

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

Form Approved
OMB No. 0704-0188

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1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY) 08-04-2020	2. REPORT TYPE Master of Military Studies (MMS) thesis	3. DATES COVERED (From - To) AY 2019-2020
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4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE The Predictive Role of Inequality in Civil War: The Influence of the Strong Predictors of Disparity and Volatility in Developing Nations	5a. CONTRACT NUMBER N/A
	5b. GRANT NUMBER N/A
	5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER N/A

6. AUTHOR(S) Franklin, Austin L. (Major)	5d. PROJECT NUMBER N/A
	5e. TASK NUMBER N/A
	5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER N/A

7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) USMC Command and Staff College Marine Corps University 2076 South Street Quantico, VA 22134-5068	8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER N/A
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9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) N/A	10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)
	11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S) N/A

12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT
Approved for public release, distribution unlimited.

13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES

14. ABSTRACT
The likelihood of civil war in developing nations is dependept upon the simulataneous prevalence of social and economic inequality along with political instability. Recognition of these variables predicts, and - if appropriate measures are taken - ultimately prevents conflict. The foundational basis for conflict begins well before the first shot is fired. The efficacy of conflict rarely remains within the borders of origination and proves that the global benefit is found within peaceful diplomacy not violence.

15. SUBJECT TERMS
Inequality (Social, economic); Civil War; Political Instability; Refugee; Gross Domestic Product (GDP) Per Capita Income; Human capital; Labor Force; Counterinsurgency; Humanitarian crisis; Forced migration;

16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON	
a. REPORT	b. ABSTRACT	c. THIS PAGE			USMC Command and Staff College	
Unclass	Unclass	Unclass	UU	27	19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER (Include area code) (703) 784-3330 (Admin Office)	

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MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

TITLE: THE PREDICTIVE ROLE OF INEQUALITY IN CIVIL WAR: THE INFLUENCE
OF THE STRONG PREDICTORS OF DISPARITY AND VOLATILITY IN DEVELOPING
NATIONS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

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AY 2019-20

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Date: 8 April 2020

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Approved: //signed//

Date: 8 April 2020

Executive Summary

Title: The Predictive Role of Inequality in Civil War: The Influence of the Strong Predictors of Disparity and Volatility in Developing Nations

Author: Major Austin L. Franklin, United States Army

Thesis: The likelihood of civil war in developing countries is dependent upon the simultaneous combination of social and economic inequality employed with political instability. Recognition of these variables predicts, and - if appropriate measures are taken - ultimately prevents conflict in underdeveloped and developing nations.

Discussion: The foundation for conflict begins well before, in some cases up to fifty years, the first exchange of bullets or artillery rounds. In many cases the variables leading to a violent occurrence are recognizable, but often ignored by developed nations within the region or with a vested interest in regional stability. The instability created by conflict includes secondary effects such as displaced and refugee populations and tertiary effects of generational unemployment that supply human capital for terrorist organizations. Global instability directly affects U.S. national interest in significantly directly and indirectly. The current 400 plus ongoing conflicts involving approximately 80 factions or separatist groups share commonalities that question the adequacy of preventive efforts. The continent of Africa supplies the best example through its vast array of current unrest and the number of conflicts on the periphery.

Conclusion: Internal conflicts of the civil nature share similar characteristics of inequality perpetuated over a significant period. As shown in the case of the American Civil War it is the disregarding of the social, political, and economic inequalities that pinpoint a roadmap to effective preventive measures. Exacerbating the conflict is the fact that war effects rarely confine themselves to borders but extend globally. Peace is a more cost-effective tool of diplomacy than its violent counterpart and should receive the strongest consideration of discussions.

DISCLAIMER

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Preface

This Masters of Military Studies paper, “The Predictive Role of Inequality in Civil War; The Influence of the Strong Predictors of Disparity and Volatility in Developing Nations”, provides an alternative method for assessing and analyzing the effectiveness of military solutions against problem sets with political, social, or economic based foundations. The research satisfies the requirements for The Marine Corps Command & Staff College Master of Military Studies degree. I enjoyed conducting research from October 2019 through April 2020 and discovering new theoretical ideas previously unconsidered. The research questions presented themselves from many dialogues led by Dr. J. William Gordon, LTC Paul Armstrong, and Dr. Jorge Benitez with participation from peers in Conference Group Nine (9) as we aimed to collectively examine the future of U.S. military involvement in an ever-evolving battlefield.

I am extremely grateful to the Leadership Communication and Skill Center staff as well as the Marine Corps University Gray Research Center for the immeasurable assistance provided throughout the entire process of Command and Staff College. To Mr. Tony Whittingham Jr. and Mr. Derman Spragg Sr., I thank you for your continued support, consistent motivation, and unwavering examples. To my sons Austin, Justin, and Jordan, I love you and appreciate you gentlemen dearly. Lastly, a sincere thanks to my lovely wife Bianca for your constant support throughout each of my professional endeavors.

It is my most sincere hope that this reading is enjoyable, educational, and thought provoking.

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“It is well that war is so terrible, or we should grow too fond of it.” Robert E. Lee

The tolls of conflicts historically measure in total dollars spent on sophisticated weapon systems, their employment while prosecuting the war, in rebuilding estimations of critical infrastructure, or in the countless lives lost directly, and as lingering injuries becoming fatal years later. All considered collateral in nature, resulting in enduring negative effects.

