



Inequalities, Conflict and Economic Recovery

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“Remove the secondary causes that have produced the great convulsions of the world and you will almost always find the principle of inequality at the bottom. Either the poor have attempted to plunder the rich, or the rich to enslave the poor. If, then, a state of society can ever be founded in which every man shall have something to keep and little to take from others, much will have been done for the peace of the world.”

– *de Tocqueville 1835*¹

Introduction

Policies designed to stimulate economic recovery must address the underlying causes of violent conflict, or recurrence can be expected. This paper discusses the role of inequality as a cause of violent conflict and policies that might be included in the post-conflict period to tackle it.

While violent conflict can take many forms – criminal or political, small-scale or large-scale, domestic or public – in this paper we are primarily concerned with the normal context for post-conflict programmes. These involve societies that have suffered large-scale, organised, internal political violence that has come to an end, at least for the time being.

There are many reasons for wanting to reduce inequality, beginning with the potential to promote economic growth, reduce poverty, and prevent violent conflict. The main focus of this paper, however, is on the conflict dimension, while still acknowledging that policies to reduce inequality in the context of post-conflict recovery would be important in any situation.

There has been a recent focus on economic causes of conflict.² These cover a variety of economic causes, including failures of growth, high unemployment, the desire

to capture lootable resources, and inequality. While this paper focuses on inequality, this should not be taken to imply that other suggested causes have no role. In fact there are a variety of types of conflict and a variety of causes – not all of which operate in all circumstances, and often involve more than one cause.

Inequality itself is a very broad concept. Two questions always predominate: Who is unequal, and what is the substance of the inequality?

The next section of this paper reviews alternative answers to these questions and considers how different types of inequalities may relate to conflict at a theoretical level. This is followed in Section 2 by a survey of empirical evidence concerning the association of inequality with conflict.

Having established the types of inequality most likely to be a cause of the occurrence and recurrence of conflict, Section 3 considers first whether war itself exacerbates or mitigates these inequalities, and then the possible impact of the end of conflict on the inequalities.

Together, sections 2 and 3 set the scene for post-conflict reduction of inequalities of various types. This is then contrasted with actual policies in this area. Section 4 reviews the sort of policies that are likely to be undertaken in post-conflict situations, particularly those espoused by the international community (Section 5). The paper concludes with considerations of whether and the kind of reforms that are needed if the issue of inequalities is to be taken seriously in post-conflict recovery.

1. What inequality?

Inequality among whom?

In discussing global inequality, a contrast is often made between inequality among countries and inequality within countries. Since we are here talking of “civil” war (or internal wars), intra-country distribution would appear to be the most relevant factor. While inter-country distribution could arguably have some impact on some civil wars, it is likely to be a relatively insignificant one, so here we focus on within-country inequality.

Most measures, and much of the discussion of inequality within countries, relate to inequality among individuals or households, or what we shall define as vertical inequality. This is often summed up by the Gini coefficient. Sharp vertical inequality tends to be associated with high poverty levels; that is, for any given average per capita income, poverty rates are higher the greater the vertical inequality.

An alternative approach is to analyse inequality among groups rather than individuals. People can be classified in groups in many different ways. One way is by identity group (i.e., according to characteristics that people themselves feel are important to them, or ways in which others categorise them). Significant identity groups include ethnicity, religion, gender, and location (region or rural/urban, or hills/lowlands, inland/coastal). Significant identity groups could also include class (workers, peasants, landowners).

We define inequality among groups as horizontal inequality. The big difference between horizontal inequality (HI) and vertical inequality (VI) is that the former is composed of a number of individuals with common and significant identity ties, while VI

consists of individuals, regardless of their identity affiliations. The nature and strength of identity ties clearly vary across types of tie, across society, and over time. Moreover, people have multiple identities and can be motivated in different ways according to the type and salience of the identity ties.

Surveys of perceptions of identity in five countries (see Langer and Ukiwo forthcoming on Ghana and Nigeria; Diprose et al. 2007 forthcoming on Indonesia; Paredes Gonzales 2007 on Peru; Zavaleta forthcoming on Bolivia³) have shown variations in the perceived importance of particular ties across the countries, according to the sphere of life (private or public) and whether there has been recent conflict in the area. For example, in both Ghana and Nigeria, religion is important to people in their daily private lives, but ethnicity is more important in “public” life, including the distribution of government jobs and contracts.

In Latin America, gender is seen to be very important in private life, while race is perceived to be of importance in public life. In Indonesia, religion seems to be more important to people in terms of their private identity in the peaceful areas than the conflictual ones, but the reverse holds in aspects of the public arena where a much higher proportion of people in the conflict areas think religion affects the chance of getting government jobs, etc., than in the peaceful areas.

Types of inequality and conflict

It has been argued that greater VI might lead to more conflict, since the higher VI, the higher the likely level of poverty for any given per capita income, and resentment and grievance among the poorer individuals might therefore be larger, particularly since they

see others with much higher incomes⁴. But the issue then is what mobilises people to organised conflict.

One possibility is that there is no organised mobilisation, but rather individual grievance and protest takes the form of criminality. The other possibility is that they are mobilised by individuals with ideological or greed motives of their own. For example, although coming from middle-class backgrounds themselves, the leaders of Sendero Luminoso in Peru and of the FARC in Colombia mobilised poor peasants for ideological reasons, while in countries like Sierra Leone, it is argued that fighters were mobilised by military factions motivated primarily by greed. For those mobilised, individual motivation of grievance and lack of opportunity may then combine with economic advantage arising from joining rebellions (e.g. via license to loot), or compulsion.⁵

People are often mobilised by their ethnic or religious affiliation by religious leaders or “ethnic entrepreneurs”⁶ To the extent that such mobilisation is more likely and more effective where there are resource differences between groups, then conflict is related to horizontal inequalities. The hypothesis of relative deprivation⁷ or horizontal inequalities⁸ as a predisposing factor for conflict rests on the view that some potentially binding affiliations, such as those of common religion or ethnicity, make it easier to mobilise for group conflict, but such mobilisation will only occur if there is some sort of group resentment arising from differential access across groups to a variety of resources.

The HI hypothesis, in contrast to the relative deprivation one, points to the fact that it can be the relatively rich, not just the relatively poor, who initiate conflict. The Tutsis, for example, in Burundi, have attacked the poorer Hutus; the relatively rich area of Biafra initiated the Nigerian civil war; in Sri Lanka, the Tamils initiated the conflict.⁹

In each case, the attack seems to be motivated by a fear that the situation is not sustainable without force and that the relative prosperity of the group is or may be under attack.

While religion or ethnicity can provide such a common affiliation, as does a region, (region often overlaps with religion and ethnicity), people may also identify with their economic class (e.g. campesinos in Guatemala or Colombia) and be mobilised on a class basis. Hence where sufficient numbers are or can be made sufficiently aware of and bonded by their common class affiliation, these HIs may generate conflict. In such situations, a conflict based on common grievances of poor individuals (associated with high VI) and one based on the common grievances of a particular identity group (associated with high HI) would amount to much the same thing. This occurs where there is a common conscious affiliation to a particular class.

Yet in many countries, the poor are divided into differentiated subgroups – e.g. the unemployed, low-wage agricultural workers, the disabled, small-holders – to such an extent that class does not provide a binding affiliation in the way that ethnicity or religion can.¹⁰

Moreover, the prevalent discourse influences how people are mobilised. Class discourse, dominant in Marxist ideology and prevalent during the Cold War, has been overtaken by identity discourse, including ethnicity and religion, so that the latter today provides a more common form of mobilisation. According to the Centre for Systematic Peace, “A virtual cornucopia of these seemingly intractable (and previously ‘invisible’) social identity conflicts exploded onto the world scene and captured the public and policy eyes.”¹¹

Two of the groupings mentioned above, gender and the urban/rural divide, seem less plausible as ways of mobilising people for conflict. In the case of gender, this is a result of several factors. On the one hand, where people have multiple affiliations, they are more likely to give rise to mobilisation where they overlap and less likely where they are cross-cutting.¹²

In the case of gender, the affiliations are cross-cutting: While women place considerable emphasis on their gender, they are members of families and ethnic and religious groups (as well as other affiliations) that include men. Women are united by their gender but divided by these other differences, and their immediate environment lies in these other affiliations, not that of gender. Nonetheless, women do mobilise for economic activities and for empowerment, but almost never in a violent way.

It has been argued that gender inequalities do lead to conflict, however, not because women themselves mobilise, but because in the presence of severe gender inequalities, ethnic mobilisation is more likely.¹³ As Peterson states: “Gender relations are a crucial, not peripheral, dimension of the dynamics of group identities and intergroup conflict.”¹⁴ The argument is based on the view that ethnic nationalism is essentially patriarchal and operates more effectively in gender unequal societies.

The rural/urban divide is a weak one from the point of view of mobilisation, though it has been argued to be a factor behind the Sierra Leone conflict.¹⁵ People in both rural and urban areas have many cross-cutting affiliations. Thus, there are rich and poor people in both areas; there are people of the same religions in both areas and of the same ethnicities. Moreover, even the dividing line between what is rural and what is urban is

quite blurred with many in a peri-urban situation, and many living in small towns and working in the truly rural areas.

