitanism' is often used to refer to a double commitment: to liberal humanist principles and, at the same time to multi-culturalism and the diversity of identities (Kaldor 1999; Archibugi and Held 1995). Thus cosmopolitan politics can include both political movements and parties that are secular and non-nationalist or religious, as well as moderate identity-based parties that respect and cherish different identities. Such politics is usually associated with civil society, in particular NGOs and independent media, but it also may have political representation in parliaments or even governments.

The democratisation of politics can only come from within society; it cannot be artificially generated. But there are ways in which democratic or cosmopolitan politics can be supported either by external actors or, in the case that there remain democratic elements within the state itself, from above, and from local government. In nearly all conflict zones it is possible to identify individuals, groups or even local communities that try to act in inclusive and democratic ways. Precisely because these are wars which are not total and in which participation is low, there are often what might be called 'zones of civility' that escape the polarisation imposed by the logic of war. Examples include Tuzla in Bosnia Herzegovina, Somaliland in Somalia, as well as many other places (Kaldor 1999). Pro-democracy groups are not, moreover,

confined to non-violent resistance. Self-defence groups or reformist forces like (arguably) the RPF in Rwanda, or elements in the KLA in Kosovo, may be counted among these cosmopolitan or democratic political groupings.

Given the polarisation of war, the spread of societies of fear, this kind of politics is very fragile. But there are ways in which it can be strengthened. One method is international recognition. The risk of negotiations between warring parties is that they give formal legitimacy to extremist groups who participate in negotiations. It is thus very important to raise the public profile of democratic groups by including them in negotiations. Publicity in general can be a form of protection from repressive governments and paramilitary violence. Other ways include support for independent media, training and education, particularly textbooks, curriculum development, summer schools for young people from different groups and so on.

However, what works in one situation may not work in others; sometimes international recognition can be a danger, sometimes internationally transmitted skills are inappropriate. Perhaps the most important way to strengthen democratic groups is to take the advice of those groups in developing peace strategies. It is these democratic groupings who understand the local situation and can act as political interpreters. It is they who can assess the value of negotiations at a particular moment, the advantages of an international presence, or the possibilities for institutional change. Perhaps the most important generalisation that can be made about the new conflicts is that, although it is possible to identify some new features and some common dynamics, every conflict has its own unique form. There is no standard blueprint, and the best guide to the particularities of any conflict are those people in the area who espouse non-exclusive politics.

In particular, this argument applies to debates about institutional change. In our parallel democracy paper (Luckham, Goetz and Kaldor 2000) we discuss various forms of institutional engineering designed to damp down conflict. The main debate is about majoritarian democracy versus various forms of power sharing. While it is true that majoritarian systems may end up excluding

minorities, the various power-sharing arrangements that have been devised, for example the Cypriot or Lebanese constitutions, may have the consequence of building identity conflicts into the system. What is important, as we have stressed, is not the institutional form but the public commitment to democratic politics. It is true that some institutional arrangements may be more favourable than others in creating an environment in which democratic politics can flourish. But which institutions are appropriate may depend on the particular local circumstances and it is the democrats on the ground, who are most likely to offer the best institutional designs.

The same kind of argument may be applied to the question of elections. It is sometimes argued that quick elections are necessary to establish a legitimate ruling group, even if widespread fear and coercion, as well as control over media, mean that elections cannot be genuinely free and fair. Such elections may be the price for giving up violence, even if temporarily. On the other hand, such elections may legitimise repressive governments and exclusivist groups and give rise to new and dangerous forms of political mobilisation based on exclusive identity, thus exacerbating tensions that could contribute to renewed conflict.

Yet another institutional device is decentralisation. Municipal governments can be both the sites of civility, as in Tuzla for example, and sites of extreme oppression. There is a case for arguing that democratic politics is more likely to flourish in situations where government is closer to the people and, moreover, that democratic politics and the restoration of legitimacy can only be built from the bottom-up. But this is not always so; there are many cases where local and regional government is firmly in the hands of warlords, who can only be removed from above. How these questions about elections or about decentralisation are best resolved thus also depend on the particularity of each situation and local democrats are again best placed to think them through.

A further important component of any strategy for building a democratic peace has to address directly social and economic relations – how to rebuild trust and legitimate ways of making a livelihood. In both post-conflicts and conflict zones, individuals may

have little choice but to engage in criminal activities or join a paramilitary group. Participation in democratic politics is not an option for those who are dependent on illegal sources of income or on humanitarian assistance controlled by the conflicting parties. Again, the rule of law, the implementation of appropriate regulatory frameworks (for building, or for property ownership, or for fiscal revenue) is a necessary precondition for the restoration of a formal economic sector, although this is clearly only a beginning.

The rebuilding of regulatory frameworks is impossible without the rebuilding of trust. These are traumatised societies in which relations among friends, families and neighbours may have been irretrievably disrupted let alone the relations of trust between strangers that are the basis for modern politics and economies. This is why the arrest of war criminals is important – to show that there are international standards of justice. It is also why truth and reconciliation commissions can play a creative role – to establish what happened and why, to relive personal experience and find viable ways of coming to terms with that experience. And of course, there are other areas of activity crucial to the rebuilding of trust – multi-cultural education, the revision of textbooks, particularly on history, secular culture and independent media.

There is a tendency for reconstruction strategies to be dominated by liberal economic reform – privatisation and liberalisation because of current orthodoxy. Since these policies may have contributed to the genesis of conflicts, they may have to be rethought, even though there may be good reasons for liberalisation and reopening markets and trade routes that have been blocked by war, or for removing key productive facilities from political control. Without the re-establishment of regulatory frameworks and of trust, these strategies can be counterproductive. For example, privatisation can be used as a device for transforming the political and military positions of warring parties into private gain, and macro-economic stabilisation can be used as an excuse for rationing resources according to ethnic networks.

From the point of view of peace-building and removing vested interests in continued violence, legitimate employment is a key priority. Microcredit schemes have been introduced in many post-conflict situations to help demobilised soldiers and displaced persons. Undoubtedly, these make some contribution to the lives of those who benefit, but they only have a small impact on overall employment. Public investment in infrastructure, health and education is more important, especially where it encourages integration of opposed groups, or where it helps provide favourable conditions for returning refugees.

The approach we have outlined briefly could be described not as a return to state-building in the classic sense but rather as part of what might be described as a global 'civilising' process. One of the problems of developing a strategy is precisely that the agent of that strategy is no longer necessarily the state, since it is the collapse, weakening or privatisation of the state that is part of the problem. But nor is there any single agent to whom such a strategy can be addressed – as the stakeholders in conflicts involve a range of actors both internal and external, public and private. And, given the breakdown of the distinctions between external and internal or between public and private, it is no longer possible to envisage a territorial containment of conflict, or to hope that external actors can remain aloof and unaffected.

## Notes

1. In the archives of the ICRC, a letter can be found from Che Guevara and Fidel Castro, then fighting in the hills, requesting assistance to enable them to treat their captured and wounded enemies, according to the Geneva Conventions.
2. Our use of the concepts of 'societies of fear' and of 'governance voids' in this section draws on Koonings and Kruijt (1999).
3. The UN's peacekeeping operation, though crucial, is not in itself an alternative.
4. Or in some cases before such an agreement, our basic point being that it is a continuous, seldom smooth, process.

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