the green revolution which caused landlessness, displacement and poverty and due to deep-seated ethnic and religious animosities, the Sikhs now started to demand an independent Sikh state comprising Punjab and some adjacent areas. The root causes of the conflict were lying in rural-urban inequality coinciding with Sikh-Hindu domination of the rural and urban economic sectors respectively, that were soon distorted in a communal schism. The conflict culminated in the Operation Blue Star, when the Indian army intervened militarily to crush the Sikh militant movement.

Pakistan

Sources of conflict in Pakistan are predominantly ethnic and sectarian. There have been ethnic nationalist movements in the Northwest Frontier Province (Pakhtun nationalism), Baluchistan and Sindh (Sindhi and *mohajir* nationalism) and in East Bengal before the independence of Bangladesh. The sectarian anti-Ahmadiya movement and the Shia-Sunni strife are mainly located in the Punjab.

Pakhtun nationalist leadership faced oppression by a domineering Center. However, integrationist policies gradually weakened Pakhtun nationalism and the conflict never took a violent form. East Bengali nationalism had to do with language discrimination and lack of access to government funds, jobs and services. It finally resulted in a bloody civil war, followed by Pakistan's defeat by Indian forces. Baluchi nationalism has had different moments of rise and fall. There was a guerilla war against the state from 1973-1977, but after that there was a decline and the political scene has been quiet for more than a decade now. Sindhi nationalism has to be seen as a reaction to the federal government and the so-called Punjabi-*mohajir* imperialism that thwarted their cultural and linguistic aspirations. Sindhis continue to feel seriously under-represented and discriminated in their own area, a sentiment fuelled by the influx of migrants from the North as well as the prospect of the repatriation of large groups of Biharis from Bangladesh. The *mohajir* movement is different in the sense that *mohajirs* initially were dominant in the state system though they lacked a common identity in ethnic, linguistic, sectarian or other sense and were even relatively unstructured and atomized. They progressively lost their grip on power and essentially as a result of this started to organize a movement and acquiring a nationalist character. The most important party, the MQM, operated initially as a pressure group but gradually developed into a terrorist group. In 1992 the army cracked down on the MQM, but the lack of adequate state performance in response to *mohajir* demands and their declining role in public life and political representation continue to fuel *mohajir* ethno-nationalism.

The sectarian conflict related to the anti-Ahmadiya movement led to martial law being imposed in Lahore in 1953. Ever since, the governments of the day have attempted to outlaw the Ahmadiyas despite international protests and human rights campaigns. There have been many instances of social ostracism, killings and attacks on Ahmadiyas and their places of worship.

The centuries old division between the Shia and Sunni sects have worsened the last decade or so due to developments in Iran (1978 revolution), Afghanistan and Pakistan itself (Zia's Islamization program). The contradictions increasingly took a violent shape and at present the conflict is characterized by widespread terrorism in the Punjab and the inability of the government to stop the deterioration of sectarian relations.

Sri Lanka

Since the mid-1950s till the present day Sri Lanka provides examples of a variety of conflicts with varying levels of intensity. Though there have been some minor clashes between Buddhists

and Roman Catholics regarding educational issues, the two main sets of violent conflicts are episodes of ethnic conflict between Sinhalese and Tamils and the insurgencies by the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP), a Marxist, Sinhalese nationalist group. Ethnic conflict saw two early violent periods in 1956 and 1958, mainly precipitated by changes in the government's language policy. The JVP's armed attempt to overthrow the government in 1971 was largely inspired by failure of the then government to satisfy the aspirations among militant and articulate unemployed educated youth mainly from rural areas in the South of the country. Equally important in this insurgency were the ideological and organizational factors that gave shape to the JVP movement. In the 1970s there were also spells of ethnic violence mainly as a result of changes in the rules and quota for university admission. Now, however, there was a change from demands for minority rights and forms of regional autonomy towards advocacy of separatism due to the fact that more radical and younger Tamil groups had pushed the traditional and moderate Tamil parties to the periphery. After the anti-Tamil riots in 1983, the conflict assumed proportions of a near civil war fought between the LTTE and forces of the government. The Indian (IPKF) intervention (1987-91) internationalized and worsened the conflict. In the same period the JVP launched another attack on the government in the period of 1987-88, exploiting the resistance among the Sinhalese population against the Indian involvement in the ethnic conflict. The JVP killed well over 2,500 persons, especially prominent members and supporters of the ruling party. The army finally crushed the JVP movement in a harsh anti-terrorist campaign. Violence and terror at both sides, resulting in large numbers of casualties accompanied this conflict.

