The Determinants of Internal Conflict in the Third World

By Hae S. Kim

Of the many characteristics that set the First World apart from the Third World, one of great significance is the frequency of internal conflict and political violence occurring in the latter. While many Third World countries experience a much higher frequency of internal conflict and political violence than their First World counterparts, not all less developed countries (LDCs) in the Third World experience internal conflict and political violence. As such, it seems that the Third World can be dichotomized between conflict-stricken and non-conflict-stricken countries. What causes the occurrence and nonoccurrence of internal conflict and political violence in some countries of the Third World? This paper addresses that question by analyzing determinants of internal conflict and identifies those conditions that dichotomize between the occurrence and nonoccurrence of internal conflict in Third World countries. Utilizing a multivariate analysis, moreover, this paper seeks to understand which factors may be contributing to such conflict.

The attacks in the US on September 11th and the subsequent wars in Afghanistan and Iraq have overshadowed crises and internal wars prevalent in other parts of the world, particularly in the Third World's LDCs. Crises in other parts of the Third World have become "forgotten crises" when indeed they are still active and significant.[1]

Conflict-stricken Third World countries suffer from, *inter alia,* poverty, refugees, civil wars, political violence and instability, food shortage, drought, AIDS, famine, as well as economic devastation. Internal crises, as manifested by ethnic conflicts, religious conflicts, riots, forceful overthrows of governments, secessionist or independence movements, or civil and political violence, may arise for a number of reasons: racial, religious, cultural, ideological, and economic factors, as well as political and social structures.

In recent decades the world community has witnessed a high frequency of such terms as "ethnic conflict," "ethnocentrism," "ethnonationalism," and "ethnic cleansing." These "ethnic" prefixes have been more widely used since the end of the Cold War. Also, such terms portray internal conflict as based on ethnic-racial lines

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within a state. Ethnic-racial determinists of internal conflict argue that the distinctiveness of each of the diverse groups within a state is the very source of internal conflict and political violence in the Third World.[2]

Religious determinists argue that religious differences are the source of internal conflict. A system of belief, they argue, provides religious believers with their main source of identity. Their "belief" and "identity," if compromised, are the key factors of civil wars and political violence. Those who advocate religion as a factor for conflict also argue that this type of conflict spills over to ethnic-racial conflict. [3]

While there is a dichotomy between racial-ethnic and religious conflicts, some determinists take an integrated view of the causes of internal conflict in the Third World, undifferentiating between ethnic-racial and religious determinants. The term "ethnic-religious conflict" is one prime example of this supposition.

What causes the occurrence of internal conflict and political violence in some countries of the Third World?

Cultural determinists explain the cause of internal conflict based on a broad concept of civilization. Such explanations are more expansive and comprehensive than either ethnic-racial or religious determinists' views on the causes of conflict. One notable argument made by cultural determinism is that no attempt has been made to conceptually differentiate between ethnic-racial and religious lines. Clearly the cultural determinism of conflict is more comprehensive than either ethnic-racial or religious determinism in explaining the causes of conflict.

Relative deprivation theory, which attempts to explain the cause of conflict, is based on psychological dimensions of any society transitioning from underdeveloped to advanced stages in much of the developing world. The aspiration gap between the rising expectation (hopes) and the actual level of satisfaction (realities) is particularly eminent in these transitional societies. The wider the aspiration gap, the more the people suffer, and this frustration can eventually lead to conflict.[4] Simon Kuznets advanced the gap theory, which also attempts to explain causes of conflict. The so-called "Kuznets curve" aims to explain the gap in income distribution that develops during the early stages of modernization between the traditional rural and advanced industrialized sectors within a nation. Accordingly, the gap between the two sectors is the very cause of internal conflict.[5]

Some argue that the gap between economic growth (i.e., the quantitative dimension of economic development) and quality of life (i.e., the qualitative dimension of economic development) serves as a source of internal conflict. It is generally argued that economic growth is not necessarily and positively correlated with the quality of life, although the economic growth itself will upgrade other broader indicators of living standards such as literacy, health and nutrition, life expectancy, and infant mortality. The discrepancy between the economic growth and the quality of life is generally considered more conspicuous in developing nations than in industrialized ones. The wider the gap between the economic growth and the

quality of life, the more frequently countries will experience internal conflict.