It is true that “urban bias”¹⁶ is a fact, and that per capita income in urban areas is better, on average, than in rural, and that urban services are better than rural. But because of their differences, people are rarely, if ever, mobilised as urban or rural dwellers; rather, they are mobilised as peasants or as members of a particular religion or ethnicity.

However, the rural-urban divide is a major source of migration, which can, in turn, generate unemployment – among young men especially – and thus feed into violent mobilization, particularly where there are other forms of horizontal inequality at play. In India, for instance, communal conflicts have been seen as a consequence of rural-urban migration and the concomitant competition over resources and services in the urban context.¹⁷ In the city of Aligarh, rural-urban migration, predominantly by Muslims, upset the previous religious electoral balance of the city, and the new Muslim neighbourhoods (mohallas) proved fertile ground for elite agitation¹⁸.

Inequality of what?

This question can be viewed from the point of view of what is the best measure of well-being,¹⁹ or from the perspective of what kind of inequality is most likely to lead to conflict. The usual measures of inequality relate to income or consumption. Sen has powerfully argued that this is the wrong “space” for measuring individual well-being or freedoms, i.e. from the point of view of welfare or development. He argues that “capabilities” or “freedoms” are the more appropriate space, where both capabilities and freedoms consist of the ability to be or do things that people have reason to value.

While Sen is clear on the need to go beyond income, the list of capabilities to be considered is an open-ended one, although others²⁰ have gone further in defining the list of capabilities. Nussbaum includes, for example, the capability of life, health, senses and the imagination, practical reason, play affiliation, social bases of self-respect, control over the environment, and respect for other species.

However, in most practical work, a more limited list of “basic capabilities” is adopted: The capacity for being well-nourished, healthy, and educated are critical elements.²¹ Accepting this perspective, inequality is to be measured as capability inequality, and by definition is multidimensional, following the multidimensionality of the concept. Capabilities represent a potential – the possibility of being e.g. well-nourished – but this is difficult to measure, and, consequently, the usual interpretation is to measure inequality in functionings – that is realised capabilities, not the potential to be well-nourished, or the capability of being well nourished, but actual nutrition levels.²²

Turning to conflict-causing inequalities, the individualistic (VI) approach has generally stuck with income as the chosen measure, though some studies have looked at land inequality.²³ However, multidimensionality is an essential component of the HI approach. Four important dimensions have been identified – economic, social, political and cultural status. Each of the four dimensions contains a number of elements, the relevant ones varying across society.

- Economic HIs include inequalities in ownership of assets – financial, natural resource-based, human and social – and of incomes and employment opportunities that depend on these assets and the general conditions of the economy.
- Social HIs cover inequalities in access to a range of services – education, health and housing – and inequalities in achievements in health and educational outcomes.

- Political HIs consist in inequalities in the group distribution of political opportunities and power, including control over the presidency, the cabinet, parliamentary assemblies, the army, police, and regional and local governments.
- Cultural status HIs refer to differences in recognition and (de facto) hierarchical status of different groups' cultural norms, customs, and practices.

Each of the dimensions is important in itself, but most are also instrumental for achieving others. For example, political power is both an end in itself and a means for securing economic and social benefits and conferring cultural status. Control over economic assets is primarily a means to secure income but it is also an end, particularly in societies where a cultural status is attached to particular assets such as land or cattle.²⁴ The relevance of any element depends on whether it forms an important source of incomes or well-being in a particular society. For example, security of housing is generally more relevant to industrialised countries, while security of land is of huge importance where agriculture accounts for most output and employment, and becomes less important as development proceeds.

The interaction between these dimensions in the way that they predispose countries to large-scale, violent conflict means that it is not possible to isolate the economic dimension and treat this on its own. In analysing causes of conflict, it is necessary to consider the motives both of those who may be mobilized (the “supporters”) and those who do the mobilising (the “leaders”).

The diverse motivations of the supporters who join armed groups primarily relates to social and economic deprivations, although inequalities in cultural status can also be important, particularly in binding supporters together and in triggering conflict; for example, an attack on a religious building is often a powerful trigger.²⁵ As far as leaders

are concerned, political inequalities provide a particularly powerful motive for violence. Thus, the most explosive situations arise where there are political *and* socio-economic inequalities. If there is socio-economic deprivation, but the leaders are included in the political system, particularly if they actually dominate it, then conflict is much less likely.

Ghana is an example of a politically inclusive system; North-South socio-economic inequalities have persisted but have not led to violent national conflict. In Nigeria, after the 1967-1970 civil war, power-sharing via the Federal Character Principle, as well as the political dominance of the North, has sustained peace at a national level, although there have been fierce local conflicts, particularly in the Niger Delta states. In contrast, the political exclusion of northerners after the death of Houphouët-Boigny was a direct cause of conflict in Côte d'Ivoire.

Because of these interactions, it is essential to consider political and cultural status inequalities as well as social and economic ones both in analysing the causes of conflict and in considering appropriate post-conflict policies. Hence, we need a multidimensional approach. However, the groups are defined: by gender and in rural-urban categories, and in ethnic, religious, class, or regional categories). This also applies, though perhaps to a lesser extent, to VIs, since if it is grievance that motivates individuals to fight, then any of our four dimensions may lead to felt grievances, and like HIs, the grievance will be greater the more there is a coincidence of inequalities. But for political and cultural status inequalities, the deprivation is not a matter of the individual herself being deprived so much as being part of a group that is deprived, i.e., we come close to it being a matter of HIs in these dimensions.²⁶

2. Empirical evidence on inequality and conflict

There are numerous case studies documenting the role of inequality in particular countries that suffered conflict.²⁷ Such studies provide important insights into particular cases because they generally draw on a deep understanding of the case in point. Moreover, they illuminate the particular combination of inequalities that seem to be provocative, and those that are not.

Econometric analysis adds to this by incorporating a systematic comparison that includes non-conflict as well as conflict cases, but it does have disadvantages: It is very dependent on the availability of data (a particular problem for conflict-ridden cases), on the accuracy of the data that are available, on the definitions of the various variables, the dates selected, the intervening variables included, the methodology adopted, and the interpretation of the results.²⁸ For these reasons, it is quite often difficult to reproduce results from econometric analyses; a meta-investigation, bringing together the results of a number of econometric studies, is more reliable than any individual study. Of course, the question of the direction of causality is also a serious problem, both for the individual studies and the meta-approach.

The earlier discussion made clear that on the issue of inequality and conflict, we need to differentiate between a focus on individual inequality within the society, and one on group inequality (VI and HI approaches). This section first reviews VI studies and then HI ones.

Vertical inequality and the risk of violent conflict

Conflicting results are evident here. A 1989 survey of over 40 studies using cross-sectional data found mixed results, with some studies finding that vertical inequality was positively correlated to violent political conflict, a few finding that it was negatively correlated, and a number finding no relationship.²⁹

The survey concludes: “In sum, two decades of empirical research in conflict studies have challenged the conventionally accepted view that a strong positive relationship exists between economic inequality and political conflict. While numerous analyses purport to show that economic inequality has a positive impact on political dissent, others purport to show negative relationships.”³⁰

Turning to more recent evidence, a mixed story still emerges. Auvinen and Nafziger³¹ are unusual in finding a positive relationship. In a sample of 124 countries, 1980-1995, they find that for each of their measures of humanitarian emergencies, the greater the measure the higher the Gini coefficient for income, while levels and growth of GDP per capita have a negative impact.

Three measures of complex humanitarian emergencies are used: one that multiplies the number of violent deaths and the number of refugees adjusted so as to be positive even if one of the two (deaths or refugees) is zero; one that multiplies the number of violent deaths by the number of refugees, and is zero if either of the two are zero; and one that is like the first measure but also includes measures of weak performance in nutrition and infant mortality. However, the finding with respect to income distribution is not very strong, as with a fixed effects model, inequality is inversely related to humanitarian emergencies. But since very little data is available for income distribution

over time – indeed, in many countries even one observation is unusual – the fixed effects model is really not suitable to test the relationship.

By contrast, several studies have found no significant relationship between VI and armed conflict, including Collier and Hoeffler³² for 1960-1999 using both inequality data for income and land; Fearon and Laitin³³ for 1963-1999 using income data; and Lazar and Dixon³⁴ for 1963-1999 (they introduce a new inequality measure but otherwise use the same data as Fearon and Laitin). Each of these studies used cross-country data, and, to some degree, different data sources. These studies do not differentiate among types of conflict.

However, while Collier and Hoeffler³⁵ and Fearon and Laitin³⁶ come to very similar conclusions – that grievance generally and inequality in particular play little or no role in causing conflicts – Collier and Hoeffler³⁷ conclude that “the grievances that motivate rebels may be substantially disconnected from the large social concerns of inequality, political rights, and ethnic or religious identity,” while Fearon and Latin³⁸ state that “the poor quality of the inequality data does not allow us to go beyond the claim that there appears to be no relationship between inequality and [civil war] onset.”

