JANUS.NET
e-journal of International Relations

POLEMOLOGY OF CENTRAL AFRICA (1990-2020)

HENRIQUE MORAIS
hnmorais@gmail.com
Degree in Economics from Universidade Técnica de Lisboa / Instituto Superior de Economia e Gestão. Master's degree in International Economics from ISEG. PhD in International Relations: Geopolitics and Geoeconomics from Universidade Autónoma de Lisboa. He works at Banco de Portugal (Portugal) where is Head of Innovation and Support Division of Markets Department. He was a Consultant for the Portuguese Post Office (CTT), Chairman of the Executive Committee and Director of Invesfer S.A., a company of the REFER Group, and Director / CEO of CP Carga. He teaches at Universidade Autónoma de Lisboa (in the Departments of Economics and Business Sciences and International Relations) and on the MBA in Corporate Finance at Universidade do Algarve. He is also a member of the Foreign Relations Observatory of UAL, where he has been involved in various research projects, as well as assiduous participation in the various editions of Janus - International Relations Yearbook.

Abstract

In this article, we propose a holistic approach to conflict, delimiting the geographic space to a sub-region[1], Central Africa, while keeping active the communicating vessels that derive from ethnic mobility and the fluctuation of territorial borders.

The ethnic issue, geopolitics, and the resources curse seem to us to be more appropriate explanatory factors of conflict than the religious issue, linked to Islam, or the idea of "failed states".

The processes of externalization and factionalism, the diffuse and dispersed dynamics of alliances, their fluidity according to various alignments, extraversion and policefalia are only visible characteristics of State`s disorder and chaos that has not disappeared, but simply feeds, through a hybrid phenomenon (the post-colonial State), from fragmented social structures for an economy of predatory accumulation.

Keywords

Central Africa; Conflict; Resources; Ethnicity; Religion

Resumo

Neste artigo propomos uma abordagem holística da conflitualidade, delimitando o espaço geográfico a uma sub-região, a África Central, embora mantendo ativos os vasos comunicantes que derivam da mobilidade étnica e da flutuação das fronteiras territoriais.

A questão étnica, a geopolítica e a "maldição" dos recursos parecem-nos fatores explicativos da conflitualidade bem mais apropriados do que a questão religiosa, ligada ao Islão, ou a ideia dos "Estados falhados".

Os processos de externalização e de faccionalismo, a dinâmica difusa e de dispersão das alianças, a fluidez das mesmas obedecendo a vários alinhamentos, a extraversão e a policefalia não são mais do que características bem visíveis da desordem e do caos do Estado que não desapareceu, mas que simplesmente se alimenta, através de um fenómeno híbrido (o Estado pós-colonial), das estruturas sociais fragmentadas para uma economia de acumulação predadora.

Palavras-Chave

África Central; conflitualidade; recursos; etnicidade; religião

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[1] We have chosen to consider Central Africa a sub-region, although aware that the classification is not unanimous, and many authors consider Central Africa a region.

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Conflict in Central Africa: from religion to ethnicity and to politics

The south of the Sahara religious problem can be considered polysemic because of the way in which the two main monotheistic religions, Christianity, and Islam, penetrated the subcontinent. In fact, it was a slow process that lasted several centuries, probably also related with the syncretism typical of animist religions.

Religion, although armed groups claim, for example, to have a Salafist or Pentecostal allegiance, has over time been a somewhat marginal phenomenon in African political crises. The eruption of crises, rather than being primarily associated with religious phenomena, has been related, directly or indirectly, to political claims identified with ethnic cleavages and their interests.

For all these reasons, it was somewhat surprising that Sub-Saharan Africa became part of the international agenda regarding religiously motivated terrorism. We refer to the attacks on the American embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam in August 1998, perhaps the harbinger of an even more impactful event, the September 11 attacks in New York.

It does not seem to be an ideological agenda behind the conflict in Africa, and often the belligerent forces will not hesitate to use revenues from some sort of trafficking to acquire weapons. Moreover, perhaps this relative absence of ideology in conflict may have been due to the way in which African societies have been militarized, involving regular forces, militias, and rebel groups in a disorderly interweaving of functions, according to a logic of indiscipline and distortion of the ethical code of combatants.

In this context, war in Africa is a massifying phenomenon that has devastated the continent in an unprecedented way, starting with the introduction of industrial weaponry and the bureaucratic and territorialized conception of the nation-state based on the ethnicization of identifications and political affiliations (Bayart, 2018: 109). In other words, ethnic cleavage is behind the creation of armed groups as well as political formations in situations where the war scenario gives way to political convergences initiating electoral processes.

Establishing a relationship between the phenomenon of conflict and ethnicity, the interethnic problem is diffuse and may be subnational or transnational, following a logic of geometric and systemic chaos (Mashimango, 2015)[2].

In Central Africa, and especially in the Great Lakes region, the ethnic mosaic is very fractious, a situation intensified by the "geological scandal" that constitutes the East of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, with implications for the processes of systematic rearrangement of alliances in the face of the differentiated strategies of the belligerents.

The ethnic issue and the associated conflict also characterize the coastal strip of Central Africa, as exemplified by the massacres of the Laris ethnic group in the Pool region in southern Congo, perhaps because the coastal states have, to some extent, very similar characteristics to those of the Great Lakes region from an ethnic point of view.

The ethnic problem, inherited from the colonisation, can consequently be manipulated according to strategies with multiple scopes and motivations, with tragic consequences, as evidenced by the constant massacres of civilians in rural areas and particularly in refugee camps.

Despite the recognition of these phenomena of manipulation, the importance of the identity issue in the emergence of conflict seems indisputable. The identity problem, which is closely related to ethnocentrism and ethnic cleavages, is directly related to an overvaluation of the individual and the community to which he belongs. There is a shyness, a closing in oneself, which is proper to community values passed on from generation to generation, in communities, tribes, clans, or united and undivided ethnic groups.

From a political point of view, although the story is more remote, perhaps we can start it in 1990 with the civil war in Rwanda.

The civil war in Rwanda was driven by the friendly regime in Uganda, both sponsored by the US. The objective was twofold: on the one hand, to redraw the borders left by the Europeans and to control the mines in Eastern Congo-Kinshasa (Péan, 2010: 327-338) and on the other hand, through the armed movement led by John Garang (the Lord's Resistance Army)[3], to prevent the influence in the Horn of Africa of the Islamic regime in Khartoum. Although we must be cautious about the term "redraw the borders," we can easily understand its meaning considering an ethnic reconfiguration that involved the coming to power of the Tutsi minority in Rwanda and Eastern Congo.

Peace attempts through the Arusha agreements failed, and in 1994, after the assassination of the Rwandan president, Kagame's Rwandan Patriotic Front (FPR) took power. It is from here, and a little later with the end of Mobutu regime in 1997, that the atmosphere of hostility will become more volatile, until the so-called "Great African War" between 1998 and 2003.

Two changes in the Western side were important to the reconfiguration of the geopolitical map of the sub-region, namely Bill Clinton's change in policy towards Africa and François

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2   Geometric chaos refers to a logic of the variable geometry of conflict, which will be discussed elsewhere in this article.
3   This movement had its bases and funding sources in the Great Lakes region and claims in South Sudan.

Mitterrand's La Baule speech in 1990, promoting the end of one-party rule and opening the door to national conferences throughout the Francophonie.

The factors linked to the identity problematic exposed above, accelerated by the historical process, will create between two ethnic groups with different origins the conditions for a genocidal vision, as exemplified by Rwanda.

The "Hutu revolution" was the trigger for the diaspora and ostracization of the Tutsi minority, in the face of porous borders where refugees from both sides circulate through Rwanda, Uganda, Burundi, or the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In this context, in April 1994, the shooting down of the plane carrying the Hutu President (J. Habyarimana) was only a pretext for creating an environment conducive to the "Hutu power" of the Interahamwe militias and the beginning of the genocide, with the death of almost one million people in about two months.

There are various explanations about what happened in those tragic weeks: official views of Tutsi victimization, comparing what happened to this ethnic group to the fate of the Jews during the Holocaust, following the propaganda disseminated by the FPR after the genocide (Braeckman, 1994; 1996), or even the idea of the double genocide (Péan, 2010 and Rever, 2020, among others), soon dubbed by the official discourse as "denialist." The humanitarian mission of Operation Turquoise itself was considered by the official view as a farce, a way to protect and let genocidaires escape.

Subsequent events will make the "facts" of the official version falter. In 1996, the Rwandan Patriotic Front (FPR) invades the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, a year later Laurent Kabila's Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo (AFDL) enters Kinshasa victorious. In October 1997, the Congolese Labor Party (PCT) regained power in Brazzaville by force of arms and with the support of regular Angolan troops.

Meanwhile, between 1998 and 2003, the largest armed conflict in Africa took place, involving eight states and about twenty-five armed movements, and causing about five million deaths. The door was open for the Balkanization of the Democratic Republic of Congo. Movements like the Rally for Congolese Democracy-Goma (RCD-Goma) or The March 23 Movement (M23, now almost extinct), among others, continued to spread terror through provinces like Kivu or Kasai.

The twists and turns of geopolitics also played their part.

During the 1990s, as noted above, we witnessed a somewhat troubled diplomatic and political relationship between the two mains out of Africa actors, that is, they were the difficult years of coexistence between Washington and Paris (Tedom, 2015: 24-37).

In the twenty-first century, Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa (BRICS) began to gain prominence, especially evident in the case of China, after joining the World Trade Organization. Beijing's "thirst" for raw materials has led to a new approach for Central African countries, the so-called "winner-winner" relationship, in short, the ability to secure essential resources for the Asian dragon's growth in exchange for infrastructure.

Although China gains real ascendancy in Africa, notably through trade, becoming Africa's first trading partner since 2015, the ambivalence in its relationship with the West, between competition and cooperation regarding penetrating African markets, is at least ambiguous (Niambi, 2019).

The latest bilateral agreements between Paris and Beijing point to a trilaterally approach in Central Africa, in a perspective between budgetary and financial resources, which in the Chinese case are overwhelming, and experience and technology that can be offered by the French, following the trend of multilateralism of the last twenty-five years.

But the truth is that both the Hexagon and the "Middle Empire" continue to favor bilateral relations with the various states of the sub-region. The Sino-Congolese contract in the mining sector is proof of this, through the supply of rare and strategic minerals in the provinces of Katanga and South and North Kivu and was even strongly criticized by the International Monetary Fund, on the grounds that it could worsen the Democratic Republic of the Congo's external debt.

In conclusion, to the endogenous factors of conflict, namely the ethnic issue, we can also add the problems inherent to the effects on a mostly rural population of income economies where exports are based on two or three commodities, as well as promiscuity and lack of transparency in state affairs, coupled with poor governance[4].

The result is invariably a lack of social cohesion and consequent insecurity, as the idea of "living together" is called into question. All this is a catalyst in the climate of exacerbated violence that is the common denominator of most Central African states.

The case of the Great Lakes region is only a symptomatology or, if you like, an etiology of the latent aggressiveness of predation, whether it has economic, political, or ethnic origins.

The former UN Secretary-General said in 2007: "About half of all armed conflicts and nearly three-quarters of all peacekeeping forces are in Africa. This is because millions of Africans are still at the mercy of brutal regimes" (quoted by Bangui, 2015: 132, own translation).

The scenario of repeated convulsions for decades in countries such as the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo have become recurrent, involving several states and the United Nations. In those two countries violence has become chronic, preventing the state from ensuring the integrity of the territory.

From 1998 to 2014, the Central African Republic had thirteen external peacekeeping interventions. In 2014, two more intervention forces were created, one by the European Union ("European Union Military Operation in the Central African Republic"), in complementarity with the French contingent, which withdrew in 2016, and another by the United Nations ("United Nations Integrated Multidimensional Mission for the Stabilization of the Central African Republic"), which replaced the previous African Union contingent.

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, also after non-transparent elections that gave Joseph Kabila a third term in office, there was an upsurge in war activities in the east of the country. A UN Security Council resolution had to be resorted to again, and an additional force ("United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo") was created to try to neutralize the M23 rebels.

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4   Several Non-Governmental Organizations (such as Transparency International) refer to the ill-gotten assets of the clans in Equatorial Guinea, Congo-Brazzaville, and Gabon, in power for several decades, assets derived from embezzlement of public funds.

Conflict and identity issues

The new post-war world order created supranational instances in the areas of both economics and international law. However, for example regarding the intangibility of borders and the principle of non-interference, the founding charter of the United Nations presents several paragraphs in its articles that are, to say the least, unclear or even equivocal (Lagot, 2021: 26).

In particular, the principle of "the right to self-determination of peoples" is very difficult to articulate with the dispersive multidimensionality of identity phenomena. Ethnic identification does not obey the artificial borders inherited from the colonial period; the feeling of belonging to a certain linguistic group, with its own culture, a common history in which a collective memory is shared, and even a well-defined genealogy and mythology is what brings about the feeling of community.

And behind this feeling of belonging are repressed relationships and affections that derive from different socioeconomic statuses and that generate frustrations toward those who are different. There is a regressive projection and a libidinal investment that can be aggressive. This aggressiveness, manipulated through kinship and lineage relationships, very often results in conflict, aggravated by political structures in an embryonic state.

In other words, it is not biological traits or even social status that define and delimit ethnic barriers, nor is it supposed to be a state that is perfectly artificial and that does not represent the populations, not by a long shot. Ethnic identification has much more to do with cultural (mythology, cosmologies, and kinship rules) and socioeconomic (land tenure, classlessness) characteristics of the different human groups.

From this perspective, the question of the Hamitic origins of the Tutsi, which gives them a superior status, as opposed to the supposed "*bantuization*" of the Hutu majority or the Twa, is an effusion created by the Belgian administration, trying to divide to rule. The animosity between the differentiated communities comes from an ancestral problematic that stems from three asymmetric factors, the access, distribution and sometimes even scarcity of land, the differentiated economic activities of each group (farmers/pastoralists; sedentary/nomadic) and, finally, demographic pressure (vide, among others, Senarclens, 2016: 148).

In addition, there is an underlying issue that relates to the domestic economy of clan or lineage societies. The extent of the problem will be in the symbolic power of chieftaincies and the social status that is not derived from wealth but from prestige. This is the second invariant that we can find and that has no parameter of comparison with the industrial societies of advanced economies.

The kinship ties typical of secular traditions have loosened with the mobility of populations due to demographic pressure and climate change. It is no longer possible to regress to the idyll of classless, labor less societies in an environment where, with a very low level of technology, one can perfectly well satisfy consumption needs (Sahlins, 1976: 43-63).

The categories of "poverty" and "social insecurity," which are often linked to the phenomenon of war, begin to make sense during resistance to colonial empires and in

post-colonial reality. Politics would thus be, inverting Clausewitz's aphorism, the pursuit of war by other means.

We would have to distinguish within the political economy and the legal formula of sovereignty two separate meanings of domination, contract-oppression, and war-repression, the two being linked, respectively, to political law and war (Foucault, 1997: 15-19). The subordination of politics to war becomes evident, the latter being a continuous process that would lead us, through the submission/insurgency dynamic, to the concept of class struggle (Terray, 1999; Sibertin-Blanc, 2013:. 144-148). In this way, we would distinguish, altering Clausewitz's precepts, as mentioned above, a passage from the state of war to the apparatus of capture (in essence, the emergence of the State) and to what Deleuze defined as being "Urstaat"[5].

And from class struggle, by transposition, we would move to biopolitics with race warfare and state racism. In other words, if the phenomenon of war precedes political philosophy through the inversion of the two concepts in power relations, then violence has an archeology and a phylogenesis that are at the base of the political-military crises in sub-Saharan Africa, where power relations and hierarchies are not a cephalic, but polycephalic. Thus, there is a division and segmentation of power that makes it disperse and diffuse (Rey, 2017: 193).

The paradigmatic case of what we are saying is another Central African country, wedged in the center of the continent, whose fluidity of borders and geographic space create another geo-system from the point of view of violence: Chad.

Crossed in the middle of its territory by the Sahelian strip, to the north is the Sahara and to the south the savannah, in the southern area ethnicities with Christian and animist religions predominate, in the northern areas much of the population is Islamic. It borders the Central African Republic to the south, Sudan to the east, particularly Darfur, Libya to the north, and Niger to the west.

Lake Chad is a geostrategic confluence region, as it borders several states. It serves, for example, as a rear base for the Boko Haram terrorist movement that is very active in northeastern Nigeria. The base for the Barkhane operation's general staff for the Sahel is established in N'Djamena.

The regime, neo-patrimonial (based on cotton and hydrocarbon revenues), like most regimes in black Africa, has ended up squandering export revenues, further aggravating the already long civil war. Also as in most African states, President Idriss Déby, who died in 2021, was already going into his sixth term with over thirty years in power.

The idea that the craft of arms creates an anomie that spreads to civil society is not absolute. In a predatory accumulation economy, loyalties are fluid and fragmented pushing the various actors into a non-linear logic of alliance composition. On the other hand, there is a crystallization of identities that goes beyond ethnicity. From this stem the tendency of regular forces and fighters from the various rebel factions, mostly composing themselves into loosely organized militias, especially when there is no regional support, in this case from neighboring countries (Libya, Sudan, and Central

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5   Urstaat means "State of Ur" referring to a city in Babylon, the cradle of the first civilization and the beginning of history, if we assume that history begins with writing.

African Republic) or the former colonial power (France), to a well-known phenomenon, the warlord insurgency. (Debos, 2013: 104-108)

The story would have to start further back, with the formation of the Frolinat still in the 1960s. In the following decade, to quote the same author: " While the Frolinat of the 1970s was part of the anti-imperialist movement, the rebellions of the 1990s and 2000s display, with varying degrees of clumsiness, their commitment to democracy or, less often, to development." (Debos, 2013: 94, own translation). Signs of the times? The truth is that the Frolinat branched out into a series of party organizations with their respective armed arms. The Patriotic Salvation Movement (PSM) itself, which brought Idriss Déby to power in 1990, followed this same path.

Chad's relationship with Sudan and the Darfur region is very similar to that between, for example, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Burundi, and Uganda. The porosity of the borders, the ethnic and identity loyalties based on clan and kinship are quite analogous.

The resources curse

The beginning of the current scientific debate about the relationship between the existence of natural resources in a country/region and the outbreak of armed conflict[6] is due to the work of Collier and Hoeffler, namely through the Greed and Grievance in Civil War Model[7].

At the time a rupture occurred with the traditional approach of political science, which associated the onset of a rebellion with the materialization of grievances/claims powerful enough to motivate individuals to violent forms of protest (Collier and Hoeffler, 2004: 564). This rupture was not even initiated by Collier and Hoeffler, this model appearing rather as an attempt to approximate the traditional approach of political science, in which rebellion had a motive (the claim) and an explanation (the atypical claim), with the approaches closer to economics, which saw in the motive greed - rebellion would be an industry that generated profits from looting (Grossman, 1999: 269-270), and in the explanation the existence of atypical opportunities.

Collier and Hoeffler's reference to Hirshleifer's approach (1995 and 2001), which classifies the possible causes of conflict into preferences, opportunities, and perceptions, is very curious (Collier and Hoeffler, 2004: 564). Collier and Hoeffler have stuck to defining a set of variables (proxies) that illustrate motives (claims/claims) and opportunities (greed), thus attempting some reconciliation between political science and economics, without abandoning their positivist epistemology and deductive methodology. However, this approach to Hirshleifer's "perceptions" "the introduction of perceptions induces the possibility that motives, and opportunities are being misperceived" (Collier and Hoeffler, 2004: 564) is likely to be a recognition of the usefulness of an approach that also incorporates an inductive and qualitative component.

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6   The scientific debate began by being more general, not least because Collier and Hoeffler's Gains and Claims model presented a broad set of explanatory variables for the outbreak of civil war. Later, one of the variables in question, the endowment of natural resources, would itself become a line of research.
7   We will freely use the translation of complaint or claim for the original expression "grievance".

One hundred and sixty-one countries were analyzed in the period between 1960 and 1999, and seventy-nine civil wars were identified, defined as the occurrence of an internal conflict that causes at least one thousand deaths per year, of which at least 5% are elements of rebel and government forces. In four Central African countries such episodes were identified (Angola, Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Chad) and, in a logic of extraversion, three more countries of the Great Lakes, namely Rwanda, Burundi, and Uganda, closely linked to the conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo, in addition to Nigeria, whose northeast borders Chad.

The model presented a wide range of opportunity/greed variables, including natural resources, diaspora remittances, foreign support, opportunity cost in income, conflict capital, and military capacity, all illustrated by metrics[8]. It also contemplated so-called claim/claim variables, namely religious/ethnic hatred, political repression, political exclusion, and economic inequality[9].

Collier and Hoefler found that models based on opportunities for rebellion have plenty of explanatory robustness, which is not the case for models constructed from claim variables, where statistical relevance is significantly lower (Collier and Hoeffler, 2004, p. 587).

They revealed that the availability of financial means is a way to create opportunity for rebellion, i.e., the existence of significant primary product export revenues and emigrant remittances increase the risk of conflict: it was after all the "curse" of resources.

The indicators of grievances have little statistical significance, except for ethnic political exclusion and ethnic hatred, particularly when one ethnic group is dominant. In conjunction with the conflict-unfriendly effect of ethnic and religious diversification, this may mean that diversification decreases the risk of conflict relative to more homogeneous societies, if there is no dominance relationship of one religion and/or ethnicity (Collier and Hoeffler, 2004: 588).

Finally, a note on population and the time that has elapsed since the last conflict, which have in common that they can be indicators of opportunity or claim (Collier and Hoeffler, 2004: 588-589). A higher population seems to be more often conducive to conflict, while an increase in the length of time a country has been at peace tends to make it less likely that new episodes of conflict will arise.

In conclusion, opportunity as an explanation for conflict risk is consistent with the economic interpretation of rebellion being motivated by greed. It is also consistent with the claim motivation, insofar as the perception of the claim may be generalized across societies and diffused over time. But the claims that motivate rebels may not be entirely related to the larger concerns of inequality, political rights, and ethnic or religious identity

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[8] These metrics were, respectively, i) commodity exports versus gross domestic product; ii) emigrants living in the US versus the total population of the country; iii) civil wars that arose in the Cold War period versus total civil wars; iv) income per capita, young males with secondary education versus total students, GDP growth per capita; v) time since last conflict (in months) and vi) mountainous terrain, forest cover, social fractionalization (ethnic and religious), population density, population concentration, and population in urban areas.

[9] With indicators such as i) ethnic fractionalization, religious fractionalization, and polarization; ii) democracy; iii) ethnic dominance; iv) income inequality and land ownership inequality.

(Collier and Hoeffler, 2004: 589), in other words, rebels may use a claimant discourse to explain a conflict they initiated with one main goal: greed.

The intellectual debate was very much centered on the issue of natural resources. Indeed, the existence of a statistical correlation between natural resource endowment and the incidence of civil war was initially interpreted as evidence that natural resource abundance would make armed conflict more likely (Samset, 2009).

This conclusion launched several topics of analysis (Samset, 2009), of which perhaps only one is most relevant at this point: is there really a correlation between natural resources and violent conflict?

Some empirical tests of the model (notably Fearon, 2005) found no significant causal relationship between civil war and a high share of commodity exports in a country's gross domestic product, which was precisely one of the explanatory variables used by Collier and Hoeffler.

Fearon (2005: 503-505) concludes that "there is no clear evidence that high levels of primary sector commodity exports cause a high risk of civil war," although he acknowledges the existence of a more significant causal relationship between oil endowments and conflict. Indeed, the association between civil war and resource endowment results "from oil being the main component of primary commodity exports and substantial oil production being associated with civil war risk." Fearon adds that "the existence of oil allows one to anticipate the risk of civil war not because it provides an easy source of funding to start a rebellion, but probably because oil-producing states have a relatively low organization/capacity for intervention in relation to their high level of per capita income, making control of the country or region a tempting prize."

This argument also finds support in the work of De Soysa (2002: 407) when he states that "the relative availability of natural resources is unrelated to conflict, although the availability of mineral resources is a significant predictor of conflict," as well as in Ross (2004: 352) who finds no correlation between commodity endowment and the onset of civil wars.

Although the existence of a correlation between natural resources and civil wars has not been confirmed by most subsequent studies, the truth is that Collier and Hoeffler's model paved the way for a vast literature that relates some types of natural resources (namely oil and other minerals) with particular aspects of the conflict, namely its onset or duration (Samset, 2009 and Ross, 2004, among others). And it has also generated additional discussion about the nature of the relationship that exists between some of the exogenous variables (indicators of opportunity and claim) and the endogenous variable, that is, the civil war or, more generally, the episodes of conflict.

The question remains: are variables such as the endowment of natural resources what causes civil wars or, on the contrary, is it the escalation of violence that induces the increase in exports, precisely to finance the conflicts? In this regard, we highlight the work of Mitchell and Thies (2012), in an approach dubbed by themselves as "two-way relationsship between natural resources and civil war" (Mitchell and Thies, 2012: 218) that focuses on the cases of oil, diamonds and fishing catches. Two conclusions are drawn from this empirical test: civil wars do tend to reduce the oil and diamond resources of the countries in conflict but, on the other hand, there is an increase in fish resources,

due to the reduction in catches associated with the mobilization of fishermen to war (Mitchell and Thies, 2012: 238). They conclude that "we also show that the effect of civil war on resources may depend on the characteristics of the resources and nature of the conflicts" (idem)[10].

The type of data to be used in empirical tests of this type of model is still a matter of academic discussion. Since it was concluded that not all natural resources are likely to be linked to conflict phenomena, then why not remove them from the sample and place the analysis only on episodes of conflict that occur in countries that export primary products likely to provoke these conflicts, notably oil and other minerals?

Conclusion

Much of the literature about conflict in Central Africa considers this phenomenon to be a direct consequence of so-called "failed" states.

We have tried to rebut this thesis. We even prefer the term "fragile" states to avoid the idea of their collapse. Our idea is that these states live on war as a sine qua non of politics.

Other approaches are based on the religious issue as the most likely cause for conflict in those territories.

We also do not think that the religious issue is the central reason for the conflict.

Rather, we believe that the causes are to be found in ethnic and identarian aspects, politics, and economics.

The processes of externalization and factionalism, the diffuse and dispersed dynamics of alliances, their fluidity according to various alignments, extraversion, and polycephaly are only visible characteristics of the disorder and chaos of the state that has not disappeared, but that simply feeds, through a hybrid phenomenon (the postcolonial state), on fragmented social structures for an economy of predatory accumulation.

Almost all Central Africa entered the new century in "iron and fire".

On the one hand, the political and economic framework is directly related to development, in conjunction with the role of international organizations. On the other hand, identity problems, as we have seen, are not objectively affiliated with the definition of the states that emerged from decolonization.

These seem to us to be the main factors for understanding the dynamics of conflict in that geographical area.

The objective of this analysis was to try to establish a causality of the phenomenon of war and interpret it in a cause-effect relationship. These are the basic assumptions of polemology.

The irenology has already come out of the scope we have proposed. It would be opportune to do so to find solutions that could lead us to a new phase in the history of the African peoples. A history that does not begin with the passage of the Europeans,

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[10] This subject has been discussed by several other authors, with special reference to Roos (2004).

because the idea of "peoples without a history" is a myth, much less coherent than all the mythology of societies of oral tradition.

Perhaps we are also led to reflect on North-South relations. The conquests of science and technology, law, political institutions, economic models, and manifestations of art tell us nothing about the social organization of those who cannot be proud of such achievements. In the 1920s, Marcel Mauss, heir to Durkheimian sociology and founder of French ethnology, said that the West would have to reflect itself in the mirror and be attentive to the teachings revealed through observation on the ground (Mauss, 2012, p. 219-248). Exoticism and archaism, I think we all agree on. As for the delay, it always depends on the perspective.

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