H i C N Households in Conflict Network

Micro-level dynamics of conflict, violence and development: A new analytical framework[1]

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Introduction

Violent conflict is arguably one of the most important challenges facing the world today. The incidence of international and civil wars has decreased in recent years (Harbom and Wallensteen 2009), but the legacy of violence persists in many countries, affecting the effectiveness of global development, international peace and democracy-building processes worldwide, as well as disrupting the living conditions of local populations, often for generations. Yet, we have limited rigorous evidence of how people live in contexts of conflict: what choices they make, how institutional arrangements impact on and are affected by these decisions, and what policies may work in strengthening peace and post-conflict development processes. This lack of systematic understanding of the interplay between violent conflict and development has limited the effectiveness of policy interventions, and weakened processes of state- and peace-building in areas affected by conflict and violence.

For a long time, research on the causes of violent conflict focused on the mediation and resolution of conflicting interests between governments and opposing groups,[2] while studies on its consequences have concentrated on estimating the costs that wars impose on countries.[3]

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[2] See Hirshleifer (2001), Garfinkel (1990) and Skaperdas (1992) at the theoretical level, and Collier and Hoeffler (2004) and Fearon and Laitin (2003) at the empirical level. This literature is reviewed in Blattman and Miguel (2010).

[3] For instance, Stiglitz and Bilmes (2008), Brück, de Groot and Bozzoli, (2012), Brück, de Groot and Schneider (2011), Knight, Loayza and Villanueva (1996), Collier (1999) and Stewart and FitzgGerald (2001).

Programmes of conflict resolution have also typically been driven by concerns with state security and state capacity (UN 2004, 2005). This perspective has come under criticism for its insufficient consideration of the role of local conflict dynamics in the outbreak and duration of civil wars, and the impact of armed conflicts on the lives of individuals, households and communities affected by violence (Autesserre 2011; Justino 2012a; Kalyvas, Shapiro and Masoud 2008; Verwimp, Justino and Brück 2009).

While research at more aggregate levels has been important in advancing our understanding of global patterns that may drive or trigger violent conflict, as well as informing research and policy on the global costs of conflict, it has been less useful for uncovering mechanisms that may explain sub-national patterns of conflict (for instance, why conflict happens in some communities or regions but not others), variation in types, forms and consequences of violence (for instance, why some people are targeted by armed groups, or why some wars are very brutal while others are less so), and variation in the consequences of violent conflict (for instance, why and how some groups and regions benefit from the institutional transformation effected by violent conflict, while others lose out).

At a fundamental level, the factors that explain the outbreak, the continuation, the end and the consequences of violent conflict are closely interrelated with how people behave, make choices and interact with their immediate surroundings, and how all these factors may shape the lives and livelihoods of those exposed to conflict and violence. This volume makes the argument that individuals, households, groups and communities are at the centre of processes and dynamics of violent conflict. Understanding these processes is critical, shaping how we support institutional,

social, political and economic capacity in areas of violent conflict, identify factors leading to the success or failure of conflict prevention measures, and improve options for conflict mediation, prevention and resolution. To that purpose, this volume presents a collection of in-depth analyses that resulted from a major five-year research programme – MICROCON – funded by the European Commission under its 6th Framework Programme.[4]

The main contributions of this volume – and of the MICROCON programme in general – are threefold. First, we contribute towards the theoretical and conceptual understanding of violent conflict by outlining fundamental micro-foundations of violence and conflict. These micro-foundations result from complex interactions between people's behaviour and choices on the one hand, and the ways in which local institutions and social norms transform and are transformed throughout processes of violent conflict on the other hand. Second, we provide the most systematic and comprehensive empirical evidence to date on the micro-foundations of violent conflict, based on the collection and compilation of original data using a mix of quantitative and

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[4] MICROCON is a consortium of 24 research institutes based in Europe, South Asia, Africa, Latin America and North America. The aim of the MICROCON programme is to advance knowledge in the field of conflict analysis through the construction of an innovative micro level, multidisciplinary approach that promotes in-depth understanding of individual and group interactions leading to and resulting from violent conflicts. Between 2007 and 2012, the programme conducted research in over 50 case studies and collected primary qualitative and quantitative data in over 20 locations. MICROCON has produced 12 PhD theses, over 70 research papers, 19 policy papers and a series of policy briefs on the programme's main findings. See www.microconflict.eu.

qualitative methods – including surveys, interviews, life histories and experiments – in several conflict-affected countries. Third, we have and will continue to make use of our research to support policy planning in fragile and post-conflict contexts aimed at enhancing social justice, decreasing poverty and preventing the renewal of violence. Policies in these contexts can be considerably strengthened by taking into consideration how the motivations, aspirations and daily realities of people affected by violence may affect development, peace-building and state reform efforts in post-conflict contexts. We hope that this volume will convince and inspire researchers and policy makers to place people affected by violent conflict at the heart of their thinking.

1. Towards a micro-level perspective on violent conflict: an analytical framework

Addressing violent conflict from a micro-level perspective implies finding answers to three fundamental questions: *What* does violent conflict mean at the micro level? *Why* do violent conflicts take place, and who are the actors involved in them? *How* does violent conflict impact on individuals, their families and their social groups, and how may these changes affect the course of the conflict? The answers to these questions constitute what we define in this volume as the *micro-foundations of violent conflict*. These answers, we argue, will allow us to better understand why violent conflicts start, persist, end or re-ignite, why peace agreements, recovery programmes and demobilisation processes sometimes work, but sometimes do not, and why some regions and countries recover from conflict but others find themselves in persistent cycles of violence and suffering. The answers to these questions are discussed briefly below, and

addressed in more detail in Parts I, II and III of this volume, respectively. Part IV deals with the

policy implications of these answers.

1.1.   The concept of violent conflict at the micro level

There are significant challenges involved in understanding conflict from a micro-level

perspective, and in thinking about the causes and effects of conflict (and its full cycle) at the

individual, household, group and community levels. Several authors have proposed more or less

overlapping typologies of violent conflict, which include definitions of violence against citizens,

civil wars, guerrilla wars, coups, revolutions and riots (for instance, Gupta 1990; Sambanis 2004;

Small and Singer 1994). These typologies are difficult to uphold at the micro level because they

differ in scale and may share similar qualitative characteristics from the point of view of

individuals and households caught in their crossfire. While revolutions, uprisings and civil wars

may have different macro-level narratives, the disorder they cause on the ground may be quite

similarly experienced by those living in the areas of violence. Similarly, the same type of

conflict, or indeed the same conflict, may affect people in quite different ways, leaving some

households displaced, others dispossessed of their assets, others with dead, disabled or wounded

family members and others worried or scared but physically unaffected. Some households may

experience all of these impacts, while others may benefit materially, socially or politically from

the conflict.

Rather than proposing new typologies, we define violent conflict as the systematic breakdown of

the social contract resulting from and/or leading to changes in social norms, which involves mass

violence instigated through collective action. This definition includes a variety of conflict

intensities spanning from violent protests and riots to coups, revolutions, civil wars, genocide, international wars and terrorism. It excludes forms of conflict grounded on labour relations that do not result in mass violence, such as strikes and lockouts and other forms of labour action; conflicts instigated by individuals for self-gain that do not involve mass violence, such as thefts or robberies; and intra-household forms of conflict that do not necessarily degenerate into group violence, including domestic violence and bargaining processes within the household.

While this definition stays close to existing typologies of conflict, the micro-level perspective adopted in this volume departs from the existing literature in four fundamental ways: (i) the core unit of analysis, (ii) the focus on the violence, (iii) the notion of a continuum between conflict and peace, and (iv) the focus on the breakdown of the social contract as the underlying condition for the emergence of violence. These four elements have, in turn, wide implications for how violent conflict and its causes and consequences can be understood and measured. Below, we discuss briefly these key concepts. We discuss also the issue of measurement of the dynamics of conflict, violence and development from a micro-level perspective, central to all the chapters in this volume.

Unit of analysis

The core units of analysis common to all chapters in this volume are the individual, the household, the group and the community, defined collectively as the 'micro-level'. Violent conflicts are generally a collective process. However, groups do not constitute uniform entities, but are rather formed by interactions at several cultural, social, political and economic levels of different individuals, their families and their social networks, driven by common (but not

necessarily equal) interests and aspirations. Political, social, economic and cultural processes and norms of interaction between individuals, households and groups simultaneously affect and are affected by violent conflict. This includes, for instance, the short- and long-term impact of violent conflicts on livelihoods, socio-economic security, health and migratory movements, and the formation of group interactions and social networks themselves. At the same time, the ways in which people behave, adapt and live have important effects on how conflict evolves and takes shape in different areas. Individuals are not merely passive victims of conflict; they have agency (Justino 2009, 2012a and the chapters by Raeymaekers, Zetter and co-authors and Justino in this volume). These include ordinary civilians, members of insurgent groups, counterinsurgent groups and government armed forces, as well as political decision-makers and political opponents. All of these actors are affected in multiple ways (directly or indirectly, positively or negatively) by violent conflict. Their behaviour, choices and aspirations have in turn considerable effects (which may be more or less direct) on the course and duration of the conflict, as discussed in Part II of this volume.

The violence in violent conflicts

As emphasised in the groundbreaking analysis of civil wars by Stathis Kalyvas (2006), the notion of violence is central to understanding violent conflict from a micro-level perspective. There is a relationship between the idea that conflict reflects a societal and economic disequilibrium (a temporary condition) and the tendency to treat incidents of mass violence as irrational or emotional. As argued in a large literature on political violence, conflict is normal and rational (Keen 1998, 2000), and may be in many settings part of a social equilibrium (Lubkemann 2008). Social choices, development processes and political change are inherently

conflictual processes because the status quo will always benefit some sectors of society, while any proposed reforms will benefit other sectors (Acemoglu and Robinson 2006). One of the main aims of this volume is to better understand the conditions under which social, economic or political conflict is managed or addressed through the use of violence, and how organised violence is used as a strategic choice to achieve particular objectives concerning the way in which society and politics are organised and power is distributed (Justino 2012a, 2012b).

Some forms and episodes of violence may be perceived to be legitimate, while others will be seen as illegitimate. In many situations, the legitimacy of an act of violence is open to debate. Therefore, we do not a priori distinguish between legitimate and illegitimate violence in our approach since violent conflict may legitimise (and legalise) various forms of violence. There may also be no objective understanding of legitimate or illegitimate violence, and some manifestations of violence may be perceived as either one or the other. The emphasis in this volume is on the subjective aspect of legitimacy – for the resolution of violent conflicts and the sustainability of peace processes depend on what people perceive as legitimate, not on what others define to be so.

The issue of legitimacy is also important from a policy perspective (World Bank 2011). On the one hand, violent conflicts entail a direct challenge to the legitimacy of the state to maintain the monopoly of violence. On the other hand, contested states and donors alike wish to build legitimacy in conflict-affected countries as a direct way of strengthening peace, stability and economic growth. A more subtle variant of this perspective aims at building grassroots cohesion and trust as a way of achieving peace. Either in its top-down or bottom-up versions, legitimacy

has become a panacea to the success of peace and stability processes. While there is no rigorous evidence (never mind consensus) on what works and what does not work in peace-building interventions (as argued in the chapter in this volume by Carlos Bozzoli and his co-authors), such programmes often risk confusing the symptoms with the causes. In some circumstances, low state legitimacy may provide the conditions for the emergence of violent conflicts, though more often than not it is a symptom of underlying social disequilibria. Hence, tackling legitimacy without addressing the causes of it is akin to trying to cure a bacterial infection with an aspirin: the fever may be reduced, but the disease remains in place.

The focus on violence proposed here is particularly instrumental in terms of helping us to understand the conflict system itself. Methodologically, a focus on violence enables us to disaggregate conflict by considering more nuanced changes in the nature and intensity of conflict across space and time, and within a given country or year (Brück et al. 2012). Members of the same household may experience conflict in different ways depending on their level of exposure to the different modalities of violence, for example through displacement, war crimes, dispossession, recruitment, and so forth. We can identify much more readily causality between variables, and the underlying mechanisms explaining such causality, by accounting for nuanced ways in which violence affects different people and the different forms it takes in each context. This approach to the analysis and measurement of conflict is a major legacy of the MICROCON programme, reflected in many of the empirical papers produced in MICROCON and discussed in this volume, where the variable of interest is usually the type and level of violence experienced by any given individual, household, group or community across the full conflict cycle.

Cycles of conflict and peace

A central element in looking at violent conflict from a micro-level perspective is the observation that conflicts occur in cycles, with the degree of violence intensity rising and ebbing, and with different violent episodes being linked to each other. In addition, we do not see conflict and peace as necessarily representing opposite ends of a continuum, but rather as coexisting in different degrees of intensity. This perspective transcends previous often uni-dimensional approaches to the analysis of violent conflicts, where states of conflict and violence would be contrasted with states of peace. In this respect, the various chapters in this volume consider closely the paths through which processes of violent conflict operate at the individual level, and how everyday violence becomes integrated into a person's social, risk and time preferences (Bozzoli, Brück and Muhumuza 2011; Voors et al. 2012), into the accumulation of health and human capital over the whole lifespan (for instance, among others, Bundervoet, Verwimp and Akresh 2009), into activities and coping strategies (Brück, Llussá and Tavares 2011; Brück, Naudé and Verwimp forthcoming; Bozzoli, Brück and Wald forthcoming; Gafaro, Ibáñez and Justino 2012; Tranchant, Justino and Müller 2012) and into the institutional and normative organisation of social networks and communities for a long time after the end of the initial conflict (Justino 2009, 2012a, 2012b).

Violent conflict entails large destruction, but is simultaneously accompanied by extraordinary feats of resilience by individuals, household and communities, by the rise of new opportunities, as well as by tremendous local institutional transformation where peace, order and violence intermingle in new everyday realities. At the same time, formal peace agreements do not necessarily represent the end of violence, and pockets of instability tend to persist or emerge in

post-conflict settings. These points are brought together conceptually in the chapter by Timothy Raeymaekers, and formalised theoretically in the chapter by Jose Cuesta and Mansoob Murshed. Both chapters emphasise the complex processes of negotiation and exchange – the 'social navigation' (Vigh 2006) – that take place as part of the onset and duration of violent conflicts, and at different levels of analysis. The analysis of such complex multi-level interactions between conflict, order, violence and peace constitutes one of the main features of the MICROCON programme.

The breakdown of the social contract

One last pillar in the micro-level approach to the analysis of violent conflict is the recognition that violence only emerges in very specific circumstances. Some societies, despite having conditions pre-disposing them to violent conflict, such as horizontal inequality, polarisation and natural resource rents, do not descend into conflict. There must hence be other institutional factors at work. Cuesta and Murshed (2008) and Addison and Murshed (2001) define these factors overall as the weakening or breakdown of the social contract. The social contract incorporates the institutional mechanisms that allow for peaceful conflict resolution, and it can break down when there is a contest over the monopoly of violence by the state, the protection and security of citizens, and the legitimate right to define and enforce property rights (in the broad, institutional sense) and the rule of law in a given territory.

In general, violent conflict is unlikely to take hold if a country has a framework of widely-agreed rules, both formal and informal, that govern the allocation of resources and rents and the peaceful settlement of grievances (Besley and Persson 2011; North, Wallis and Weingast 2009).

Such a viable social contract can be sufficient to restrain, if not eliminate, opportunistic behaviour, the violent expression of grievances and the use of violence to resolve social conflict or access the mechanisms of power and decision-making. Violent conflict as we understand it in this volume is a reflection of the breakdown of a contract governing interactions between the state and its citizens, which in turns opens up opportunities for the strategic use of violence to change existing institutions and forms of power distribution, instead of peaceful conflict resolution mechanisms.

The notion of the breakdown of the social contract is very helpful for the understanding of conflict from a micro-level perspective because it focuses our attention both on the institutional aspects of peace and conflict, and on the distributional consequences of violent conflict. In particular, as discussed in the final chapter of this volume by Patricia Justino, violent conflict may shape new social orders, leading to the emergence of new social contracts.

Measurement

One of the main challenges in the analysis of violent conflict from a micro-level perspective is the absence of adequate rigorous information on local conflict processes and dynamics. This partly results from the focus of traditional security studies on the state and on state capacity and state agency. There are, in addition, a number of difficulties associated with the collection of data in conflict areas, including the destruction associated with violence and the potential ethical and security challenges (Brück et al. 2012). Furthermore, data analyses that attempt to understand conflict processes at the micro level face a number of methodological challenges, such as selection effects, the fact that conflict events tend to be highly clustered geographically, the fact

that many of the occurrences or types of actors that conflict surveys will want to focus on may be in very small numbers, and difficulties in linking the objects of surveys with contextual information (Verwimp, Justino and Brück 2009).

For a long time, these difficulties prevented researchers exploring in much detail the relationship between violent conflict, individual and household behaviour, and local institutional transformation in a rigorous way. This has started to change in recent years with the wider availability of good micro-level evidence based on quantitative and qualitative data collection efforts, in which MICROCON and other related research initiatives such as the Households in Conflict Network,[5] played a central role. This body of empirical research has developed in three broad directions.[6] The first is based on data specifically collected to uncover causes and functions of violent conflict at the micro-level. This has been so far an uncommon approach and includes a limited number of surveys of former soldiers and members of rebel movements (Arjona and Kalyvas 2011; Guichaoua 2007, 2010, 2011; Humphreys and Weinstein 2008; Weinstein 2006), and of civilian populations affected by violence (Bundervoet, Verwimp and Akresh 2009; Calderón, Gáfaro and Ibáñez 2011; Gupte, Justino and Tranchant 2012; Nillesen and Verwimp 2010a, 2010b; Seekings and Thaler forthcoming; Verwimp and Bundervoet 2008). The second direction is the use of socio-economic datasets in conflict-affected regions that were not explicitly collected for the analysis of processes or consequences of violent conflict per se, but that can be used to that purpose by being creatively merged with conflict event data (for instance, Bernal 2011; Badiuzzaman, Cameron and Murshed 2011; Bozzoli and Brück 2009;

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[5] See www.hicn.org.

[6] For a comprehensive survey see Verwimp, Justino and Brück (2009).

Bozzoli, Brück and Muhumuza 2011; Calderón and Ibáñez 2009; Camacho 2008; Douarin, Litchfield and Sabates-Wheeler 2012; Dube and Vargas 2007; Guerrero-Serdán 2009; Ibáñez and Moya 2010a; Justino and Shemyakina 2010; Justino, Leone and Salardi 2011; Muller and Vothknecht 2011; Shemyakina 2011a, 2011b). The third direction has been the development of qualitative and quantitative analyses of populations affected by violent conflict, based on small samples and limited geographic locations (Arnaut 2012; Jennings and Nikolić-Ristanović 2009; Karamelska and Geiselmann 2010; Lecoutere 2011; Lecoutere, D'Exelle and van Campenhout 2010; Lindley 2010; Lubkemann 2008; Nordstrom 1997; Raeymaekers 2011; Voors et al. 2010; Walraet 2011; among others), but containing a wealth of information on conflict processes, community structures and institutional changes at the local level. These empirical approaches, discussed in different ways across all chapters in this volume, have led to wider availability of valuable evidence on conflict processes, as well as the accumulation of expertise on how to conduct high-level rigorous research in contexts of extreme insecurity.[7]

1.2. *A micro-level perspective on the causes of violent conflict*

The macro-level perspective on conflict analysis that has dominated the conflict literature has been particularly effective at generating understanding of global patterns that may drive or trigger violent conflict. This lens has been less useful for gaining a better understanding of who are the real actors in the outbreak and continuation of violent conflicts, and why some individuals and groups participate in violent acts, while others do not. Individual motivations

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[7] The MICROCON programme has trained over 30 young researchers in the use of a variety of methods for data collection in conflict-affected countries, and in the use of appropriate analytical techniques (see http://www.microconflict.eu/events/training_events.html).

differ significantly across sex, age, ethnic, religious and other social, cultural, political and economic group divisions. They also depend crucially on processes of group mobilisation and interactions with local institutions and norms that will impact on individual and household decisions to participate or refrain from participating in violent conflicts. Part II of this volume deals with the motivations, choices and aspirations of individuals, households, groups and communities involved in violent conflicts.

Armed conflict, or any other form of mass organised violence, only occurs when a number of individuals behave violently. While this may not constitute an immediate cause for the breakout of violent conflict, participation in collective violence (voluntary or forced) is a fundamental condition for the feasibility of any violent conflict. Violence is used strategically by certain groups of actors – the entrepreneurs of conflict, as emphasised by Yvan Guichaoua in this volume – to achieve certain objectives. Then others (the followers) get caught up in this process, either by choice or by force. This starts a dynamic process of interaction whereby the behaviour (or expected behaviour) of one group will determine and be affected by the (expected) behaviour of other actors. The effectiveness of policy interventions in the areas of conflict prevention and demobilisation is dependent, therefore, on understanding the multiple objectives of individuals and the way in which they, and the means to achieve them, interrelate.

Recent literature on violent conflict has mostly concentrated on two explanations for the origin of conflict: greed and grievance. The greed explanation emphasises the role of lootable rents in producing inter-group rivalry for their control (Collier and Hoeffler 1998, 2001), while the grievance concept refers to historical injustices and inter-group inequalities (Gurr 1970; Bircan,

Brück and Vothknecht 2010). While this literature is important for explaining aggregate causes (or at least triggers) of violent conflict, it is limited in its ability to explain how people are mobilised into violence. This is due to the focus on aggregate correlates of civil wars, with less focus on the mechanisms governing associations between aggregate variables. To give an example: overall, low GDP per capita is found to be one of the most robust determinants of civil war onset (Collier and Hoeffler 2004; Fearon and Laitin 2003). However, this finding lacks a clear micro-foundation because it is consistent with several models of individual behaviour. There are at least five potential micro-behavioural channels that may explain the correlation between low GDP and violent conflict. The first is the low opportunity cost of fighting: individuals that are unable to find regular employment may be attracted by the opportunities offered by rebel groups and other organised armed groups. Second, this explanatory model can also capture greed- and grievance-based motivations. Even when individuals hold jobs, they may still join armed groups because they may anticipate earning more at the end of a successful fight (greed). Third, individuals may join armed groups because they are discontent with the way society and the economy is organised through the current government (grievance). Fourth, the relationship between low GDP and the outbreak of civil wars may also result from the fact that poor countries in general have low capacity to protect civilians against violence, but also to suppress armed struggle. Hence, joining armed groups may have to do with the need of individuals to protect themselves and their families, because they realize that the government is unable or unwilling to do so. Finally, the decision to join armed groups may also be consistent with the belief that the government is too poor to defeat armed rebellion and, therefore, individuals do not have to fear the government if they join armed groups. Thus, one type of behaviour – joining an armed movement – may be consistent with at least five micro-

foundations, all in turn consistent with the widely observed macro-level correlation between conflict onset and low GDP per capita. Which of these five (or more) explanations is correct (and there can be more than one at work at the same time), makes a large difference to how policy interventions should be designed to effectively prevent or mitigate violent conflict. For example, if the main motivation to join a rebel group is the security concern for individuals and their families, then a policy of counter-insurgency will be counterproductive, because individuals would then feel even more insecure. In this case, a cautious approach to increase security in the area, including the provision of law and order against common crime, will be more effective in reducing the appeal of an armed movement.

Distinguishing between the different mechanisms that underlie individual, household or group motivations to participate in violence requires the theorisation of violence as a behavioural choice, with its own costs and benefits, and determined by a set of institutional, cultural, social, economic and political factors. Whereas traditional explanations have mostly focused on one factor (either greed or grievance) to explain individual participation in violence, the micro-level perspective identifies the often complex and multiple motivations involved in the behavioural choice. This approach is supported by recent evidence at the micro level which documents the multiplicity of motivations and the interaction between them (Humphreys and Weinstein 2008; Guichaoua 2007, 2010; Weinstein 2006). This point is developed further in the chapter by Yvan Guichaoua.

Individual motivations must also be examined within the context of group belonging. A large fraction of recent violent mass conflicts across the world have been attributed to clashes

originating from opposing interests or perceived injustices between different religious, cultural or ethnic groups (e.g. Horowitz 1985; Gurr 1970, 1993; Stewart 2000, 2009, 2011; Marshall 2005). This is, however, the subject of a large debate. On the one hand, cross-national empirical analyses of the causes of civil wars have found no statistical evidence for a relationship between inequality and civil wars (Collier and Hoeffler 1998, 2001; Fearon and Laitin 2003; Bircan, Brück and Vothknecht 2010). On the other hand, a significant number of studies have highlighted the importance of grievances as causes of armed conflict, measured in a variety of ways including vertical inequality (of incomes and assets such as land) (Maystadt 2008; Muller 1985; Muller and Seligson 1987; Wickham-Crowley 1992; Schock 1996), class divides (Paige 1975; Scott 1976), inequalities in access to power decisions (Richards 1996), horizontal inequality across ethnic, religious and other cultural characteristics (Langer 2004; Stewart 2000, 2002; Stewart, Brown and Mancini 2005; Mancini 2005; Murshed and Gates 2005; Østby 2008), relative deprivation (Gurr 1970), levels of polarization (Esteban and Ray 1991, 1994; Reynal-Querol 2002; Montalvo and Reynal-Querol 2008; Esteban and Schneider 2008), categorical inequalities (Tilly 1998) and ethnic fragmentation (Easterly and Levine 1997; Elbadawi 1992). The debate is inconclusive with respect to the role of inequality as a cause of armed conflict, but is converging towards the view that although levels of inequality may not be a sufficient condition to trigger violent conflict (after all most societies exhibit forms of inequality), they may be instrumental to the organisation of collective violence. The mechanisms explaining a potential relationship between inequality and violent conflict are, however, not well-understood. This gap is addressed in the chapter by Frances Stewart, where the central role of horizontal inequalities between population groups in the outbreak and duration of various types of violence – riots, communal violence, civil wars, genocide and global terrorism – is strongly highlighted.

Although there is a large literature that relates mass organised violence with high levels of ethnic and religious fragmentation (e.g. Easterly and Levine 1999; Bates 1999) and polarization (Esteban and Ray 1991), it is not clear how ethnicity is associated with outbreaks of conflict. Indeed, most multi-ethnic societies live relatively peacefully (Fearon and Laitin 1996). An individual's utility may however be related to his or her identity, in which case individual and group well-being could be inseparable (Akerlof and Kranton 2000). Verwimp (forthcoming) considers this an important mechanism explaining the participation of ordinary Hutu in the genocidal campaign against the Tutsi population of Rwanda. Participation in violence may be related to group behaviour and belonging, where individuals may face sanctions from like-minded group members if they deviate from them. To other members of the group, non-compliance exerts a negative externality. Such motivations may explain individual's participation in collective action (including violent collective action) on behalf of the group, as well as how different groups integrate and cooperate in society. Some of these key issues are examined in detail in the chapter by Michael Emerson in the context of the ongoing debate on multiculturalism in Europe.

1.3.   *A micro-level perspective on the consequences of violent conflict*

What happens to people once violent conflict erupts in any given society? The datasets, methods and analysis developed in the MICROCON programme were well placed to produce significant advances in the identification of the consequences of violence on people's lives and livelihoods. This has in turn provided us with valuable insights into how the cycle of conflict evolves, including some of the key processes responsible for the persistence and potential re-emergence

of violent conflicts. In particular, numerous empirical findings in MICROCON and related programmes of research indicate that part of the explanation for why violent conflicts persist and reignite may be related to the social, economic and political legacies of the initial conflict (Justino 2009). The discussion of the consequences of violent conflict at the micro-level is addressed in Part III of this volume.

Violent conflicts have enormous consequences for the lives of those affected by the violence: they destroy and damage infrastructure, institutions and production systems, keep apart communities, families and networks, and kill and injure people.[8] The MICROCON programme focused on four main areas of conflict impact: (i) poverty, livelihoods and coping mechanisms, (ii) health outcomes, (iii) displacement and migration, and (iv) gender relations.

Violent conflict, livelihoods and coping strategies

Violent conflicts affect the livelihoods of individuals, households and communities through killings, injury, looting, robbery, abductions and displacement. During violent conflicts, assets such as houses, land, labour, utensils, cattle and livestock get lost or are destroyed (Bozzoli and Brück 2009; Brück and Schindler 2009a; Bundervoet and Verwimp 2005; Gonzalez and Lopez 2007; Ibáñez and Moya 2010a; Justino and Verwimp 2012, forthcoming; Shemyakina 2011a; Verpoorten 2009). The destruction of productive assets reduces people's access to important sources of livelihood, which may in turn impact on their productive capacity and probability of

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[8] See Justino (2012a) for a survey and Justino (2009, 2012a) for conceptual frameworks on the links between violent conflict, poverty and development outcomes. Blattman and Miguel (2010) provide a recent comprehensive review of the economics literature on civil wars.

economic survival. Loss of trust between economic agents, the turmoil caused by armed violence to local communities and institutions and the destruction of infrastructure are likely to severely constrain the functioning of local markets, further constraining the ability of households to access suitable forms of livelihood and maintain economic security in conflict settings.[9] These issues are analysed in detail in the first two chapters of Part III of this volume. The chapter by Julie Litchfield discusses the effects of violent conflict on behaviour and choices around livelihoods, with an emphasis on the complex endogenous mechanisms linking violence and the economic survival of individuals and households affected by violent conflict. The chapter by Philip Verwimp and Olivia D'Aoust focuses on the risk mitigation strategies adopted by people affected by violence, their coping mechanisms in the face of extreme uncertainty, and the feats of agency and resilience shown by many individuals and families living in contexts of violence and conflict.

Violent conflict and health outcomes

Violent conflicts lead to severe and long-term effects on health outcomes. These include war-related deaths, civilian deaths, injuries, ill-health and severe psychological damage. These effects are often aggravated by the breakdown of health and social services (which increases the risk of disease transmission), the destruction of infrastructure such as roads and public utilities, the loss of social capital and political trust (Grein et al. 2003), and the already precarious situation of

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[9] Justino (2009. 2012) outline the conceptual framework adopted in MICROCON to analyse the relationship between conflict, violence and poverty outcomes at the micro-level. Brück, Naudé and Verwimp (forthcoming) discuss how conflict affects entrepreneurs and small-scale firms in developing countries.

displaced households (Bozzoli and Brück 2010). Even relatively short episodes of violent

conflict can have long lasting consequences for the health and human capital accumulation of

affected people, particularly young children under the age of five who are at risk of being stunted

as a result of under-nutrition. In a series of related papers, Bundervoet, Verwimp and Akresh

(2009), Akresh, Verwimp and Bundervoet (2011) and Verwimp (2012), demonstrate the causal

impact of violent conflict on stunting. They find that young children in Rwanda and Burundi

who resided in conflict affected areas have lower height-for-age measurements than children in

non-affected areas and children of older cohorts in the affected areas who were already older at

the time of conflict.[10] These effects are typically irreversible, affecting the entire lifespan of

affected children. Major advances have also been made during the past decade in the way the

international community responds to the health consequences of complex emergencies,

especially at the level of the refugee camp. In such a context, epidemiology has become an

important tool for assessing the direct and indirect health impacts during and after natural

disasters and complex emergencies (see Guha-Sapir and Degomme 2006; Guha-Sapir, Hargitt

and Hoyois 2004). This research has also suggested that improving the health of those affected

by conflict is not only valuable in its own right, but may also be of instrumental importance to

the prevention of violent conflict (Krug et al. 2002). These key arguments are further developed

in the chapter by Chiara Altare and Debarati Guha-Sapir.

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[10] Similar findings have been found across other conflict-affected areas of Côte d'Ivoire

(Minoiu and Shemyakina 2012), Kashmir (Parlow 2012), Nepal (Valente 2011), Nigeria (Akresh

et al. 2012), Iraq (Guerrero-Serdan 2009) and Germany during WWII (Akbulut-Yuksel 2009).

For these and other relevant studies see www.hicn.org.

Violent conflict, displacement and migration

The levels of disruption and destruction associated with violent conflict are made worse by the large population movements that accompany most conflicts. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimates that around 44 million people are currently displaced due to armed violence. Refugees from conflict areas and displaced populations are amongst those living under the most difficult forms of socio-economic exclusion and deprivation (see Chronic Poverty Research Centre 2005). In particular, displaced populations encounter serious difficulties in accessing labour markets and agricultural livelihoods (Engel and Ibáñez 2007; Ibáñez and Moya 2010b; Bozzoli, Brück and Muhumuza 2011), are less likely to work in the post-conflict period (Kondylis 2010) and display lower levels of productivity than those that stayed behind (Kondylis 2008). By cutting off large numbers of people from economic opportunities, violent conflicts can lead to a vicious cycle of displacement, poverty and destitution from which it is difficult to escape. This is made worse by the destruction of social networks and the consequent depletion of important elements of the social, economic and political capital of those affected by violence (Bozzoli, Brück and Wald forthcoming). Successful integration of displaced populations into society is therefore a key precondition to avoid the economic decline that may make it more difficult to bring civil unrest to an end (Walter 2004). Attempts to end violent conflicts and mitigate their adverse effects need to be built upon a better comprehension of the dynamics of displacement, a point strongly emphasised and developed in the chapter by Roger Zetter, Andrea Purdekova and Ana Maria Ibáñez.

Violent conflict and gender relations

The UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (October 2000) called for the inclusion of women's voices in peace negotiations and the development of targeted policies to protect women from the abuses of war. Yet progress in this area has been remarkably slow (Mazurana, Raven-Roberts and Parpart 2005; Brück and Schindler 2009b; Brück and Vothknecht 2011) and what exists is usually quite descriptive and lacks a rigorous analytical approach. Gender is still not included as an integral part of social analysis in conflict contexts. There has been some work on issues of women's attitudes towards and during war, and how they are incorporated into it (Justino et al. 2012; McKay 2004). What is missing is an analysis of ways in which gender identities are constructed to facilitate or restrain violence. Understanding these issues and bringing them into political and legal processes of conflict mediation and resolution can facilitate work with communities to resist involvement in violence. This important gap is addressed in the chapter by Colette Harris. The chapter proposes four levels of gender-sensitive analysis in conflict contexts, with an emphasis on the key roles played by gender relations and identities (of men and women) in processes and dynamics of conflict and during post-conflict periods.

2.   Policy implications from a micro-level approach to conflict analysis

Violent conflicts affect the lives of 1.5 billion people every year across the world (World Bank 2011). This volume makes the argument that the behaviour, aspirations, perceptions and expectation of these individuals, the way people interrelate in groups and communities and their links to institutional organisation and transformation are at the centre of how we understand the complex dynamic links between conflict, violence and development. This micro-level perspective on the causes and duration of violent conflict has important policy implications for

the development of institutional, social, political and economic capacity and support in countries affected by violent conflict. These key policy issues are brought together in the last three chapters of this volume.

Carlos Bozzoli, Tilman Brück and Nina Wald discuss potential links between the micro-level analysis of violent conflict and international policy on conflict mediation, resolution and prevention by proposing a micro-level lens to policy impact evaluation in conflict-affected contexts. They argue that rigorous impact evaluations, if adjusted suitably, can provide useful insights into how to alleviate conflict and its legacies. Disregarding the existence of violent conflict in the evaluation of development programmes, on the other hand, may lead to misleading if not counterproductive policy recommendations.

The chapter by Nathalie Tocci develops an analytical framework to assess the role of micro-level processes, in particular the role of civil society organisations, in better informing the design of effective and coherent European policies aimed at preventing, managing, transforming and resolving violent conflicts within the European border and in neighbouring countries. The chapter explores in detail how the EU may influence ongoing violent conflicts through its engagement with the civil society and its understanding of local processes of conflict dynamics.

The final chapter by Patricia Justino reflects on the long-term development prospects of countries affected by violent conflict in light of the tremendous institutional and normative transformations that follow most processes of conflict and violence. Development policy may have a key role in the effectiveness of stability interventions in countries and regions affected by

violent conflict. Notably, donors, humanitarian organisations and international NGOs often respond to conflict events by increasing aid allocations (Brück and Xu 2012), and are responsible for picking up the pieces when fragile states sink into violent conflict, peace agreements fail and conflicts reignite. Some of their critics, however, see them as more part of the problem than part of the solution, arguing that humanitarian assistance can entrench conflicts and fail to address the poverty and injustice sustaining violence (Anderson 1999). A substantial body of literature already devotes itself to the problems of ensuring co-ordinated donor responses to conflicts and humanitarian emergencies. This literature highlights how the international development community has largely focussed its attention on reactive, damage-limiting policy frameworks to reduce insecurity, bring violent conflicts under control, and minimise their negative impacts on development (Addison and Brück 2009; Addison and Murshed 2002; DFID 2005). It has been less good at thinking strategically about how to cut through and reverse vicious cycles of conflict, how to build pragmatic and durable systems of local development and global peace that incorporate real assessments of individual and group motivations and perceptions, local politics and local resource competition, and how to assemble synergies between local, national and international coalitions in support of change. The final chapter of this volume discusses the policy implications of a micro-level perspective on the conflict cycle for the establishment of relevant institutional and normative arrangements that may prevent the onset of large-scale conflicts and develop more sustainable approaches to peace, stability and the security and well-being of people, as well as states.

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