2.3.2 West Africa

Nigeria

The first major conflict that shook West Africa was the Nigerian Civil War that pitched this country's Federal Government against its secessionist Eastern Region, Biafra. The civil war that raged between 1967 and 1970, was the culmination of political and ethnically-motivated strife that had taken center stage in the country in the first few years of independence. Shifts in the locus of central power in the federation among the elites of the competing ethnic groups -Hausa, Fulani, Igbo and Yoruba- acting in alliance or separately, were politically destabilizing to the country. Two consecutive coups heralded the outbreak of the civil war. The first coup was perceived as a power seizure by the Eastern, i.e. Igbo led elite, whereas the second coup clearly represented the response by the predominant Northern, i.e. Fulani and Haussa led elite. Massive killings of Igbo's residing in the Northern parts of the federation, as well as the promulgation of further administrative splits of the Eastern region by the federal authorities, provoked the civil war. However, the major issue at stake was the control of the federal government. Control over the allocation of federal funds was widely perceived as the ultimate prerequisite for political domination and power. Although the Nigerian Civil War was an intrastate conflict, its relevance for West Africa lay in the type of external intervention and shifts in West African alliances that it occasioned. The British Government and the Soviet Union served as the major arms suppliers to the Nigerian Government. France and Portugal were the main backers of the Biafran secessionist bid. As colonial rivals in West Africa, Britain sought to preserve the territorial integrity of its erstwhile star colony and prized market in West Africa, while France saw an opportunity to eliminate the threat which this huge Anglophone federation constituted to its predominance in the region by encouraging the latter's dismemberment. Also within West Africa itself, the Nigerian Civil War generated conflicting responses, varying from attempts to reconciliation, recognition of Biafra and humanitarian operations.

The regional security setting was perturbed in the 1970s by a number of other incidents. In 1971, Portugal invaded Guinea to stem the tide of the anti-colonial war against it by the liberation movement in Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde from bases in Guinea. In 1974, a short confrontation erupted between Mali and Burkina Faso over the precise limits of their borders. In the latter part of this decade the protracted civil war in Chad provided Libya with opportunities to meddle into its internal affairs, after which Libya attempts to annex parts of Chad and Niger. The civil wars or domestic upheavals were mainly due to processes of state formation, to the nature of the post-colonial state and to personalized (authoritarian) political rule. In the beginning of the 1980s West Africa saw a soft variety of state collapse exemplified by Ghana and Guinea whose economic misfortunes led to a massive emigration or disengagement of their nationals from the political process.

Senegal

By 1982, the seething discontent in the Casamance was openly articulated as a political demand on the Senegalese authorities with the reactivation of the *Mouvement des Forces Démocratiques de Casamance*. The relative remoteness of this province from Dakar and the widely perceieved economic and political domination of the Northern Wolof elite over local ethnic groups, intermingled with other cultural and historical factors to explode into a violent and secessionist challenge to the Senegalese state. The Jola dominated uprising of the MFDC movement against the Senegalese state seems to be largely based on a process of economic development that marginalizes the indigenous population by exploiting regional resources as modern economic relations dominate over local modes of production. The ensuing violent conflict has evolved over some concrete issues stemming from this structural setting. The obvious manipulation of land allocation in the early 1980s led to an outburst of popular protest that was severely repressed by the Senegalese government. This in turn led to the creation of an armed opposition movement. The quiet period from 1982-89 can be considered as an "incubation period" for the MFDC to get support and to gain strength. The tensions between Senegal and neighboring states during 1989, resulting in various clashes and tensions but never evolving into full-scale war, provided an excellent strategic momentum for the MFDC to take on the Senegalese state. From this point in time the conflict became a full-scale military confrontation which gradual has evolved into a military stalemate. At present the conflict can be characterized as a guerilla war. A political solution has not yet been agreed upon.