Empirical evidence has shown that ethnic-racial heterogeneity, rapid population growth, and excessive defense spending were found to be the detrimental factors in widening the gap between quality of life and economic growth (per capita GNP level) in developing nations in the Third World. These factors impede the economic growth from being fully reflected in the level of the quality of life, thus widening the gap between these two levels of economic development. These same variables, however, were found to be insignificant or weak factors in developed nations.[6]

Polity categories of totalitarian, authoritarian, and democratic-competitive states are argued to have a significant effect on the frequency of internal conflict as well. In a study of seventy-four states from 1955 to 1960, Zinnes and Wilkenfeld discovered that authoritarian states tended to have more than their share of internal conflict but a fair share of external conflict. It is argued that libertarian regimes, in which the authors include Western democracies with free-enterprise economies, were found to have less external conflict than totalitarian and authoritarian regimes.[7]

During the final years of the Cold War and the years of the post–Cold War era, many Third World countries experienced a growing sense of individual equality and a desire for citizen participation in the political process, serving as an engine for democratization. Both democracy and the democratization process, as political factors, were considered to be important determinants of internal and external conflict.

Power-transition theorists argue that most internal crises and conflicts erupted when states were locked in internal power transitions, usually characterized by new state formation, political revolution, or efforts to democratize autocratic regimes. These drastic internal developments, whether as a result of rapid social mobilization or of sharp advances in national economic development, invite internal conflict and crisis. [8]

Proliferation of arms and weapons, particularly shipped into many parts of Third World countries, is also thought to be a culprit for a great deal of killings and repression.[9] Weapons are used by government-controlled armed forces, local police and militia, private military forces, as well as insurgents and bandits. Such groups arm themselves for many reasons, including regional rivalry, prestige, and the pervasive ambition of authoritarian or dictatorial regimes. It is argued that sophisticated arms and weapons have increased the death toll, as well as the number of refugees, in the Third World.[10]

Theory and Hypothesis

The theories and approaches reviewed above have a number of things in common. Each attempts to explain the causes of internal conflict primarily based on a single variable rather than utilizing a multivariate approach, where a variety of variables, theoretically relevant, are employed to analyze the causes of internal conflict. Ethnic-racial determinism, for example, is solely based on ethnic-racial composition of a nation-state, where economic, political, and even religious factors

are ignored.

This single variable approach, however, has an inherent weakness in that it cannot provide a "pure" effect of the single variable since many other variables might also cause internal conflict. In order to identify the pure effect of a given single variable, the effect of those other variables must be controlled for.

None of the theories or approaches previously reviewed suggest that the effects of other variables were controlled for in order to isolate a pure effect of the single variable on internal conflict. None of the ethnic-racial, religious, cultural, relative deprivation, power transition, political system, or proliferation of arms theories suggest that control variables were employed in the context of multivariate analysis.

Therefore, this paper employs a multivariate analysis aiming to isolate the pure effect of each of the variables theoretically relevant to the cause of internal conflict. A logistic regression analysis is used to predict a binary dependent variable from a set of independent variables. As the data for the analysis in this paper are based on "occurrence" versus "nonoccurrence" of internal conflict in the Third World—the binary dependent variable—the logistic regression is the most pertinent method of multivariate statistical analysis.

METHODOLOGY

A cross-sectional analysis, based on both conflict-stricken and non-conflict-stricken developing countries (140 countries in total), was utilized for this study. The time span covered in the analysis is the 2000–2005 period.