Disaggregating types of conflict into conflicts between identity groups and “class or revolutionary” wars, Besançon³⁹ finds that a measure of VI (the Gini) is negatively related to ethnic conflict and positively related to revolutionary conflicts, using country data for the period from 1960 to 2001.

To summarise, there are mixed results on the relationship between vertical inequality and conflict, on the basis of cross-country evidence, although the earlier studies seem to show more positive results than later ones. In the most recent studies,

most studies show an insignificant relationship between HIs and the risk of violent conflict.

Assessing the effects of HI and conflict risk

Concerning the effects of HI and conflict risk, data problems are even more severe than with the vertical inequality studies because national data are rarely collected by group. Moreover, there is a problem with defining appropriate group boundaries. Although this relationship has been less tested, evidence is accumulating; some of the studies are cross-country and some within countries.

Gurr's successive cross-country studies of relative deprivation and conflict using a systematic but subjective set of measures⁴⁰ found a positive relationship between discrimination (economic, political, and cultural) and rebellion. His data is confined to conflicts that involve minorities rebelling against the state; it does not include state-induced violence or inter-communal violence. Barrows⁴¹ found that inequalities among ethnic groups showed a consistently positive correlation with political instability across 32 sub-Saharan African countries in the 1960s, with the measure of inequality including share of political power and socio-economic variables.

Østby⁴² comes to similar conclusions. Østby (2003) uses Demographic and Health Survey data (DHS) for 43 developing countries for 1986 and 2001, where HI variables are calculated in terms of both economic (durable goods ownership) and social variables.⁴³ The results reveal sizeable positive effects on the likelihood of conflict onset associated with social HIs, where conflict-onset is defined as occurring at 25 or more battle deaths. The impact of economic HI is weaker both in magnitude and statistical significance.⁴⁴

Other findings include no effect on conflict onset associated with vertical inequality, or ethnic fractionalisation or polarisation, once HIs are controlled. Interestingly, the inclusion of interaction terms between vertical and horizontal inequalities suggests that the likelihood of civil conflict is highest when low within-group coexists with high between-group inequalities.

Similar findings are made by Østby (2006).⁴⁵ She shows a significant rise in the probability of the onset of conflict across countries for countries with severe social and economic HIs, for 1986-2003. Social HIs are measured by average years of education and economic by average household assets. The analysis covers 35 to 55 developing countries according to the availability of data. The effect of HIs on conflict occurrence is quite high, with the probability of conflict tripling with respect to HIs in assets if one compares the probability at mean values and at the 95th percentile.

In this paper Østby also investigates political HIs, testing whether political exclusion (using data from the Minorities at Risk [MAR] project for the political exclusion of minority groups) affects conflict. She shows that while political exclusion on its own as an independent variable does not affect the probability of conflict, it has a strong interactive effect with inter-regional asset inequality – i.e., asset inequality has a stronger effect in increasing the probability of conflict in the presence of political HIs. She finds a similar effect with educational inequality, but not a statistically significant one. She thus provides econometric support for the hypothesis made earlier that HIs are more likely to cause conflict where there is consistency between socio-economic and political HIs.

Østby⁴⁶ (2006) also finds that the probability of HIs being associated with conflict is higher in democratic and semi-democratic regimes than in autocracies, presumably because autocracies can suppress conflict. This is an important policy finding, for it means that, from a conflict perspective, it is particularly important to try and reduce socio-economic HIs in democracies and semi-democracies – and these, of course, are becoming the prevalent regimes throughout the world.

Turning to within-country studies, HIs within particular regions or districts can be expected to be most relevant to communal conflicts helping to determine where they occur. However, for other types of conflict with national characteristics (like separatist or ideological ones), the within-region or district HI would not necessarily be expected to be related to the location of conflict, while other factors might be decisive, such as the degree of central or rebel control over the area.⁴⁷ Investigation into the correlates of the location of communal violence in Indonesia has shown that HIs are related to conflict.

Mancini⁴⁸ uses district-level data to explore the impact of HIs between ethnic and religious groups on conflict. Very small groups were excluded from his sample. Mancini finds that horizontal inequality in child mortality rates and its change over time are positively (and significantly) associated with the occurrence of deadly ethno-communal violence, after controlling for a number of intervening factors, including population size, ethnic diversity, and economic development.

Other measures of HI, including measures of HIs in education, unemployment, landless agricultural labourers, and civil service employment, were also related to the incidence of conflict, but the effects were less than that of child mortality, and were not significant when the HI in child mortality was included. Results also suggest that violent

conflict is more likely to occur in areas with relatively low levels of economic development and greater religious polarisation.

Standard measures of (vertical) income inequality as well as other purely demographic indicators of ethnic diversity are found to have no significant impact on the likelihood of communal violence. Similarly, using a municipality-level measure of Muslim “relative deprivation” vis-à-vis Christians, Magdalena⁴⁹ finds a positive correlation between HI and the intensity of the Moro rebellion in the Southern Philippines.

Murshed and Gates exploring spatial-horizontal inequality in Nepal also find that “horizontal inequalities robustly explain the intensity of the Maoist insurgency” (although not the incidence),⁵⁰ with a statistical association between district-level relative deprivation in terms of human development and the incidence of violent deaths in that district. A subsequent econometric analysis in Nepal Do and Lyer⁵¹ replicates this finding of regional deprivation – in this case, measured by the regional poverty rate and the literacy rate – but adds additional variables relating to demographic characteristics, finding that demographic caste polarization is also significantly related to conflict intensity.

In summary, the recent evidence suggests little relationship between VI and violent conflict, but there is mounting econometric support for the view that HIs are related to the incidence of conflict. While this seems to be the case, the results show that only a small part of the variance is explained and therefore other causes are also at work. Interestingly, evidence for districts within Indonesia⁵² and cross-country⁵³ (Østby 2003) shows that there is no correlation between VI and HI, which implies that studies of the

relationship of one type of inequality with conflict cannot be interpreted as applying to the other type; it also implies that the findings that VI is not related to conflict but to HI are not contradictory.

Caprioli⁵⁴ has investigated this relationship using the fertility rate to capture gender inequality. She transforms it into a dichotomous variable, with a value of 0 if it is three or below, and a value of 1 if it is above three. She finds a positive relationship with conflict incidence (using 25 or more battle-deaths as the conflict variable). GDP per capita and GDP growth are not found to be significantly related to conflict incidence once the gender inequality variable is included, and democratic regimes are more likely to experience conflict.

Caprioli also finds that conflict is more likely in the presence of minorities at risk and if there has been past conflict. As general development progress is itself inversely correlated with the fertility rate, it is possible that the findings may partly reflect the well-established relationship between overall level of development and conflict risk. However, the model stands up to an alternative specification of gender inequality in terms of female participation in the labour market, but again this could partly be reflective of broader developmental processes as well as gender inequality per se.

3. Conflict and inequality

Conflict certainly affects the distribution of resources. How it does so depends on the nature of the conflict. It sometimes seems to be thought that everyone loses by conflict, but this quite clearly is not so. Certain groups gain as war permits them to seize resources of various kinds, legally and non-legally, and trade embargoes plus conflict allows for a type of war-induced import substitution benefiting those who participate,

often in the informal sector.⁵⁵ The losers are manifold, of course. Many lose their jobs as the formal sector contracts; when war rages, many have to flee, leaving behind their livelihoods and possessions.

The social sectors tend (though not always) to decline, and the delivery of education and health services and clean water deteriorates, with widespread costs. Food prices sometimes escalate, especially when food production is adversely affected, or if the government adopts inflationary war finance, cutting into the food entitlements of the poorer sections, sometimes leading to famine.⁵⁶ However, research shows that the costs of war (and the distribution of those costs) vary across societies, depending, in particular, on two factors: the nature of the war itself, and the response of the government⁵⁷.

A third factor is the nature of the economy. With respect to the nature of the war, probably the most important issue is its location, whether it is concentrated in one part of the country or widespread. Where it is concentrated, as is often the case, the particular groups located in the area of the fighting tend to suffer especially – for example, northern Uganda has not been able to participate at all in the development enjoyed by most of the rest of the country during the last 20 years; similarly, in the conflict of the mid-1980s, it was the people living in the Luwero triangle who suffered most.⁵⁸ Other relevant aspects of war include whether civilian populations are targeted, whether looting is widespread, whether social and/or economic infrastructure is destroyed, whether most fighting occurs in rural or urban areas, and the war's duration.

As far as the government is concerned, two aspects are critical. First is whether it retains reasonable capacity or is completely undermined – for example, both the Nicaraguan and Sudanese governments remained quite strong despite civil war, while the

Somali Government virtually disappeared. Where the government disintegrates, poor people suffer from insecurity and lack of services, while wealthier people are better able to protect themselves by using private services or moving out of the country (except where the richer groups are specifically targeted, as in Cambodia and Rwanda). A second important aspect is whether the government continues to try and meet the needs of the whole population or withholds services in “enemy” territory.

