

### 3 Violence and structures

The news of 6 April 2009. The first item takes the viewer to the village of Mbyo, Rwanda. Two men, Frédéric Kazingwemo and Félix Habiyamana, look back at the Rwandan genocide, which began exactly 15 years ago. The voice over tells us that one is Hutu and the other a Tutsi, driven apart by the war. Frédéric participated in the genocide, 'I am a murderer' he admits. Félix fled to Burundi, and upon returning to his village he found out that most of his family had been killed. Now the two men are friends again. They stand close to each other, they shake hands. 'It was not our fault' they explain. 'It was the system'. The next item shifts to the banking crisis and its causes. A young banker, in front of a glass building, pitches his truth: 'it is not the individual bankers who are to blame for this, it's the system'.

Frédéric's and Félix's explanation of the genocide, and the banker's reaction to the financial crisis, take us back to the discussion on framing and blaming of the introductory chapter: by categorizing and labelling acts of violence (such as in Rwanda) we, intentionally or not, become engaged in discussions on blame and responsibility. Although recognizing Frédéric's role as perpetrator in the Rwandan genocide, the two men from Mbyo point out that it is the system that is to blame for the genocide, not the individual or collective agent. By implication, they state that they – both perpetrator and victim – merely followed the rules of the system: they were forced into certain positions and merely 'played their part'. Similarly, the banker points out that neither he, nor his colleagues, were responsible for the banking crisis that hit the world in 2008: they just went along with the system. These everyday observations on the distinction between 'the individual' and 'the system' bring us to a fundamental ontological divide in the social sciences between approaches that claim that human action can only be accounted for by appealing to some larger whole (structuralism) and orientations which claim that structures can only be accounted for by appeal to individual agents (individualism). Simply put, is it agency or structure that is most important to explain human action? Does the 'structure of the social system' determine the actions of individuals, or vice versa? And do these positions stand in a radical, and insoluble 'chicken-or-egg' relation to one another, or can they perhaps be complementary? Although a truly elaborate discussion of these issues is beyond the scope (and capacity) of this book, the agency–structure debate is inescapable in the study of violent conflict. Throughout the book, we will turn to insights from the philosophy of social sciences to help us position the various conflict approaches in their proper 'ontological boxes'. Roughly, we can state that agency-based approaches locate the sources of violent conflict at the level of individual agency. Structure-based approaches, by contrast, locate the causes of violent conflict in the organization of society. It is this latter category which will be at the core of this chapter on structures and violence.

In their analysis of the connection between structure and violent conflict the approaches discussed in this chapter draw on two different sociological traditions: Marxian and Durkheimian.<sup>1</sup> Roughly, the Marxian tradition places emphasis on the *material conditions that shape social relations*. The essence of Marxian thought is that social change is firmly rooted in material, economic conditions. Conflict, in this view, results from the inherent contradiction in the structure of the capitalist system, where those who control the means of production (the dominant class) stand in direct opposition to those whose only property is their labour time (the workers). The task of conflict analysis is to identify the main social classes and interests which emerge from the organization of production, examine the resulting conflicts of interest, and consequently, the readiness and capacity of each class and its representatives to act on its interests. By contrast, Durkheimian traditions focus on *what holds societies together*; that is, on the structure of ‘social rules’ that function to bring society (back) to order and social equilibrium. The classic Durkheimian idea presents society as characterized by a continuous struggle between forces of integration and forces of disintegration. Society, in this view, exerts its control over individuals through their participation in a shared consciousness. ‘The totality of beliefs and sentiments common to average citizens of the same society forms a determinate system which has its own life; one may call it the collective or common conscience’ (Durkheim 1933: 79). Rapid social change (e.g. industrialization, urbanization, modernization, migration) weakens the controls and attachments which normally sustain these shared beliefs and keep people in their places. From this, Durkheim derives models of three different kinds of collective action: routine, anomic and restorative. If all is stable and a society is characterized by high levels of shared beliefs, these will be sustained routinely. If shared beliefs are shaken, however, this translates into a set of undesirable results: individual disorientation, destructive social life and conflict (anomie). Disorder and conflict are thus seen as the outcome of a process in which social change weakens the system that holds people in their places. It is only through restorative collective action that societies can move back to stability and a new or renewed commitment to shared beliefs.

The structure-based approaches under review here all aim to show the interconnectedness between the organization of society and violent conflict. Conflict is explained as deriving from violence *inherent* to political, economic, cultural and geopolitical structures. The influence of the above sociological traditions can be recognized in the analysis of how the incapacity of political institutions such as the state (not society in general, as Durkheim would argue) to deal with rapid (economic) change translates into anomic collective action, but also in the Marxist idea of false consciousness as discussed by Galtung, or the references to Gramsci’s views on the role of hegemonic culture in ‘mainstreaming’ the values of the dominant classes as commonsense values of all.

This chapter has a threefold aim. First, it discusses the work of the Norwegian sociologist Johan Galtung, one of the principal founders of the field of Peace and Conflict Studies, and in particular his notion of structural violence and the conflict triangle. Second, this chapter aims to bring to life abstract structuralism by reviewing more applied structure-based analyses that examine the interconnections between the structure of *global* systems and *local* conflict. This second part of the chapter addresses the ‘political economy of violent conflict’. It examines in particular the connections between structural contradictions inherent to the modern state system, global capitalism and global governance and contemporary violent conflict. In the third and final part of the chapter, we briefly return to the role of ‘framing’ by means of Mark Duffield’s work on the representation of the ‘borderlands’ and the biopolitics of the new interventionism of the post-Cold War era. With this, we clearly move away from

the focus on group formation and group dynamics. Whereas in the previous chapter we have studied how social identity approaches focus on how people *act (violently) upon* uncertainty, we here are interested in the *sources* of societal uncertainty. And where social identity approaches do not incorporate historic, economic or political contexts into the analysis, to their structuralist counterparts, context is everything.

### Manifest violence and structural violence

I think it is safe to say that the large majority of theories that fall under the heading of Conflict Studies focus on what could be named ‘manifest violence’: violence as visible, instrumental and expressive action. It is this kind of violence that is generally defined as an ‘act of physical hurt’. Since the violent act is visible and concrete, it is an efficient way of staging an ideological message before a public audience (Riches 1986: 11). It is the kind of ‘breaking news’ violence that comes to us from our television and computer screens. That both seems to fascinate and appal audiences worldwide: the suicide attacks, urban riots, precision bombings and mass murders of our times. It is the kind of violence that is performed by identifiable individuals such as Frédérique, that made Félix flee his village, and that killed his family. It is also this violence that provokes humanitarian interventions, NGO negotiation, PhD research, humanitarian aid, weapon trade and war journalism: what can be cynically referred to as the ‘conflict industry’.<sup>2</sup> If episodes of manifest violence end, this is often termed peace. Although acknowledging the importance of the study of manifest violence, structure-based approaches of violent conflict argue for a much broader understanding of violence. Manifest violence is just the *visible* component of the phenomenon. Underlying these ‘acts of physical hurt’ are other forms of violence, sectioned into structural (or systemic) and cultural (or symbolic). This is the violence done to people in much more diffuse and indirect ways such as the subtle forms of coercion that sustain relations of exploitation and repression.

In an influential article published in the *Journal of Peace Research* in 1969, Johan Galtung, seen by many as the founding father of Peace and Conflict Studies, argued against the empiricist and behaviourist models of his time and in favour of a radical new understanding of violence. Galtung argues that violence is built into unequal, unjust and unrepresentative social structures (imperialism, capitalism, caste society, patriarchy, racism, colonialism) and should hence be defined as a situation in which actual realizations of human beings are below their potential realizations. In a reframing from 1996, he defines violence as:

avoidable insults to basic human needs, and more generally *life*, lowering the real levels of needs satisfaction below what is potentially possible.

(1996: 197)

The difference between actual and potential needs satisfaction can be defined by the actors themselves or by others (e.g. researchers), but it can only be seen as indicative of violence if the perceived difference is *avoidable*. Thus, if a person dies from tuberculosis in the eighteenth century, it would be hard to conceive of this as violence since it might have been quite unavoidable, but if he dies from it today, despite all the medical recourses available, then this is what Galtung would call structural violence. People are caught up in structures of exploitation and repression that are harmful and damaging to them, hence – physically – hurtful and *violent*. With this, the terrain of conflict research is extended substantially, including into the analysis the processes and mechanisms that prevent people from realizing their potential, that is, the silent violence of poverty, low education, poor

health and in general low life expectancy inherent in the way societies are organized. Clearly, by drawing this new definitional boundary, Galtung aims to politicize and bring to the fore what is largely taken for granted. By labelling poverty and underdevelopment as violence, he is casting blame and responsibility, pointing at the underlying forces supporting and legitimizing this. He draws our attention to violence in the normality of things, for we are so obsessed and distracted by the spectacular forms of violence (the killing, maiming, war rape) that we fail to address the much less visible, but massively destructive force of structural violence that lies underneath (people dying from lack of health care, malnutrition, slavery). This profoundly rocks the analytical boat of violent conflict studies and commonsensical dichotomies of war versus peace. For what we hitherto recognized as a state of 'peace' (the absence of protracted manifest violence) may actually be a state of conflict. Through Galtung's analytical lens, peace may very well be sustained by highly destructive forms of structural violence. He clarifies this by making the distinction between *negative peace* and *positive peace*. Whereas negative peace is defined as the absence of manifest violence, positive peace is defined as the overcoming of structural (and cultural) violence as well. Slavoj Žižek in his introduction to *Violence* (2008: 2) eloquently addresses the 'violent peace' paradox as follows:

The catch is that subjective and objective violence cannot be perceived from the same standpoint: subjective violence is experienced as such against the background of a non-violent zero level. It is seen as the perturbation of the 'normal', peaceful state of things. However, objective violence is precisely the violence inherent to this 'normal' state of things. Objective violence is invisible since it sustains the very zero-level standard against which we perceive something as subjectively violent. Systematic violence is thus something like the notorious 'dark matter' of physics, the counterpart to an all-too-visible subjective violence. It may be invisible, but has to be taken into account if one is to make sense of what otherwise seem to be 'irrational' explosions of subjective violence.

It is indeed this connection between structural violence (or Žižek's systemic violence) and the 'explosions' of manifest (subjective) violence that needs further exploration. It is the *interconnectedness of violence* that is at the core of the approaches under review in this chapter. Galtung's canonical 'conflict triangle' will serve as entry point.

### **Galtung's conflict triangle**

Manifest violence is only one of three components that together form Galtung's conflict triangle. It certainly is the more spectacular and *visible* of the three and the one that attracts most attention, but for any situation to be a conflict, this 'behavioural' (B) component must be linked to two *invisible* components: attitudes and assumptions (A) and contradiction (C). I will here explain Galtung's conflict triangle in two steps. First, we look at the triangle as a model to describe the life-cycle of conflicts. Second, we discuss how the triangle can serve as a model to grapple with the distinction between what Galtung termed 'actor conflict' and 'structural conflict', and ultimately, the relation between manifest and structural violence.

#### *The triangle as conflict life-cycle*

Conflict, according to Galtung, is a triadic construct. Only if we have A, B and C do we have fully articulated conflict. There is thus a manifest (B) and a latent side (A and C) to conflict.

The *manifest*, empirical and observed side is identified by B for behaviour (violence, discrimination) and the *latent*, theoretical, inferred aspect of conflict is identified by A for attitude/assumptions (fear, prejudice) and C for contradiction. Whereas A and B speak for themselves, what Galtung means by C needs perhaps a bit more elaboration. Contradiction (C) has to involve ‘something wanted’, named a ‘goal’, and its attainment a ‘goal state’. This is what Galtung identifies as the content of the conflict: ‘Deep inside every conflict lies a contradiction, *something standing in the way of something else*’ (1996: 70, emphasis added).

In most readings (e.g. Miall, Ramsbotham and Woodhouse 1999) Galtung’s triangle is primarily seen as a model to describe the escalatory and de-escalatory dynamics of a conflict. It is emphasized how it can be used to trace flows in all six directions, starting anywhere. A conflict spiral may, for instance, start in C. Let us say someone’s access to land is blocked by someone else (C). This may be experienced as frustration (A), and this frustration may lead to aggression (B). In return, aggressive behaviour may bring a new contradiction into the relation (for instance, the aggressive behaviour of the frustrated party may be incompatible with the other party’s concept of happiness). Hence, we have a new C, which may give rise to a new round of attitudes and behaviours, which may lead to new contradictions and so on and so forth. Violence breeds violence, and we may see escalatory dynamics that run its course like a fire, only stopping when the house is burnt down. Galtung describes how the parties may burn out in the A corner from emotional exhaustion, or in the B corner from physical fatigue. However, A and B may also be restrained, and the contradiction may be superseded.

Some conflicts, however, run their course in less obvious ways. The spiral may also start in A or B. A party may have accumulated a certain aggressiveness (e.g. from bad experiences in the past) and when ‘something comes along’ that looks like a problem (C), this negative energy is hitched on to this contradiction, unleashing a negative conflict spiral, with newly developing  $A > C > B$  dynamics. Used in this way, the triangle serves as a model to describe how conflict is a dynamic process in which contradictions, attitudes and behaviours are constantly changing and influencing one another. In sum, the triangle helps us to study the life-cycle of a conflict.

There is, however, more to the triangle than conflict dynamics alone, and it is this discussion, which deals with the dialectics between the manifest and the latent components of the triangle, that brings us back to the discussion on structural violence.

### *Actor conflict and structural conflict*

Galtung makes a distinction between *actor conflicts* and *structural conflicts*. In an actor conflict, the actor has agency, he or she is fully aware of the ‘real’ incompatibility underlying the conflict (C), and is ready to act with purpose. The actor is conscious of ‘what is’

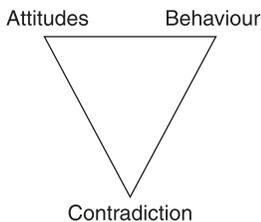


Figure 3.1 Galtung’s conflict triangle

(cognition), what (s)he wants (volition) and for that reason 'ought to be', and how (s)he feels (emotion). Simply put, A and C are fully conscious. And because A and C are clear and conscious, the actor can act (B) in accordance with them, that is, purposefully. This type of conflict is called 'actor conflict'. The metaphor here is that of the actor as driver, in control of the car, clearly seeing all obstacles in his or her way. Most conflicts, however, are not as 'conscious'. Very often, individuals have a false image of C, of what goal-states stand in the way of each other. A group of workers may for instance think that migrants are to blame for the rising levels of unemployment they experience (C) and start building up feelings of envy and hatred (A) towards them, which result in acts of aggression and discrimination (B). However, this may not be a realistic image of what is at hand. Instead, it may not be the migrants but the structure of the global economy that increasingly forces local corporations to relocate their businesses to low-tax and cheap labour regions that is causing unemployment (C). Only if they become aware of the 'real C' can the workers begin to act purposefully and try and resolve their conflict. When addressing the notion of false consciousness, Galtung (1996: 74–5) explicitly refers to Marx, but takes a less objectivist view on what in the end determines the 'true' and the 'false'. What his theory seems to imply is that by trial and error ultimately a realistic image of A, B, C will appear:

We, party to the conflict or not, construct an image of the conflict, complete with A, B, and C of ourselves and the other party. Whether this is done by the participants or by the observer, that image will always remain a hypothesis, to be tested again and again and to be revised. False consciousness means a disconfirmed hypothesis, an unrealistic image, and that can happen to all of us. . . . The test lies in what happens later.

If actors are not aware of A and C, this is what Galtung calls a structural conflict. Actors are caught up in structures of repression and exploitation but fail to recognize them as such. A and C are embedded in the subconscious: there is a contradiction but no awareness of it. There is not even false consciousness.<sup>3</sup> People may feel frustrations, and even at times act upon these frustrations, but in random, senseless ways. But, we may ask, is then the term structural conflict not a contradiction in terms? What determines a conflict if not the actors themselves? With what right do we talk about a conflict at all? What is the C in structural conflict, and how are parties involved in it? Galtung's reply to this is that the contradiction lies in the system tying them together or, to use another formulation, C lies in the *structure of the social system*. Actors are unconscious of what is happening to them in the structure of the social system. They fail to see what it is that is standing in their way: what it is that prevents them from reaching their potential levels of needs satisfaction. While doing social life, people actually do harm to themselves. As the famous definition of ideology has it: 'they do not know it, but they are doing it'. They fail to see the larger picture. This is what Galtung calls structural conflict. The archetypical structural conflict, in his view, has exploitation as a centre-piece. This simply means that some (the 'top dogs') get much more out of the interaction in the structure than others, the underdogs (1996: 198). Clearly, this relates straight back to a Marxian critique of capitalism as inherently exploitative and as defined by a fundamental conflict of interests between those in control of the means of production (the capitalists) and those who only control their labour (the workers). But what prevents people from seeing the larger scope of what is at stake? And what is required to transcend from structural to actor conflict?

## Cultural violence

‘Just as political science is about two problems – the use of power and the legitimation of the use of power – violence studies are about two problems: the use of violence and the legitimation of that use’ (Galtung 1996: 196). Galtung introduces the notion of cultural violence to highlight how exploitation is legitimized and why people fail to see ‘what is standing in their way’. Culture (or rather certain aspects of culture) teaches and dulls us into seeing repression and exploitation as normal, or, rather, *not see it at all*. By cultural violence, Galtung (1996: 196) means:

those aspects of culture, the symbolic sphere of our existence – exemplified by religion and ideology, language and art, empirical science and formal science (logic, mathematics) – that can be used to justify or legitimize direct or structural violence.

The study of cultural violence focuses on the way in which forms of both manifest violence and structural violence are legitimized and thus rendered acceptable in society. This idea of culture as sustaining and misrepresenting social structures of domination as ‘natural’ can be traced back to the work on cultural hegemony of the Marxist philosopher Antonio Gramsci (1891–1937). Capitalism, Gramsci famously argued in his *Prison Notebooks*, is capable of sustaining itself not just through violence, economic coercion and political repression, but also ideologically, through a *hegemonic culture* in which the values of the dominant classes have become the ‘commonsense’ values of all. People, lost in their daily routines and worries, and guided by symbolic orders and notions of normality and commonsense, are incapable of perceiving the greater, systemic nature of socio-economic exploitation that cultural hegemony makes possible. Gramsci’s thought importantly influenced later thinkers such as Michel Foucault, Pierre Bourdieu, Zygmunt Baumann, Noam Chomsky and Judith Butler, and his influence is also clearly evident in the work of Galtung. We will return to the discussion on the legitimization of violence, under the heading of discourse theory, in chapter six.

We have so far identified three types of violence: manifest, structural and cultural. These forms of violence have a dialectic relation, constantly influencing and legitimizing one another. Despite the symmetry of Galtung’s violence triangle, there is nonetheless a basic difference in the time relation of the three concepts. Manifest violence is an *event*; structural violence is a *process* with ups and downs and cultural violence is *permanent*, remaining largely the same for long periods of time, given the slow transformation of basic culture. In describing how the three types of violence enter time differently, Galtung uses a metaphor from geology, with the earthquake as event, the movement of the tectonic plates as a process and the fault line as a more permanent condition (1996: 199). Just as was the case with the conflict triangle, causality flows in all six directions and cycles connecting manifest, structural and cultural violence may start at any corner, invoking different stories.

One such story is the way in which cultural violence both legitimizes the ‘fact’ of structural violence and the ‘act’ of manifest violence. Or how a causal flow can be identified from cultural to structural to manifest violence. Galtung gives the example of how the ‘criminalization of the poor’ is a form of cultural violence. Victims of structural violence (the exploited poor) are branded as evil aggressors when they try to break out of the ‘structural iron cage’ through the use of direct violence (see Loic Wacquant’s *Punishing the Poor*; 2009). The story of slavery shows us how the vicious cycle of violence can also start in the manifest violence corner, leading to structural and eventually cultural violence (1996: 200):

Africans are captured, forced across the Atlantic to work as slaves; millions are killed in the process – in Africa, on board, in the Americas. The massive direct violence over centuries seeps down and sediments as massive structural violence, with whites as master topdogs and blacks as the slave underdogs, producing and reproducing massive cultural violence with racist ideas everywhere. After some time, direct violence is forgotten, slavery is forgotten, and only two labels show up, pale enough for college textbooks: ‘discrimination’ for massive structural violence and ‘prejudice’ for massive cultural violence. Sanitation of language: itself cultural violence.

What is repeatedly made clear here, and what is at the core of Marxian structure-based theories of violent conflict, is the violence *in* structures. The rules and regulations, cultural codes and norms that together make up the organization of societies, and that are largely taken for granted, are inherently violent. They are, however, often not recognized as such. The overwhelming complexity of social life and the individual’s dual structural role as both player and maker of the game, however, mean that he or she is caught up in a Gramscian hegemonic limited ‘state of focus’, where one cannot see out of the box.

### ***Conscientization***

Are we forever locked up in our boxes, or is there a chance of breaking out? In answering our second question (Can we go from structural to actor conflict?), we run into the programmatic (transcendental) character of Galtung’s work. Indeed, according to Galtung, it is possible to ‘lift C up from the subconscious and into the daylight’. This is called *conscientization*, a concept taken from Paulo Freire. Again, the link to Marxist calls for the ‘awakening of the proletariat’ and Gramsci’s ‘educating the masses’ is obvious. Often, Galtung argues, actors, unconscious of the contradiction in the structure of the social system (be it on the personal, social or world level), have a ‘frustration image’ as a passing stage before the more realistic image of the conflict emerges. Women may feel frustrations at not being in control of their bodies, working classes at never reaching middle-class incomes, and these frustrations may trigger occasional acts of violence. But only when women and workers become aware of the contradiction in the social system (patriarchy, capitalism) will they be able to act purposefully, and see the very concrete actors on the other side. It is only then that they enter the arena of ‘actor conflict’ and can begin to work on conflict resolution. Galtung remains somewhat enigmatic about what exactly triggers conscientization, except in references to the ‘spirit’, and the ‘reflective capacity’ of conflict parties. He hints at the role of emotions, particularly frustration, as a guiding force. ‘The frustration phase becomes like a crust of ice on a frosty day as the consciousness passes from the cold waters underneath into the clear air above’ (1996: 77). In chapter four, we will address the notion of *collective action frames* as a more focused analytical concept to study what Galtung refers to as conscientization. ‘Collective action frames redefine social conditions as unjust and intolerable with the intention of mobilizing potential participants, which is achieved by making appeals to perceptions of justice and emotionality in the minds of individuals’ (Tarrow 1998: 111).

Galtung is theoretically omnivorous, and mostly interested in how we get from being puppets on a string to true actors. He calls for the ‘freeing of the spirit’, ‘escaping the realm of the subconscious’, to become value-directed, aware and capable of seeing the ‘real’ incompatibility in the structure of the social system. At times he supports an interpretative epistemology (‘the statement “this is a conflict” should always be taken as an *hypothesis*’ (1996: 70, my emphasis)) but he also hints at objectivism by stating that actors only know

what they want subconsciously: 'they want it but they do not know that themselves' (1996: 80). Above all, his work is programmatic. He clearly argues for a movement: down from the 'rule follower' living in the upper right quadrant of our matrix to the purposeful 'actor' of the bottom right box. Although repeatedly referring to Marxist thought, he keeps his distance from the more objectivist or deterministic approaches to what constitutes the real contradiction. He calls for a constructive Peace Studies, which builds upon both empirical peace studies (informing us only about patterns and conditions for peace or violence in the past) and critical peace studies (as pointing out what is wrong) to do just what architects and engineers are doing: take theories about what might work and bring them together with values about what ought to work in order to build new habitats and constructions. For Galtung, Peace and Conflict Studies should be understood as a socially 'productive' discipline only feasible in terms of investigation-action, thus breaking the barrier between theory and practice. This pedagogy of dividing academic training into three stages of (1) evidence-based analysis; (2) critique; (3) creation has become quite influential.

### **Structure: force without a face**

Galtung's work can be positioned in the wider 'structuralist turn' of scholarly thought of the 1960s and 1970s. Structure-based analysis, in particular Marxian understandings of the global political economy, exemplified by for instance the Latin American Independencia school and the rise of the field of Development Studies, was important in the shaping of academic thinking on issues of peace and war. Galtung's definition of structural violence is operationalized at state and sub-state levels by a variety of authors (Jacobs and O'Brien 1998; Preti 2002; Farmer 1996; Kent 1999; for an overview see Jacoby 2008). Likewise, the idea of 'false consciousness' is, in a broad variety of ways, implied in structure-based conflict analyses. Authors arguing from a structure-based approach have, for instance, repeatedly critiqued dominant representations of contemporary conflicts as 'ethnic', as distorted, as a false image (e.g. Woodward 1995; Storey 1999). These distorted images can be understood as being brought in intentionally: 'top dogs' have an interest in framing the frustrations of 'underdogs' as deriving from religious or ethnic antagonisms, where the real contradiction is economic exploitation. However, the top dog/underdog dichotomy seems simplistic, and it is hence acknowledged by many structure-based analysts that although in the end elite machinations are essential, often the actors involved (both top and underdog) operate according to a much more implicit and ambiguous practical logic and 'feel for the game' (as in Bourdieu's *Logic of Practice*). As we will see later, it is here where analytical vocabularies of (neo) Marxians and Foucauldian post-structuralists meet. Of relevance to this discussion is the Gramscian notion of cultural hegemony with its emphasis on how difficult it is for us to see the 'larger picture' shaping our routines and relationships. We live in an extremely interconnected and complex world. Partly, this complexity explains the tendency – of both political leaders and audiences – to target concrete 'evil others' as the source of misery and suffering rather than 'structures', for these are not only hard to substantiate, they are also seen as uncontrollable. As Appadurai (2006: 44) puts it, 'globalisation is a force without a face', and although the changes it brings may give rise to deep anxieties and social uncertainties, it cannot be targeted in any 'satisfactory' way. 'Ethnic others', by contrast, can.

Structure-based approaches to conflict try to steer away from the emphasis on violent agents (perpetrators and victims) and focus the analysis on the underlying organization of society as shaping and sustaining violent conflict. In this, they are confronted with the

question ‘what structures do we see at work?’ and the empirical difficulty of substantiating causal relations. Most structuralist theories require no clear subject–action–object relationship (I hit/shot/killed you) but a diffuse subject–object relationship, something we will discuss further in chapter four. Another important issue is how to define this ‘abstract force’ often referred to as ‘structure’. As explained in the introductory chapter by means of the Hollis matrix, the authors under review in this chapter understand structures as ‘sets of meaning rules’ rather than objective, external ‘laws’ determining social behaviour. That is, they understand structures as ‘games’ with specific constitutive and regulative rules and practices. These ‘games’ are *external* to each individual player, in the sense that we as individuals have a tendency to follow the rules of the game obediently. But ‘games’ are seen as *internal* to the players collectively. Ultimately, games are socially constructed, and inter-subjective. Giddens (1979: 64) defined structures in this sense as ‘rules and resources recursively implicated in the reproduction of social systems’. Structures are thus ‘rules that are articulated in social interaction and tell people how to “do” social life, and the resources on which people can call to achieve their objectives’ (Wallace and Wolf 1999: 181). Structures are hence relational, shaped by power differences (access to resources) and both enabling and constraining (telling us how to do, but also how not to do social life).

There is no set level for how to apply structure-based theory. The core assumption of structure-based approaches is that systems largely shape the actions of their units, be it at the global, regional, state or community level. The key question of this chapter on structure-based approaches to violent conflict revolves around the interconnection between structure and (collective) action. In the remainder of this chapter, we will discuss the work of a selection of prominent conflict scholars who explore the connection between global structures and local violent conflict. I have deliberately selected authors who work from a global perspective, for this allows us to extend our levels-of-analysis approach by drawing in national, regional and global levels. Although they see different structures at work differently, all authors explore the connections between violent conflict and the organization of society. Three global systems are highlighted: the modern state system, global capitalism and global governance. Notably, the authors under review here are not just single voices but represent strands of thought within the academic literature on global development and conflict.

### **Unending failure: the state-making paradox**

In his work on ‘state-making and state-breaking’ Mohammed Ayoob (2007) understands contemporary violent conflict in the global South in the context of the process of state formation. More precisely, in the context of a crisis in state formation. His main point is that postcolonial states are expected to replicate in a few decades a process that took developed states a couple of centuries and a long series of bloody wars, that is, the establishment of relatively stable, centralized modern states. Both the enormity of the time lag, and the radical difference in international norms and political contexts highly complicate state formation. It is this crisis of ‘state-making’ that is the source of most contemporary violent conflicts in the underdeveloped world.

At the core of Ayoob’s work is the argument that the democratic nation-states of the developed world, with their relatively high levels of legitimacy and consent, did not evolve overnight. The process of sovereign state-making that took shape in sixteenth-century Europe was a top-down, elite-driven and lengthy process, by which disparate populations were cajoled and coerced to ultimately accept the legitimacy of the state and its institutions

to extract resources, set territorial boundaries and control the monopoly over the use of violence. As Charles Tilly points out, this was by no means a peaceful process:

The building of states in Western Europe cost tremendously in death, suffering, loss of rights, and unwilling surrender of land, goods, or labour . . . The fundamental reason for the high cost of European state building was its beginning in the midst of a decentralized, largely peasant social structure. Building differentiated, autonomous, centralized organisations with effective control of territories entailed eliminating or subordinating thousands of semiautonomous authorities . . . Most of the European populations resisted each phase of the creation of strong states.

(Tilly 1975: 71 in Ayoob 2007 :130)

This process of state-making antedated the formation of nation-states by at least a couple of centuries. The distinction between *state* and *nation-state* is crucial here. A state is a 'relatively centralized, differentiated, and autonomous organization successfully claiming priority in the use of force within a large, contiguous, and clearly bounded territory' (Tilly 1990: 43). The notion of the nation-state, however, entails the idea of a state whose inhabitants form a nation: a 'shared culture' (Gellner 1983) or 'imagined community' (Anderson 1991). The idea of the nation-state, and hence nationalism as the principle that 'the boundaries of the state and nation should be congruent', emerged in the nineteenth century when the rise of capitalism and industrialization created the need for a more homogeneous, standardized society. It was only then that people began to imagine themselves as being part of a nation and that the process of national identification began to take shape. Although there is debate among scholars about the when and why of the rise of the nation-state, there is ample agreement on how it took centuries of uncivil wars, coercion and bloodshed before European states could overcome their weaknesses, remedy their administrative deficiencies, and bring 'lukewarm loyalty up to the white heat of nationalism' (Ayoob 2007: 131).

In the post-WWII era, the imaginary of the socially cohesive, political responsive and administratively effective nation-state of the developed world became the standard ideal type. State-makers in postcolonial (but also post-communist) countries who fail to live up to this ideal-typical template risk international ridicule and permanent peripherality within the system of states. Their states are labelled as 'failed', 'fragile' or 'collapsed'. Ayoob argues that in order to copy the process of nation-state building, state-makers in developing countries need above all two things: lots of time and a relatively free hand. Of course, neither of these two commodities is available. For developing countries are not only under pressure to demonstrate adequate statehood quickly, in an era of mass politics and democracy, they are also confronted with a set of international norms and regulations that pressure them to do this in humane and civilized ways. In fact, developing state-makers are confronted with contradictory contemporary international norms. They have to cope with the paradox of the inalienability and 'sacredness' of colonial state borders in international law on the one hand, and the principle of human rights, including the right to ethno-national self-determination on the other hand. This often poses a great threat to the competence of the state. State governments are pressured to force a diversity of populations (whose ethnic antagonisms often stem from the divide-and-rule strategies of colonial rulers) to remain within the territorial boundaries of the often rather arbitrarily drawn borders of the colonial state. In contrast to earlier centuries, in the current era individuals and groups can claim rights that are independent of their memberships of individual states and that derive not from their national status but from their status as members of the human species. At the same time, newly independent states are

incapable of accommodating political and economic demands from dissatisfied groups, either because they lack the necessary resources or because doing so could seriously jeopardize their territorial integrity. In particular, the international recognition of the doctrine of ethno-national self-determination increases the challenge to the legitimacy of the principle that postcolonial states are territorially inviolable. Ayooob describes the core of the problem as follows:

The major problem is that standards are set by Western Europe and US, states that have successfully completed their state-building process, they can therefore afford to adopt liberal standards in relations to their populations, because they are reasonably secure in the knowledge that societal demands will not run counter to state interests and will not put them in jeopardy. However, these standards are in the Third World often in contradiction with the imperatives of state making.

(Ayooob 2007: 133)

In sum, it is the contradictions inherent in the organization of the modern state system, in particular the unevenness in state-making processes, that importantly constrain the ability of state-makers in developing countries to reach levels of nation-statehood similar to the Western world. The way in which this imbalance feeds into a reconceptualization of the notion of sovereignty and the rise of the 'human/inhuman' divide is discussed next through the work of Jabri (2010).

### ***'Fragility' and the transfer of sovereignty***

One of the key transformations in global politics in the post-Cold War era is the normative rejection of the principle of state sovereignty. In its 2001 report *The Responsibility to Protect*, the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty argued for a redefinition of the notion of sovereignty, from sovereignty as 'control' or 'authority' to sovereignty as 'responsibility'— the responsibility to protect civilians in civil wars and other humanitarian crises within borders (ICISS 2001). In 2005, at the UN World Summit, states agreed to adopt the Responsibility to Protect (or R2P) as doctrine and articulated the norm that the 'international community' has a duty to intervene to prevent and stop mass atrocities crimes everywhere. Concretely, this means that if a state is unable or unwilling to fulfil its responsibility to protect, this task is transferred to the international community, and sovereignty is temporarily suspended. State sovereignty is no longer an argument against external military intervention to protect civilians (see Warner 2013). A key figure in the doctrine of R2P is the construct of the 'failed' or 'fragile' state. As explained by Jabri (2010), the failed state is a state disqualified. It is a state not worthy of sovereignty, and hence undeserving of the laws protecting this sovereignty. In a way, it is removed from the realm of law. Although Jabri agrees that at first sight this position seems attractive, she highlights a series of 'uncomfortable truths' and political consequences. When states are categorized as failed states, then the location of government shifts away from the local or national arena towards a constellation of international institutions and states, acting directly or through public-private networks of governance. The transfer of sovereignty from the local to the external is a structural transformation, and a highly political one. Cloaked in a discourse that has the welfare of populations as its underlying justification, a hierarchical relationship is established between the intervener as protector/saviour and the subject population as protected/saved. This is what Fukuyama (2004) calls 'international imperial power' and what Hardt and Negri name 'Empire' (2004). A crucial element of the transfer of sovereignty from the local to the

external, as pointed out by Jabri, is that it depends upon a discourse of legitimation. It is reliant on the symbolic power to name, to identify and to classify. As she highlights, ‘the current international political order is no longer based on the sovereignty of states as the baseline of legitimacy, but on the *judgment of conduct* in relation to the realm of the human, and its counterpart the inhuman’ (2010: 120–121, my emphasis). These forms of judgment are directly linked to the power of discourse. In particular, to the capacity of actors to establish the necessity and legitimacy of an action that overrides the law. This is where questions on the politics of portrayal come in. When wars are fought in the name of the human, then the ‘enemy must by necessity constitute the inhuman’ (Jabri 2010: 119). The ‘uncomfortable truth’ here is that the division of the world into ‘failed’ and ‘successful’ states is political: it serves functions, it is strategic. It is intrinsically linked to questions of betterment and empowerment but also, and more so, to matters of power and control.

Before we turn to the question of how this structural imbalance is related to violent conflict, we first turn to another system: global capitalism.

### **Global neoliberalism**

Contemporary thinking on the connection between the global economy and local violent conflict is characterized by a controversy between two common perspectives. The first is often labeled as the ‘liberal peace’ interpretation, according to which free market reforms and good governance contribute to stability and the resolution of conflict through the promotion of economic growth. From this point of view, globalization and market deregulation are seen to furnish the basis of stability. Underlying this view is the assumption that through the mechanism of the free market, labour, production and raw materials will be automatically adjusted in ways that will rationally secure the optimal benefits for all. The free market is understood as the ultimate driving force behind rationally calculated and hence superior forms of organization and order. An order where there is no place for conflict. As argued by Haass (2014: 72), ‘economic interdependence acts as a brake on conflict’. This position is contradicted by proponents of the second view, stemming from critical political economy. This interpretation claims that the doctrine of neoliberal globalization that swept the world in the 1980s, and has since become hegemonic, tends to encourage new and durable forms of division, instability and expulsion. In the encounter with national and local contexts, the neoliberal market reforms of the 1980s are seen as having produced unexpected and, at times, unwanted outcomes, including violent conflict. Neoliberalism has deepened poverty, increased economic inequality and exacerbated the division of the world into ‘core’ and ‘periphery’, or ‘metropolitan’ and ‘borderland’ zones. In particular, the shift from an inclusionary to an exclusionary capitalist logic, and the imposition of rigid debt regimes, is seen to have had profound implications. For some critics, the ‘new’ in neoliberalism refers to a revival and return of earlier forms of ‘laissez faire’ capitalism of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Others, however, use the ‘new’ to emphasize how neoliberalism is a radically new form of capitalism. Authors such as Castells (1996, 1998) and Cox (1995), for instance, have argued that with the rise of the modern informational economy of the 1980s, the logic of capitalist development is better characterized by consolidation and exclusion than by – classic – expansion and inclusion. Since this time, the tendency has been for production, finance, investment, trade and technology networks to concentrate in and between the metropolitan blocks of mass consumer societies at the expense of the outlying areas. The present system is driven much more by commercial investment and technology networks than by a thirst for cheap labour and raw materials. As a result, apart from ‘enclave

economies' revolving around a number of high-value commodities (oil, gas, minerals, land, coltan, timber), large 'borderland zones' are deemed 'structurally irrelevant' from an economic point of view. Particularly after the 2008 financial crisis, authors have addressed the rise of finance, and 'the financialization of everything', as of crucial importance in understanding the transformation of global capitalism. Scholars such as Brown (2015), Feher (2009) and Sassen (2014) address this transformation as the shift from an 'economy of exchange and profit' to a 'financialized economy of speculation and credit'. Financialization defines a new governmental mode with its own set of practices. The most fundamental is a new logic of corporate culture, which moves away from maximizing *profit* to permanently raising the *value of the stock*. This is a major departure from the Keynesian period, when economic growth was driven by the expansion of material economies (with an emphasis on mass manufacturing, building of infrastructures). For Feher, investors – and not employers – are at the forefront of the new capitalism. They are the beneficiaries not of labour markets but of financial markets where projects become assets and are evaluated by the investment of capital by shareholders. Investors do not fit the profile of the classic business owner. Their main function is not the appropriation of the labourer's surplus value; rather, it is the power to select the endeavours that 'deserve' to receive resources. Investors speculate and bring projects to fruition by allocating credit to those they deem worthwhile. It is this relation between investors and investees that Feher sees as the prime relation of neoliberal capitalism. The investee is a broad term, which includes not only countries (fearing to be stripped of their 'triple A' credit-ratings) and governments (assessed through provisional budgets) but corporations (evaluated by their business plans), loan seekers (rated by their reputation as loaner, their health, their 'human capital') and so on. It is the shift from 'profit-based' to 'credit-based' capitalism enhanced by financial deregulation which provides a model through which we can understand the transformation not only of institutions (corporations and governments) but also of the subject, expressed in new categories of 'credit-worthy' and 'credit-less'. We will return to this in more detail later. In the new form of capitalism, economic actors once crucial to the development of Keynesian capitalism, such as middle-class workers and consumers, are much less important, something which translates into new forms of socio-economic dislocation and expulsion. Importantly, authors in the critical political economy tradition show how the new ways of 'expulsion' we see under neoliberalism can co-exist with economic growth as counted by standard measures (Sassen 2014: 2-5).

Proponents of the liberal peace approach recognize the rise in internal violent conflict of the 1990s. They also acknowledge the fact that the process of global neoliberalization coincided with an overall rise of parallel economies, severe financial crises, and high levels of poverty and inequality. However, where scholars from the critical political economy tradition argue that these instabilities are inherent to the logic of the global capitalist system, advocates of the liberal interpretation have a quite different reading. In their view, it is not the neoliberal model that is to blame for the serial market failures and lack of progress but rather the immature, corrupt and inefficient state administrations of developing countries and transition economies themselves. It is emphasized that global neoliberalism can only successfully proceed in a 'sound' governance environment. Whereas the idea of 'more market and less state' was the prime objective of both the stabilization programmes that started in the 1970s and the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) that were vigorously enhanced and extended in the 1980s, the call for *less state* of the Washington consensus has been gradually substituted by a call for a *better* state. So, where the liberal interpretations locate the sources of civil war and instability at the level of 'bad actors' (greedy rebels, corrupt leaders, criminalized regimes) who rationally calculate the costs and benefits of

war and rebellion, the political economy approach emphasizes the need to grapple with the complexities of the relation between local war and the global capitalist logic. The argumentation of the former will be further explored in chapter five. The remainder of this section will deal with how critical political economy approaches understand the connection between neoliberal globalization and violent conflict. We begin by mapping the two dominant strands of neoliberal critique. As we will see, the notion of sovereignty again plays a leading role in this analysis.

### *Neoliberalism: two vocabularies*

The field of critical political economy is often presented as split between two vocabularies on neoliberalism, with (neo)Marxians talking about neoliberalism as a concrete, strategic political project in the service of a transnational capitalist class and a Foucauldian post-structuralist understanding of neoliberalism as a form of governing rationality (as ‘governmentality’). (Neo)Marxians focus on how neoliberalism is essentially a coercive and repressive project, a global ideological hegemony, in which power is wielded over populations by a transnational capitalist class (see Harvey 2005; 2010). From a post-structuralist vocabulary, neoliberalism is a ‘logic of practice’, a form of self-rule and self-assessment that has profoundly reoriented the contemporary subject as ‘human capital’ (see Brown 2015). The quality of the former lies in its empirical applicability, in its capacity to map, count and measure. The latter provides us with a more abstract insight into the pervasiveness of neoliberalism not as a strategic project but as an everyday lived reality. To me, these strands of thought seem to reinforce rather than contradict each other. I will here reflect on both.

In the abstract, neoliberalism is often conceptualized as the combination of ‘frictionless market rule’ and ‘state minimalism’. In practice, it is neither constant nor unified and differs across its geographical instantiations and transmogrifies over time (Peck 2010). The two forces that have given neoliberalism its distinct shape over the past decades are the *transfer of ownership* from the state or public holdings to the private sector and corporate interests under the rubric of efficiency, and *austerity policies* through budget cuts in jobs, pay, pensions, benefits and public provision of infrastructure and social services. Aiming to provide a flexible framework for conceptualizing neoliberalism, Peck (2010) introduces the notion of ‘roll-back’ and ‘roll-out’ phases of neoliberalism. Roll-back neoliberalism is associated with the ‘destructive and deregulator moment’, such as attacks on Keynesian-welfarist structures and the extension of neoliberal strategies to the international domain. Roll-out neoliberalism is ‘the creative and proactive moment’ characterized by pro-market institution building and the social normalization of its logic.

### *Neoliberalism as political project*

In their analysis of global capitalism, William Robinson and Mario Barrera (2012) fit the (neo)Marxian strand of thought in understanding neoliberalism as a concrete political project of the unfettered rule of capital in the service of a transnational capitalist class. They describe how at the beginning of the twenty-first century this class, in constant search for new forms of capital accumulation, turned to three (not entirely new) mechanisms: worldwide financial speculation, militarized accumulation and the dismantling of the social welfare state. The first is the ways by which the capitalist class unloaded billions of dollars into speculation and into every imaginable ‘derivative’, eventually resulting in the 2008 collapse of the global financial system. The second mechanism is about the connection between war and capital accumulation. The making of wars and interventions, facilitated by the War on Terror,

unleashed cycles of destruction and reconstruction that generated enormous profits for an ever-expanding ‘military-prison-industrial-security-financial complex’. The third mechanism deals with the so-called ‘assault on the commons’ and the commodification of public services. Transnational capital used its financial power to take control of state finances and to impose further austerity on the working majority, resulting in increased inequality and hardship (‘roll-back’ neoliberalism).

Although emphasis is placed on the neoliberal project as primarily coercive and repressive, Robinson and Barrera argue that its mechanisms of control are more subtle and sophisticated than the forms of totalitarianism we have seen in the past: ‘The role of political and ideological domination, through control over media and the flow of images and symbols, would make any such project more sophisticated and, together with new panoptical surveillance and social control technologies, probably allow it to rely more on *selective* than *generalized* repression’ (Robinson and Barrera 2012: 12, my emphasis).

By referring to concepts such as ‘technology of control’, we enter the analytical vocabulary of Foucauldian post-structuralism and the way in which neoliberalism has become the new ‘normalcy’.

### *Neoliberalism as governing rationality*

In trying to understand the violence done to people through symbolic representations of their status as worthy/unworthy, effective/ineffective and even as human/inhuman, we can draw on a body of literature that takes neoliberalism as ‘common-sense, meaning quite literally a sense held in common’ (Springer 2012: 137). In this view, neoliberalism has seeped into the social and political fabric and deeply reconfigured people’s relationships to each other, their sense of membership in a public and the conditions of self-knowledge (see Braedley and Luxton 2010). As Greenhouse notes: ‘Neoliberal reform – now a generation or more in the making – has restructured the most prominent public relationships that constitute belonging: politics, markets, work and self-identity’ (2010: 2). Here, neoliberalism is understood as a logic of practice and a form of normative reasoning through which the principles of the market are extended to every dimension of human life: political, cultural, social, vocational, educational, public and private. In fundamental ways, over the course of the past decades, neoliberalism is seen to have become a pervasive, internalized rationality of governance and self-discipline which shapes human conduct through the image of *homo economicus*. All human institutions (universities, hospitals, nations, aid organizations, news media) are governed through the specific model of the firm. Neoliberalism is thus about the reconfiguration of political subjectivity: about how people have come to see themselves and others as human capital (credit-worthy or discredited) and no longer as members of a public, as rights-bearing or association making (Brown 2015). This interpretation of neoliberalism as governmentality emphasizes how it has become a ‘thing we do to ourselves’. Here power is treated as a ‘complex, yet very specific form centering on knowledge production through the ensemble of rationalities, strategies, technologies and techniques concerning the *mentality of rule* that allow for the de-centring of government through the active role of auto-regulated or auto-correcting selves who facilitate “governance at a distance”’ (Springer 2012: 137, my emphasis).

Together, the two approaches to neoliberalism ask questions about the world as a complex multidimensional site of interrelationships among transformative and contradictory phenomena. Both approaches address the violence done to people through the way neoliberalism places people in positions of structured economic inequality, dispossession and exploitation, but also how it has changed the way we value ourselves and others in primarily economic

terms, as human capital only. To refer back to Hollis' conceptualization of structure: what is highlighted here is how neoliberalism as 'set of constitutive and regulative rules and practices' and as 'mentality' has become the only game in town.

In the following, we will map out the interconnections between global structures and violent conflict in more concrete ways.

### **Global structures and local conflict: the interconnections**

It is at the level of the state, and state-making efforts, where the impact of economic, geopolitical and political transformation becomes manifest and hence researchable. It is not surprising that many structure-based approaches to violent conflict focus on this level of analysis. The argumentation followed by authors such as Mohammed Ayoob that contemporary violent conflict should be understood in the context of a crisis of (postcolonial) state- and nation-making, and how the international standards set by established, Western nation-states importantly aggravate this crisis, is acknowledged by authors arguing from a critical political economy stance. However, they point out, this crisis is exacerbated by an even more fundamental problem. New states are not only hampered in their efforts to monopolize national territory: they also lack control over their national economies. They are not only enfeebled politically, but also, and more importantly, economically. Whereas states in Europe went through a process of state- and nation-building based on the idea of the national economy and state territory as viable economic units (Hobsbawm's so-called 'threshold principle') and went through phases of strong economic protectionism, thriving on colonial exploitation and a strategy of primitive accumulation, the state- and nation-building processes of developing countries are marked by very different contextual realities. Not only do they suffer the consequences of a history of extraction and exploitation, they also often have only experimented briefly with economic models of state-led growth. Clearly, the economic development and trajectories of developing countries show massive differences, from the long history of import substitution characterizing many Latin American states to the postcolonial neopatrimonial state in Africa, the newly industrializing countries (NICs) of southeast Asia and the economic protectionism in post-independence India and Indonesia. A central argument, however, in the political economy tradition is that although the 'neoliberal revolution' of the late twentieth century played out differently, it went with a worldwide erosion or disintegration of state structures. The incapacity of governments to monopolize national territories and control economic dynamics has eroded the decision-making power and legitimacy of the state in many developing countries (but certainly also in advanced industrial countries). Processes of state- and nation-building are either weakened and delegitimized, or frustrated and impeded. The effects of this are threefold: the emergence of identity conflicts and network wars (largely as a result of 'roll-back neoliberalism') and the rise of the 'social control state' (resulting from 'roll-out neoliberalism').

#### ***Identity conflicts***

Mary Kaldor's book *New and Old Wars: Organized Violence in a Global Era* (1999) was a strong influence on the discussion of globalization and local violence. What she termed 'new wars' were 'to be understood in the context of globalisation' (1999: 3). Kaldor contrasts the old 'politics of ideas' that had characterized conflict throughout most of the twentieth century with what she identifies as the rise of a new 'politics of identity' of recent decades, which emerged out of the disintegration or erosion of modern state structures, especially

centralized authoritarian states. ‘The collapse of communist states after 1989, the loss of legitimacy of postcolonial states in Africa or South Asia, or even the decline of welfare states in more advanced industrial countries provide the environment in which new forms of identity politics are nurtured’ (1999: 78). In a context where decision-making powers have shifted from the state to the market, and where the neoliberal framework has been more or less fixed by external international financial institutions (such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organization) and donor agencies, and where transnational activities abound, political classes suffer from growing impotence and declining legitimacy. In the process of global market integration, national governments have been stripped of their powers to determine policies in the socio-economic realm. The inability of the state to impose rules and regulations to keep market power in check has posed problems for both democratic accountability and political legitimacy. The lack of control of the economy leaves the cultural field as the main battleground for political constituency building and opens a ‘market’ for identity-based politics. As a consequence, minorities, migrants, refugees and ‘ethnic others’ become the flash point of exclusionary discourses and are scapegoated as invaders and the source of all evil. In this sense, identity politics can be seen as a survival tactic for politicians in contexts of declining economic decision-making powers. It is hence the weakening and delegitimization of the state set in motion by the neoliberal globalization project that is at the base of contemporary ethnic conflict, nationalism and xenophobia (see also Appadurai 2006). This process is certainly not exclusively characteristic of the underdeveloped world. More than anything it is the rapidly neoliberalizing former welfare states of Western Europe and Scandinavia that witness the rise of populist and xenophobic repertoires. In places such as the Netherlands, Sweden and Denmark, where the neoliberal project has, largely unnoticed, abolished the collective standards and solidarities of the post-WWII era, the faces of immigrants have served as ideal, identifiable targets for new narratives of othering and belonging (Demmers and Mehendale 2010).

### ***Network wars***

The political economy position implies that contemporary conflicts need to be understood in the context of the economic transformations of the late twentieth century. These transformations trigger not only identity politics but also new forms of resource competition. The rise of the so-called ‘war economies’ in many developing countries is linked to the decline of state formation as a political project in the context of the worldwide trend of privatization, deregulation and financialization. Keen (1998), for instance, with a wink at Von Clausewitz, states that internal forms of war are now better understood as the continuation of *economics* by other means. The war economies that emerged after the Cold War, revolving around illegal trade in diamonds, arms, drugs, timber, and coltan and oil bunkering in Africa, Eastern Europe and Central Asia, and the production of poppy (e.g. Afghanistan, Pakistan) and coca (e.g. Colombia, Bolivia), are understood to be perpetuated by local and global networks of producers, traders, warlords, corporations and consumers. Increasingly, actors move beyond the state in pursuit of economic power. The result of this is the so-called ‘post state conflicts’ or ‘network wars’ (Duffield 2002). These are often internal forms of war in which actors find it no longer necessary to project power through the juridical or bureaucratic control of a relatively fixed territory. The state has been replaced by multiple centres of authority, often controlled by warlords and local business networks who no longer consider the state the main ‘trophy’ in conflict, except perhaps as a means to solidify their commercial activities. The interconnectedness between these local economies of war and the international market

is expressed in the term ‘network war’. In their aim to control strategic assets, local warring parties strike deals with multinational corporations that have a vested interest in access to natural resources. In Colombia, for instance, with the growth of oil concessions, foreign companies developed a complex strategy engaging the state, rebel forces and para-military (see Richani 2002). Likewise, in the midst of the post-2012 violence in Iraq, international oil firms such as ExxonMobil and Chevron were drilling in the north of the country under Kurdish Region Government contracts (Ahmed 2014; Al-Qarawee 2014). Often enough, however, local and global parties become engaged in violent competition over oil or timber. In Nigeria and Sudan, the energy security strategies of China, the US and Europe have resulted in what Watts (2008) names the ‘scramble for African oil’. This has only been exacerbated by the War on Terror. ‘It is in the intersection of a more aggressive scramble for African oil by China and the U.S. twin concerns of secure oil supply (national energy security) and the global War on Terror that a perfect storm of political volatility is created’ (2008: 33). Together with local ethnic antagonisms, youth militancy and state repression, this accounts for the Nigerian ‘oil complex’, a highly unstable and militarized corporate enclave economy. Critical political economy research points out how in an age of private security, international corporations do not require stability or government protection for their investments. On the contrary, at times ‘disaster zones’ are preferable to strong states. As a 2014 report by the global intelligence firm Stratfor assured: ‘the existing involvement of EU energy majors in high-risk countries such as Nigeria, Libya, Yemen and Iraq indicates a healthy tolerance for instability and security problems’ (Lanthenmann 2013). Evidently, war and business are not mutually exclusive. The rise of shadow economies is also enhanced in more indirect ways. International institutions such as the World Trade Organization, World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) preach economic integration of all societies but in practice, primarily enforce trade liberalization in poor countries. This double standard of pushing poor countries to open markets and allowing rich countries to protect their markets through Economic Partnership Agreements is greatest in such sectors as textiles and agriculture. These continuing protectionist measures, such as subsidies to farmers in the North and the existence of tariff barriers and import quotas, have had a detrimental impact on the prospects of poor countries to gain access to important consumer markets, which, in turn, feeds into processes of criminalization and violent conflict. In a complexity of ways, international capital rewards reinforce local structures of violence (Pugh 2011; Sassen 2014; Willett 2010). In situations where there are few sources of livelihood, joining military groups or shifting to coca and poppy growing or coltan and diamond mining may be essential survival strategies. For example, in the case of Colombia, peasants are known to shift from growing bananas (earning 16 dollars a month) to illegal coca production (earning 100 dollars a month). All these processes have an important impact on the existence and perseverance of war-related economic systems.

In sum, the changing competence – or outright impotence – of the state is of key importance to the understanding of the emergence and sustenance of internal violent conflict and disorder. From a political economy perspective, it is the decline of state formation as a political project that results in a loss of legitimacy of political classes and nurtures new forms of identity politics. In addition, economic groups, both legal and illegal, global and local, increasingly operate ‘around the state’. What results is a rather grim picture of large parts of the world as caught up in a downward spiral of violent resource competition along often heavily politicized ethnic fault lines. It is exactly this picture of breakdown and decline, evoked by the political economy approach, that is contested by a more Durkheimian reading of violent conflict. Before we move to our third ‘violence complex’, we will here briefly look into this critique.

***A critical note: the (dis)order of violent conflict***

It is tempting, for the outsider, to view the larger part of the underdeveloped world, particularly postcolonial territories, as plagued by failure, breakdown and anomie. In line with the argumentation above, the majority of conflict approaches linked to political economy regard the many incidences of intra-state violent conflict, in particular in the South, in terms of a *failure of modernity*. This view is contested by a group of scholars who propose to read the forms of collective action on the ground not as anomic but rather as restorative. Duffield (2002), for instance, argues that the political economy approach has an important contribution to make when it comes to understanding the transformations in global capitalism but fails to look beyond the truism of the 'failed state'. In its representation of the South as made up of 'multiple black holes of social exclusion' (Castells 1998: 164), it unintentionally reproduces the 'new barbarianism' discourse implicit in many conventional descriptions of contemporary conflict zones. The images of social regression and criminalized violence produced by the political economy analysis clearly articulate 'popular images of borderland barbarity, excess and irrationality' (Duffield 2002: 1,054). Situations on the ground may prove to be much more complex and ambivalent than the images of failure and chaos suggest. Rather than a failure of modernity, the new shadow economies and network wars that emerged in the post-Cold War era can also be understood as forms of *reflexive modernization*, as 'emerging political complexes' instead of 'complex political emergencies'. Political actors, institutions and social groups in places such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo or Somalia have appropriated and adapted the changes that came with globalization into new and essentially non-legal and non-liberal forms of autonomy, protection and regulation (see Bueger 2013 on Somali piracy as 'community of practice'). Although there is no need to romanticize these new forms of organization – including the organization of violence – it is worthwhile to take a more ethnographic approach to the ways by which the new shadow networks offer alternative forms of social regulation. In a similar way, Keen (2008), Cramer (2006) and King (2004) argue for a close examination of the reflexive systems supporting the 'new wars'. Rather than conceptualizing war as collapse, Keen, for instance, suggests investigating war as an alternative system of profit, power and protection. For Keen, 'events, however horrible and catastrophic, are actually *produced*, they are made to happen by a diverse and complicated set of actors who may well be achieving their objectives in the midst of what looks like failure and breakdown' (2008: 15). Likewise, Cramer (2006) aims to show how war is not necessarily the absence of development, or 'development in reverse', and how war and capitalism have supported each other throughout history. What these authors argue for is that the all too simplistic branding of the large majority of contemporary violent conflicts as 'failure and implosion' leaves no moral space for different forms of reflexive and ambivalent modernity. The templates and taken-for-granted ideal types of 'nation-state' and 'development' against which any given state should be measured as having succeeded or failed are themselves in need of critical reexamination.

***The control state: defective consumers and military urbanism***

The third pathway connecting neoliberal realities, the state and violent practices takes inspiration from the idea of the reorientation of the contemporary subject to 'human capital'. This strand of thought is largely dominated by sociologists, urban geographers and political philosophers reflecting on the 'militarization of the social' (Graham 2010), the rise of 'securocracy' (Gilroy 2011) and the rise of 'surveillance states'. Underpinning the debate are

two main strands of thought. First, neoliberalism as a peculiar form of reason has produced new divisions of (un)worthiness. Second, with the transformation of capitalism from a redistributive, Fordist Keynesian model to its present neoliberal form, the state's role has shifted from a 'social state' to a 'control state'. Combined, these ideas are used to explain repertoires of violence ranging from urban riots to militarization. The latter position emphasizes how with the privatization and outsourcing of public activities such as security, health, education, housing and drinking water ('roll-back neoliberalism'), new forms of governance emerged that undermined the social bases for more stable forms of consensual governance and provided further impetus for more coercive forms of social control. The neoliberal 'roll-out' state resorts to a host of coercive exclusionary measures: mass incarceration and prison-industrial complexes, policing, anti-immigrant legislation, detention of 'illegals', the reclaiming of the streets through closed-circuit television, manipulation of space so that both gated communities and ghettos are controlled by armies of private security guards and technologically advanced surveillance systems but also the militarization of the city. Rather than trying to accommodate or secure legitimacy, the neoliberal state's main task is policing, especially through surveillance and control (see Alexander 2012; Graham 2010; Robinson and Barrera 2012; Wacquant 2009). At the same time, with the rise of neoliberalism as normative reason, those who are incapable or unwilling to contribute to the project of 'personal enterprise management' and the 'nation as firm' no longer are seen as deserving of the protections of the old liberal democratic social contract. Discredited, they are considered redundant, and are shed, downsized or starved (see Brown 2015). As is documented by Sassen (2014), the past two decades have seen a sharp growth in the number of people expelled from the core social and economic orders (the so-called 'wasted lives'). However, as pointed out by Zygmunt Baumann (2004; 2011) these 'outcasts', too, are neoliberal subjects, wanting their share of 'consumer enjoyment'. Reflecting on the London riots and, in particular, the looting taking place in the summer of 2011, Baumann framed this as 'defective consumption', as a form of consumer violence. In fact, as the manifestation of a consumerist desire violently enacted when unable to realize itself the proper way: by shopping (2011).

For defective consumers, those contemporary have-nots, non-shopping is the jarring and festering stigma of a life unfulfilled, and of own nonentity and good-for-nothingness. Not just the absence of pleasure: absence of human dignity. Of life meaning. Ultimately, of humanity and any other ground for self-respect and respect of the others around.

What these debates show is how the reorganization of the global economy over the past decades has brought about a range of reorientations, displacements and evictions, and how these may result in violent forms that will become increasingly manifest in urban settings. Sassen (2014), in this respect, makes an important observation when stating how the sheer complexity of the global economy makes it hard to trace 'lines of responsibility' for the (structural) violence it produces, but also how equally hard it is for those who benefit from the system to feel responsible for the harm done. This observation bridges the step to an analysis of the third and final global system discussed in this chapter: global governance.

### **Global governance as containment**

Part of the discussion under the heading of global governance consists of an analysis that not so much aims to account for the phenomenon of internal war itself, but rather, its representation. This brings us to the systemic analysis of Duffield (2007, 2008, 2010a) on the relation

between local 'borderland' wars and the power hierarchy of the global governance system. In a way, this third analysis includes a warning. It points to the slippery and controversial relationship between academic analysis on the one hand and the 'reality call' of its ideological and practical implementation on the other. Put simply, academic knowledge on the 'new wars', as discussed above, is re-appropriated, both as a concept and in practice, by global governance institutions and turned into a legitimizing discourse. Stripped of its political economy components, the concept is used as a way to categorize contemporary violent conflict as uncivil, barbaric and excessive, and hence illegitimate. Cut off from its global and systemic 'sources', what is left of the 'new wars' concept is a label. This translation of an analytical concept into a policy concept perhaps seems meaningless at first sight but may have serious consequences. Simplified, we see a shift from an analytical understanding of new wars as connected to global systems, to a policy understanding of new wars as primarily provoked by local actors.

By analysing the re-appropriation of the 'new wars' label, Duffield not only describes the shift in framing and the construction of new dichotomies but also conceptualizes their *functionality* in what he sees as a global regime shift from geopolitics to biopolitics. Central to this analysis is the logic of representational transformation of parts of the global South from a series of 'strategic states' at the time of the Cold War into a 'dangerous social body' during the War on Terror era. What follows is an analysis of the contradictions inherent in the structure of this new system of global governance.

What is 'new' about the 'new wars', Duffield argues, is their alleged illegitimacy. What has changed is not so much the nature of violent conflict but the international denial of any *legitimacy* to warring parties within 'failed states'. For most of the twentieth century, supporting conflicts waged by irregular armies was an accepted feature of international conflict – certainly during the superpower rivalry of the Cold War. Because a direct military confrontation between the two superpowers was impossible, Moscow and Washington exported their geopolitical rivalry to the developing world. This resulted in the much discussed inter-state and intra-state 'proxy wars' and a merger of local and geopolitical antagonisms and alliances. The massive transfer of weapons to both governments and insurgents in the 'strategic states' of Central and South America, Africa and Asia greatly enhanced local insecurities and instabilities in these regions. Largely, however, local wars were seen as legitimate and were supported with funding, arms and political patronage. Importantly, during the Cold War, development aid and donor-led peacekeeping and conflict resolution activities were circumscribed by state sovereignty, territorial integrity and the norms of non-intervention. The end of the Cold War, however, changed all this. Warring parties in internal conflict lost their geopolitical strategic functionality. The rapid withdrawal of financial and political support after 1989 forced warring parties in the former 'strategic states' to turn to other sources of income and support, such as the shadow economy and overseas diasporas. Rather than strategic allies, they turned into potential threats which needed to be contained (the quintessential example of this is of course the US relation to the Mujahedin in Afghanistan). It is against this background that the 'new wars' label gained prominence in the countless reports of the United Nations, World Bank, donor governments, regional organizations and NGOs. Duffield points out how these conventional descriptions create a series of 'us' and 'them' dichotomies (2002: 1052):

*Their wars*, for example, are internal, illegitimate, identity-based, characterised by unrestrained destruction, abuse civilians, lead to social regression, rely on privatized violence, and so on. By implication, *our wars* are between states, are legitimate and politically

motivated, show restraint, respect civilians, lead to social advancement and are based on accountable force. In describing their wars, by implication, such statements suggest a good deal about how we like to understand our own violence. They establish, for want of better terms, a formative contrast between *borderland* traits of barbarity, excess and irrationality, and *metropolitan* characteristics of civility, restraint and rationality.

By constructing the imagined space of the ‘borderland’, a powerful legitimization was established for the new Western humanitarian and peace interventionism that came with the new hierarchy of power of the post-Cold War era. The ‘new war’ label of chaos and barbarity was used as a moral justification for this increased interventionism (coined the New Humanitarian Order by Mahmood Mamdani). For, not only did internal wars cease to be politically functional, the emerging shadow economies and network wars were above all seen as *dangerous*, as seriously threatening Western ways of life. This was, of course, greatly enhanced by the 11 September attacks and the Global War on Terror and resulted in the idea of underdevelopment as dangerous, and hence the *securitization of development*. For Duffield ‘(t)he bad forms of global circulation associated with non-insured surplus population penetrate the porous borders of mass consumer society, damaging its social cohesion and destabilizing its way of life’ (2007: 122). It is in this light that Duffield argues for understanding the rise of ‘human security’ and ‘state fragility’ as *technologies of containment*. The renewed wave of Western humanitarian and peace interventionism in the post-Cold War period and its fashions of ‘human security’ and ‘state fragility’ are primarily technologies of power aimed at controlling people living on the margins of global society. The main development recipe in this context is the encouragement of local self-reliance, or more recently, ‘resilience’ (Evans and Reid 2014). Whereas the notion of self-reliance began as a challenge to the world economy by advocating endogenously determined autonomous development, the term has been transformed over the past decades to mean support by international agencies for do-it-yourself welfare programmes in the periphery. These programmes aim to enable populations to achieve self-sufficiency, to contain the exodus from the borderlands to the metropolitan zones and hence create some sort of stability among populations which the global economy cannot absorb. In its transformed meaning, self-reliance has become ‘complementary to and supportive of hegemonic goals for the world economy’ (Cox 1983: 173). Duffield applies Foucault’s concept of ‘biopolitics’ in his critique of this liberal understanding of development. Simply put, where geopolitics is a form of politics where power is executed through a control over territories, biopolitics is the exertion of power through the disciplining and regulation of people. Biopolitics is primarily about governing the life (and death) of the population. For Duffield, rather than a way to ‘better’ people, development has become a technology of security, aimed at containing the circulatory and destabilizing effects of underdevelopment’s surplus labour (or ‘waste life’) upon the Western way of life:

Rather than moving towards global equity, for decades Western politicians have proved to be either unable or unwilling to moderate mass society’s hedonistic thirst for unlimited consumption. . . . The expectation that those excluded from the feast – the international surplus population – will be satisfied with basic needs is, at best, unrealistic and racist. (2007: 70)

‘Human security’ should not be understood by its common definition as ‘prioritising people rather than states’ but as a form of long-distance biopolitics – that is, as ‘effective

states prioritising the well-being of populations living within ineffective ones' (2007: 122). What follows is the emergence of what Duffield calls 'governance states' that is, zones of contingent sovereignty where the West, through complex networks of public–private governance, shapes the basic economic and welfare policies. While its territorial integrity is respected, sovereignty over life is internationalized, negotiable and contingent.

In his analysis of the rise of the 'new wars' label, Duffield seeks to uncover how, in the post-Cold War era, 'metropolitan' states established a new hierarchy of power through a series of public–private networks of global governance. Although he does not directly use the term, he addresses the violence inherent in the structure of the global governance system of the new humanitarian order, and the ways governments and NGOs, at times unknowingly, sustain and police the gap between mass consumer society and those living beyond its boundaries. Clearly, Duffield's 'contained instability' is not far removed from what Galtung identified, in the first part of this chapter, as 'avoidable insults to life'; that is, structural violence.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter, we discussed authors who situate the source of violent conflict in the organization of society. The 'true contradiction', that is to say, *that which is standing in the way of something else*, is built into the structure of the system. It is built into the structure of the modern state system, where 'effective' states that have completed their nation-state building processes (often at the expense of the 'ineffective' ones) set the liberal standards that are in contradiction to the imperatives of state-making in large parts of the South. It is built into the structure of the global capitalist system, where international rules and regulations of market integration have stripped national governments of their power to control economic dynamics. It is also built into the global governance system where 'metropolitan' states through a new set of technologies of (bio)power keep 'borderland' populations in place.

### ***The three questions***

Let us now turn to the three core questions of the book to try and assess structure-based approaches to violent conflict. Again, we are forced to simplify a rather diverse and broad research tradition, and the answers to the three questions are clearly not unequivocal. However incomplete, the answers below do bring out a series of stark contrasts with those of the earlier chapters on ethnic boundaries and social identities. The most obvious contrast pertains to our first question: What makes a group? It is unsurprising that structure-based approaches do not indulge in long elaborations of what makes the individual or collective agent, for, as has been emphasized enough, they place the sources of violent conflict at the level of structures, not agents. Almost by implication, the group formations in zones of conflict do not fall in line with what Marxian approaches recognize as the 'real' parties in conflict. The 'real' groups in conflict are produced by the contradictions in the structure of the system. What is suggested by, for instance, the work of Galtung, and many of the authors in the critical political economy tradition, is that groups are individuals who share a similar position in the market economy. The dominant idea here is that of people having clearly defined interests. However, often people do not act in accordance with these interests (or, as in Galtung, they have no awareness of their joint exploitation). They fail to see what it is that is standing in their way. Their social anxieties and frustrations are projected onto 'false' enemies and threats, and hence translate into unrealistic forms of violence. The resulting

conflict formations and violent actions in no possible way address, let alone resolve, the fundamental contradictions underlying them. It is this distinction between realistic and unrealistic violence which sets the structure-based approaches apart from other theoretical approaches to violent conflict. Even if people are aware of ‘true contradictions’, their room to manoeuvre is extremely limited and constrained by institutions, laws and regulations. Ontologically, structure-based approaches support a holistic stance. Holists contend that power resides in institutions and as such is beyond the control of the individual. People have little choice but to act according to the constitutive and regulative rules of the dominant social order. Particularly the orderings of the state (citizenship status, immigration laws), capitalism (financialization, consumption, production, job market, salaries) and global governance (international law and institutions, security doctrines, imperial powers) create robust and inescapable ‘facts of life’ that defy change. As long as the inherent contradictions in the organization of the modern state system, global capitalism and global governance remain, the violence that comes with them, both structural and direct, will remain as well.

The connection between structures and violence runs through the state. The fundamental contradictions in the structures of the modern state system, capitalism and global governance produce incompetent states that cannot accommodate needs and demands from society. This is the basic problem underlying contexts of instability and expulsion, which then translate into identity conflicts, network wars and social control states. There is debate on whether to understand the violent action implied as ‘anomic’ or ‘restorative’ and whether the essentially non-legal and non-liberal forms of organization in conflict zones should be classified as ‘breakdown’ or ‘reflexive modernization’. Structure-based approaches, however different, contend that the forms of structural violence done to people through the organization of society, in one way or the other, prepare the ground for direct violence. What is suggested is that the violence inherent in the structure of the system contains the intrinsic capacity to provoke direct violence. However, this cannot satisfy its critics. Structure-based approaches are critiqued for their inability to produce an answer to the second of our questions: *How* do groups resort to violence? The connection between structural and direct violence remains under-theorized, and structure-based approaches give little insight into how particular violent conflicts occur. Although structural contradictions in the modern state system, the global economic system and the global governance hierarchy and the concomitant changing competence of the state set the larger context, they by themselves cannot explain violent conflict. Why is it that in certain situations of structural violence we see no eruptions of violence, and in others we do? How do people organize for violence? Clearly, social uncertainties or frustrations, however deeply felt, by themselves do not ‘make’ wars. In the next chapter, we will discuss approaches that specifically aim to explain how people mobilize for collective violent action.

In a way, we have already answered the last question: How and why do they (not) stop? It requires structural change to end or transform violent conflict. From a structure-based approach, most peace-making, reconciliation and conflict settlement attempts are rendered insufficient. The elaborate attempts by the many global and local NGOs to ‘bring conflict parties together’ through inter-ethnic or inter-religious dialogue in places such as Kenya, Uganda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) or Indonesia (but also in urban neighbourhoods in the West) overemphasize the ‘attitude’ component of conflict. Thinking back to Galtung’s triangle, working on conflict attitudes (A) is primarily what reconciliation is about. Likewise, it is not enough to work on the B (behaviour) corner of the triangle. This is what conflict settlement efforts are about: to make parties refrain from fighting (‘negative peace’). Whereas reconciliation efforts focus on A, and settlement is largely about B, conflict

resolution only begins when C (the contradiction in the structure of the system) is addressed ('positive peace').

A few last words on epistemology and ontology. As has already been briefly discussed, most structure-based approaches to violent conflict take an interpretative epistemological stance. They do not understand structures as in some way external or prior to actions, and as determining them fully, as is claimed by objectivism. Structures are not seen as 'unobservable systems which exert purposive pressure on their parts' but as 'sets of meaning rules' or 'games' with specific constitutive and regulative rules and practices. A 'game' as explained by Hollis is:

historically and culturally specific, with a real enough power to set the terms in which people think and relate but only in their own place and time. If so, it would not be surprising to find only overlapping or criss-crossing resemblances among the games of social life and no universal features which all normative structures have in common.

(1994: 159)

The difference here is that structures are understood not as external (as envisaged in the top left box of the Hollis matrix) but as forms of life that are inter-subjective and socially and historically constructed. That is, they are external to each but internal to all (and hence fit best in Hollis' upper right box). The approaches in this chapter all emphasize how in the specific era of the post-Cold War, certain 'forms of life' (global capitalism, modern state systems and hierarchies of global governance) importantly shape the social world. Ontologically, structure is placed prior to agency, and collective action is largely explained as determined by the structure of social systems.

In this chapter, we have focused on approaches which aim to explore the connection between the workings of global structures and local zones of violent conflict. These approaches primarily emphasize the global level of analysis, by addressing the constitutive and regulative rules supporting the systems of the modern state, capitalism and global governance. They examine the ways in which these rules structure relations particularly between actors in the 'metropolitan' and 'borderland' zones, and how this translates into different forms of collective action. Although the global analysis of violent conflict importantly sets the larger picture, there remains much to be said about the interplay between global structures and local realities. The following chapters will focus on approaches that see the structure-based approach to conflict as too broad. Although the workings of global systems give insight into the larger contexts of power (the so-called 'opportunity structures'), they are not helpful in understanding how specific conflict trajectories come about. The question remains how and why distinct groups or parties become engaged in rebellion and collective violence against other parties, (groups of) civilians or the state. This is the key component of the following two chapters.

*Table C*

Ontology/Epistemology	Explaining (positivist)	Understanding (interpretative)
<b>Structuralism</b>		Structure-based approaches (Political economy)
<b>Individualism</b>		

## Notes

- 1 Most scholars under review here do not qualify as ‘Marxists’ or ‘Durkheimists’. It is because they – often implicitly – follow the general logic of Marx’s or Durkheim’s explanation of structure, and its relationship to violence and conflict, that they can be classified as *Marxian* or *Durkheimian* (for a more elaborate explanation of the relation between Marxian and Durkheimian traditions and collective action see Tilly 1978: 1–51. This section is based on Tilly’s interpretation).
- 2 ‘War is like a delicious piece of cake’ writes the Croatian novelist Dubravka Ugresic, ‘that everyone wants a piece of: politicians, criminals and speculators, profiteers and murderers, sadists and masochists, the faithful and the charitable, historians and philosophers, and journalists’ (Ugresic quoted in Schröder and Schmidt 2001: 5).
- 3 This is where Galtung’s definitions remain fuzzy. I assume that he means to say that any conflict that is based on an unrealistic (false) image should also be classified as a structural conflict.

## Further reading

- Cramer, Christopher (2006) *Civil War is Not a Stupid Thing*, London: Hurst & Company.
- Duffield, Mark (2002) ‘Social Reconstruction and the Radicalization of Development: Aid as a Relation of Global Liberal Governance’, *Development and Change* 33 (5): 1049–71.
- (2010) ‘The Liberal Way of Development and the Development – Security Impasse: Exploring the Global Life-Chance Divide’, *Security Dialogue* 41 (1): 53–76.
- Sassen, Saskia (2014) *Expulsions: Brutality and Complexity in the Global Economy*, Cambridge, MA, and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

## Recommended documentaries

- The Corporation* (Mark Achbar, Jennifer Abbott, Joel Bakan, 2003)
- Inside Job* (Charles H. Ferguson, 2010)
- Coca Mama* (Journeyman Pictures, 2001)
- Capitalism: A Love Story* (Michael Moore, 2009)
- Blood in the Mobile* (Frank Paulsen, 2010)
- Darwin’s Nightmare* (Hubert Sauper, 2004)
- Four Horsemen* (Ross Ashcroft, 2012)