The following three criteria served as the basis for dichotomizing countries between conflict-stricken and non-conflict-stricken. Third World countries experiencing any of the following criteria were classified as conflict-stricken countries and the remaining as non-conflict-stricken:

1. The UN list of the world's twenty-one "forgotten crises:" post-war poverty, refugees, war and civil war, political instability, food shortage, drought, conflict, AIDS, famine, and economic devastation
2. Significant ongoing armed conflicts
3. Countries producing worldwide refugees and asylum seekers

Countries classified as conflict-stricken are coded as "1" and the remaining countries as "0." The dependent variable, the existence of conflict, is classificatory and dichotomous.[11] Since the dependent variable is grounded in whether an event will or will not occur, based on dichotomous internal conflict (occurrence) versus non-internal conflict (nonoccurrence), logistic regression analysis is the most pertinent analysis that can be applied. Logistic regression estimates the probability that an event will or will not occur. [12]

The following are treated as independent variables as well as control variables. These were selected because they have been theoretically assumed to affect the likelihood of internal conflict: political freedom, ethnic homogeneity, religious diversity, income distribution, quality of life, economic growth, population growth, and military expenditures. Each is hypothesized to have a significant effect on the

likelihood of internal conflict. They are operationalized respectively as follows:

Political freedom/political system: Political freedom is classified as "not free," "partly free," and "free." Types of political systems are classified according to the degree of political freedom; "not free" as totalitarian, "partly free" as authoritarian, and "free" as democratic. This variable is treated as a categorical variable, in which totalitarian is coded as "1," authoritarian as "2," and democratic as "3."

Ethnic homogeneity: The ethnic homogeneity is measured by the percentage of the dominant ethnic-racial group within each nation.

Religious homogeneity: This is measured by the percentage of the dominant religious group within each nation.

Income Distribution: This is measured by the Gini index, which measures the degree of inequality in the distribution of family income in any given country. The Gini coefficient measures the extent to which the distribution of income (or, in some cases, consumption expenditures) among individuals or households within an economy deviates from a perfectly equal distribution. The coefficient ranges from '0'—meaning perfect equality—to '1'—complete inequality.

Quality of Life: This is measured by a Human Development Index (HDI). The HDI is a summary composite index that measures a country's average achievement in three basic aspects of human development: longevity, knowledge, and a decent standard of living. The most basic capabilities for human development include leading long and healthy lives, gaining knowledge, having access to the resources needed for a decent standard of living and being able to participate in the life of the community. Longevity is measured by life expectancy at birth; knowledge is measured by a combination of the adult literacy rate and the combined primary, secondary, and tertiary gross enrollment ratio; and standard of living by GDP per capita (PPP in US dollars).

Economic Growth: Economic growth is measured by purchasing power parity (PPP). PPP allows a standard comparison of real price levels between countries, while normal exchange rates may over- or undervalue purchasing power. At the PPP rate, one dollar has the same purchasing power over domestic GDP that the US dollar has over the US GDP. The data derived from the PPP method provides the best available starting point for comparisons of economic strength and well-being among countries.

Population growth: This is based on a natural increase per 1,000 people; it is based on natural growth or the balance of births and deaths reflecting the difference between the birth rate and the death rate of a given population.

Defense spending: This is measured by military expenditures as a percentage of GNP.

Table 1: Difference in the Means of Socioeconomic and Political Variables Between Conflict and Non-Conflict Countries (2000–2004)

	Non-conflict	Conflict
Ethnic Homogeneity (%)	73.19 (88)	64.50 (52)
Religious Homogeneity(%)	72.12 (88)	69.48 (52)
GINI (%) (a)	47.24 (47)	41.63 (32)
HDI (b)	.68 (78)	.56 (47)
PPP ($)	7230.68 (88)	2640.38 (52)
Political Freedom (c)	2.36 (87)	1.56 (52)
Population Growth (%)	17.15 (91)	19.91 (52)
Military Expenditures (%)	2.93 (69)	3.08 (49)

(a) GINI: 1.00 (100%) perfect inequality while 0 (0%) perfect equality.
(b) HDI ranges between 0 (lowest) to 1 (highest).
(c) Political freedom ranges from 1(not free) to 3(free).

Source: *The World Factbook* 2000–2005; *Britannica Book of the Year* 2000–2005.