Approximately 150 years ago, the present-day global superpower, America found itself in the crossroads of discerning the monetary war cost in comparison to the benefits of the devastation. A death toll that exceeds 600,000 is disturbing by any account, and as America witnessed then and so many countries are experiencing now, civil war is also monetarily, developmentally, and intellectually expensive.ⁱ For example, in Syria, the cost of a civil war is on par to exceed \$1 trillion as the war drags into its sixth year.ⁱⁱ Whether the savings are realized in monetary terms or in the developmental potential allowed to thrive under favorable conditions, peace in many cases is a more viable option than war. Underdeveloped nations with below-average income per capita, social, political, and economic inequality, along with recent involvement in the conflict, are more likely for recidivism. Is a civil war imminent based merely on the presence of inequality, poverty, and instability? The answer does not assert that other variables such as religion or tribalism are obsolete. However, it makes the case that religion and tribalism are dependent upon inequality, poverty, and instability in order to predict conflict.

This research argues that conflict is predictable, and in many cases, preventable. An additional assertion surmises that the instances where deterrence does not prevail, post-conflict rebuilding cost exceeds those of preemptive dissuading. In addition to theories of the conflict trap, this paper examines the following: the total aggregate cost of civil war, the subsequent crisis that begins as a result of civil war, and how civil war is a predictable occurrence. This

paper also examines the global consequences of conflict, specifically humanitarian and refugee calamities. Lastly, the paper examines examples of countries currently experiencing civil war where the inequality triad (social, political, economic) exist, and additional examples where civil war is imminent based on existing deteriorating conditions.

Hidden in this fiscal narrative are the budgetary considerations owed to rebuilding, refugee management, and long-term economic development, among others. Furthermore, although it is understandably commonplace to account for the sobering death tolls resulting from the violence that persisted, it is a misrepresentation of the effects. The lasting adverse economic effects are vital components to this measurement for all parties involved, including invading and neighboring nations. Nevertheless, to accurately explain the actual cost of war, the more economically influenced explanation supplied the context of not only the fiscally explained costs of war but also the price of prevention. The cost of deterrence is welcomed by nations that have seen the aftermath of conflict and adamantly determined not to witness this occurrence again. Whereas war is necessary for safety, the overarching problem presents itself in the claim that war costs more than peace, an argument based on possible post-conflict rebuilding costs.

In addition to costs incurred by nation-states in large scale conflicts, life devastation within cities, states, and countries affect the global economy even more during civil wars. Additionally, a more responsible allocation would see funding used in other areas of economic development, such as education or training. This investment in the human developmental infrastructure shows a nation's commitment to peace and stability not only within its borders but also throughout the region. Can, then other nations make tantamount commitments, and will the cost of these commitments remain lower than the violent alternative? Countries experiencing social inequality, political instability, and economic stagnation have an increased likelihood of

experiencing a future civil war. Upon gaining consensus on the factors that persist before the start of any civil wars, the next step is to understand that preventative methods are more cost-effective than rebuilding to negate years of internal destruction.

Civil war causes developmental (social, political, economic) impediments that extend beyond the warring countries' borders, making the concerns global. Social inequality is the existence of unequal opportunities and rewards for different social positions or statuses within a group or society.ⁱⁱⁱ Inequalities cause conflict when they exist substantially in persistent wealth and income. Inequality within countries and between groups, as well as group inequality between ethnic, religious, and regional groups, are all significant and have a direct distinction to conflict. Social inequality exists in many forms that fall within the five following types: Political, Income and Wealth, Life, Inequality of Treatment and Responsibility, and Membership. In these forms, the different opportunities and rewards for the people within a society confirm a varying dimension or degree of inequality present.

Political instability in a region or country manifests when the political atmosphere is at risk for change or failing. When a political disturbance is imminent, that country or region is politically unstable. Of the many factors that contribute to the destabilization of a country's political atmosphere, they all impede development and progress. Individual rights of citizens, leadership corruption and fiscal mismanagement, Voter suppression and election intimidation, Opposition party suppression and deliberate persecution, and government clandestineness all contribute to country instability.^{iv}

Economic stagnation is a persistent, prolonged period of slow or no economic growth customarily measured in terms of GDP coupled with extremely high unemployment. Economic growth at 3% or less on an annual basis is stagnating. Stagnation defines itself in terms of

unemployment or joblessness rates. When the number of citizens within the labor force (age 15-64) that are actively seeking full-time employment exceeds 5% of the total labor force, that economy is in a state of stagnation.^v A stagnated economy in the purest form equates to parents no longer able to supply necessities for themselves or their children.

Civil war does more than kill the participants on both sides. Roads and bridges become caught in the destructive crossfire, in addition to the sanitation systems and water production facilities that the citizens depend on daily. The hospitals damaged reduce the capacity necessary to treat the wounded along with a reduced capacity for institutional learning as teachers take cover or arms. Trade and commerce are retarded, while economic growth halts completely. War completely abolishes a society's operating concept and creates a sanctuary for violent extremist organizations. Fiscally speaking, experts estimated that \$1.5 billion would have prevented the Somalian fighting in comparison to the \$7.3 billion paid in rebuilding.^{vi}

“An eye for an eye leaves the whole world blind” Mahatma Gandhi

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES:

The immediate goal of the research is to provide quantifiable insight into the cost-effectiveness of deterring armed civil conflicts. Conflicts that begin domestically are predisposed to two types of guaranteed costs: rebuilding and refugee management. The goal of this study is to provide a comprehensive review of previous literature and past criteria used in search of political solutions concerning an analysis of rebuilding costs and outline the conceptual frame for conflict management. More specifically, the study will address the following sub-objectives:

- a) Provide a comprehensive review of sources and characteristics that prove to be common denominators in the igniters of wars.
- b) Review current ongoing conflicts and compare the degradation of the human capital within war-torn countries.
- c) This study will also highlight the long-term mental and psychological effects of those taking part in conflict to show how it further erodes the human capital available for the current and succeeding generation. This fact is also an indicator of the future propensity of another involvement in the conflict.

