

Chapter 1

The Global System and the Third World War

The Third World War is neither an epic drama nor a glittering extravaganza designed for prime-time audiences; it is playing now in theaters everywhere. It is the other side of the “long peace,” an offshoot of the Cold War, life on the “wrong side of the tracks.” In the Third World War there are no war heroes, no ticker-tape parades, no armistice day celebrations. There are only grief and gaunt faces, squalid camps and unplowed fields, empty classrooms and children toting automatic weapons. The Third World War is a stupendous human tragedy being performed almost entirely by amateurs.

Little attention is paid in the mainstream academic literature to the continuing sagas of violence and strife in the Third World War; its poignant imagery of pain and suffering provides occasional news that titillates our humanitarian concerns before being lost in a confluence with our relief at being “above that sort of thing.” Our modern, sophisticated theories and understandings do not fit Third World facts very well, often rendering analysis and policy prescription ineffective, counter-productive, or exacerbative. It seems easier to discount the discrepancies with disdain by assuming that these “primitives” and “fundamentalists” are simply irrational, mean, and brutal, that they haven’t yet learned (or are unable to learn) how to behave and to conduct themselves properly in civil society. Unfortunately, our condescension and arrogance belie our own ignorance and irresponsibility. “We” are the executive producers of this great passion play: “we” supply both the lethal props for the military machinery and the consolation for its many victims; “we” might even intervene personally to straighten things out when the play strays from the script or threatens to evade effective containment or victimize one from our own.¹

Jessica Mathews, President of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, makes the point in a recent newspaper editorial “that in the absence of a post-Cold War doctrine, the West is unable to harness its humanitarian impulse and its traditionally defined interests into a coherent approach to [Third World] crises.”² The end of the Cold War pulled the security hood from our heads and left us to face a world that is in many ways a spectre of past indiscretions and which

we may rather have chosen not ever to face. What she fails to point out is that it was precisely our Cold War doctrine that led us, and enabled us, to ignore the Third World War for so long; we were too busy playing ideological games of tag and a much more serious game of “duck and cover” and nuclear brinkmanship. The Cold War ended abruptly without changing much of anything except to bring the real world and its problems into sharper focus. What is gone is not the “ever present communist threat” but the translucent chimera of our greatest intellect and our worst fears. Meanwhile, the real war rages on.

The trouble with our comprehension of the Third World War lies in the fact that it isn't really a war at all, at least not of the kind we have traditionally thought about as being a war. We prefer to think of turmoil and violence in this “remote” part of the world as simply an endless series of relatively minor skirmishes between mostly insignificant actors within an unfortunate context of poverty and ignorance, venality and vindictiveness. Because we focus mainly on the institutionalized aspects of political violence and war, armed combat between contending professional armies, we tend to overlook real warfare transpiring among mostly uncoordinated militia and spontaneous uprisings comprising or encompassing the various elements of a nascent and naive civil society: minor league and sandlot war. Mathews touches on this rub when she refers to UN estimates and points out that “the pattern of violence has changed. Civilian casualties accounted for 5 percent of the total in World War I, 50 percent in World War II and 80 to 90 percent in the conflicts of the past decade.”³

The Third World War is not an institutional war in the modern European sense, it is pervasive social warfare devoid of the regal trappings of institutional legitimacy. The Third World War escapes rigorous scrutiny because it falls mostly outside the parameters of what are properly thought of as a systemic war, or even as a series of dyadic wars. Instead, the Third World War blatantly suffuses over all the neatly defined categories of violence and warfare. Systemic wars command a great deal of attention. “We have always known that some wars seem unique because they kill more people, consume more material resources, involve more participants, and tend to spread throughout the system...[These wars are] the system's most important wars.” (Thompson and Rasler 1988, 336) This description fits the Third World War like a glove, however, the Third World War is disqualified from inclusion in this elite category of war primarily because it does not meet a standard criterion: “the participation of most or all of the system's major actors.” (Thompson and Rasler 1988, 338) Or does it? How involved do the “major actors” have to be in order to qualify a war experience for this grand distinction?

It is clear that the pattern of violence in the world has changed. One of the greatest changes is that the major actors are not usually *directly* involved in the *actual* fighting of wars and especially not when there is major power in direct opposition. Wars have been “de-institutionalized” as a result. Real war events have become less formal and less institutionalized primarily because they are being

perpetrated in the less institutionalized societies of the “new world order.” The war episodes are less organized, less technologically sophisticated (in relative terms), and less spectacular but no less deadly, mainly because the societies and individuals affected by them are so much more vulnerable to the massive societal disruptions associated with wars and warfare and much less inhibited by social structures and conventions. The catastrophic impact of pervasive warfare on the social systems of the Third World is surely of comparable magnitude to that of the more conventional wars involving the major actors.