Table 1 contrasts the differences between conflict and non-conflict countries in terms of the composition of ethnic-religious, socioeconomic, and political variables. Out of 140 developing countries, 52 countries (37 percent) were classified as conflict-stricken. One of the most glaring differences between these two groups comes from economic growth as measured by purchasing power parity (PPP). Where non-conflict countries have a PPP of $7230.68, conflict-stricken countries have a PPP of $2640.38. In other words, the former has a PPP 2.74 times as much as that of the latter.

In the area of ethnic diversity, conflict-stricken countries turned out to be more heterogeneous than their non-conflict counterparts, but in religious homogeneity both groups of countries retained a similar level.

Income distribution as measured by Gini coefficients shows 47.24 for non-conflict countries, while 41.63 for conflict countries: the higher the coefficients, the more unequal the distribution. The non-conflict countries are more unequal than the conflict countries in the distribution of income among different segments of the population.

Quality of life, as measured by HDI, is similar to the economic-growth as measured by PPP, although non-conflict countries retain a higher quality of life than conflict-stricken ones. The level of political freedom is higher in non-conflict countries.

Table 2: Conflict vs. Non-Conflict Countries by Political System

Type of Government	Conflict Countries	Non-Conflict Countries
Section I: Totalitarian	Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Bhutan, Burundi, Cambodia, Chad, China, Congo (former Zaire), Cote d'Ivore, Cuba, Egypt, Eritrea, Guinea, Haiti, Iran, Iraq, North Korea, Laos, Lebanon, Liberia, Myanmar, Pakistan, Rwanda, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Vietnam, Zimbabwe	Brunei, Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Libya, Maldives, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Swaziland, Togo, Tunisia, UAE, Yemen
Section II: Authoritarian	Central African Republic (CAR), Colombia, Congo, East Timor, Ethiopia, Fiji, Guatemala, Indonesia, Mauritania, Nepal, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Turkey, Uganda	Albania, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Djibouti, Ecuador, Gabon, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Honduras, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Macedonia, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Morocco, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Niger, Paraguay, Seychelles, Singapore, Trinidad and Tobago, Zambia
Section III: Democratic	Ghana, India, Mexico, Philippine, Senegal, Thailand	Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Benin, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Cape Verde, Chile, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Dominica, Dominica Republic, El Salvador, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Kiribati, South Korea, Lesotho, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Micronesia, Monaco, Mongolia, Namibia, Nauru, Palau, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe, South Africa, Suriname, Taiwan, Tuvalu, Uruguay, Vanuatu

Source: *The World Factbook* 2000–2005; *Britannica Book of the Year* 2000–2005

Table 2, Section I, indicates that there are many totalitarian countries classified as conflict-stricken, yet there are also totalitarian countries such as Brunei, Cameroon, Oman, Saudi Arabia, and Togo, among others, classified as non-conflict-stricken. Many totalitarian countries suffer from internal conflict and crisis, but not all. Authoritarian countries whose level of political freedom is based on a "partly free" system are relatively "equally" divided between conflict-stricken and non-conflict-stricken.

Table 2, Section III, indicates that there are democratic countries suffering from internal conflict and crises, such as Ghana, India, Mexico, the Philippines, Senegal, and Thailand. Democracy does not necessarily guarantee peace and stability in Third World countries, yet many democratic countries turn out to be non-conflict countries.

Both non-conflict and conflict countries show similarities in the population growth as well as in military spending, respectively. Essentially, there is virtually no difference between the conflict and non-conflict countries when it comes to the amount of military expenditures.

Despite the similarities, Table 3 shows that totalitarian countries spend much more than democratic countries in military expenditures regardless of their conflict status. Conflict-stricken totalitarian countries spend 2.63 times (3.82/1.45) and non-conflict totalitarian countries 3.07 times (5.38/1.79) more than their respective democratic counterparts. One notable finding is that even the "peaceful" totalitarian countries' military expenditures are much higher than their conflict-stricken counterparts (5.38 percent and 3.82 percent, respectively). Regardless of internal conflict, totalitarian leaders in the Third World strive for a higher level of arms acquisition than those in democratic countries.