The 1980s have been particularly violent for West Africa. The general economic decline of the states in the region was, among others, attributed to external dependence, poor management, corruption and debt. Austerity measures in line with the conditionalities demanded by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, were implemented. From Mauritania to Nigeria, the implementation of an economic structural adjustment program raised poverty levels and, therefore, exacerbated social tensions. Three categories of conflicts and of protest movements were discernible in this period. In the first place, Mali and Burkina Faso re-engaged in another short-lived war over their disputed border in 1985. A dispute between Mauritania and Senegal in 1989 over grazing and farming rights along the banks of the River Senegal degenerated into mutual killings and mass expulsion of their nationals living in each other's territory, thereby creating unprecedented refugee problems. Secondly, mass discontent in many parts of the region led to persistent demands for an end to military rule and the one-party state authoritarianism prevalent in many of these states. The latter was a part of an unprecedented wave of protests in sub-Saharan Africa that searched a democratic solution to the crisis of the state in the region. Thirdly and finally, there was an upsurge in insurgency activities and in other forms of armed conflicts within some states. In Nigeria, for example, the first half of the decade

was marked by a repeated outbreak of religious violence in several cities in Northern Nigeria during which hundreds (thousands by some estimates) of lives were lost. These religious upheavals were followed by ethnic-induced and inter-communal uprisings in especially the oil-producing Niger Delta area inhabited by among others, the Ijo, Ogoni and the Itsekiri.

Niger
Insurgency movements racked Niger, where the Tuareg and Toubou rebellions exploded in the early 1990s. Consecutive droughts in the early 1970s and 1980s heralded an ecological crisis for the Sahel zone in Sub Saharan Africa, aggravated by progressive demographic growth and a stagnation of traditional modes of production. This in turn led to a profound crisis in the livelihood systems of farmers and herdsmen and provoked massive migration to neighboring regions as well as the disruption of the prevailing subsistence economy. In particular the herdsmen communities were affected. When the situation gradually improved these refugees were repatriated from Libya, Algeria and Mauretania to their areas of origin in Niger and Mali. Unfortunately, the governments of these countries failed to absorb these displaced and impoverished returnees which led to protest amongst the herdsmen. The erstwhile powerful Tamajaq requested state assistance for the reintegration and the build up of new herds, but they were frustrated and humiliated by the government of Niger. Violent incidents led ultimately to the open declaration of rebellion by specific Tamajaq fractions in Niger in 1990. The rebellion resulted in extensive unrest in large areas in the desert and in the northernmost parts of both countries. The result was and led to a military stalemate between the insurgents and the national armies. The rebellion was finally ended by a negotiated settlement, facilitated by neighboring governments and France.

Three of the countries included in this study -Niger, Nigeria and Senegal- have undergone or are still undergoing intrastate, armed conflict. Ghana, which shares similar neo-colonial features with these states, appears to be on a low scale of violence. Though there had been a measure of violent conflict, these conflicts did not escalate into full civil wars, also because there was no full and direct involvement of the military apparatus of the state First of all the Ashanti separatism was already dealt with by Nkrumah's CPP before independence and this was consolidated by the electoral triumph in 1956. Also the Ewe and Ga separatist initiatives were defeated without the exercise of major military power.