The results of this study will provide insight into the long-term effects of conflicts and possibly add more leverage to diplomatic solution sets. Results will also put increased emphasis on the use of more collaborative efforts in developing future peace agreements. Special attention given towards economic, educational, and infrastructure in developing nations will prove to be a long-term deterrent to engaging in violent conflicts. Lastly, for comparative analysis, the model of a country experiencing conflict with external influences achieving counterproductive results contrasts itself with a developing nation on the verge of conflict breakout.

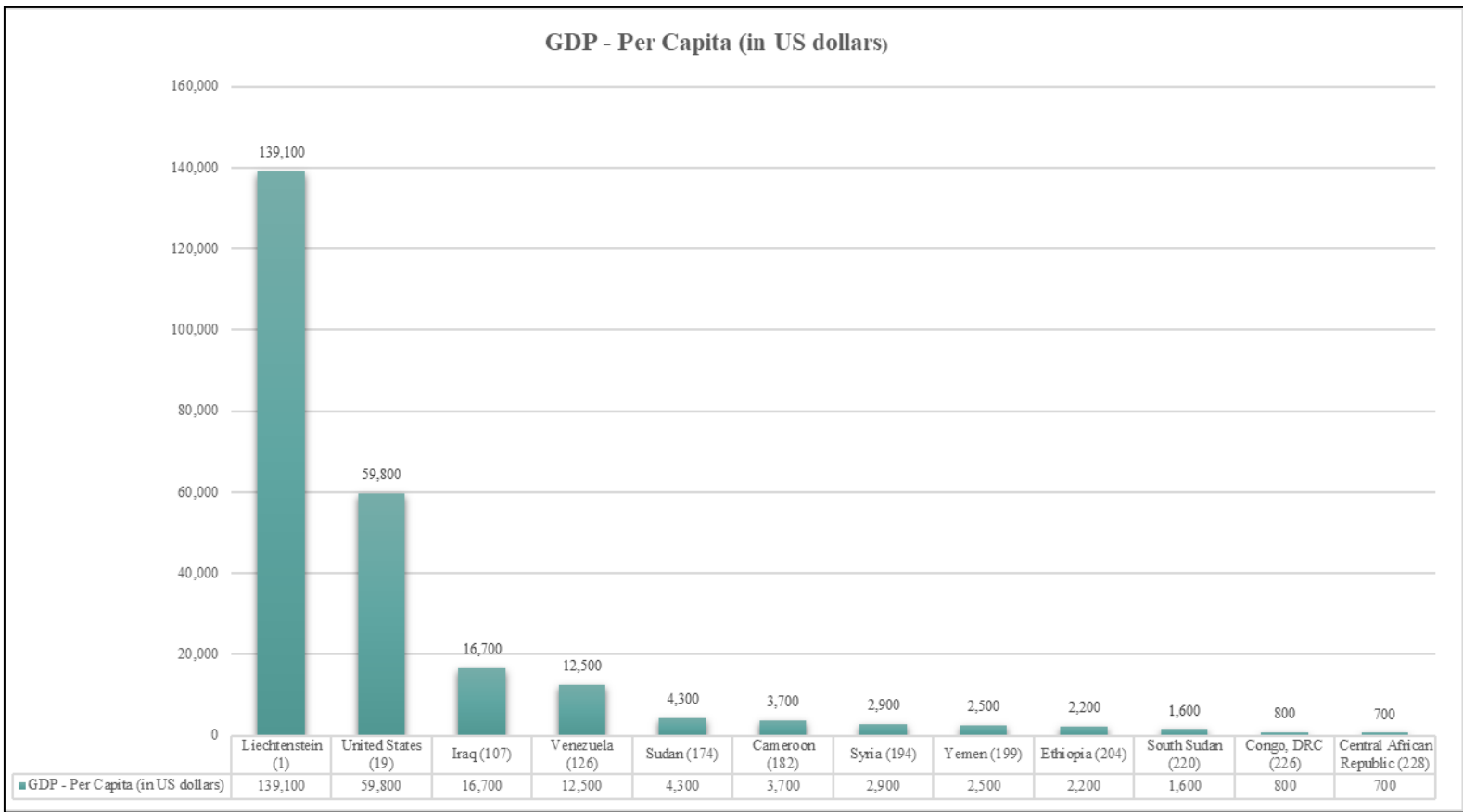
These and other cases of civil conflict may each in isolation offer policymakers some useful insights. Nevertheless, viewed together, they solicit an overarching question: Is there a significant and demonstrable link between income poverty and the risk that a country will slide into civil war? Could the U.S. and global foreign policy benefit from greater emphasis on promoting economic growth and alleviating poverty?

“History teaches that war begins when governments believe the price of aggression is cheap.” Ronald Reagan

Previous literature, motivated with an economic emphasis, primarily focuses on the holistic impacts within the entire spectrum of conflict costs. Research by P. Collier and A. Hoeffler of the World Bank surmise that violence shares a direct linkage to the exploitation of natural resources; however, this is only remotely accurate for developing nations. As Afghanistan proved, commodity exportation does not sequester violence to an isolated occurrence, but conversely, provided a funding stream in support of ongoing conflicts and political objectives. They further concluded that the response to civil or internal conflicts was usually a reflection in that nation's overall GDP. However, when the conflict extended beyond borders, there was a reduction in output and capital stocks. In the cases of factors leading to civil war, while much attention focuses on GDP, PPP, and per capita income, little attention is given to income inequality that exacerbates poverty issues in already developing countries.

A subsequent review raises the following questions: Is the price paid for deterring a violent conflict tantamount to the long-term benefits? What is the cost of rebuilding from the perspectives of human capital as well as in the infrastructure? Analyzing conflicts for the invading and invaded nation will facilitate further discussions as to what actions to take to prevent future violence. Additionally, understanding what motivators exist that incite terroristic activity will enable a greater understanding of the uniqueness of these organizations.

Literature also suggests that the crucial determining factors of conflict outbreaks and recurrences in the state of economic conditions. More specifically, as the number of low household incomes increases, so does the likelihood of future conflict (Median annual household income worldwide - \$9,733; Median per-capita household income - \$2,920).^{vii}



Of the factors leading to conflict, evidence shows that the most likely indicator is that of reduced economic performances. A reputable verifier of this data is the familiar contest model where opposing parties were each allocated resources of producers and appropriates. Winning evaluates the ability to distribute said resources in the most efficient manner. The hypothesis of the contest model is constant with the human development relationship. Low human development can stifle the allocation of resources from the government to citizens due to inefficient government institutions. Differing perspectives ascertain that below-average per capita incomes, economic growth that is slow or negative, and geography conducive to insurgent behaviors are the most likely indications of future civil wars. The tabulation of incomes does not,

however, differentiate the effects of economic inequality, which indicates a likelihood of civil war as well.

Adequate efforts aimed at the prevention of violent conflict have proven over time that people on all sides are willing to compromise to minimize the perceptions of growing inequality. Additional research will demonstrate that countries involved in a conflict will not experience economic growth for decades, and as an unintended consequence, will find itself involved in conflict again. The anomaly to this hypothesis occurs in the period following World War II, where Germany and Italy experienced phenomenal economic growth mainly because the United States invested in these economies as a strategic partner in the Cold War. In the case of the U.S invasion into Iraq beginning in 2003, the calculation of recovery efforts will extend well beyond infrastructure or education rebuilding and into the tabulation of the human capital loss during this time. Specifically, the adult workforce (ages 18-55) that existed in the year 2003 is now on the downward slope of productivity 16 years later.^{viii} To aggravate this degradation is the succeeding entrance age workforce devoid of investment in human capital (education, training, and experience) because of the constant and persistent conflict of the previous two decades. Conflict is a proven determinant leading to the most severe social and economic ramifications. The rhythmical pattern referred to as the conflict trap is the cycle of conflict to a low capacity for human development. Conflict destroys any accumulation of human capital and degrades any institutional ability. Over time, countries with low growth rates reap the elevated risks of conflict involvement and their potential to enter the conflict trap cycle.

The contribution of war to poverty, economic under-development, and poor health worsens in developing nations. Economic factors continue to be a significant cause of conflict in addition to religious and ethnic cultural dimensions. These factors address the conflict linkage

but did not address the economies of invading countries and nation-state supporters. Also discussed, were methods to reduce war incentives absent of supporters supplying opposing incentives to engage in conflict. Without a thorough analysis of political goals, the deduction is still inconclusive.

More research on tribal factions, descendant genealogy, and the impact of certain religious variables would enhance the validity of the research. With this other information provided, presumptions that the conflict trap extends beyond the human development concept. Legislation aimed at creating a more resilient society and reducing inequalities between warring factions, if researched, could also supply valuable insight into the motivators of war. Inconclusive evidence on the effects of black-market economics would enhance the outcome of the research. The monetary benefits that derive because of illegal financial activities, when substantial, challenges historical evidence of conflict indicators.

"The time is always right, to do what is right." Martin Luther King, Jr.

In the most general definition of the term civil war, it is a violent conflict involving many citizens of the same country.^{ix} This characterization of war also considers factions and groups agglomerated within a single country. Civil wars are distinct by their total war methodologies that produce many casualties in aim to achieve political, social, or economic outcomes. For the focus of this study, it is pertinent for the reader to understand not only the type of armed conflict independently but additionally the causes of civil conflicts and the external derivatives that influence civil wars. The predictors of the conflict have a foundation in political, economic, social instability, and recent involvement (within 50 years) in an armed civil conflict. Civil wars either enable or cause subsequent conflicts with the aims to achieve similar or new subsets of

strategic goals. Insurgencies, Independence, and Proxy Wars can start derivative conflicts or worsen ongoing civil wars after the onset of conflict and create political impediments to third party involvement or partisan support. The DoD defined Insurgency as the organized movement purposed to overthrow a constituted government by subversive and armed conflict means.^x This definition has similarities to counterinsurgency that cites the motivational means of subversion and violence but slightly differs in describing the prevention of political shift in authoritative governance.^{xi} Both agree on group organization as the qualifier. The uniqueness of insurgency, however, lies within the primary motivation to force a political change.^{xii} Independence Wars to gain complete or compartmentalized independent status are pertinent to this study to aid in describing group motivations, but most importantly, as a predictor of conflict. War instigated by third-party nation-states to achieve a particular outcome is known as wars by proxy. These conflicts present disparity in the desired outcomes between primary, secondary, and tertiary actors, yet the predictability stays consistent. Although variant in type, warfare method, and scale, civil wars share a commonality in their predictive factors. The variation is apparent in the size and scope of reconstruction, rebuilding, and humanitarian costs.

“It is not enough to win a war; it is more important to organize the peace.” Aristotle

The cost of war is astonishing. The impact on the global economy in 2016 was \$14.3 trillion, 12.6% of the world's GDP.^{xiii} War Economics focuses on a calculation of the economic costs of war as a necessary variable in determining the relative benefits of investments in pre-conflict intervention as opposed to post-conflict rebuilding operations. Is there an aggregate cost-benefit to war? Most aid agencies and NGOs make the case that war avoidance makes economic

sense on a global scale. The argument hinges on the fact that only 45% of the \$8.2 billion necessary to fund the 68.5 million forcibly displaced people in 2018 adequately was supplied by contributing governments.^{xiv} Here is the case of ex-post, after the fact, where the cost of not acting is considerably higher than the cost of conflict prevention. The tale of costs does not; however, adequately account for the fact that brewing civil wars often have opposing factions that make resolution efforts confusing at best. Economic investments seem more plausible when comparing prevention against rebuilding, and the probability of conflict, expected cost, and success ratios determine where to place resources.

War comes with dire economic consequences: buildings, structures, debt accumulated to finance war efforts, with arguably the most significant of them all is the degradation on the war-ravaged country's human capital and available labor pool. The secondary effect in understanding war economics is the insufficient development that occurs during the conflict and continues post-conflict is the country's induction into the conflict trap.^{xv} The conflict trap encompasses the long-term risk of a country to conflict increases with their involvement in a first conflict, usually within 50 years. The recidivism into conflict transcends borders and, as the conflict trap shows, generations as well.

The economics of war exude effects that extend into future generations. Once war breaks out, education stalls, refugees increase, and others join in fighting for either side. These contribute to human capital negatively affected by conflict. The sum results in a country's total GDP and the employment/unemployment rates. For a conflict that lasts just six years (60% of U.S. students complete a bachelor's degree in six years), the costs of human capital exceed over \$500,000 per person.^{xvi}

“All those who seek to destroy the liberties of a democratic nation ought to know that war is the surest and shortest means to accomplish it.” Alexis de Tocqueville

The growing list of the humanitarian crisis caused by civil war is robust, and the inability to confine the detrimental effects within the borders of the conflict set the conditions for categorization as a global calamity. The primary effects of conflict on any scale are human rights violations, infrastructure degradation, and internal displacement. The factors left unattended will increase the propensity for future conflict. Future conflict is indeed detrimental to the host nation, but geography alone does not contain the effects of violent conflict. Forced migration, or refugees, created as a cause of conflict is the leading claim to conflict prevention. There is a direct linkage between the growing number of refugees worldwide commensurate with the ongoing civil wars that qualify the spread of refugees as a global crisis. Refugees displaced by civil wars have reached a record number, with nearly half of that total formed by children, increasing the economic strain on bordering nations. To expound upon this total in more detail, of the 70 million forcibly displaced, 80% fled to neighboring countries for refuge. Another 14 million within the last year, many of which remained displaced within their country of origin, all are costing the world approximately \$8.6 billion annually.^{xvii}

The humanitarian crisis does not confine itself to that of displacement and inconvenience within geographic parameters; hanging on the periphery is that of extreme famine and extreme economic strain on welcoming countries. In one of the more extreme cases of a civil conflict allowed to continue to untenable complexity is the country of Syria. Their seven-year conflict has reduced their 18-million-person population down by over half, with 12 million people currently displaced, resulting from the civil war.^{xviii} In this instance, external factions will worsen this crisis as Turkey begins an offensive campaign within the borders that could increase the total

by another two million people. The forced migration and the subsequent effects will spill into neighboring countries of Lebanon, Jordan, and Turkey. Impacts of a crisis of this magnitude are majorly quantifiable from the fiscal perspective when calculating the dollar amount of humanitarian assistance per individual necessary. More difficult to measure are the qualitative variables such as human suffering, structural devastation to cultural antiquities, and personal anguish.

What incentives exist to motivate neighboring countries to intervene in civil instability before the onset of a full-scale conflict? Refugee displacement crisis, territorial disputes involving militant groups, and extreme child famine affect entire regions and have the ability for international interventions. As of 2018, 26 million current refugees are the highest level on record. 13 million, approximately half, are under the age of 13, and one-third of is in the world's poorest countries (Liberia, Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo).^{xix} Persistent displacement and unsettled refugees increase the risk of violence along with added vulnerability to violent extremist organizations. Violence and recruitment opportunities add to the global urgency to create a comprehensive refugee plan. The leadership vacuum created by a refugee crisis breeds an ensuing power struggle amongst competing entities, many of which have a responsibility for conflict before onset. Militaries with government backing competing with armed rebel groups and separatist factions compete for vacated territories and violently vie to maintain it. All of which makes the refugee crisis more severe when and if the return is allowable. A return to the depleted infrastructure, schools, and hospitals come with tragic consequences for civilians, especially children.

Child famine continues to plague South Sudan, Somalia, Yemen, and Nigeria through conflict and into the categories of urgent necessity. Civil wars create large populations of

displaced personnel, both internally and externally. Host countries supply refuge to individuals fleeing their homes to escape poverty and hunger caused by the conflict.

In the current state of total refugees in the world and the factors previously mentioned, it is indeed a crisis. With the total of refugees at an all-time high and 40,000 new displacements occurring daily, the efficacy of civil war is increasingly evident.

"Wars can be prevented just as surely as they can be provoked, and we who fail to prevent them, must share the guilt for the dead." Omar N. Bradley

Before any definitive solutions, proposals, or publications related to existing possibilities become available. It is essential to understand that the complexities of civil war do not always adhere to the structured answer offered through a singular focus of Diplomatic, Information, Military, or Economic options. Internal power struggles and external influences coupled with opposing factions and groups within a region further convolute the decision-making paradigm. Civil wars share a commonality with a preventive framework that facilitates prediction, yet the involvement among multiple factions and ethnicity impedes preventative solutions. The ongoing civil wars in Cameroon and Yemen displayed detrimental characteristics in politics, equality, and economics before full-scale violence began with solutions hindered by the complexity and numerous actors.

The continent of Africa is home to three of the world's fermenting conflicts in Cameroon, Nigeria, and South Sudan. Within the impending escalations are widespread undertones of social, political, and economic inequalities exacerbated when the factions and their motivations are unclear and sometimes intertwined. Of the 79 ongoing conflicts, 30 countries on the African

continent currently host a form of civil conflict involving 267 militia-guerrillas, terrorist-separatist groups, and anarchic organizations.^{xx} The involvement by so many different competing factions that rely heavily on violence to achieve their objectives makes an understanding of the deterioration clearer, but the answer equally less clear.

Internal Political and development failure is one of the leading contributors to civil wars within Africa, unlike Yemen, Libya, and Syria, where external political factors come into play. In all cases, the political solution becomes challenging to codify when each demographic receives unequal representation. Diplomatic efforts are always a consideration, mainly when the loss of lives is preventable. The hindrance to diplomacy develops when separatist militias find themselves fighting government forces. Economics of civil conflict is extremely difficult, again when the opposing sides are not clear cut by providing an additional level of uncertainty of the question of whom to help, how to help them economically, and how to do with the assuredness of intentions.

On the southwestern point of the Arabian Peninsula bordered by Saudi Arabia and Oman is the sight of a civil war responsible for over 90,000 deaths since violence heightened in 2015. Yemen's current civil conflict reached a zenith in March of 2015 when a coalition backed by the Saudi Arabian government opposed former president Ali Abdullah Saleh and intervened against the Houthi rebels. In just four years, the country has been devastated to the tune of 250,00 displaced citizens, 24 million requiring assistance, and an estimated \$28 billion price tag to return the country to pre-conflict status. A clandestine and corrupt government, numerous human rights violations, frequent arrest by opposing political party members, and one of the highest poverty rates in the world has created a foundation within Yemen to continue civil conflicts for years to come.

Political instability within any country is potentially disastrous, a state of being that worsens when the territory draws the interest of terrorist organizations seeking to expand. President Ali Abdullah Selah (March 21, 1947 – December 4, 2017) was at the center of the political uncertainty in Yemen leading up to his assassination in 2017.^{xxi} Beginning as the President of the unified country of Yemen in May 1990, his popularity waned by those who were Pro-democracy and made their resignation requests known in the 2011 Arab spring. A rise in tensions that caused the deaths of protestors led to a brokered deal and subsequent transfer of authority to Vice President Abd Rabbu Mansour Hadi. Suspicion of a singular candidate for leader of the transitional government in 2012 elections and rejection by the northern-based Houthi rebels of constitutional along with unfavorable budget reformations created a political situation where factions benefited from the chaos. The financial benefit to some impedes holistic solutions to social inequality and economic strife for others making any type of intervention much more difficult.

Many experts attribute the ongoing conflict in Yemen to a repeated and systematic failure to address the actual root cause of the country's anger and frustration. Underrepresentation of disenfranchised populations and denial of essential services such as health care and education are a few of the reforms needed in Yemen to help bring the 60-year cycle of violence to a welcomed end. The inequality source in Yemen was majorly the status erosion of rights for women and girls. Women bared the brunt of the effects arising from their participation in the 2011 Arab spring protest, but the inspiration came from 30 years of detrimental ideological influences. That effect is very noticeable as women and children displaced totals close to one million to date. Progress for Yemen and the end to violence is not as inaccessible as some would believe and instead very attainable, according to Yemeni activist, with greater inclusion of women.

Historically, women's involvement in peace negotiations yields more stable results in building safer and less violent countries. Additionally, gender equality is proven proportional to conflict rates; more equality equates to lower conflict levels. Lastly, the foundational keystones of any society, such as access to healthcare, adequate education, and universal social protection, all build upon a functioning society and at the forefront of women's political agendas.

Yemen is known to remain ranked as one of the poorest countries on the Arabian Peninsula. Before the current conflict zenith in 2014, Yemen already faced a seemingly insurmountable challenge of economic growth and stabilization. The economic stagnation that existed before 2011 served as a primary contributor causing the civil war and will serve as a tantamount obstacle to rebuilding efforts when or if the crisis concludes. Restricted imports, hyperinflation, and extreme poverty maintain the foothold to Yemen's economic stagnation. Yemen relied heavily on oil and gas imports to generate revenue, which accounted for 25% of total GDP and 65% of government funding in 2014. Due to consecutive years of resource mismanagement, these reserves continue to deplete as corruption remains along with consecutive budget shortfalls. Yemen's inflation, a rise in the cost of living prices, topped out at 25% in October 2011, six months after the Arab Spring uprising. When compared to inflation within the United States of 2.9% for the same period, the country's inability to provide access to food and medical equipment is more accurately delineated. Yemen ranks 97th in the world in terms of GDP (purchasing power parity), 219th in real GDP growth rate, 199th in GDP per capita, and 182nd in Gross National savings. These rankings are in the bottom tier of economies on the world scale and on par with ongoing conflicts globally.

Yemen's plague of civil war violence continues to persist because of several elements of present ignitors; political, social, economic inequality, and marginalization. Previous attempts at

intervention stalled as corruption in government continued to burgeon. Success in Yemen is not impossible, not is it easily attainable. Continued failure equates to a foundation for the subsequent rounds of civil wars and a humanitarian crisis that the world collectively scrambles to solve.

The Second Congo Civil War is historically known as the African Great War or the First African World War because of its vast scope of death, and its destructive nature. What began in the late 20th century morphed into the deadliest conflict of the 21st century, amassing over 6 million deaths and exceeding the death toll of World War II. The Congo region began its entrance into the strife of the cycle of conflict in 1994 when Rwanda's genocide crossed the borders as militias of the Rwandan Hutu sought refuge provided by Congo's geography. Rwanda's invasion to eradicate militia groups and topple the dictator Mobutu Sese Seko sparked the fighting that included six separate African military defense forces and subsequently split the nation into numerous rival factions and fiefdoms. In developing nations, the root causes of civil conflict are consistent. Political instability, social inequality, and economic stagnation predispose these countries to conflict. The recent participation increases this propensity and exacerbates existing poverty in the aftermath.

An ongoing political crisis causes much of Congo's current violence disposition plague. President Joseph Kabila has stayed in power as the President of the Democratic Republic of Congo for 18 years, well beyond his constitutionally mandated two-term limit, mainly in part by repeatedly delaying elections and suppressing opposition. Even in a transfer of authority to Felix Tshisekedi, the main opposition party leader, Kabila is still calling the shots in a political climate where previous leaders fled or died before they escape assassination. Security forces kill peaceful protestors is commonplace, and the jailing of opposition or democracy supporting activists

expected under Kabila. The DRC lacks the necessary political stability and leadership to address the violence crisis. If allowed to remain in the existing political deadlock, Congo is more susceptible to falling into a new war degrading an already unstable region. Spillover is increasingly imminent as the dire situation in the DRC continues a degrading path.

Congo's economic disposition is a significant impediment to stabilizing the country and bringing peace back to its citizens. Poverty underpins the recent spike in violence. A government as the Republic of Congo that constrains economic freedoms for the citizens is likely to blame for financial woes and will cause frustration throughout the country. Although DRC is one of the largest producers of oil in the Sub-Saharan region, yet it lacks the necessary infrastructure to turn potential into financial gain. As a result of an immature development foundation, Congo bears the responsibility to manage a 2019 GDP of \$28.9 billion for its 4.3 million citizens. Growth from the previous year was an economic contraction of -4.6%. Per capita is \$6,000 well below the global average compounding an 11% unemployment rate.^{xxii} High unemployment, when coupled with deprivation of essential goods and services, creates the right balance of frustration and desperation that makes violence seem to some like a practical option.

In the Horn of Africa between the countries of Somalia, Djibouti, Somalia, Sudan, and South Sudan, a return to civil conflict, is all but imminent in Africa's oldest independent country of Ethiopia. What began as well-intentioned political reforms by the recently appointed prime minister, Abiy Ahmed, created an unintended effect of reigniting the country's ethnic tensions with far-reaching effects into Europe, Eastern Africa, and the Arab Gulf. The Ethiopian is one situation where all-out conflict is preventable due to the signs of impending conflict that exist, political instability, inequality, and an economy ranked among the poorest in the world all served to set the stage for a civil war.

Ethiopia is one of 22 failed states in the world and considered one of the most fragile as a state.^{xxiii} Weakness and fragility of states is a perfect breeding ground for violence and extremist activity. Failing is the inability to provide the necessities of life quality, rights, services, and security. With the stage set of world actors on both sides of the motivation spectrum, the urgency to act is apparent. Prevention in the case of Ethiopia is a possibility, presumably welcomed by many residents, along with peace and stability.

Ethiopia's current state of unstable politics can point to a transition spurred by Prime Minister Ahmed's 2018 appointment. His pledge to reform the Ethiopian government away from the methods utilized by the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) is the primary cause of the ensuing antigovernment protest that followed the appointment. To add to the already complicated and tense situation is a factor of religion, called into the equation after the persecution of Christians began along with church burnings.^{xxiv} Ethiopia's economic growth might be their only saving grace in an otherwise dire situation.

Despite tumultuous politics and rampant inequality, Ethiopia's economy has risen steadily over the past decade. Once considered as one of the three most impoverished countries in the world, with a GDP per capita income at \$700, Ethiopia has since experienced a miraculous turnaround to the third fastest growing country with more than 10 million residents.^{xxv} Service and agriculture are the dominant industries responsible for the 11% annual GDP growth from 2004 to 2014. The downside to the internal challenges facing the 100-million-person country is the attractiveness to the China investment agenda.^{xxvi}

Ethiopia sits at a crossroads of one of the greatest success stories in recent history and the verge of repeated history on the continent. Economic growth championed by the government is, at times, overshadowed by the opposition suppression and beliefs of favorable treatment of one

ethnic group over another. If the country can overcome the status quo of instability, vast opportunities await. The question remains as to whether intervention is plausible.

"The art of war is of vital importance to the state. It is a matter of life and death, a road either to safety or to ruin. Hence it is a subject of inquiry which can on no account be neglected."

Sun Tzu

The world's most war-ravaged countries remain as such from the enormity of death tolls, infrastructure destruction, and a displaced civilian population that is likely never to return. The ever-increasing danger generated by civil unrest is likely to increase as instigators also increase continually. State sovereignty and previously established foreign policy have yielded conflicting results in the past. However, the events of the previous year, coupled with a codified predictive criterion, make the case to reduce the breakouts of civil wars. In addition to the analysis of specific civil wars ongoing, two additional countries are topping a growing list of countries considered on the verge, Cameroon and Venezuela. The countries show ongoing societal inequalities, a catastrophic economy highlighted by unstable, corrupt governments.

Perilousness is not a matter of if but when if interventions do not occur most expeditiously. The country of Cameroon once considered one of the more stable in an otherwise troubled region finds itself facing a destabilizing civil war looming on the verge of breaking into a crisis due to violent extremisms and a political leader overstaying his welcome. Exacerbating the challenges to stabilization are the estimated ten separatist militias battling Cameroon's security forces and government supporting defense groups. Death tolls already exceed 500 civilians, minor in comparison as ten percent of the estimated 480,000 internally displaced

personnel. A resolution is not beyond reach for the people of Cameroon, but time is not a luxury.^{xxvii}

Cameroon's equally volatile peer on the crisis watch list is a natural reserve abundant Latin American country of Venezuela. Venezuela's crisis emanates from Defense Minister Vladimir Padrino's accusations that regional allies of the United States launched or planned to launch a coup d'état against Nicolás Maduro.^{xxviii} Opposing sides differ on what cause or political party to back, yet the resulting chaotic and anarchic risks are agreeable. Insertion into the volatility by Russian President Vladimir Putin backing Maduro creates an atmosphere of political instability conducive to start a civil war.

Adding to the turbulence of the political environment is the country's worst economic crisis in its history. The economic calamity comes because of hyperinflation, drastic cuts in, and oil production. The economic freefall will only get worse without policy intervention hindered by political discord. The current state of Venezuela's economy is food transportation requiring armed guards, and a three-day wait to receive necessities like cooking oil or rice. A growth rate of -8% along with a 480% inflation rate precede an impending civil war.^{xxix}

Venezuela's social inequality situation is described by the digital newspaper Tal Cual as "The inability of the government to guarantee public services."^{xxx} This shortcoming is also the cause of a gap in living standards and employment wages that grows larger by the day. Rich getting richer and poor getting poorer has increased the suffering and made a change in political leadership seem more likely, if even by forcible means. Forcible displacement is prevalent, with 4.5 million citizens currently living outside of the country, expected to reach upwards of 8 million by next year's end.^{xxxi}

In a situation where a civil war seems likely, and preventive intervention seems even more plausible, the answer is farther off than initially perceived. Especially true when Russian opposition to the UN security council debates on solutions to the Venezuelan crisis. Moscow appears content to describe the crisis as internal, but rarely are civil wars a respecter of borders.^{xxxii} Moreover, although anarchy creates a welcomed power vacuum for some, the consequences absorbed by others is not the ideal equitable return.

"It is not enough to win a war; it is more important to organize peace." Aristotle

Whether the correct term to phrase is conflict prevention, resolution, peacebuilding, or any combination of the above what remains constant is the fact that none of the efforts remain summarily confined to a specific field, policy, or regional government nor do these conflict ever remain confined to the state of origin. The question that this research aimed to answer was not whether an intervention was necessary, but how and when to execute the intervening efforts. Diplomacy, foreign policy, human rights are areas of concern when discussing how to address a solution set for the 1.5 billion people affected by violent conflict worldwide.^{xxxiii}

Peacebuilding is a function of economic development, social equality, political security, and stability. As the drivers of conflict are consistent, there are three overarching reasons why the necessity to invest in conflict prevention needs to increase the world's priority itinerary. The effects of conflict extend beyond borders and persist within borders for years after conflict ends. Solutions to political or social problems cannot always come in the form of military force. Conflict hinders development for the duration of the conflict and well into the future, often serving as a precursor to a later conflict.

The goal of lasting peace is achievable through a combination of political, social, and economic solutions often without the military lever of influence. The task of establishing peace and conflict prevention is just as important as how it is accomplished. It is understandable that factors preceding conflict do not always lend themselves to a parochial solution nor to singular aftereffects. The premise of a peaceful nation begins with solutions offered by the indigenous inhabitants and continues with negotiations including oppressors and victims. The sentiments of inclusiveness and participation punctuate the evolution of dialogue which allows external intervention without full-scale overtaking.

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