The "peaceful" totalitarian countries that have large military expenditures turn out to be wealthy countries as well. As Table 3 further indicates, those countries retain an economic strength in terms of PPP at $9030.77, which is much higher than the authoritarian average ($5476.67) and even the democratic one ($7880). The PPP in those non-conflict totalitarian countries is 4.09 times as much as that of conflict-stricken countries ($2206.90). As seen from Table 2, the totalitarian and non-conflict countries are mostly from the Middle East and, as such, produce oil.

Results

Table 4 presents the logistic model analysis of the likelihood of internal conflict in Third World countries. Political freedom (political system), ethnic composition, and income distribution, respectively, were all found to have a significant independent effect on the likelihood of internal conflict. This subset of independent variables in the equation can be taken as a good predictor of the likelihood of internal conflict, which is then treated as the dependent variable. But the logistic regression analysis has excluded religious composition, economic development (quality of life, HDI and economic growth, and PPP), population growth, military spending, as well as "authoritarian" political system variables. In other words, this means that those

Table 3: Means of Socioeconomic and Military Spending Variable of Conflict and Non-Conflict Countries by Political System

Conflict Countries

Political System	Low	Medium	High
Ethnic Homogeneity (%)	68.61	54.34	77.38
PPP ($)	2206.90	2682.35	4616.67
Religious Homogeneity (%)	68.88	65.29	84.22
Population Growth (%)	20.34	20.94	14.97
Military Spending (%)	3.82	2.35	1.45
HDI[a]	.544	.543	.654
Gini Coefficient[b]	39.11	44.33	41.28

Non-Conflict Countries

Political System	Low	Medium	High
Ethnic Homogeneity (%)	67.96	71.86	75.58
PPP ($)	9030.77	5476.67	7880.00
Religious Homogeneity (%)	76.77	72.55	70.49
Population Growth (%)	22.10	18.40	14.90
Military Spending (%)	5.38	2.96	1.75
HDI	.696	.637	.717
Gini Coefficient	44.68	44.61	50.79

[a]HDI ranges between 0 (lowest) to 1 (highest).
[b]GINI: 1.00 (100%) perfect inequality while 0 (0%) perfect equality.
Source: *The World Factbook* 2000–2005; *Britannica Book of the Year* 2000–2005

excluded "variables not in the equation" were all found to have no significant effect on the odds of internal conflict.

The political freedom variable—i.e., the political system—indicates that the totalitarian political system, with little or no political freedom, had the largest regression coefficient (2.04), to be followed by income distribution (-.064), and ethnic homogeneity (-.026). The value of the largest coefficient means that totalitarian countries in the Third World are more likely to experience a higher frequency of internal conflict and crisis than authoritarian or democratic countries.

As one might expect, totalitarian political systems at the "not free" level of political freedom were found vulnerable to the likelihood of internal conflict and

Table 4: Logistical Regression: Internal Conflict

Variables in the Equation

Variable	B	Waldo	Sig
Political System[a]			
Low/Totalitarian	2.04	8.443	.004*
Ethnic Homogeneity	-.026	5.589	.002*
Income Distribution (Gini)	-.064	4.437	.035*
Constant	3.790	5.201	.023*

Variables Not in the Equation

Variable	Score	Sig
Political System		
Medium/Authoritarian	.107	.744
High/Democratic[b]	0	
Economic Growth	1.57	.211
(PPP)		
Quality of Life (HDI)	1.018	.3133
Religious Heterogeneity	.553	.810
Population Growth	-.239	.625

[a]Political System is a categorical variable, in which the system was categorized into totalitarian, authoritarian, and democratic according to their respective degree of freedom.

[b]Democratic here is a "reference category," whose coefficient accords with 0, that is to be compared with the coefficients of the other two categories, totalitarian and authoritarian, respectively.