2.3.3 Central America

The 1979 Sandinist Revolution had a profound effect on the whole Central American region. Comprehension of the dynamics of that conflict helps to understand the conflicts in El Salvador and Guatemala as well. Although there were similar conditions in Honduras and a significant military presence, there was no conflict. Costa Rica not only lacks many characteristics shared by the other four countries, but also is demilitarized and, therefore, in a unique situation in the region.

The Nicaraguan conflict should be seen as two separate conflicts that follow upon one another. The first conflict consisted in a multi-class revolutionary alliance to overthrow the Somoza dynasty. Protests and armed actions by guerrilla groups had begun in Nicaragua as early as the 1920s under the now mythical nationalist leader, Augusto César Sandino, and a less coherent guerrilla struggle occurred between 1957 and 1967, when the movement was temporarily defeated. As the Somoza dictatorship worsened, taking absolute control not only of government, state institutions and resources but also coming to monopolize significant

sectors of the national economy, the guerrilla movement picked up again, particularly as of 1977. This time the insurgents had the growing support of the rest of society, including the private sector and the Catholic Church until eventually all of society had united against the dictatorship. The strength of that movement was enough to send Somoza fleeing into exile. The members of the National Guard laid down their arms or fled, too, resulting in the immediate de-escalation of the conflict. The FSLN and the economic elite had previously agreed to rule the country together, but the ideological gap between these two opposing poles of leadership proved too wide. The power struggle that evolved rapidly sent the country into a new period of conflict.

The second conflict lasted a full decade. Although this conflict involved most of the same actors, there had been shifts in the alliances between them. The FSLN s monopolization of power and effort to implement socialist measures alienated the more conservative sectors. While the FSLN fought to defend the revolution, the conservative anti-Somoza economic elite realigned themselves with the former National Guard members who had formed a counter-revolutionary guerrilla force known as the *contras*. They received substantial financial and logistical support as well as military training from the United States. As of 1982, *contra* armed actions against the Sandinists escalated and the *contra*-Sandinist struggle in many ways came to represent a proxy war between the United States and the Nicaraguan government. Despite U.S. insistence on the military defeat of the Sandinists, by 1987 the *contras* seemed to have little chance of victory against the national army. Moreover, the regional peace process had begun and was to a great extent founded on the pacification and democratization of Nicaragua, as the situation in Nicaragua had come to be an elemental factor in the other regional conflicts. The Sandinists were the only insurgency that had actually won an armed struggle and come to power and they helped to feed the guerrilla movements in El Salvador and Guatemala, often channeling aid and equipment from Cuba and the Soviets. Elections in 1990 removed the Sandinist from power, initiating not only a transition to democratically elected governments but also an effort at national reconciliation and peace building.

The conflict in El Salvador had a much slower beginning. After the 1969 war with Honduras, thousands of Salvadorans were forced to return home from that country. The already difficult land tenure situation made it difficult to absorb those returning. Second, that migrant population brought with it popular organizational skills that they had gained working on the Honduran banana plantations. This coincided with the appearance of a guerrilla movement that was based in the border area that had been demilitarized as part of the cease-fire between the two countries. Over the course of the next ten years the situation in El Salvador deteriorated as the government grew increasingly authoritarian, causing growing numbers of the population to defect to the armed struggle. The guerrilla movement (FMLN) gained not only strength and numbers but also got a political leadership (the FDR) that earned international recognition and diplomatic backing for the movement.

In 1981, the guerrilla launched its final offensive. Rather than ending the conflict, this attack catapulted the country into open civil war, with the government backed by the United States and the guerrillas by Nicaragua (and indirectly Cuba). By this time, efforts were under way to initiate a transition back to an elected government, but negotiations, both on behalf of the government and the guerrilla, were genuine, and each side continued to pursue a military victory. The safeguards that the regional agreement provided for democratization did, however, prompt the FDR to abandon armed struggle and to participate in upcoming elections, scheduled for 1989. Though the FMLN planned another final offensive, it only demonstrated to both sides the futility of continuing with an armed struggle that was

hopelessly stalemated. From that moment on, both sides engaged earnestly in negotiations, mediated by the United Nations. These finally led to a peace accord in 1992.

Guatemala experienced a conflict that was distinct in two regards, first because of the relative absence of U.S. military influence and second because of both sides' manipulation of the country's ethnic population. A period of reform came to an end in Guatemala in 1954 through a coup sponsored by the United States. From then on, military governments tried to repress popular demands. A guerrilla movement was born out of a failed coup in the early 1960s, but was quickly disrupted. By the mid-1970s, however, the levels of violence had begun to increase as both the military and the guerrilla sought new bases of support in the peasant and indigenous populations. The military unleashed a large scale counter insurgency campaign when the guerilla had established autonomous independent self governing units in parts of the country in the early 1980s. This military campaign led to the massive destruction of a large number of indigenous villages and into an exercise of ethnic cleansing. This in turn provoked the displacement of some two million people, who partly fled to neighboring Mexico. The guerilla movement as a result lost much of her credibility as it proved incapable to resist the military onslaught successfully. The opposition movement was defeated repeatedly in the period 1982-1984 and was forced to return to guerilla tactics as opposed to controlling and maintaining a fixed base in the country itself. The ensuing stalemate between the guerilla and the military paved the way for negotiations. Similarly, a return to civilian elected governments in 1984 had helped to ease the political tensions. Between 1986 and 1990, dialogue between the government and the URNG was hampered by the military's desire to see the guerrillas surrender in contrast to the URNGs vision of dialogue as a desirable form of negotiation. Although Guatemala had been host to the first major steps of the regional peace process, the effects of the *Esquipulas II Accord* on the Guatemalan conflict were less immediate. By 1990, however, the conditions were in place for a negotiated solution to the crisis, which then required six years of discussion on various themes that lay at the heart of the crisis. Finally, in 1996, the Guatemalan peace accord was signed.

Honduras has avoided conflict with the exception of the 1969 war with El Salvador. Although that conflict served a domestic purpose by uniting the national population against a common enemy, it did not resolve the many social and economic ills facing the country. Once the war ended and the problems persisted, the government was forced to take action or risk the reaction of the population. Because it tried to avoid an insurgent, revolutionary movement like those in neighboring countries, the conservative military Honduras governments tended to implement the minimal reforms necessary to keep the masses appeased, with doses of repression used only against the most radical opposition. Guaranteed participation through the traditional political parties, unions and peasant organizations; fairly successful agrarian reform (relatively speaking in the Central American context); and a preventive transition back to civilian and democratically-elected presidents were among the measures that helped Honduras to contain conflict, despite being located literally in the middle. Indeed, even the U.S. quasi-occupation of the country, accompanied by the presence of *contra*, FMLN and Salvadoran troops operating clandestinely or overtly, was not enough to counter the positive influence of the reforms taken by the government. Despite sharing all of the structural conditions present in Nicaragua, El Salvador and Guatemala, and despite the influence of most of the same external and temporal factors, Honduras succeeded in implementing a system of conflict management that steered the country clear of open armed conflict.

Costa Rica avoided conflict by adopting a political and socioeconomic system that was completely distinct from that of its neighbors. Stable, elected democracies were in place in

Costa Rica as of 1948 and, soon thereafter, government policy began to focus on distributive policies and social measures that benefited the entire population. Costa Rica had the advantage of starting out with structural conditions that were considerably less unequal and embedded than those in other countries, largely due to its somewhat distinct colonial heritage and post-colonial evolution. Finally, Costa Rica is the only country in the region that has abolished its army. Clearly, the lack of a repressive force with the ability to overrule the legitimate government favored the healthy development of democracy in Costa Rica. Moreover, it helped to keep Costa Rica further out of the fray of the Central American conflict, unlike Honduras which saw its national military co-opted to serve as a first line of defense for U.S. geo-strategic interests.

2.4 The dynamics of conflict

Below the conflict dynamics, mentioned in section 1.4, are highlighted. In this study a life cycle of conflict was used, comprising four distinct phases, a so-called tensing phase, an escalating phase, a de-escalating phase and a settlement phase. The factors that play an important role within the transition from one phase to another have been identified. Here a distinction is made between triggers, pivotal, mobilizing and aggravating factors.

2.4.1 The relevance of the dynamic conflict model

When one compares all country chapters and regional analysis it becomes clear that the ideal-type model of conflict dynamics, adopted from Bloomfield and Leiss (1997), does not apply to all conflict cases. First the implicit contention that the four phases follow each other time wise in a logical order and that each conflict follows such a sequence by necessity cannot be upheld. In fact, in some cases conflict does not cross the threshold of violence as defined in our definition of conflict. In Honduras, Bangladesh and Ghana many violent incidents have materialized throughout the period of investigation but large-scale organized violence did not occur. In the cases of the Punjab and Biafra the settlement phase was reached because one of the conflict parties was crushed militarily. Conflicts of a protracted nature, such as the Casamance in Senegal, the Kashmir dispute between Pakistan and India and the Tamil-Singhala conflict in Sri Lanka, seem to alternate between tensing, escalating and de-escalating phases, i.e. going through violent and less violent episodes. Nevertheless, the model has helped to gain insight into the alternating intensity of conflicts and to recognize distinct phases in their life cycle, as well as the iterative nature of the cycle in certain circumstances.

Focusing more closely on the factors or iterative clusters of factors that cause transition from one phase to another, a dynamic pattern based on the intensity of violence can be discerned. Structural factors are a vast category of underlying features of society and politics within any given society. As such this category may include a variety of cultural and historical factors, as was argued plausibly in the different case studies.

Triggers are simple events that trigger off a conflict but are neither necessary nor sufficient to explain for the outbreak of violent conflict. Triggers may assume different shapes in each phase. Mobilizing factors seem to be the most important category as they account for the political rallying ground on which political entrepreneurs thrive. Such mobilizing factors almost exclusively relate to sociocultural features of specific groups, i.e. language, religion, ethnicity, a common history or sets of common cultural habits and attributes. This has been

often the case in West Africa (mainly based on language and ethnicity) and South Asia (religion, language and ethnicity) and to a lesser extent in Central America, where ideological divisions played a role (ethnicity in the case of the Mayas). In some cases ideological concepts frame specific actors in conflict as exemplified by the various guerilla movements in Central America but also in Sri Lanka (the JVP movement during its first attempt in the 1970s). What stands out in relation to the conflict dynamics is the fact that during the course of conflict the nature of the mobilizing process seems to ' jump' from one factor to another. In the Tamil-Sinhala conflict it changed from language as a leading mobilizing principle in the early 1950s to education in the 1970s to ethnicity in the 1980s. In South Asia as a whole the partition was based on religion (Hindi vs. Muslim) and later the separation between both wings of post-partition Muslim Pakistan in Pakistan and Bangladesh was based on language and economic discrimination. Therefore, a uniform concept of conflict dynamic, even in one particular conflict, has to be treated with caution.

Another important feature that can be deducted from this study is the changing intensity of demands from parties in conflict. In general one perceives positions of contending parties as rather inflexible, or even fixed. In reality we have witnessed a wide variety of fluctuating demands during the course of conflicts. In South Asia, where a large number of rather intractable conflicts are located, the general trend has been the development of increasingly intransigent attitudes of distinct ethno-cultural movements towards the state. This has been clearly the case in Sri Lanka (Tamil Tigers) and in India, where in Punjab (Sikh Akili Dal), Kashmir and the Northeastern states (Nagaland, Mizoram, Tripura and Assam) violent insurgency movements occurred. In Bangladesh the tribes of the Chittagong Hill Tracts embarked upon a military insurgency, but here a negotiated settlement seems attainable. In Pakistan the military suppression of ethno-linguistic groups in society has somehow contained these movements, and prevented them from becoming prominent. In West Africa, apart from the military defeat of the Biafra secessionist movement in the 1960s, there seems to be more willingness of the contending parties to arrive at a negotiated settlement. In Central America, apart from Guatemala there is no large-scale ethnic movement, and even here the level of coherence and organization may be questioned.

As regards the issue of changing demands we conclude that the intensity of the conflict is sometimes reinforced by the hardening of positions of parties in conflict due to their unwillingness to compromise. This also has an important impact on the course and trajectory of conflicts. Aggravating factors tend to reinforce this process. In this regard external military aid stands out as well as the availability of arms often resulting from such types of aid. Our findings also indicate that contingent population groups across national borders contribute to the duration of conflict, as the West African cases of Senegal and Niger testify.

2.4.2 Transitions from phase to phase

The second methodological question concerns the transition from one phase in the conflict cycle to another. The transition from a non-conflict situation to the tensing phase in fact is partly theoretical. In reality many types of social conflict exist permanently but their number and intensity vary over time. The distinction between both situations, however, is important and should give insight in issues on which potentially violent conflicts thrive. Therefore, it is important to link underlying features of society to disputes between groups in society. The social stratification of society and the way in which access to productive resources and social services is organized are pivotal to the understanding of many of such conflicts.

The study on the transition from the so-called *tensing phase* to the *escalating phase* has generated some tentative insights. From the Central American study we might conclude that a mixture of repression and reform can suffice to prevent the transition from tension to escalation of conflict. From this case we might infer that there are critical thresholds of repression and lack of reform that, when passed, lead to the further escalation of conflict. The lack of avenues for effective political participation of the population combined with a refusal of the land holding elite to engage even in modest forms of land reform in the countries that have experienced conflict, have been forwarded as pivotal factors in this regard. Again in Honduras we learn that the selective repression of so-called extremist political movements combined with a rather successful but gradual and limited process of land reform, as well as a bipartisan political process have provided a safeguard against further escalation of existing social conflict within society. Nevertheless, some preconditions need to be present for such a 'model' to be effective including the presence of uncultivated or idle lands (i.e. space for expansion without fundamentally touching upon the landholdings of the elite). Another country that succeeded in containing conflict is Costa Rica. This country has institutionalized corporate agreements between social sectors in society and therefore possesses an in built capacity to reform.

In West Africa another image appears when reviewing the control case of Ghana, which has effectively thwarted the ambition of the erstwhile powerful Ashanti ethnic group. In the case of Ghana, internal repression was omnipresent, widespread and directed at many different social groups in society but did not lead to unified internal violent opposition. Instead many people fled the country to live in Nigeria and Europe whereas other citizens developed different opting out mechanisms that made life bearable. Hence, repression sometimes seems to be quite effective to counteract escalation into violent internal conflict. Repression, however, is unable to resolve the underlying tensions and perspectives on effective settlements and social peace remain. Repression at best forestalls violent conflict for some time. This is amply demonstrated in various cases in South Asia (the Northeastern states), as well as in Central America (Somoza regime in Nicaragua).

In South Asia the transition from one phase to another is less uniform in character, although some general features can be distinguished. In many internal conflicts the question of political and cultural autonomy seems pivotal as most states feel threatened by the potentially centrifugal forces of even modest demands from distinct communities. The ways in which such demands have been handled in the recent past have proven to be inadequate, and have in turn often led to further escalation of demands. In other cases the historical heritage from the undoing of the British colonial empire still lingers on and accounts to a large extent for the intractability of some disputes in the region (Kashmir, China-India border dispute, Durand line issue between Pakistan and Afghanistan). Socioeconomic stratification and a lack of upward mobility have also led to violent conflicts (JVP uprisings in Sri Lanka, Naxalite movements in India and Bangladesh). Finally, relative deprivation has given impetus to some specific conflicts (Mohajir movements in Pakistan, the Tamil-Sinhala conflict) or reinforced existing conflicts (Sikh Jat caste in Punjab conflict).

In West Africa states are still involved in a struggle to obtain legitimacy from their multicultural populations. At the same time these relatively new states (independant as of the end of the 1950s and the beginning of the 1960s) prove incapable to distribute resources to all their constituents. In West Africa the states (i.e. state elite groups) refuse to allow even modest degrees of cultural plurality. Again the potential threat of centrifugal forces resulting

from such pluralism lead to the use of the military for coercive unification. In several cases the use of this 'instrument' eventually paved the way for violent opposition to the state. Escalation to violence set in when economic crises stretched the clientelist capacity of ruling elites to co-opt sufficient support in society. Thus when the ecological crises impacted on specific groups in the Sahel countries there was no concerted effort by the government to counterbalance their suffering. This factor combined with a widely perceived image of cultural subjugation has catapulted these groups into violent resistance. The Nigerian Biafra crisis evolved as a direct result of the self proclaimed independence of this region, following ethnic scapegoating of Igbo's in other parts of the country and the intransigence of the Northern led federal government to compromise on more autonomy for this oil rich region in the South.

Concluding, we tentatively infer that in general the refusal of the state elites to arrive at some type of power sharing arrangement, even on a limited scale or regarding a specific cultural feature, has heralded the escalation of conflict. In other cases modest accommodations proved insufficient or untimely to stem the tide, thus resulting in 'too little, too late'.

The study of the transition from the *escalating phase* to the *de-escalation* of conflict and the subsequent *settlement phase* reveals that the assessment of military power of the contending parties as well as the war weariness of the contending parties play an important role. In the latter case all parties involved are constantly loosing out in terms of potential gains and benefits as the losses inflicted are not counterbalanced by profits. From the Central American region we have learned that military stalemates play a crucial role in the willingness of the fighting parties to negotiate a settlement. In Latin America the left wing and socialist movements of the 1960s and 1970s finally decided for a 'bourgeois' settlement instead of a revolutionary victory. This phenomenon can be observed in all conflicts of the Central American region, albeit in different periods. Clearly, the case of El Salvador stands out, since both the government and the insurgents held possession of vast areas but were unable to secure military victory over each other.

In West Africa a similar trend can be observed, especially when looking at the Tamajaq rebellion in Mali and Niger. Both the governments and the Tamajaq populations suffered severe material losses during the conflict and none of the parties could enforce a military victory. In this case, however, external state actors provided additional incentives to the contending parties to lay down their arms, thus facilitating and encouraging settlement. In Senegal the protracted conflict in the Casamance has also experienced various efforts at conflict mediation, but here specific sub-groups, in the Casamance as well as in the Center, are still convinced that a military 'solution' can be arrived at. The Senegalese military forces have tried to crush the MFDC movement militarily on various occasions but failed. Within the MFDC the fragmentation in sub groups has worsened the perspectives for negotiations and external mediation as it has proven to be difficult to find common ground.

In South Asia the majority of conflicts has not yet reached a settlement phase. In many cases the state chooses military action to enforce a 'settlement' (e.g. the use of the Indian army in the various rebellious regions like the Punjab, the Mohajir MQM movement by combined security forces in Pakistan), or is forced to resort to violence for self survival (the Sri Lankan government during the JVP uprisings). However, in most conflict cases we have witnessed a further escalation of violence as a result of such interventions. Also many conflicts seem to develop a dynamic of their own when newly emerging power elites that represent a rebellious or separatist movement tend to gain financially by the continuation of warfare through the

operation of particular forms of war economy (drugs trade, arms trafficking and money laundering). Obviously, the willingness to arrive at a negotiated settlement is closely related to the perception of one's own power position in a conflict and the potential gains and losses stemming from such an agreement as opposed to the continuation of violent conflict. Internal as well as external actors should focus more closely on these perceptions and try to influence them more effectively.