Reliable data on the extent of the human toll and suffering in the Third World is mostly non-existent, data compilations are largely speculative, figures merely suggestive. Using the UN Development Programme’s low estimate of the percentage of civilian casualties in “modern” war (80 percent) and the Correlates of War Project’s (COW 1992) data on military deaths occurring in the Third World during the post-Cold War period, 1946-1990 (11.2 million), we can derive an estimate of war-related deaths attributable to the Third World War of about 56 million. Using the same method on the data for World Wars I and II and in accordance with Mathews’ figures (5 percent and 50 percent, respectively), we arrive at comparable estimates of 9 million deaths in World War I and 23 million in World War II.⁴ Harff and Gurr (1988, 370) estimate the total deaths from the most extreme form of political violence, genocide and politicide—that is, war waged against unarmed, captive populations, a type of military violence not included in the COW data—at between 7 and 16 million in the period 1945-1980. Comparable figures for the Holocaust during World War II are between 6 and 10 million. Data on war-related fatalities are highly speculative, especially in the world’s less-developed regions. Yet, despite the inaccuracies, the sheer magnitude of the numbers should be enough to command our attention.

No accurate estimates can ever be made of the non-lethal casualties, the disabled, the diseased, the dispossessed, and the traumatized. Likewise, no reliable estimates can be made of the destruction of property and the loss of wealth and income (the foregone development) resulting from the actual warfare and societal disruptions associated with warfare. One small indication of the pervasive societal disruption of the Third World War are the refugee statistics. The United States Committee for Refugees (*World Refugee Survey*, 1991) notes that there were nearly 50 million refugees and internally displaced persons fleeing political strife in 1991; this figure does not include the countless “economic” migrants gravitating toward the advanced industrial economies of Europe and North America, driven by deplorable economic conditions and political uncertainty in their home territories. The general measures of social disruption and devastation in the contemporary global system are impossible to deny; meanwhile, they continue to increase.

I will argue that system dynamics play a pivotal role in the determination of violent conflicts. Violent conflicts are not randomly distributed through the world system; they are, rather, clustered events or, better put, distinct social processes

that tend to diffuse throughout societal networks, transform the instrumental-relational nature of all the different societal relationships, and help to recreate the conditions that reproduce and reinforce the utility of violence. I will further argue that system dynamics must be taken into account in the resolution of any violent conflict; we must bring *context* into the analysis if we are to devise successful resolution strategies.

Technology has brought us all closer together, vastly improved the quality of life for the fortunate, and continues to threaten the unfortunate daily with the experience of ever more unspeakable horrors. Everyone living within an organic, social system has a vital stake in the proper maintenance of the system and responsibility in supervising the proper, humane applications of technology. Complex interdependence has made it necessary to take systems into account in all issue areas. Greater communication and information systems have made systemic conflict analysis possible. The final collapse of the colonial and Cold War world systems have granted us a historic moment to view the world system from a unique perspective and gain insight on the societal effects of political violence.

System Dynamics

This section presents a brief narrative explanation of system and process in the evolution of the inter-state system and a discussion of the problem of violence in that context. The story is somewhat revisionist and grossly over-simplified; it does not romanticize the European colonial culture or attempt to rationalize its pretensions. What it proposes, in the most simplistic terms, is that a world system does exist, that the system was constructed with some amount of purposeful intent, and that it has existed in some form for a significant period of time. The inference of this claim of *constructivism* is that we have the capability to provide some measure of control and influence on the system and its outcomes, thereby forcing us to accept some responsibility for the nature and performance of the system. (Wendt 1992; Mercer 1995) This is not done so as to assess blame but to enable critical inquiry. What I will try to avoid is a discussion of the etiology or morality of violence. What I hope to accomplish is to fit a theoretic explanation to observed data, a theory that rejects the assumption of the independence of violent events and proposes, instead, an explanation of interdependence, a *diffusion of insecurity*. The implications of such a model are profound.

The narrative is supplemented, throughout the study, by the use of models or conceptual visualizations. Visual, conceptual models (a type of formal model) are a preferable mode for explication of complex system dynamics because their formal, geometric structures discipline the complicated textual arguments and simplify the relational “mechanics,” yet they remain intellectually accessible to a much larger audience (compared to the use of formal mathematical models).

Complex organic systems challenge human faculty and comprehension; simplification is essential to the task.

Most conflict research and conflict management techniques assume some form of systemic closure in order to simplify the inquiry and isolate the problem events or processes from their general systemic context (i.e., focus on the opposition and discount external influences). The assumption underlying this conventional approach is that system influences in determining the conflict situation are constant, weak, or non-existent. The conflict management technique associated with this understanding of the problem involves bringing the conflict parties together, uncovering the core grievances and demands affecting behavior (i.e., the conflict issues), publicizing the opposing positions or viewpoints, and discovering and negotiating solutions acceptable to the parties to the conflict. Once reasonable terms are discovered, negotiated, and accepted, the conflict will be “resolved” and any impetus to violence as a means to that end will be mitigated. In the course of normal conflict management, in those conflicts that have not yet escalated to systematic violence, these are valid techniques which usually lead to meaningful resolutions of the conflict issues and enable the conflict parties to accept practical and pragmatic schemes of political integration.⁵ Unfortunately, if the conflict has not escalated to violence, the parties are usually expected to negotiate their own resolutions on their own terms; the system rarely gets directly involved at this stage.