*Significant at .05 level

Source: *The World Factbook* 2000–2005; *Britannica Book of the Year* 2000–2005

political violence, in comparison with authoritarian and democratic counterparts at the "partly free" and "free" levels of political freedom, respectively. Countries in the Third World with a higher level of political freedom were less likely to suffer from internal conflict and crises than their totalitarian counterparts.

The finding also supports the argument that a democratic political system is

more capable of solving and managing internal crisis and conflict than the non-democratic political systems in the Third World. Regardless of ethnic and religious composition (homogeneous or heterogeneous), and even regardless of economic development, totalitarian countries in the Third World are more likely to experience such strife and unrest; that is, the less political freedom, the more likely they experience internal conflict and crises. Those non-democratic political systems with little or no political freedom were found to be less capable of solving and managing crisis and conflict. The finding seems to support the "democratic peace" premise: democratic politics is capable of attenuating internal and civil conflict, thus leading to peace and stability.

Ethnic composition was found to have a significant effect on the likelihood of internal conflict, indicating that ethnically homogeneous countries are less likely to experience internal conflict than ethnically heterogeneous ones. Although its coefficient (-.026) is much smaller than the political system variable (totalitarian with 2.04), ethnic homogeneity is more conducive to the maintenance of domestic stability and peace than the ethnic heterogeneity in the Third World. Regardless of its political system or economic development, ethnically homogeneous countries are less vulnerable to the likelihood of internal conflict than ethnically heterogeneous ones. Unlike ethnic composition, and perhaps somewhat surprising, religious diversity was found to have no significant effect on the likelihood of internal conflict.

Both ethnic and religious compositions were found to be independent of each other in affecting the odds of internal conflict. This suggests the need for a distinction between the ethnic and the religious components of internal conflict needs to be made in conflict analysis. In short, these findings suggest that the phrase "ethnic-religious conflict," having been so widely used in conflict literature on developing countries, needs to be revised into separate categories of ethnic or religious conflict.

No significant and independent effect of the religious variable on the likelihood of internal conflict indicates that what appears to be a "religious conflict" is actually due to ethnic, racial, and/or political reasons; so-called "ethnic-religious" conflicts seem, indeed, to be ethnic or racial rather than religious. In other words, the religious composition, taken by itself, appears not to be a direct cause of likelihood of internal conflict and crisis in the Third World.

Income distribution was found to have a significant independent effect on the likelihood of internal conflict. The negative regression coefficient of income distribution (-.064) in Table 4 indicates that the more unequal the distribution of income among different segments of the population within a nation, the less likely they are to experience the internal conflict and crisis in developing countries of the Third World. Under any conditions of ethnic composition and political freedom, income distribution was found to affect the likelihood of internal conflict.

That income distribution is expected to have a significant effect means that countries in the Third World undergoing a more egalitarian process of distribution,

as realized by the equitable income distribution among diverse segments of population, are more likely to experience internal conflict and political violence. Table 5 shows the "most unequally" distributed twenty countries, in terms of income, in contrast with the "most equally" distributed ones. Clearly the most equally distributed countries document higher scores of internal conflict than the most disparate countries.

Countries transitioning toward a more equal distribution of income among different segments of the population are more likely to experience a higher frequency of internal conflict than those countries still under the condition of established unequal distribution. Internal conflict is more likely to be triggered

Table 5: Unequal vs. Equal Countries: Top 20

Most "Unequal" Countries: Top 20

Country	Gini Coefficient	Conflict (1)/ Non-conflict (0)
Namibia	70.7	0
Lesotho	63.2	0
Botswana	63.0	0
Sierra Leone	62.9	1
Central African Republic	61.3	1
Swaziland	60.9	0
South Africa	59.3	0
Brazil	59.1	0
Colombia	57.6	1
Chile	57.1	0
Zimbabwe	56.8	1
Paraguay	56.8	0
Panama	56.4	0
Nicaragua	55.1	0
Honduras	55.0	0
Mexico	54.6	1
El Salvador	53.2	0
Zambia	52.6	0
Argentina	52.2	0
Papua New Guinea	50.9	0