The government of Nicaragua actually improved its nationwide coverage of services during the civil war, and nutrition levels of the poorest regions improved, also.⁵⁹ In contrast, in the 1980s and 1990s, Sudan provided minimal services to the South, which became increasingly underdeveloped. Indeed, many in that region were forced into slave labour when food aid was withheld from them.⁶⁰

With respect to the economy, adaptability is important. Perhaps unexpectedly, very undeveloped economies seem to be more adaptable than more developed ones; people are able to retreat into subsistence and thereby ensure their survival. In Uganda during the late 1970s, nutrition levels did not change significantly despite regression in the formal sector of the economy associated with Amin’s policies and the invasion to topple him.⁶¹ In contrast, Nicaragua’s import-substitution industry suffered greatly from the trade embargo, and consequently, GDP fell precipitately, with estimates of total reduction in GDP due to the war and embargo varying between 17% and 26% of GDP between 1980 and 1987.⁶² Illegal activities flourish under the cloak of conflict – drug, diamond, and timber production, and smuggling, for example. These activities not only offer considerable riches to the people who organize the trade, but also to small producers, such as poppy producers in Afghanistan or coca producers in Colombia.

In Afghanistan, poppy production was estimated to have increased twelve-fold between the mid-1980s and the mid-1990s, during the war against the Soviet invasion. It subsided when the Taliban took control in the late 1990s, but has again become of huge significance accounting for (illicit) exports of \$3 billion.⁶³ In Colombia, production often has been at the heart of the conflict for years, and the government has taken draconian measures in an attempt to eradicate the narcotics trade. Yet an estimated 200,000 families in Colombia rely on coca production for their livelihoods, and the government's programmes are resulting in a reduction in the dietary standards of rural populations, which is likely to generate further dissatisfaction against the government⁶⁴.

It is thus clear that it is difficult to generalize about the socio-economic distributional impacts of violent conflict. Setting aside for a moment the uneven geographical impact, as far as VI is concerned, war often (but not always) affects the modern sector first and foremost. As such, it is the middle classes rather than the poor who generally suffer greater income losses. To put it another way, there is a sort of reverse Kuznets effect. Kuznets predicts that income distribution worsens with development, at least in the early stages. War, or "development in reverse," as it has been called by Nicholas Stern, the former Chief Economist of the World Bank,⁶⁵ reverses this process, and might reduce VI unless this is offset by targeting of particular groups.

Often the poorest had no access to services before the conflict so their services are not affected by general deterioration in service provision. Nonetheless, had investment in infrastructure continued to expand education and health service coverage, the poorer groups would have been the likely beneficiaries. Consequently, the sharp reductions in such investments, which often accompany armed conflicts, affect them adversely in this

way. However, some of these effects can be offset by governments that are determined to sustain services and food entitlements.⁶⁶

The typical geographic unevenness of conflicts normally affects HI and may affect VI. Prolonged and concentrated conflict leaves the conflict-zone underdeveloped and sharpens HIs. There are many examples, including Northern Uganda, Southern Sudan, Northern Côte d'Ivoire, the middle belt of Nigeria, the hill areas of Nepal, and the indigenous rural areas of Guatemala. In so far as it was relative deprivation that set off the conflict in the first place, and conflict is located in the areas of deprivation, then groups which started out deprived become more so over time, and HIs rise. This may well involve a rise in VI, also. From a geographic perspective, then, conflict might be expected to increase HIs, except where the conflict ends in separation, so that a region which had been relatively rich (e.g. East Timor, at least in terms of resources) or poor (Bangladesh and Eritrea) leaves the country resulting in a more equal state.

Rural/urban and gender inequalities may also change during conflict – but again, the direction of change is not always to widen existing inequalities. This too depends on the nature of the conflict. In some cases, the rural areas may be relatively untouched, and most economic collapse occurs in the urban areas. But in others, such as Mozambique, there is widespread destruction of rural facilities,⁶⁷ while urban areas gain from an influx of aid. Women suffer during conflict – sometimes as the victims of mass rape – but they also sometimes are able to take up new social and economic opportunities denied them during peacetime (as in both world wars). A comparison of war and non-war economies in the 1980s and 1990s showed a mixed picture: Girls did relatively better than boys during the conflict on education, but fared worse on mortality, while their economic

activities, compared with men, were not systematically different in war than in peace.⁶⁸ There has, however, been rather little systematic research on this; much of the literature consists in itemizing particular roles of women or particular impacts rather than assessing the relative impact.⁶⁹ Goldstein⁷⁰ shows that women's "traditional" roles are used to support the war effort, but he finds only weak evidence that this prevents them from becoming warriors, and indeed there is plentiful evidence that many women do join the fighting, some on the "frontline" and more in more ancillary roles. A survey of 55 countries at conflict from 1990-2003 found that women were part of the military forces in 38 countries.⁷¹ One estimate puts female participants at between one-tenth and one-third of total fighters⁷² (Manhoharan 2003, quoted in Bouta et al. 2005). It is often assumed that because the vast majority of deaths are civilian, in recent civil wars, therefore the vast majority are women and children.⁷³ This assumption has been questioned by Goldstein with data covering both interstate and intrastate conflicts.⁷⁴

In sum, war tends to impoverish societies generally, and it also has strong but unsystematic distributional effects. It is worth recalling that the two world wars of the 20th century were associated with a sharp reduction in general and gender inequality mainly because of the big expansion in employment opportunities that the wars brought about – and in both cases, these seem to have had a ratchet effect, and the changes were not fully reversed subsequently. Today's developing countries are clearly in a different position; in particular, employment opportunities generally fall rather than rise. Nonetheless, it is not possible to assert with confidence that every type of inequality worsens during conflict. Some of the gaps that typically widen with development – including VI and rural/urban gaps – may fall as development stagnates. On the other

hand, HIs may widen, especially where the conflict is located in poorer parts of the country and poorer groups are targeted. There are likely to be complex changes in gender relations which cannot readily be summarized or generalized.

When violent conflict comes to an end, some of the war effects go into reverse. Economic recovery is likely to be associated with worsening VI as new opportunities arise for some but not others. Rural urban gaps can be expected to widen too. This may also apply to HIs, with the revival of the export industries located typically in the more privileged parts of the country, but this may be offset by initiation of the development process in the areas previously neglected because of the conflict. If women's economic and political position was improved by war, this may be reversed by peace.⁷⁵ But for each type of inequality much depends on the specific policies adopted – to be discussed in Section 5.

4. Tackling inequalities in post-conflict recovery policies

This analysis points to the necessity of including analysis of socio-economic, political and cultural causes of conflict from the beginning of the peace process. It is important that there should be widespread acceptance of the need to reduce inequality. Moderating economic and political HIs is an important aspect of peacebuilding in those societies where HIs are serious and appear to be a major conflict-provoking element. Not only is the aim of generating a more egalitarian society desirable in itself, but it is also important instrumentally, as sustained growth and poverty reduction will not be possible if strong HIs lead to a recurrence of conflict.

We find, indeed, that the commitment to tackle HIs forms an important element of many peace agreements, without which such commitments would probably not have been

made. For example, in the 21-year north-south Sudanese conflict, in which political and economic marginalization was an important element, according to the “Black Book of Sudan,” written by Southern leaders, the peace agreement of 2005 incorporated both power-sharing and federalism and wealth-sharing elements.⁷⁶

Equally, the halting progress of the Northern Ireland peace only occurred after major progress on eliminating economic disparities and involved stringent requirements for political equality, extending well beyond the top levels of government to the police. Failure to make progress on disparities in the police was one factor that explicitly delayed a final agreement. A similar story can be told about the Guatemalan, Lebanese, and Bosnian peace agreements.⁷⁷

Failure to deal with these issues often prevents peace agreements from occurring. In some cases, agreements do occur without any explicit commitment to tackle HIs, perhaps because one side wins the war decisively, or because peace is imposed from outside. Whether and when this leads to renewed conflict depends on the circumstances. Failure to include power- and wealth-sharing explicitly can be seen as a factor behind the recurrence of conflict in Angola in 1992, when “first-past-the-post” elections left UNITA with no power at all. In Mozambique, too, there has been neither political nor economic power-sharing.⁷⁸

Successful economic recovery, shared to some extent by all parts of the country, some incorporation of opposition elites in some of the spoils of development, and lack of external support (which previously played a very large role) or other obvious resources for rebellion have kept the peace, but it remains a somewhat fragile situation.⁷⁹ The recent recurrence of conflict in Sri Lanka is another case where neither economic nor

political disparities were reduced since the ceasefire in 2002 – a failure that was one important element behind the return to war.

We have argued that the evidence that vertical inequality leads to conflict is much weaker than the evidence regarding horizontal inequalities. Nonetheless, there are strong reasons for tackling each type of inequality in reconstruction policies. Moderating VI is important as part of any policy to reduce poverty, since with high VI a successful growth strategy may not lead to a substantial reduction in poverty, as when vertical inequality is severe the poor receive only a small fraction of additional output.

Vertical inequality has been a severe impediment to poverty reduction in countries such as Brazil and Bolivia. Where inequality is worsening, growth may do little for poverty, as the bulk of additional incomes are secured by middle or higher income groups.