However, in non-normal conflict situations, those that do involve systematic violence, the terms of contention have usually escalated to the vital concerns affecting life, liberty, and security and such issues are usually expressed in symbolic terms rather than practical concerns. The issues driving these violent conflicts are often perceived as non-derogable; they are fused with symbols of inter-group differences, differences that can not be reasonably compromised without destroying the groups’ characteristic distinctions (and thereby destroying the group itself). Forced, either by deteriorating circumstances or external pressures, to negotiate an end to the fighting, the affected parties are compelled to translate symbolic terms into practical concerns that can be negotiated and compromised. The resulting “agreements” do not touch the underlying, vital concerns and grievances which are experiential and relational: the violence has produced vivid consequences in casualties, destruction, and displacement attributable to the machinations of the “others.” The groups’ “agreement” is counterpoised and, thus, vitiated by the force of reality and the affected individuals’ desires for rectification or revenge. The violence has critically diminished the capacity for inter-group trust and limited the potential for practical integration. In such situations, resolution of the tangible issues is made irrelevant because effective implementation and administration of the agreed measures are precluded until inter-group trust is restored. Catch-22. Under circumstances of political mistrust, all conflict issues tend to take on perceptions of vital importance to the groups, all conflict contentions are viewed as “proof” of the essential

incompatibility of the groups' divergent political aims, and any political compromise is deemed antithetical to the maintenance of group identity and a betrayal of group solidarity. The ensuing "peace" is better termed "non-war" or "cold war." "Resolutions" tend to break down and subsequent conflict issues more readily ignite group passions; the peace is tenuous at best and tends to be short-lived. It is in these situations where systemic failures are most apparent, as it is the system that has failed in its primary mission: effective conflict management and security, that is, to avoid the outbreak of political violence by controlling the conditions that spawn violent reactions to political conflicts.⁶ The system is invariably drawn into serious, violent conflicts as these conflicts undeniably affect system dynamics in some dramatic way. Unfortunately, the system remains mainly ignorant of its role and largely impotent in its responsibilities; the players are left to respond as they see fit and the specifics of their involvement are then defined in myopic "rational choice" terms.

In either case, it is important to bring the system consciously, not inadvertently, into the analysis; either conventional approach to conflict management at the systemic level represents only a partial response to the conflict dynamics of modern societal systems. The larger system plays an important, necessary, and continuing role in the societal conflict management process in both non-violent and violent conflict situations. Despite a general rule of non-intervention, the complex interdependence of system units in the modern system means that the units are constantly and continually intervening, whether directly or indirectly, in the internal concerns of other units. No state is an island. Denying systemic influences in conflict dynamics is tantamount to "pulling the plug" on the conflict management system. The influences of system dynamics must be determined before they may be discounted. Effective conflict management strategies must account for all significant influences.

The World System

In systemic analysis it is of crucial importance to understand the nature and workings of the system itself and to begin by defining the system at its greatest level of aggregation. It seems beyond dispute that a world system does exist: "the expansion of Europe starting in the fifteenth century created an international system." (Buzan 1993, 331) What then remains is to understand the nature of the world system at any given point in time. As recently as one hundred years ago, it may have been appropriate to define the world system in terms of a hyper-extended European regional system; European authority structures had accomplished global reach. Under this administration it may have been appropriate to concentrate analysis on the authority structures at the systemic core and ignore the dearth of polity at the margins; the system core was composed of open, interacting units while the margins were politically contained and, so, closed

off from system dynamics. Each European systemic unit created a unique sub-system to administer its marginal territories. Since that time, systemic changes have been profound, closure has eroded, visibility has been strengthened, and there are few, if any, issue areas that remain effectively closed off from system dynamics.

There is a parallel narrative to the story of world system development: it is the culture of violence that has characterized human relations throughout recorded history. We are only beginning to chronicle the full extent of the “utility” of violence in the evolution of political relations and the establishment of modern societies. Violence certainly has been instrumental in the organizational process of politics, however, one can not take the logical leap to assert that it has been necessary. If that were the case the paradox of societal development would stand as an unsolvable dilemma and war would be an inevitable and unavoidable facet of that process.⁷ We would truly be condemned to repeat the experience of wars past. Development would be explicable only in light of humankind’s technological inadequacy and its collective inability to finally accomplish its own annihilation and thereby put a final end to human development. Technological progress is now providing us that capability and this fact obviates the philosophical debate. The key to the dilemma can no longer be construed, in rational terms, as learning to survive the culture of violence (i.e., to victimize rather than to be victimized—survival of the fittest) as that is a rapidly diminishing option; the key is to transform the culture of violence to non-violent conflict management and thereby remove systemic fetters on the development process so that *all* may survive and prosper. De-victimization is the foundation of normative society and the rule-of-law system.

Figures 1.1, 1.2, and 1.3 present stylized conceptualizations of the development of the world system. Systemic expansion to the global level of aggregation is finally accomplished through the instrumental use of violence by the European great powers (see Figure 1.1). This primitive world system, the Euro-centric “colonial” world system, is established and maintained mainly as a rule-of-force (utilitarian) system. The infusion of rule-of-law (normative) principles is a secondary process, a corollary to the slow democratization process of the European societies. As force and violence remain the organizing principles in the extra-societal, colonial extensions of the system, the degree of systemic control at any point in space is a general function of the distance from the instrumental authority core: the European state.⁸ As a result of this process, a culture of violence and an experience of utilitarian authority patterns are instilled or imposed on the nascent political relationships of the system as a whole. The system itself, established through naked aggression and based as it was upon illegitimate power relationships, naturally disintegrated through a long and painful process culminating in the most horrendous cataclysms the world has yet experienced: the “world wars” of the twentieth century.

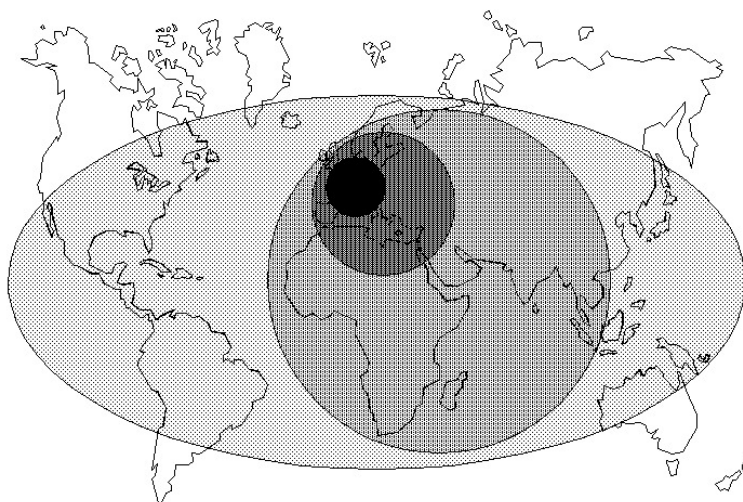


Figure 1.1 Euro-centric “Colonial” World System

The collective demise of the core institutions controlling the colonial system left an authority vacuum that was filled, by default, by the world’s only remaining, functioning great-powers: the United States and the Soviet Union. The obvious power advantages of the U.S. granted it the (relatively) undisputed leadership role in the post-colonial world system. A war-devastated USSR stubbornly insisted upon a new configuration of systemic closure and the Socialist Bloc isolated itself, as best it could, from global systemic dynamics behind an “iron curtain” (understandable given its experiences in the wars marking the demise of the colonial system). This enforced enclosure enabled the USSR to recover its power while preserving its hegemonic control over the regional sub-system within the larger global systemic context. Thus, the successor system (Figure 1.2) to the colonial world system was characterized by the ideological contention and bifurcation between the two Superpowers. That system is best conceptualized as a “caretaker” regime as neither Superpower, despite its aggressive rhetoric, appeared willing or capable of reestablishing systemic authority and control through the use of force. Both Superpowers proudly sported moral ideologies that eschewed the use of force in social relations in favor of normative authority strategies (they were, however, willing and able to threaten each other in ritualistic displays of unrealized force). The ensuing Cold War confrontation had extremely deleterious effects on system dynamics, however. The primary effect was a

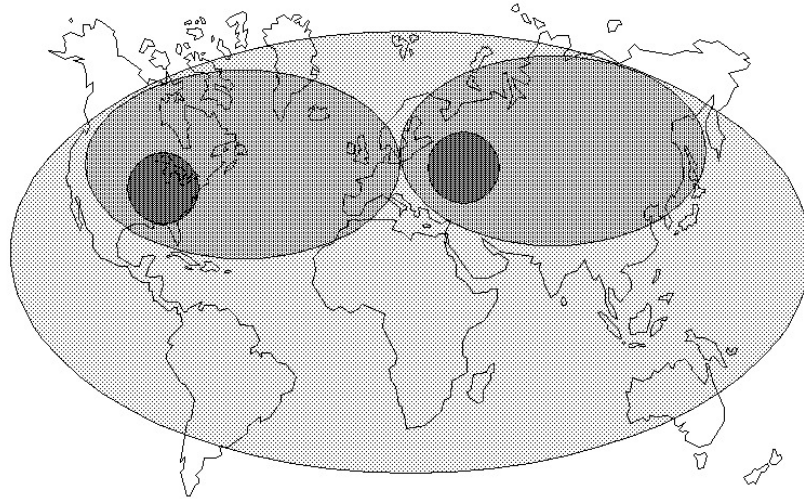


Figure 1.2 Post-Colonial “Cold War” World System

progressive deterioration in systemic authority through neglect as the competing Superpowers concentrated their attention and consumed their resources in a rather contemptuous charade of saber-rattling, a vestige of the colonial culture of violence and rivalry made impotent by the existence of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass-destruction. Secondary to the Cold War confrontation were the continuing systemic development process that extended a nascent rule-of-law regime throughout the system and integrated the various local sub-systems to varying degrees within a functioning, increasingly interdependent world system.

The Third World had literally leaped into world politics following the collapse of Europe’s utilitarian capabilities and their shaky claims to normative authority.⁹ The world system suddenly became confusingly complex, not because new territories and their resources were being added (they were not) but because more people were being enfranchised within the system and making new demands upon it (see Figure 1.3). It was perhaps predictable that the war-ravaged European states would be unable and unwilling to expend energy, resources, or attention on their former colonies. The world system was preoccupied with the recovery of its most advanced and industrialized members and, so, systemic authority was mostly disabled. At the same time, a new concept of systemic authority, the United Nations Organization (UN), was being established but remained essentially inoperative and non-effectual. The advanced states did eventually manage to

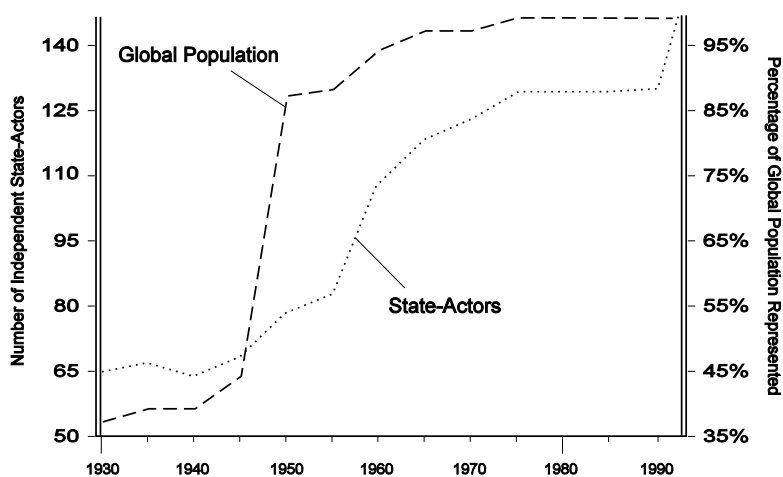


Figure 1.3 Changes in International System Participation, 1930-1992

recover their capacity to act systemically, in their own interests. Yet, while the core states recovered and their development proceeded apace during the Cold War's absence of violence in the system's core regions, the nether regions of the system experienced the opposite effect. There, through a combination of a rather myopic systemic neglect for development processes and a systematic exacerbation and escalation of indigenous societal conflicts by Superpower "proxy" actors, political violence increased dramatically and real development was effectively arrested.

Various theories were advanced to explain this contrasting, and ever-widening, income and development gap by the handful of world scholars interested in the relatively insignificant activities of the system's minor-powers and fledgling states. Characteristic of these theories were the "lack of stability" theories proposed by conventional core scholars such as Huntington (1968), the world system genre posed by unconventional core scholars such as Wallerstein (1974), and *dependencia* explanations proffered by scholars in the affected, underdeveloped regions (e.g., Frank 1969). However, the overpowering system dynamics of the Cold War obfuscated sub-system dynamics and, in combination with severe constraints on the availability of information on these areas and a general lack of interest among scholars, limited critical analysis of conditions in these areas.¹⁰

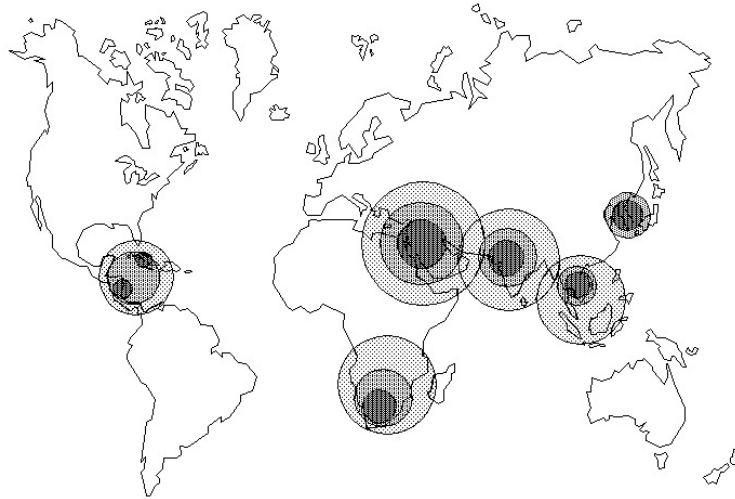


Figure 1.4 Post-Colonial System: Protracted Conflict Regions

It was not until the advent of *perestroika* in the Soviet Union, the decision to put an end to the Cold War, the re-integration of the Socialist Bloc societies into a unitary world “market” system, and a technological revolution in communication and information capabilities that sufficient attention and resources were directed at recognition of the deteriorating conditions in the Third World. System dynamics outside the “cold war/long peace” conditions in the advantaged core regions were immediately recognized as characterized by civil warfare and ethnic conflict (rather than as dominoes in a world capitalist/communist conspiracy). In light of the “newness” of the situation, there have been few systematic attempts to describe or understand the system dynamics applicable to the Third World. Theories devised from the experiences of the systemic core states and constructed within the narrative of the dominant culture (or “culture of dominance” as some feminist writers prefer to call it) have not been particularly useful in gaining understanding or in designing policies for these Third World situations. The bulk of scholarly work continues to focus on specific (dyadic) conflict situations. However, some important work is being done to reveal global conflict conditions. Foremost among the few non-traditional, systemic approaches to understanding modern conflict are the work of Azar on “protracted social conflicts” and Gurr’s work on civil conflict and violence, “minorities at risk,” and “state failures.” Most importantly these pioneering studies have led to a marked increase in the amount of information

available at the systemic level, a necessary preliminary step to meaningful systemic analysis.

What has been revealed by the demise of the Cold War system is the pervasiveness of violence and the dearth of development in most Third World regions (Figure 1.4). The post-colonial world system was characterized by “uneven development.” The main contrast there was between the economically advantaged and relatively violence-free “north” and the disadvantaged and violence-prone “south.”¹¹ However, a closer examination of the much more visible post-cold war system reveals that not all Third World states and regions are equally affected by the problems associated with uneven development. Whereas classic “development” is traditionally measured by GNP-type indicators and thus critically biased by unequal resource endowments, the measurement of political violence is relatively free of such intrinsic bias and, thus, provides a clearer image.¹² Political violence is not randomly distributed throughout the “south” sub-system; it is, rather, clustered in identifiably distinct regional sub-systems. Approximately ninety percent of political violence in the world system in the post-World War II era has taken place in the six regional clusters, or *protracted conflict regions*, denoted in Figure 1.4.¹³ The obvious research question is, Why?

Conflict and Violence

Four streams of research especially inform the present treatment. Two have already been mentioned: Azar’s work on protracted social conflicts and Gurr’s global perspectives on civil conflict and violence. A third research stream is the feminist theoretical inquiry in international relations; a fourth is Sherif’s work in social-psychology. Sherif’s work centers on the two primary categories of group conflict response and the social psychologies unique to those divergent strategies. For simplification, I have termed these two essential conflict management strategies, *normative* and *utilitarian*. The most basic distinction between these strategies is that normative strategies concentrate on legitimizing voluntarism in transforming behavior through the alteration of psychic motivations, or rational self-control or restraint (cooperation); whereas utilitarian strategies focus on changing behavior through external manipulation, or instrumental social-control or constraint (coercion). Utilitarian strategies are intrinsically divisive in that they attempt to separate the offensive behavior from the in-group, “us,” and attribute such behaviors to an out-group, “them.” Normative strategies, on the other hand, are essentially inclusive in that they concentrate on using the resources and influence of the “normal” portion of the group population to modify the potential and actual aberrant behavior of its misguided members. Violence is the ultimate instrument of utilitarian behavioral control; violence is inflicted upon “others,” rarely used upon oneself. Education is the ultimate mechanism of normative social control.¹⁴ In complex societies, the political system employs some combination of

these basic strategies, as no society can exist without some normative management and some coercive enforcement. The process of societal development represents a movement away from a greater reliance on utilitarian strategies toward a greater reliance on normative strategies.

Feminist inquiry in international relations has provided, fairly recently, a critical re-appraisal of our conventional, scientific understanding of systemic processes and relationships; its innovations have yet to be fully incorporated into mainstream research. Crucial to the present study is the feminist conception of the “interrelationship of violence at all levels of society” and the call to “rethink...boundary distinctions.” (Tickner 1992, 133) Traditional research has been constructed on the misguided idea that political boundaries adequately define analytical distinctions in categorizing empirical events into distinct levels of analysis. The feminist understanding is that such boundaries neither confine nor determine the effects of political behavior; those boundaries merely provide organizational and authority distinctions. The implication is that, in order to understand the full systemic effects of a particular type of political behavior, one must incorporate all information regarding the target phenomena at all levels of analysis. The feminist perspective is that culture is constructed and tends to reproduce attitudes of violence and violation.

One can discern the important elements of such a “culture of violence” approach in both Azar’s and Gurr’s work. Azar’s research suggests that violence is clustered both spatially and temporally and the inference of the “protracted social conflict” concept is that conflict and violence may pervade societal systems under certain conditions. Gurr’s prescient observations are many as his research has ventured far into the relationship between human psychology and conflict behavior in the societal context. I will point to two of his observations that specially inform this study:

- The increase in serious ethno-political conflict [and violence] since the late 1980s is a continuation of a trend that first became evident in the 1960s. (Gurr 1994, 364)
- Ethno-political conflict usually begins with limited protests and clashes that only gradually escalate into sustained violence. (Gurr 1994, 365)

These assertions are based upon extensive systemic research and suggest two distinct conflict processes: one, gradual systemic change in the world system’s post-World War II conflict behavior and, two, a transformative quality in the conflict interactive process from non-violent negotiations to violent confrontations (an inference is that non-violent strategies are generally preferred by political groups).

Political violence provides a more accurate measure of societal development than the more conventional measures of economic activity (e.g., GNP), human improvement (e.g., literacy, life expectancy), or basic needs (e.g., calories per

capita, doctors per capita). In general, the total amount of violence in a societal system will diminish as a direct result of the societal development process (i.e., violence is perfectly, negatively correlated with societal development); to say that there is an increase in societal development and a decrease in the propensity to violence is tautological. No attempt will be made here to differentiate between “violence as problem” and “violence as solution.” All violence is considered to be part of the problem and the problem is violence. The initiation of violence is inherently illegitimate and unjust as it presents a radical transformation of normal political interactive behavior (normal, because the vast majority of all political interactions are non-violent). Violence, as the core element in a utilitarian strategy of conflict management, can never be a legitimate method of conflict resolution because it simultaneously transforms a non-violent relationship to violence, escalates and broadens the nature of conflict grievances, and serves to divide “target” from “source” as an essential aspect of its own rationalization (i.e., “dehumanizing the enemy”). The escalation to violence thus tends to consume the power of association and disintegrate the basis of political relationships from a unitary “us” to the binary “us” and “them.” In that sense, “violence as solution” can only exist as a direct response, or dissuasive function, of “violence as problem” and can only be used legitimately in the smallest measure necessary to neutralize the perceived “rational utility” of force (i.e., self-defense is a direct function of aggression; the principle of proportionality dictates that escalation in a conflict interaction be viewed as an act of aggressive force).¹⁵

Overview

This book presents one attempt to understand and explain the special patterns of violence that characterize the problem of war in contemporary world politics and thus to give form and substance to the concept of the Third World War. It is essential that the universe of inquiry into the problem of war be broadened to include the less institutionalized forms of warfare and political violence. Inter-state war (including “militarized disputes” and “crises”) is the least common form of warfare in the Third World although it is the most recognized form of political violence in the First World. Inter-state war is the most institutionalized form of warfare; lesser forms are civil warfare, ethnic conflict, guerrilla insurgency, revolution, terrorism, brigandism, state repression, genocide, ethnic cleansing and forced dislocation, death squads and vigilantism, and the like. What these different categories of collective action have in common is the instrumental use of violence and coercion by organized (state and non-state) groups for political purposes. In order to understand patterns of warfare in the Third World, we must acknowledge all forms of violence and warfare as being essentially related and similarly problematic. Chapter 2 is concerned with *problematation*, that is, determining the

most fundamental issue that must be addressed if progress is to be made in improving our collective human condition. Here, this involves defining the nexus between inter-state and intra-state warfare, examining the transformational aspects of social conflict from non-violence to violence, and delineating the universe of inquiry: political violence and war. Yet, a “problem” is only analytically determinate if we can situate it within its meaningful context, that is, we must be able to specify *how* it is a problem before we can examine it as an issue and come to an understanding of *why* we should be concerned about this problem and *what* can or should be done about it. Chapter 3 examines the existential context in which political violence must be viewed as the “most fundamental problem;” it is necessarily concerned with *structuration*: defining the salient processual structures and dynamics of social identification, sociation, and societal development and the political economy of social conflict.

After establishing the contextual parameters of the “problem” under study, chapter 4 will present an empirical description and theoretical explanation for the patterns of violence in the Third World during the contemporary period; it will also present an argument as to why warfare in the Third World should be considered a global issue of both practical *and* humanitarian concern and not, more conveniently and cynically, as some sort of Malthusian solution to Third World poverty and disorder.¹⁶ The process of diffusion will be offered as an explanation of the peculiar patterns of violence in the post-World War II world system. Models of a proposed regional *diffusion of insecurity* process will be presented and a schematic model of the effects that regional insecurity has on political priorities and, so, on societal policies and systemic development processes will be proposed. Chapter 5 will then apply the theoretical concepts of the diffusion of insecurity and the syndrome of *arrested development* to an operational milieu: the *protracted conflict region (PCR)*. Empirical tests of the model-generated hypotheses are presented for the post-1945 period; data is drawn from the extant global data bases, augmented with personal research, and compiled by the author. The methodology employed is quantitative analysis and is modeled after Gurr’s *Politimetrics* (1972). The quality of the data on the Third World is problematic and so the empirical tests are designed to test propositions *extensively* (using simple statistical methods from multiple sources in search of consistent patterns across non-comparable and non-combinative data sources) rather than *intensively* (combining data from different sources to test the relative influences of independent variables on a dependent variable). It is hoped that this method will minimize the confounding influence of the relatively large error terms in the Third World data.¹⁷

Shifting the inquiry away from a “causes of war” to a “causes of peace” perspective, chapter 6 examines the “democratic peace proposition” in light of the regional security processes revealed by the *protracted conflict region* analysis. It is concerned with establishing the proper relational, or systemic, context for the treatment of the special form of conflict experience symbolized as the “democratic

peace,” the non-use of political violence among liberal-democracies. The democratic peace has been touted as a possible prescription for normative authority in a “new world order.” The study explores the special type of political transaction that characterizes the relationships of states designated as liberal-democratic: the structure and medium of trade and the effects of trade on the security problematique. The first section discusses the characteristics of the democratic peace and the context within which these empirical observations may be most meaningful: regionalism. The second section details the particular research issue—the relationships among communication, trade, and security; and the specific research problem—overcoming the “prisoner’s dilemma” of individual state actors in the regional context. The third section presents the research design and empirical results. Chapter 7 then concludes the study with a brief discussion of the implications for the world security agenda in the twenty-first century.

Notes

1. Despite the proliferation of sophisticated weaponry and the prominence of militarism in Third World societies, most of these societies are still almost totally dependent, in the 1990s, on industrial arms suppliers in European and Europeanized societies, that is, very little indigenous arms production takes place outside the world’s industrial core. For a comprehensive overview of the world arms trade, see Laurance (1992). For a systematic reference to armed conflicts and foreign military interventions, see Tillema (1991) or Regan (1996).

2. Jessica Mathews, “Policy Vs. TV,” *Washington Post*, Tuesday, 8 March, 1994, A19.

3. *Ibid.* Mathews’ estimates of increasing civilian proportions of casualties suffered in warfare conform with those reported by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP 1994, 47).

4. Of course, the time periods of the three “world wars” are not comparable. The first two war periods are about 5 years of concentrated warfare while the third period spans 45 years of decentralized warfare. In temporal terms, comparable time periods would be 1901-1945 and 1946-1990. In this case the first two wars would be part of a process including all other inter-state, civil, and extra-systemic wars. Using a median figure of 25 percent civilian casualties against a total of 27.9 million battle deaths for the earlier 45-year period, the results of this comparison are 37 million deaths (1901-1945) compared to 56 million (1946-1990).

5. What is usually overlooked in this conflict management scheme is the essential role provided by the representatives and resources of the system in facilitating the conflict negotiations. In this sense, system dynamics are not included in the conflict analysis simply because they are not perceived to be “part of the problem” but, rather, “part of the solution.”

6. System has been defined by Easton (1965) in terms of “authoritative allocations.” In this conceptualization the authority is the conflict management function that both precedes and succeeds the allocation function, that is, allocation is both a response to

existing conflict and the stimulus defining future conflict over the allocated good. Waltz (1979, 40) defines a system, in the minimal sense, “as a set of interacting units.” Easton’s maximal system presumes authority; Waltz’s system is defined by anarchy, that is, a lack of authority. However, authority is not a toggle switch; it is not the case that it has just two positions: on and off. Systemic authority, itself, is instrumental ability and can be based either in legitimate authority (democratic voluntarism) or utilitarian authority (autocratic force); Arendt (1969/1972) has termed these “power” and “violence.” Easton’s system is comprised of differentiated units and controlled primarily through legitimate authority; Waltz’s system contains essentially similar units and relies on utilitarian authority (relative capabilities) for control. As usual, reality lies somewhere in between the dichotomous extremes.

7. That is, unless one argues that development has been achieved and that the world system is now capable of controlling its resort to violence. The contemporary evidence of pervasive violence in the world system strongly argues against this proposition. Fortunately, there are areas within the system that have attained this capability of restraint, however imperfect and tenuous the controls. Therein lies the locus of the system’s capacity to transform the last vestiges of the culture of violence.

8. For an explanation of this basic principle, see Boulding’s (1962) “loss-of-strength gradient” hypothesis.

9. There is no comfortable way to contend with the obvious division of the world system into haves and have-nots. For the purposes of the present study, the terminology of this systemic division is *Highly Institutionalized States* (the haves) and the *Third World* (the others).

10. The mainstream approach to systemic theory was articulated by Waltz (1979); this treatment codifies systemic neglect in its concentration on military capabilities (the “major-powers”) as the defining quality of the system, thereby rendering most of the world irrelevant (the “minor-powers”).

11. The systemic dynamics are much more subtle but are equally pervasive in the “north.” Societal problems of alienation, cynicism, social violence, and a growing culture of drugs and escapism are both troublesome and increasing in those regions. An analysis of these dynamics is beyond the scope of the present examination, but should be informed by this treatment.

12. The measurement of political violence is severely handicapped by measurement error. It is assumed that such measurement error, while quite large, is largely randomly distributed, meaning that all such statistics suffer similarly and so this admittedly imperfect data may still reveal meaningful information about system dynamics.

13. An initial analysis of the Correlates of War (COW) data on major episodes of armed conflict in the post 1945 period reveals that 86 percent of (23) inter-state wars, 67 percent of (30) extra-systemic wars, and 74 percent of (80) civil wars have occurred in these six regional clusters; the clusters are identified in the Appendix and detailed in chapter 3. Subsequent analysis has revealed that wars occurring in these clusters are of far greater magnitude (in deaths) and duration (in war-months). Civil wars are most common and it has been estimated by some scholars that as much as 90 percent of the casualties of civil wars are non-combatants, casualties not included in the COW data compilations. Analysis of refugee flows shows that 85 percent of the world’s dislocated populations are located in these clusters. An overall estimate of 90 percent seems plausible and appropriate.

14. It is important to note the obvious inference here: in this conception of “utilitarian strategies” violence is considered to be both the problem and the problem’s ultimate solution. The “obvious inference” is that in some sense an organic system contains a proclivity to *interactive* violence. I argue that such a proclivity is best understood as a systemic “self-correction” mechanism: violence, once initiated, tends to consume itself much as a fire tends, eventually, to put itself out by consuming the resources needed to sustain it.

15. Physical violence is, in most cases, a readily identifiable and distinct mode of social interaction. It is beyond the pale of this paper to discuss the subject and many “gray areas” of violence.

16. A favorite simile is a concluding remark at the end of Spike Lee’s feature film *Clockers* when the violence of the low-income “projects” in the United States’ cities is likened to a “self-cleaning oven.”

17. For further discussion of the difficulties of quantitative analysis in regard to the “scientific study of international conflict processes,” see Marshall 1998.