Most "Equal" Countries: Top 20

Albania	28.2	0
Macedonia	28.2	0
Rwanda	28.9	1
Ghana	30.0	1
Ethiopia	30.0	1
Korea/South	31.6	0
Bangladesh	31.8	0
India	32.5	1
Pakistan	33.0	1
Burundi	33.3	1
Yemen	33.4	0
Indonesia	34.4	1
Egypt	34.4	1
Sri Lanka	34.4	1
Algeria	35.3	1
Vietnam	36.1	1
Jordan	36.4	0
Nepal	36.7	1
Laos	36.7	1
Jamaica	37.9	0

during the transitional period toward a more equitable distribution among diverse segments of the population than the period of unequal distribution of income. The more the countries are transitioning to an equal distribution, the more likely they are vulnerable to the occurrence of internal conflict, regardless of political system, economic growth, and/or quality of life.

Quality of life (HDI) and economic growth (PPP), both of which represent the dimension of economic development, were found to have no significant effect on the likelihood of internal conflict. This means that income distribution rather than issues of development—i.e., economic growth and quality of life—appears to be an important factor in determining the likelihood of internal conflict. In other words, even if economic development has been achieved, the development itself was found to have no significant effect on the odds of internal conflict in the Third World.

What affects the likelihood of internal conflict and political violence in the Third World is not the level of economic growth or quality of life, rather it is income distribution within an economy, egalitarian or not. Countries in the process of

transitioning tend to experience a more equitable distribution of income among different segments of the population. The more equitable distribution of income, the more likely it triggers internal conflicts and crisis. Third World countries under an established inequality were less likely to experience an internal conflict or crisis. This means that the transition period in the course of economic development and modernization in the Third World is more vulnerable to internal conflict and crisis.

Population growth and military spending were found to have no significant, respective effect on the odds of internal conflict and political violence in the Third World. It is generally assumed that rapid population growth has been one of the major detriments to economic growth and the quality of life in the Third World; yet, population growth itself is not likely to increase the likelihood of internal conflict and crises in the Third World.

Regardless of any ethnic-racial, political, or economic conditions, military spending was found to have no significant effect on the odds of internal conflict. Military spending, particularly excessive as seen from totalitarian and authoritarian countries (conflict and non-conflict, see Table 3), has been assumed to trigger a higher frequency of internal conflict and political violence. The finding, however, does not support the long-held assumption that sophisticated arms and weapons, as purchased or developed by runaway military expenditures in the Third World, increased the death toll as well as the number of refugees. No direct and independent effect of military spending on the odds of internal conflict and crises was found.

Conclusion

A number of factors effect the odds of internal conflict and political violence in the Third World. In this regard, the type of political system, which reflects a different degree of political freedom, was found to be the most important factor. A totalitarian political system, allowing no political rights and civil liberties, was found more likely to experience internal conflict and crisis than their authoritarian and democratic counterparts. The lack of political freedom and dictatorial leadership were found to be chief culprits in the likelihood of internal conflict and crisis in the Third World, regardless of ethnic and religious diversity or economic development.

Internal conflicts and crises in the Third World are more likely to be associated with ethnic and racial differences than religious ones. Under any conditions of religious composition, homogeneous or heterogeneous, ethnic-racial diversity retains its significant effect on the likelihood of internal conflict. Ethnically heterogeneous countries are more vulnerable to internal crisis and conflict regardless of religious composition.

Economic development variables (economic growth [PPP] and quality of life [HDI]) were found to have no significant effect on the the likelihood of internal conflict and political violence. Neither the quantitative (economic growth) nor the qualitative (quality of life) dimensions of economic development appear to be culprits for the likelihood of internal conflict.

What matters in the initiation of internal conflict and crisis is the distribution,

rather than development, aspect of the economy. Whether income is equitably or inequitably distributed does affect the likelihood of internal conflict and political violence regardless of economic development as measured by economic growth. Contrary to the conventional theory that income inequality is among the serious causes of political conflict and instability in the Third World, it is rather the developing income equality among different segments of the population that is likely to trigger an internal conflict and/or political instability.