Moreover, there is evidence that reduced VI will tend to increase economic growth.⁸⁰ Bourgignon⁸¹ estimated that a change of one standard deviation in inequality will change growth by half a percentage point. There has been some debate about why this is so. Some attribute it to “human capital” effects, since poor distribution generally means low levels of nutrition and education among the poor, and consequently leads to weak productivity of a large section of the population.⁸²

Others have suggested that there are political reasons for this relationship. One is that political instability may be more probable with high inequality, leading to uncertainty and low investment and growth.⁸³ Another political explanation is that with unequal income distribution, governments have to offer “populist” policies to keep

political support and these in turn impede growth.⁸⁴ Most empirical evidence supports the first explanation.⁸⁵

More equal gender relations are also to be desired in themselves and for their contribution to human development and poverty reduction. These are objectives that should be pursued in all societies, not only or particularly post-conflict ones, but there is also some econometric evidence, noted earlier, that gender inequality itself predisposes to internal conflict.⁸⁶

Given the connection between regional, ethnic, racial and religious HIs and conflict, the rest of this section reviews the kinds of policies that would be likely to reduce HIs while the next section considers whether these policies are in fact being adopted in post-conflict societies.⁸⁷ Some of these policies are also relevant to VI and gender balance – which are briefly considered in the course of the discussion.

Measurement and monitoring

Knowledge about the nature of HIs and their major sources is essential background for designing policies to reduce HIs. A first requirement is to identify the salient groups in the society and monitor existing HIs, especially in socio-economic and political dimensions. Though this paper is concerned with economic recovery programmes, it is essential to include political HIs if conflict is not to recur, which in turn provides the basis for economic recovery. Indeed, successful reduction in political HIs can itself be sufficient to prevent conflict recurrence, as indicated by the post-civil war experience in Nigeria where there have been systematic attempts to correct political HIs while very little was done on the economic ones.

The first step in understanding the status and dynamics of horizontal inequalities in the country is to categorise the relevant identity groups: these are the group boundaries that people mind about, and boundaries on the basis of which discrimination or favouritism occurs. An initial in-depth investigation of the history and political economy of the country in question will suggest important group distinctions.

Further valuable insights can grow out of surveys of peoples' own perceptions of identity distinctions. Such surveys ask people which groups they feel are privileged or deprived, and which are favoured or disfavoured by the Government. They can also ask about the importance of different aspects of identity to the people themselves. Often it can be useful to adopt a multiple approach, examining a variety of group classifications (for example, ethnic, regional, and religious), and seeing where the main inequalities emerge. Such measures should address four additional questions:

- Whether the salient groups are ranked hierarchically, that is, most members of one group are better off than the other group(s), or unranked, such that each group contains comparable fractions of rich and poor individuals⁸⁸.
- Whether groups are geographically concentrated or dispersed.
- Whether groups are specialised on particular economic activities (e.g. one group being mainly traders, or subsistence farmers, or cash-crop farmers).
- Whether the Government is politically inclined to tackle inequalities or instead wishes to preserve them. For shorthand, we can describe these two types as “willing” or “unwilling,” though in fact the situation may not be so clear cut. For example, the Government’s willingness may depend on the degree to which aid donors are prepared to support efforts to redress inequalities. And there may be divisions in the Government on the issue.

Each of these questions is relevant for policy design.

*Measurement issues*⁸⁹

There is a voluminous literature on the measurement of vertical inequality, which has given rise to well-known measures such as the Gini coefficient; methods for measuring horizontal inequality have only begun to receive much attention. Providing summary information on horizontal inequality is more complex than summarizing vertical inequality, precisely because we are now concerned with groups. The most common measure of HIs is the ratio of average performance on a particular indicator of the groups. Where there are more than two groups, simple ratios do not capture the full picture. The population weighted group coefficient of variance then provides a good summary of HIs. However, this still makes use of the average performance of each group, which conceals distributional differences within groups.

Yet, from a political perspective, how groups compare at different points in the distribution may be relevant. In one case, for example, a group may outperform another uniformly at every income level; in a second case, a group's elite (say, the top 5 percent) may have incomes far higher than the elite of the other group, but in the remaining 95 percent of the distribution the groups have the same income levels; in a third case, both groups may be equal at the top, but the bottom 40 percent of one group is far poorer than the bottom 40 percent of the other; and in a fourth case, one group may have higher income levels at the top of the distribution, but lower incomes at the bottom.

These differences have political and policy implications. From a political perspective, in the first case, both the elite and the masses of the lower-income group have grievances, a situation that may make rebellion more likely. Malaysia in the 1960s and apartheid South Africa are examples. In the second case, the elite has a grievance but

not the rest of the population, making group mobilisation less likely. In the other cases, the income disparities among the lower-income groups may not lead to rebellion since the elite lack a motive, although new leaders may emerge.

The differences are relevant from a policy perspective, too. In the first case, policies are needed both to increase entrepreneurial and civil-service opportunities at the top and to provide basic services and economic opportunities to the masses. In the second case, focus of efforts to reduce tensions should be on elite opportunities. In the other cases, it is a matter of improving the position of poorer members of the group.

There are several ways of comparing performance across the whole distribution. The most helpful is to contrast the group performance using geometric means⁹⁰ that effectively assign different weights to different portions of the income distribution curve. For instance, a second-power geometric mean would square the incomes of each group, and then take the square root of the average.

If the disparity between second-power means of each group is greater than the disparity between the normal mean, then the bulk of the inequality is located towards the upper end of the income scale. Alternative, more intuitive but less comprehensive and informative methods are to compare the average performance of each quintile of one group with the same quintile in the other group; or to compare the proportion of each group in each income decile against their proportion in the overall population⁹¹.

One important aspect of measurement is that since HIs are multidimensional, measurement must cover each of the four dimensions, and the most important elements within each. To the extent that we are concerned with the political impact of horizontal inequalities, what is important are the elements that seem most significant to the people

involved, i.e., what they are concerned about – in the extreme, the kinds of things which people will fight over. It seems that this differs across societies and groups. In Northern Ireland, for example, it appears that people are particularly concerned about their employment and housing inequality; in Zimbabwe, people's actions suggest they pay attention to land inequality; in Britain, young black people object to being stopped by the police as they go about their business; in Sri Lanka, people's major concerns are employment prospects and access to higher education. From both a well-being and a political perspective, then, these rather concrete variables may be of more importance than outcome variables, like life expectancy or nutrition levels, or incomes, which are less visible on a day-to-day basis.

Data issues

In many countries, most data do not include ethnic or religious variables. Serious monitoring of HIs requires that such variables be included in household surveys or censuses. But in their absence it is often possible to use other data (e.g. using language or region to classify people) which can act as a crude proxy for the group data needed. Data is particularly weak on political dimensions, although an overview of the main political inequalities can usually readily be derived from a political and historical analysis of the countries.

There are also severe data problems in arriving at information about VI. Although this is easier in one way – as it does not require decisions about group boundaries or information collected on a group basis – many of both the very poor and the very rich are commonly omitted from conventional household surveys, which can invalidate available

data derived from this source. However, data on gender differences are often available, as are rural-urban data, though here the dividing line is somewhat arbitrary.

Despite problems of data and procedures, it is generally possible to get a fairly good intuitive picture of inequalities in any society. It is desirable, if possible, to use a series of alternative measures, and different groupings, to see how robust the results are. Urgent data gaps can be filled by “light” surveys and use of focus groups.

Policies towards socio-economic HIs

The discussion here considers relevant policies on the basis of experience of countries that have adopted affirmative action policies across the world.⁹² However, while the design of policies in a particular context may be informed by such experience, ultimately, appropriate policy must rest on in-depth knowledge of the society in question.

The term “affirmative action” has been defined as “positive steps taken to increase the representation of women and minorities in areas of employment, education, and business from which they have been historically excluded”⁹³. Essentially, this covers both indirect and direct approaches. Indirect approaches are general policies applied to the whole population, designed in such a way that the relatively poor groups are the net beneficiaries. In contrast, direct approaches target groups with quotas and subsidies, directed at people because they are members of a particular group. Sometimes the two approaches are combined.

In a post-conflict setting a combination of approaches is likely to be desirable – partly because indirect approaches tend to be slow in generating a significant impact, and partly because the Government needs to be seen to be doing something. For example, in South Africa, a direct approach was adopted to business “empowerment” with targets for

capital ownership by blacks, while other approaches (towards expansion of education for example and dismantling discriminatory regulations) were of an indirect nature.

The usefulness of indirect policies

In Northern Ireland, many of the policies pre-dated the 1998 peace agreement, and again consisted of a combination of indirect policies (notably education expansion and anti-discrimination policies especially in employment) and direct policies via affirmative action agreements and public sector contracts (see below). But of course what is appropriate depends critically on context.

In general, promoting indirect policies, where possible and effective, are to be preferred because they do not “entrench” group boundaries in the way that direct policies can and are less likely to arouse the hostility of disfavoured groups. These include progressive tax policies and general anti-poverty programmes which ipso facto benefit deprived groups relative to privileged ones, and of course are also relevant to tackling VI. They also include regional tax and expenditure policies where groups are regionally concentrated.

Moreover, where groups are concentrated within regions, expenditure allocations can be devised to favour deprived districts – these come closer to direct targeting, but are not explicitly targeted towards particular groups, and include anyone in the affected region, irrespective of group.

Other indirect measures use the legal system, for example, through legal recognition and enforcement of economic and social human rights and through strong and well-enforced anti-discrimination legislation. For example, in Peru, a Human Rights Ombudsman (Defensorio del Pueblo) has been instituted to help enforce the rights of

indigenous peoples, while in Northern Ireland, effective legislation against employment discrimination was important. Resources for legal aid may be an important aspect of HI-reducing policy.

Another way of addressing horizontal inequalities indirectly, where different groups are concentrated in different sectors of the economy, are programmes targeted to benefit the economic sectors in which the relatively deprived groups are concentrated. Like regional inequalities, the concentration of different ethnic groups in different sectors usually has deep historical roots, often associated with colonial “ethnic division of labour” policies⁹⁴.

Within public expenditure allocation, it is important to recognise three distinct aspects of Government expenditure: the construction of publicly financed facilities, such as infrastructure; the running of public facilities; and the beneficiaries of the facilities⁹⁵.

Attempts to trace the (vertical) distributional impact of Government expenditure have focussed almost exclusively on the third phase⁹⁶. Yet, public sector investment accounts for a very large proportion of total investment in many developing countries, and the beneficiaries of contracts to carry out this expenditure are especially visible and their selection politically provocative. Government employment also typically constitutes a large proportion of total formal sector employment, and the distribution of these “good” jobs is an important aspect of HI reduction in employment.

Policies should be designed to achieve fair distribution across groups for all three aspects of public expenditure. A first step is to ensure fair and transparent procedures that can sometimes do much to reduce prior prejudiced distribution.

The fiscal system can also be designed to favour HI-reducing regional and sectoral policies through, for instance, tax incentives for investment in particular regions or sectors. Local tax rates can also be differentiated to favour poorer people and poorer groups. In many contexts, particular groups are concentrated in trading, and taxes on wholesale and retail trade would alleviate HIs.

The poorest people and groups are generally not in the formal sector so that direct taxes on the formal sector will generally help. In Niger, for example, most people in the informal sector belong to a different ethnic group from those in the government and the formal sector generally.⁹⁷ Indirect taxation may also be designed to help improve distribution, by exempting goods consumed more as a proportion of their income (for example food and basic fuels), or goods that particular groups consumer more heavily than others, and conversely by raising the tax rates of goods consumed more by high-income people and relatively well-off groups. For example, taxation of alcohol favours Muslim groups.

Why direct approaches can be effective

Partly because indirect policies take time and are not always effective, and sometimes because of political pressure from poorer groups, direct approaches have quite often been adopted. Examples point to the variety of policies possible. Some of the programmemes have been introduced by disadvantaged majorities – for example in Fiji, Malaysia, Namibia, South Africa, and Sri Lanka – and some by advantaged majorities for disadvantaged minorities, for example, in Brazil, India, Northern Ireland, and the United States. The latter show that affirmative action can be introduced even where the political situation appears unfavourable.

The following list illustrates the range of direct policies towards socio-economic

HIIs possible:

- Assets
 - Policies towards public sector contracts to ensure fairer participation (Canada, Malaysia, N.Ireland, S. Africa, U.S. – to be discussed below)
 - Policies to improve group ownership of land via redistribution of government-owned land; forcible eviction; purchases; and restrictions on ownership (Malaysia, Zimbabwe, Fiji, and Namibia)
 - Policies towards the terms of privatisation (Fiji)
 - Policies towards financial assets: bank regulations; subsidisation; and restrictions (Malaysia and South Africa)
 - Credit allocation (Fiji and Malaysia)
 - Preferential training (Brazil and New Zealand)
 - Quotas for education (Malaysia, Sri Lanka, and the U.S.)
 - Policies towards public sector infrastructure (South Africa)
 - Policies towards housing (Northern Ireland)
- Incomes and employment
- Employment policies, including public sector quotas (Malaysia, Sri Lanka, India), and a requirement for balanced employment in the private sector (South Africa)
- Education
 - Quotas for university entrants (Malaysia, Sri Lanka, and Nigeria)
 - Language policy used to strengthen the position of some groups and weaken others in school and university (Malaysia and Sri Lanka)
- Health
 - Policies to improve health access and services in relatively deprived areas (Northern Ghana), or special efforts to improve access of the black population in the U.S.

Most of these policies involve targets, quotas and public expenditure directed at improving participation.

Several approaches have been adapted to improve the position of particular groups in Malaysia, Northern Ireland, Canada, South Africa, and the United States. One is the use of procurement as a way of enforcing anti-discrimination law; another is to enforce affirmative action targets; a third way is to stimulate entrepreneurial activity of particular groups. For example, in the United States public sector contracts were used to

tackle “underrepresentation” of blacks, while the Public Sector Works Employment Act of 1977 required that at least 10 percent of each local works project grant would go to minority businesses.

In Malaysia, Bumiputera companies receive a margin of preference in competing for contracts. In South Africa, targeted procurement has been introduced according to a system of “preference points.” In Northern Ireland, after little progress had been made on the basis of a 1976 Act prohibiting discrimination, in 1989 employers were required to ensure “fair participation” by both religious communities, with compulsory monitoring and self-assessment.

There is evidence of considerable progress in achieving the objective of fair participation since that date. In aggregate, Catholic employment grew considerably faster than Protestant, while segregated employment decreased and integrated employment increased. Some of this progress is undoubtedly due to the simultaneous reduction in HIs in education between the communities (another part of the policy package). But careful research into 78 large private sector firms and 58 public sector units that had affirmative action agreements for 1990-2000 “provides indications that significant changes occurred in the employment growth and community balance of firms with agreements, with trends towards more balanced and integrated employment.”⁹⁸

Direct policies of this kind have often been used to target women. In general, the policies would also contribute to reducing VI.

There is a need for economy-wide restructuring. Policies directed towards improving a group’s human assets are generally insufficient by themselves to improve economic HIs. For example, there have been attempts to extend education to indigenous

groups in Peru, and although there has been some success, incomes and the returns to education remain relatively low.⁹⁹

Similarly, educational access has been greatly extended in Northern Ghana, but the north-south poverty and income gaps remain.¹⁰⁰ Although something can be done to improve economic opportunities via special credit programmes and directed infrastructural investment, this is likely to be insufficient without a broad restructuring of the economic activity across groups in the economy.

Such a restructuring cannot, of course, be achieved overnight, but requires a long-term vision. However, in Malaysia much was achieved over a ten-year period. Malaysia's New Economic Policy explicitly aimed to eradicate the colonial "ethnic division of labour," and between its inception in 1970 and 1985 did indeed achieve a remarkable reduction in inter-ethnic inequalities, with the disparity ratio between the average Chinese household and the average Malay household reducing from 2.7:1 to 1.6:1, although further improvement has proved more difficult.¹⁰¹

The need for some restructuring to improve VI has been more widely recognised with the advocacy of "pro-poor" growth. For improving gender inequalities, it has also often been pointed out that special attention needs to be given to this issue, both in terms of economy-wide restructuring and in terms of the position (role and pay) within sectors.¹⁰²

International aid can play an important role in HI-reducing regional and sectoral development policies, although it also has the potential for a negative role, where aid distribution favours privileged regions or aid-imposed structural adjustment programmes contribute to increasing HIs.

Today, much aid neglects the issue of group disparities, and this can (often unintentionally) worsen the risk of conflict. An example is Nepal, where over decades aid and development neglected the west and far western regions and excluded Dalits, leading to HIs which contributed to the later outbreak of conflict.¹⁰³

Another example is Rwanda, where high aid flows in pre-genocide Rwanda supported the politically exclusive and subsequently genocidal regime.¹⁰⁴ A similar aid distribution occurred in Burundi; evidence shows that in the early 1980s, two-thirds of development funds (mostly aid-financed) was concentrated in Tutsi-dominated areas, and the remaining three-quarters of the population received just one-third.¹⁰⁵ While aid today is broadly intended to promote growth and poverty reduction, the impact can be to worsen horizontal inequalities where these do not form an explicit consideration in aid policy. There are several reasons why this is so.

First, some programmes favour particular groups, whether intentionally or not. For instance, the “transmigration” programmes in Indonesia, supported by the World Bank and other donors, relocated hundreds of thousands of Javanese families across the “Outer Islands,” often allocating them prime agricultural land and marginalizing local groups, worsening land and income distribution across groups. In Aceh, the allocation of prime land to Javanese migrants under this programme was one of the main complaints of the separatist insurgency.¹⁰⁶

Second, structural adjustment programmes can exacerbate horizontal inequalities where more privileged groups are in the favoured tradable sectors and less privileged groups are concentrated in the subsistence and non-tradable sectors. In Mozambique, the gainers are the producers of cashews, cotton, and sugar, mainly located

in the centre and south, and the losers the much poorer groups in the northern regions. In Côte d'Ivoire, the south gained from policies favouring the cocoa sector, while the subsistence north was left out. In Sri Lanka, the northeast was left out of the benefits of adjustment, in terms of private capital flows and jobs in textiles. Privatisation policies also tend to benefit the elite and powerful. This was the case in Burundi, for example, where the Tutsi secured most of the gains.¹⁰⁷

Third, projects and programmes to reduce poverty are often focused on the areas that are easiest to reach, which are those around the capital city. Remote areas tend to be neglected, thereby worsening inter-regional inequalities. This is the case in Peru, Mozambique, and Guatemala.

Fourth, implementation processes often lead to the benefits of aid distribution being skewed as particular groups control resource flows. A study of a capacity-building programme for Kenyan civil servants found that in practice it was biased by senior officials in favour of their own ethnic group. Food aid distribution seems to have been skewed in conflict situations.¹⁰⁸ It seems probable that similar processes apply in post-conflict contexts – this might explain the heavy southern bias observed in aid to Mozambique.¹⁰⁹

Reviews of existing PRSPs show that ethnic or religious distributional issues are rarely reported upon or discussed. Gender equity enters in the majority of cases, but protection of ethnic minorities is mentioned in only a quarter of the cases examined. The cases where ethnic minorities are not mentioned include countries which are evidently heterogeneous and at risk of conflict, such as Benin, Chad, Guyana, Niger, and Rwanda.¹¹⁰ Group equity considerations should also enter in the decisions as to who to

include in the participatory exercises. As noted by Booth and Curran, “The participation of minorities or indigenous peoples is either often overlooked or simply regarded as impractical due to their marginalisation.”¹¹¹

Considerations of vertical and horizontal inequality also need to be included in any donor involvement in public expenditure reviews (PERs) and in discussions of Poverty Reduction Budget Support (PRSBs). This requires an assessment of the distribution of the benefits of public expenditure by income level and by group. Given data problems, group distribution can often be approximated by regional data. The equity of group distribution of government expenditure can then be introduced as an explicit consideration along with the normal efficiency and poverty reduction criteria.

Sectoral-wide programmemes (SWAPs) also require an assessment of distributional implications of programmemes, with requirements for improvement when large inequalities occur.

Macro-reform programmemes have strong implications for distribution; programmemes generally favour tradables over non-tradables, which can have serious implications for group as well as individual distribution, sometimes so strong that it more than offsets any public sector policies designed to correct such inequities. This is the case in Ghana, where the north is benefiting from deliberate attempts to increase social sector investment, but this is more than offset by economic developments favouring the rest of the country, so that north-south inequalities in incomes and poverty are increasing. Less than 1% of foreign direct investment goes to the north. The group distribution of macro-policies need to be assessed and taken into account in the design of policies.

Policies towards political HIs

As argued above, politically inclusive policies are essential if conflict recurrence is to be avoided. Policies to achieve this, therefore, need to be built into post-conflict political settlements. This does not happen automatically in either democratic or non-democratic systems.

Both formal and informal mechanisms can play a role in ensuring such political participation – or exclusion. An example of formal exclusion occurred in Côte d’Ivoire, where the decision as to who is a citizen and who could be a presidential candidate effectively disenfranchised most of the north.¹¹²

Political power is located at many levels: the executive, the legislative, and the judiciary; at the centre and in local government; and in the army and the police. Group participation needs to be identified at each of these levels, and appropriate policies devised. However, the appropriate constitutional solution must be country specific, depending on a country’s history, geography, and demographic composition. As Reynolds argues, “When designing an appropriate electoral system that addresses the needs of a minority, the case context determines all.”¹¹³

Major considerations in tackling political HIs include the definition of citizenship, the design of the electoral system and rules of political competition, the composition of the executive and the way its decisions are made, the extent and nature of decentralisation, and policies towards employment in the bureaucracy, in the police, and in the army. Each can be designed in either an inclusionary or exclusionary way. However, given that the main purpose of this paper is to identify appropriate socio-economic policies, we do not discuss the details of these policies further here.¹¹⁴

5. Post-conflict policies and inequalities

It is difficult to be definitive about donor policies towards conflict-prone and post-conflict societies because policies are evolving, reflecting changing views about the causes of conflict. Also, there are many donors, only a few of which will be considered here. Finally, what happens on the ground is not always a reflection of the discourse.

Donor discourse

There are, of course, many considerations in the design of post-conflict policies; prominent among them are the restoration of macro-economic stability, reconstruction of facilities and institutions that have suffered during conflict; reintegration of rebel soldiers and refugees into the economy; and the “normal” policies believed to favour economic growth, such as liberalization. This package of policies tends to be a constant, but increasingly donors argue that “conflict-sensitive” development is required more in the form of “add-ons” than changes to the normal policy package.

Thus, the World Bank Report *Breaking the Conflict Trap* argues that in general, appropriate policy in post-conflict countries should differ from normal peacetime policies.¹¹⁵ In particular, the report argues for policies to help post-conflict countries sustain growth, to offset the impact of commodity price slumps, to increase transparency in natural resource rich economies, and to limit access to resources that finance conflict. But it does not consider any policies that address inequality, which is in line with the view taken in that report that this is not a root cause of conflict. It appears, however, that the (horizontal) inequality-blind stance of the authors of this book is at odds with other World Bank practices and procedures.

Indeed, as part of its *Operational Policy on Development Cooperation and Conflict* (OP2.30),¹¹⁶ the World Bank introduced a Conflict Analysis Framework (CAF), which seeks “to support country and regional efforts to analyze and address conflicts in the context of country assistance, poverty reduction, and other development strategies,” with the aim that “developmental interventions do not instigate, exacerbate, or revive situations of violent conflict, but instead – if well designed – help reduce conflict.”¹¹⁷

The CAF identifies six key categories: social and ethnic relations; governance and political institutions; human rights and security; economic structure and performance; environment and natural resources; and external factors. Although it is recommended that most countries undertake a conflict analysis, including countries that have not experienced violent conflict, the World Bank’s Conflict Prevention and Reconstruction unit (CPR) has nonetheless developed a brief risk-screening process aimed at identifying the cases in which the conducting of a conflict analysis is particularly important. The risk-screening process consists of nine indicators, including “ethnic domination,” which is defined as one ethnic group controlling state institutions and/or the economy.

Depending on a country’s initial risk screening, analysts and operational teams can decide to conduct a “full” conflict analysis. As part of such a conflict analysis, a wide range of variables within each of the six key categories is then studied and analyzed in great detail. Interestingly, quite a few of these variables, such as “regional imbalances,” “differential social opportunities,” “equity of governance,” and “inclusiveness of political institutions, clearly focus on issues of horizontal inequality.¹¹⁸ Therefore, somewhat disguised by differences in terminology, the CAF suggests that the World Bank has (at

least implicitly) recognised the importance of horizontal inequality as a possible source of violent conflict since this framework was introduced in 2002.

Moreover, in more recent analyses, the World Bank has started referring explicitly to horizontal inequalities as a major cause for violent conflict. In particular, in a paper titled *Toward a Conflict Sensitive Poverty Reduction Strategy*, the World Bank acknowledges that “horizontal inequalities may escalate into violence when differences such as ethnicity are politicised to mobilise for political causes;”¹¹⁹ lists “potential responses to conflict factors,” including a response to structural disparities between regions; and recommends a focus on systematic redistributive policies, but in an inclusionary way.¹²⁰ The paper also suggests that in addition to impact assessment of particular projects or programmes, it is important to consider the “potential impacts of overall policies and strategies – for example, the distributional impacts of a country’s growth strategy.”¹²¹

The DAC guidelines also argue for a conflict prevention “lens” in policy-making and point to the need for concern about widening socio-economic disparities (see OECD 2001). “Donors need to be politically sensitive about how activities generate benefits or cause poverty, dislocations and inequities between different groups such as returnees and local populations.”¹²² An example given is a community housing project that allocated an equal number of houses between Tamils, Sinhalese, and Muslim populations. “This example illustrates how the standard development criteria (needs-based decision-making, efficiency, product-oriented rather than process-oriented approaches) may have to be modified to meet peace-building objectives.”¹²³

DFID too points to the need to review and correct disparities or horizontal inequalities. For example, DFID 2005:

“DFID is also paying greater attention to the different access of particular social groups to services and opportunities, and to institutionalised discrimination, which increases the risk of violent conflict. Tackling social exclusion and inequality is an increasing part of DFID’s work.”¹²⁴

DFID’s programmemes in Nepal are cited, pointing to the need for “affirmative action programmemes and strengthening organisations that represent excluded groups,” although the peacebuilding section of the report omits mention of inequality.¹²⁵

In 2007, DFID argues that “if a lasting solution [to conflict] is to be found, exclusion and inequality must be tackled. Purely military action to eliminate those responsible for violence may not work because, so long as inequalities and grievances exist, new leaders will be able to mobilise support.”¹²⁶ They again point to programmemes in Nepal and Yemen as examples of programmemes aimed at improving the position of marginalised groups.

Aid donors are less directly concerned with political systems. However, in so far as they are, despite recognition of the desirability of inclusiveness, the emphasis is generally on multi-party democracy and the “usual” governance reforms, such as improved transparency and accountability.

In general – particularly in relation to socio-economic dimensions – the need to consider HIs in conflict-prone including post-conflict countries is thus increasingly “on the table,” along with the issue of gender imbalance, which has been recognized for much longer. However, what happens in practice seems to lag behind the discourse, as

indicated by the review below, in part because practice *tends* to lag behind discourse, and in part because of the “add-on” approach adopted.

Examples of post-conflict reconstruction

The experience of seven post-conflict countries’ PRSPs (Burundi, Cambodia, Chad, Georgia, Nepal, Rwanda, and Sierra Leone) reviewed by the World Bank,¹²⁷ and the experiences of Mozambique, Guatemala, and Kosovo give a mixed picture, but in general one with poor success in tackling inequalities.

For the PRSPs it was found that:

- while they opened up space for discussions limited efforts were made to “diversify the means and geographic span of communication with conflict-affected groups;”¹²⁸
- conflict issues were included, but “not the result of a systematic conflict analysis;”¹²⁹
- and they “showed little systematic attempt to address sources of conflict through policy action. They also showed little systematic attempt to consider the potential impact of the policy action on the conflict situation.”¹³⁰

Turning to the country examples:

- In post-conflict Rwanda, there has been relatively high (aid-dependent) growth, but it has been unequalising, and with a low poverty elasticity. Between 1985 and 2000, the estimated Gini coefficient increased from 0.29 to 0.45 (of course, this period includes the genocide); between 2000 and 2005, the Gini coefficient rose again to 0.51.¹³¹ Data on ethnic HIs are not available.
- A similar situation exists in Mozambique, although with a more moderate increase in inequality.¹³² Despite sharp HIs, corresponding to conflict fault lines, HIs were not considered in the reconstruction period. Indeed, for much of the post-conflict period, aid flows have been heavily concentrated in the south, where the group that won the civil war and has since dominated the political system is located. Evidence suggests widening HIs on a regional basis.¹³³ Majoritarian democracy has meant the political exclusion of major groups.¹³⁴ However, the sustained growth has involved some gains for all regions, which may have prevented conflict-recurrence.

- In Guatemala, the series of peace accords included some important mechanisms for reducing HIs, including land reform and greatly increased social expenditures for the benefit of the indigenous peoples.¹³⁵ The two relevant accords were the Agreement on the Socioeconomic Aspects of the Agrarian System and the Agreement on the Identity and Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
- The first of these included a commitment to high economic growth, an increase in the tax base, and a restructuring of public expenditure towards social investment. It also had a number of provisions relating to the agrarian sector including the establishment of a trust fund to buy unutilized land and distribute it to tenant farmers and to introduce new taxes on land.
- The second consisted of a commitment to recognize the identity of indigenous peoples, to eliminate discrimination against them, and to guarantee cultural, civil, political, social and economic rights. In a referendum in 1998, the agreements were rejected – on a very low poll (18.6 percent of the electorate) in which the agreements were overwhelmingly supported by the indigenous population. Implementation has been generally inadequate, with the most important elements not taken up at all or only to a small extent. There has been progress on education, but major failures on growth and taxation. More progress has been made in relation to the cultural recognition of indigenous people and practices and to human rights issues.
- Political obstacles within Guatemala, stemming from the exclusive political system – which has been modified but only in small ways – seem to be to blame for the slow progress. Although the country has not relapsed into conflict, perhaps due to the (modest) progress that has been made, the very high level of criminality – with one of the highest homicide rates in the world¹³⁶ – is an indicator of an unsatisfactory situation.
- In Nepal, the government has been seeking to redress geographical inequalities since at least the 1980s, but with only little success. Moreover, aid agencies and donors largely ignored this dimension of development, even when the Maoist insurgency was already widespread. In its 1998 Country Assistance Strategy, the World Bank made no mention of inequality, and its lending triggers were primarily linked to implementation of VAT. Only in recent years have a number of donors, including the World Bank and DFID, accepted that social exclusion and horizontal inequalities were at the heart of the rebellion and are promoting policies to remedy this.¹³⁷
- In Kosovo, renewed ethnic riots have been attributed, in part, to the substantial HIs between K-Serbs and K-Albanians, and the fact that in some respects these were reinforced rather than reduced by the peace process. In particular, “return” programmes focused primarily on K-Serbs (who as a group are privileged relative to the K-Albanians).¹³⁸ A report drawing lessons from the 2004 riots recommended that staffing,

contracts, and location of programmes should be sensitive to the potential impacts on K-Serbs and K-Albanians, and “programmemeing needs to be sensitive to the complex role of economic factors in exacerbating conflict. Economic development ... has contributed to violent conflict through its connection to disappointed political aspirations and horizontal inequalities among ethnic groups. Future economic, political, and development aid – from privatisation to job creation policies to practical implementation of income generation projects on the ground – should concretely identify “winners” and “losers” and the impact on K-Albanian- K. Serb (and other minorities) divisions.”¹³⁹

A more recent investigation of three post-conflict cases – Guatemala, Nepal, and Liberia – commissioned by the OHCHR concluded that even where governments commit themselves to addressing HIs in the post-conflict context, as all three countries have done, entrenched political interests and lingering impunity can critically undermine such initiatives.¹⁴⁰

These cases, very briefly summarised, are illustrative in representing a range of experiences: They have in common severe HIs present both as one of the causes of conflict and in still in evidence in the post-conflict era. Limited evidence also suggests at best limited progress in reducing HIs. The interesting contrasts are that in Mozambique, and perhaps in Kosovo,¹⁴¹ the need to reduce HIs does not seem to have been considered in post-conflict policies. In Rwanda, it was an implicit but unmentioned subject. In Guatemala and Nepal, the need to correct HIs was recognised, but progress was slow and efforts were partially thwarted by local politics and by conflict.

In addition, in all cases (apart from the level of taxation in Guatemala), considerations of distributional consequences at no time entered into the design of macro-policies, such as fiscal policy, monetary policy, the exchange rate, and trade liberalisation. Yet these can have a major impact on income inequality where there is group specialisation in different sectors of the economy.

The macro-policies were in large part responsible for the widening inequality in Mozambique and probably for the rising inequality in Rwanda.¹⁴² They have also favoured southern and eastern Nigeria at the expense of the north. In Uganda and elsewhere, structural adjustment policies favouring tradable products raised incomes among the more privileged parts and groups. Privatisation is another element in adjustment packages which often has strong group distributional implications that are rarely taken into account.

For example, in Mozambique, the benefits of privatisation were monopolised by one already privileged group, as was also the case in Burundi¹⁴³ (Muscat 2002; Gaffney 2000). One serious deficiency of the new donor consciousness of the need to consider HIs in conflict-sensitive development is that this does not extend to macro-policies. The same is true of policies towards VI and gender inequalities.

There is much in parallel here with the attitudes toward VI and to gender balance. Pro-poor growth has been interpreted as involving much the same macro-policies as before. With respect to gender, “too little attention has focused on the intersection of macroeconomic policies and gender ... macroeconomic reforms with gender impacts include spending reallocations, state-owned enterprise privatization, price and trade liberalisation, civil service streamlining, and governance decentralization. ... Donor imposed privatization activities always seem to bypass and harm poor groups, such as female-headed households and benefit the better-off.”¹⁴⁴

As far as meso-policies are concerned, to date there have been very few specific policies directed at reducing inequality (of any kind). Thus what is now needed is for donors, having begun to recognize the importance of tackling inequalities, to work out

and adopt specific policies of a structural, macro-, meso-, and micro-type that might reduce severe inequalities in a politically sensitive way.

Conclusion

This paper has argued that horizontal inequalities are an important source of conflict and that – in countries where they are severe – policies to reduce them should be an important element in post-conflict programmes.

Other types of inequality – VI and gender in particular – are undesirable in themselves and may impede economic growth, though they are less directly a cause of violent political conflict. Therefore, reconstruction policies should also include policies towards these inequalities. The paper briefly summarized some possible policies, all of which have been tried in different parts of the world, some with significant success.

Thus in Malaysia, the New Economic Policy substantially reduced income and educational gaps between the Bumiputera and the Chinese and brought about significant economic restructuring,¹⁴⁵ while in Northern Ireland, many of the longstanding gaps between the Catholic and Protestant communities have been reduced, and some even eliminated (e.g. with respect to employment, education, housing).¹⁴⁶

Political caution is needed in introducing such policies because losing groups could mobilize in reaction to them, as is argued to have happened in Sri Lanka. But the successes in Malaysia and Northern Ireland show this is not inevitable. Major aid donors are beginning to recognize the importance of HIs as a cause of conflict, and the need to introduce policies to deal with them in conflict-sensitive development. But the practice generally has not caught up with the discourse: macro-policies remain blind to these

issues, and very few specific meso or micro- policies have been introduced in post-conflict programmemes.

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