In short, the odds of internal conflict in the Third World are likely to be affected by political freedom rather than economic development, ethnic and racial differences rather than religious ones, and by distributive and egalitarian causes pursued by the populations of the Third World. Governments in the Third World should be able to meet the growing egalitarian demands generated from diverse ethnic and racial groups in the course of economic development. Political development securing democracy with a higher degree of political freedom could accommodate the demands. Governments in the Third World should be able to reconcile economic development with political development in order to diminish the odds of internal conflict and political violence.

Notes

[1] "Humanitarian Appeal 2004," The United Nations. Available at: www.un.org/depts/ocha/cap/appeals.html. (Accessed 22 August 2006.) UN Secretary of General Kofi Annan identified 21 crises in the world, which have been neglected by the international community. Those "forgotten crises" are from the following countries/regions: Angola, Burundi, Central African Republic, Chechnya, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Great Lakes Region (Africa), Guinea, Liberia, North Korea, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Southern Africa, Sudan, Tajikistan, Tanzania, Uganda, West Bank of Gaza, West Africa, and Zimbabwe.

[2] See Thomas D. Hall, "Ethnic Conflicts as a Global Social Problems," in *Handbook of Social Problems: A Comparative International Perspective,* ed. George Ritzer (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2004), 139-55; David Carment, "The International Dimensions of Ethnic Conflict: Concepts, Indicators, and Theory," *Journal of Peace Research* 30, no. 2, (May 1993): 137-150; Ted Robert Gurr, "People Against States: Ethnopoltical Conflict and the Changing World System: 1994 Presidential Address," *International Studies Quarterly* 38, no. 3 (September 1994): 347-377.

[3] Mark Juergensmeyer, *The New Cold War? Religious Nationalism Confronts the Secular State.* (Berkeley: University of California Press, Ltd., 1993); R. H. Shultz and W. J. Olson, "Ethnic and Religious Conflict: Emerging Threat to U.S. Security," Washington D.C.: National Strategy Information Center, 1994.

[4] T. R. Gurr, *Why Men Rebel*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970; P. A. Lupsha, "Explanation of Political Violence: Some Psychological Theories versus Indignation," *Politics and Society*, 2 (Fall 1971): 89-104.

[5] Simon Kuznets, "Economic Growth and Income Inequality," *American Economic Review* 45, no. 1 (1955): 1-28; Simon Kuznets, *Modern Economic Growth: Rate, Structure, and Spread,* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966).

[6] H. S. Kim, "Analysis of the Gap Between Growth and Quality of Life in the Third World," *National Social Science Journal* 10, no. 2, (1998): 84-90.

[7] Dina.A. Zinnes and Jonathan Wilkenfeld, " An Analysis of Foreign Conflict Behavior of Nations," *Comparative Foreign Policy,* ed. W. F. Hanrieder (New York: McKay, 1971): 167-213.

[8] Lars- Erik Cederman, "Emergent Polarity: Analyzing State-Formation and Power Politics," *International Studies Quarterly* 38, (1994): 501-533.

[9] *Small Arms Survey*. Availabe at: http://www.smallarmssurvey.org (Accessed 17 September 2005.)

[10] Ruth L. Sivard et. al., *World Military and Social Expenditures 1996*, (Washington, D.C.: World Priorities, 1996).

[11] Countries classified as "conflict-stricken" are as follows: Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Bhutan, Burundi, Cambodia, Central African Republic, Chad, China, Colombia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Republic of the Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Cuba, East Timor, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Ghana, Guatemala, Guinea, Haiti, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, North Korea, Laos, Liberia, Mauritania, Mexico, Myanmar, Nepal, Nigeria, Pakistan,

Philippine, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leon, Solomon, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Tanzania, Thailand, Turkey, Uganda, Vietnam, Zimbabwe (49 countries).

[12] The logistic regression is based on the Advanced Statistics of SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences).