

POPULATION DYNAMICS AND LOCAL CONFLICT:
A CROSS NATIONAL STUDY OF POPULATION AND WAR

A Summary

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Introduction:

There are many uncertainties concerning the implications of population dynamics for conflict and violence among nations. The record is unclear. And despite some preliminary evidence regarding the role of demographic factors in contributing to violent conflict, considerable ambiguities remain.¹ The purpose of this paper is to (1) summarize a cross-national study of the relationship between population dynamics and violent conflict in developing areas, (2) present a profile of basic patterns and associations, and (3) provide some insights into the apparent linkages between demographic factors, on the one hand, and conflict behavior, on the other. This skeletal review is abstracted from a detailed comparative analysis of the role of demographic factors in 45 "third world" conflicts since World War II.² Logistical constraints prevent a discussion of each case, and as comprehensive a review of methods, procedure, results and policy implications as would be desirable. Only the broadest patterns are delineated.

In this study, population dynamics refers to size, composition, distribution, and changes in each, as well as more specific population variables which represent a distinct manifestation of each of these factors.

¹Nazli Choucri, Population Dynamics and International Violence: Propositions, Insights, and Evidence (M.I.T.: Center for International Studies, August 1973).

²This study is the outgrowth of the M.I.T. Project on Population Dynamics and Organized Violence supported by a grant from the Population Council to the Center for International Studies, M.I.T. (Grant No. D71.109c).

For example, segmental differences (racial, ethnic, religious or tribal divisions) represent distinct characteristics of population composition. Similarly, the location of population in relation to national boundaries, or with respect to some spatial delineation, or in terms of the concentration of available resources, are different manifestations of population distribution.

Throughout this study we have adopted an all-inclusive definition of conflict, ranging from overt political disputes with violent overtones on the one hand, to the outbreak of violence and the generation of casualties, on the other. Such situations include wars of national independence, conflict over national integration, international conflicts, conflicts resulting from political instability, and distinctly political or diplomatic conflicts which may erupt in violence.

(1) Violent Conflict in Developing Areas

The extent and magnitude of violent conflict in developing areas, the levels of casualties generated, and the longstanding effects upon the belligerents are often underestimated by scholars in the West. If "war" is defined as any armed conflict involving regular armed forces, a certain degree of organized fighting, and sustained violent encounter and armed clashes, a recent study notes that there were 93 local "wars" in Asia, Africa and Latin America between 1945 and 1969, none formally declared, with a total duration in cumulative terms, of 225 years and seven months. Most wars lasted for more than one year. On each day throughout the twenty-five years between 1945 and 1969 there

was an average of 10.22 wars being waged: Not a single day passed without witnessing at least one war somewhere in the developing world.³ Although no precise estimate of total casualties in these wars is available, they are measured in the tens of millions.

In a recent study of local conflict in the developing world, Lincoln P. Bloomfield and Amelia C. Leiss argue that such conflicts have a common structure; that they can be separated into several phases ranging from a pre-hostilities stage, to open hostilities, to either the potential settlement of the dispute or the routinization of the conflict; and that in each phase there are identifiable factors which generate pressures leading to the transformation of the conflict from one phase to the other. The authors also argue that the nature of the conflict can often be significantly altered by use of appropriate policy instruments, either by the participants themselves, or by outside mediating forces. Their model allows the investigator to identify the structure and components of a local conflict and to subject it to concerted and systematic inquiry.⁴

To enhance their theoretical model, Bloomfield and Leiss com-

³Istvan Kende, Local Wars in Asia, Africa and Latin America, 1945-1969 (Budapest: Center for Afro-Asian Research of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, 1972), p. 113. The average duration of these wars was 2 years and nine months. Most of these wars were being fought in Asia (29 wars), followed by Latin America (23 wars) and Black Africa (16 wars).

The introduction of the Middle East in this calculus confounds these assessments somewhat, in that Kende assigns 25 wars to the Middle East region, including not only the numerous Arab-Israeli conflicts, but also conflicts involving the Berbers or the Bedouins in North Africa, the numerous disputes involving the Kurds in Iran and Iraq, and other minor, although violent, hostilities.

⁴This study is the first large-scale and detailed analysis of

piled evidence on the structure of fifty-four post World War II local conflicts. With Robert Beattie they have developed a logic system for processing these data.⁵ Outside experts were called upon to code each conflict both in terms of the presence or absence of various characteristics of such conflicts, and in terms of measures of conflict intensity.⁶ These data have been rendered computer-readable, and are currently available on the time sharing computer system at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Such codings allow simple and rapid data retrieval concerning the characteristics of particular conflicts, and also comparisons among them.⁷ The M.I.T. files, known as the Computer Aided System for the Analysis of Local Conflict (CASCON), provided the base for our investigations.⁸ However, all non-Third World cases were excluded and some additional cases which seemed particularly revealing from a political perspective were incorporated into the data files. In sum, 45 cases were included on the basis of importance, data availability, existence in the CASCON files, or the

conflict in developing areas. See Lincoln P. Bloomfield and Amelia C. Leiss, Controlling Small Wars: A Strategy for the 1970's (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1969), pp. 15-17.

⁵See Lincoln P. Bloomfield and Robert Beattie, "Computers and Policy-making: The CASCON Experiment," Journal of Conflict Resolution, Vol. XV, No. 1 (March 1971), pp. 33-46.

⁶With one or two exceptions, these 54 cases examined by Bloomfield and Leiss constitute a subset of the 93 conflicts in Asia, Africa and Latin America, 1945-1969.

⁷For related information on methods and procedures see CASCON Factor Coding Forms, Arms Control Project (M.I.T.: Center for International Studies, revised March 1971).

⁸For summaries of the political issues in each conflict see

possibility of ready inclusion.⁹ Forty of these cases are a subset of the 93 wars in Asia, Africa and Latin America between 1945 and 1969.¹⁰

CASCON was initially designed as a computer-based system for the cross-national comparisons of local conflict. But it can also be employed as an early warning system for detecting the development of conflict situations based upon pattern recognition, that is, by matching the characteristics of new ongoing conflicts with those of previous conflicts scored in the system, in order to assess potential consequences. Our objectives in employing the CASCON files is to identify the demographic characteristics of violent conflicts in developing areas by comparing the ways in which population factors affect the initiation and course of a conflict in different situations. Accordingly, we have drawn upon the CASCON data files in order to inquire into the demographic roots of violent conflicts in the developing world.¹¹

Toward this end, we have compiled a detailed historical narrative of the development of each conflict and developed attribute pro-

Irigangi C. Bloomfield, 52 Post-War Conflicts: Brief Summaries, Arms Control Project (M.I.T.: Center for International Studies, 1971).

⁹The conflict between India and Pakistan, for instance, are excellent examples of situations in which demographic factors were important in shaping and conditioning the nature of the dispute, but would have involved too much additional coding to justify their inclusion in our files. Table I presents the list of cases included in our study.

¹⁰These are identified in Table I below.

¹¹Ultimately, it would be desirable to enhance the versatility of the CASCON files by formally incorporating the demographic attributes of the forty-five cases employed below into the existing computer-readable format. This technical refinement, however, is an unnecessary elaboration for our purposes here.

files of the parties in question, including data on the distribution of knowledge and skills, socio-economic conditions, resources available, and the levels of technology and military capability, as well as demographic factors such as population size, composition, distribution and change, and the most detailed estimates possible on the movement of population. The demographic data were obtained from the United Nations Demographic Yearbook (annual series), the publications of the Population Council, and the annual yearbooks of the countries in question (whenever available).¹² It was from these combined historical, socio-economic and demographic profiles of each conflict that the basic data for examining the ways in which population variables affect the nature, outbreak, and course of local conflicts in developing areas were obtained. Detailed case studies were thus developed which have allowed for a systematic assessment of the role of individual population variables in each of the 45 conflicts, their proximity to the outbreak of violence, and their impact upon subsequent developments.¹³ A list of these conflicts is presented in Table I.

(2) The Role of Population in Conflict Situations

A recent survey of the literature on population dynamics and violent conflicts cited above yielded few empirically verifiable propositions, and little clear evidence, concerning the specific linkages be-

¹² See also the References below.

¹³ A brief note on methods and procedures is presented in Section 3 below.

Table I *

Local Conflicts in Developing Areas:

List of Cases

1. Aden (1963-67): South Yemen's struggle for self-determination
2. Algeria (1954-62): war for independence from the French
3. Angola (1961): black African struggle to end white Portuguese domination
4. Arab-Israeli War (June 1967):** the "Six-Day War"
5. Arab-Israeli War (October 1973): the "Yom Kippur" War or "Ramadan" War
6. Bahrain (1970): conflict over Persian claim to Bahrain
7. Bay of Pigs (1961): attempted invasion of Cuba by U.S.-trained Cuban emigres
8. Bolivia (1967): Che Guevara's attempts to promote insurrection
9. Ceylon (1971):*** most violent outbreak of continuing political unrest
10. Congo (Katanga, 1960-63): conflict among rival foreign-supported factions for control of central government
11. Cyprus (Enosis, 1954-59): agitation for and resistance to political union with Greece
12. Cyprus (Communal, 1963-): continuing hostility between Turkish- and Greek- Cypriot communities
13. Dominican Republic (1965): U.S. intervention in Santo Domingo
14. Dominican Republic-Haiti (1963): agitation over Dominican immigration policies
15. Ecuador-U.S.A. (1963-): dispute over fishing rights
16. El Salvador-Honduras (1969): violent nationalistic rivalry precipated by a riot at a soccer match
17. Guatemala (1954): U.S. intervention to overthrow leftist government
18. Guyana-Venezuela (1962-70): attempt by Venezuela to take over vast area of Guyanan territory

Table I (Continued)

19. Indonesia (West Irian, 1957-62): struggle to eliminate last pocket of Dutch control
20. Iraq (Kurds, 1958-63): demand for political autonomy by Kurdish tribes
21. Iraq-Kuwait (1961-63): dispute over Iraqi claim to Kuwait
22. Kenya (1964-): tribal warfare protesting dominance of Kikuya tribe
23. Laos (1959-62): struggle to check communist control of border areas
24. Lebanon (1957-58): U.S. intervention in internal political dispute
25. Malayan Emergency (1948-60): continuing communist guerrilla activities
26. Malaysia-Indonesia (1963-65): Indonesia support for guerrilla activity in Malaysia
27. Morocco-Algeria (1962-63): conflict over Moroccan claim to Algerian territory
28. Morocco-Mauritania (1957-70): conflict over Moroccan desire to annex part of Mauritania
29. Morocco-Spain (1956-): conflict over Moroccan demand that Spain relinquish her African territories
30. Muscat and Oman (1957-): politico-religious civil war
31. Nicaragua-Costa Rica (1955-56): classic border conflict
32. Nicaragua-Honduras (1957-60): classic border conflict
33. Nigeria-Biafra (1967-70): war to end Biafran succession
34. Palestine (1947-49): war between the Jewish and Arab over new Jewish state
35. Panama (1964): riots over U.S. control of Canal Zone
36. Rhodesia (1968-70): struggle by blacks to end white dominance
37. Rwanda-Burundi (1959-72): genocidal tribal warfare
38. Sinai (1956): Israeli attack, coordinated with British-French attack on Suez
39. Somalia-Ethiopia-Kenya (1960-64): Somali demand for Pan-Somali state
40. South Tyrol (1957-69): violent conflict between Italian and German ethnic groups

Table I (Continued)

41. Suez (1956):	British-French attack to re-establish control over Suez Canal
42. Syria-Turkey (1956-57):	border confrontation in context of Cold War
43. Ulster (1969-):	terrorist violence between Protestants and Catholics
44. Venezuela (1960-63):	leftist-oriented urban riots
45. Yemen (1962-69):	overthrow of monarchical government

*

The Arab-Israel war (October 1973), Ceylon (1971), and Kenya (1964-) were not part of the original CASCON files, but were developed specifically for this study. With the exception of Bahrain (1970), Panama (1964), South Tyrol (1957-1969), Arab-Israel (1973) and Ulster (1969-), these conflicts are all included in the 93 wars examined by Kende (1969) in the study noted above.

**

The five wars between Arabs and Israelis -- in 1968, 1956 (Suez and Sinai), 1967, and 1973 -- though stemming from the same underlying dispute, are in fact different in many ways. For this reason, we treat them as five distinct conflicts.

Ceylon is now known as Sri Lanka.

tween population and violence, although it is possible to identify in a general manner some of the ways in which population variables affect political outcomes. However, this much is clear: the role which population factors play in a conflict situation is intricate and complex, and is almost always subject to great variation. In some cases, population variables provide the parameters of a situation, and define the context within which a conflict unfolds, or dictate the form that it might take. In such instances, population amounts to a contextual factor which shapes and constrains the interactions of the parties and dictates the bounds of permissible behavior. In other cases, where this context is already set, population factors provide a multiplier effect upon a conflict by exacerbating the pre-existing form or mode. In such cases, the major role of population is the intensification of set patterns and the aggravation of existing cleavages or disputes. In still other instances, population may act as a variable, when it might itself change in the course of a conflict or, alternatively, cause a change in the nature of the conflict.

These distinctions are far from precise, but they can be useful conceptual guidelines for assessing the role of population in conflict situations and for providing some insights into the nature of a conflict and its development over time. It is important to realize that, during the initial stages of a conflict situation, population factors might yield the basic parameters, but operate as a multiplier as the conflict progresses, and then perhaps even as a variable. For example, the Arab-Israeli conflicts are a classical illustration of the ways in which the role of population variables can change as a conflict pro-

gresses and as the antagonists assume new attributes and characteristics. The large scale migration of Jews into the Middle East during the first part of the twentieth century was a crucial variable in shaping the nature of the subsequent confrontation between the migrants and the native population in 1948. Over the years, this variable became a basic parameter in the conflict, by consolidating the lines of cleavage and providing the context within which subsequent political disputes were undertaken. The migration factor had effectively transformed the demographic characteristics of the region, and differentials in population size provide a largely invariable context for the ensuing wars -- in 1956, 1966 and 1973. These changes also reflect the time perspective of the conflict. Often factors that in the short run may be regarded as fixed parameters will, in the long run, become variables in the situation. The Arab-Israeli case is a dramatic example of such changing dynamics. But it is not an isolated case. There are many conflict situations in which demographic factors are critical in shaping the lines of cleavage. These different roles of population factors may thus be summarized:

Population is a parameter in a conflict situation when it provides the context of the conflict and therefore dictates the form that the conflict will take. Thus, population size might function as a parameter when it generates racial tensions, resulting in segmental conflict, as was the case with the Nigerian civil war (1967-1970), or with the domestic disturbances in Kenya (1964-). And, population distribution might be a parameter of a conflict situation when, for example, tribal allegiance crosses national boundaries, resulting possible in border conflicts, as was the case in the Somalia-Ethiopia-Kenya dispute (1960-1964).

Population provides a multiplier effect in a conflict situation when it exacerbates the form which is already set. For example, population size acts as a multiplier by intensifying the effects of migration. Composition becomes a multiplier when it exacerbates economic or other competitions in a society. And population distribution may provide a multiplier effect if it intensifies migration, contributes to, or intensifies, political hostilities, as was the case in the "soccer war" between El Salvador and Honduras (July 1969).

Population is a variable in a conflict if it changes in the course of a conflict or, alternatively, if it changes the nature of a conflict. For example, population size might change through attrition or migration. Population composition may change through genocide or assimilation, or through the accommodation or negation of segmental demands. The conflict between the Tutsi and Hutu in Rwanda and Burundi (1959-1972) illustrates these complex dynamics. And distribution may be a variable in a conflict situation if it changes through migration or the discovery of new resources. The conflict between Morocco and Mauritania (1957-1970) is an example of the criticality of resources in a seemingly minor dispute.

Assessing the role of population variables in conflict situations becomes increasingly complex, first when the effects of individual population variables such as population size, distribution, composition, and change are taken into account, and then as measures of intensity are added to the analysis.

(3) Methodological Note: A Procedure for Evaluating the Role of Population in Conflict Situations

A four-stage coding procedure was employed to determine the role of population variables in conflict situations.

First: An initial, but structured, probe into the nature of each conflict and the ways in which population variables have affected the initiation and conduct of belligerency was undertaken, directed by a series of queries. These queries were raised to assist in identifying the influence of the population variables, in terms of size, change, composition, and distribution, and were designed to provide a systematic data base upon which further investigations could be predicated as follows:

With respect to population size:

- (1) Does absolute population level, in terms of the sheer weight of numbers, contribute to a group's violent behavior?
- (2) Does the pressure of numbers upon resources increase propensities toward violence?

With respect to population change:

- (1) Does a high absolute rate of growth contribute to internal violence or external conflict?
- (2) Do differential rates of growth between competing population groups aggravate political instability?

With respect to population composition:

- (1) Does an imbalance between the numbers of males and females aggravate a conflict situation?
- (2) Does the age structure of the belligerents influence the outbreak of the conflict or the conduct of the dispute?

(3) Do segmental differences play a role in the initiation and development of the conflict situation?

(4) Does the level, type, or differential in knowledge and skills of various groups (that is, their technology) influence the initiation, conduct or outcome of the conflict?

With respect to population distribution:

(1) Does the concentration of population (in terms of absolute and relative levels of density) contribute to tensions, and eventually to conflict?

(2) Does the spatial location of population in relation to resources amount to a dominant determinant of conflict?

(3) Does the spatial location of population in relation to national borders amount to an important factor in the initiation of the conflict?

(4) Does the internal or external migration of significant numbers of population lead to instability, tensions, and eventually overt violence?

(5) Do rural/urban differences in the population structures of the belligerents significantly affect the initiation, conduct or termination of a conflict?

Second: Each of these questions was then placed in the context of the three possible (though not mutually exclusive) roles that population factors might assume in conflict situations, alternatively as a parameter, multiplier effect or variable. This differentiation thus allowed for a more specific coding of the role of population.

Third: A measure of magnitude or degree of intensity was intro-

duced into each of the preceding assessments. Individual population-related factors were coded in terms of one of six ordinal measures: (0) no appreciable influence, (1) background significance, (2) minor irritant, (3) major irritant, (4) of central importance, or (5) sole determinant. These measures indicate the extent to which population factors can explain the determinants, course, conduct, and conclusion of a conflict. They are designed to form an ordinal scale the underlying dimension of which is the propensity for violence. Theoretical ambiguities involved in measuring violence noted in the survey cited in the Introduction are further compounded by seeking to identify propensities for violence, nonetheless this ordinal scale appeared both internally consistent and reliable a measure of the theoretical dimension in question. An inquiry into inter-coder reliability further reinforced our confidence in this methodological approach: The coding rules were as follows:

A population factor was coded as a sole determinant of the conflict if an adequate explanation of hostilities could be obtained with reference only to demographic variables. A population factor was coded as being of central importance if the conflict would probably not have broken out had that factor not been present. The difference between the codings of minor and major irritant was mainly one of degree: A demographic factor was coded as being a minor irritant if, though definitely present and salient, it appeared to have only low-level impact on, or significance for, the conflict. A major irritant code was employed if

the population-related factor in question was appreciably greater, although the conflict would probably have broken out even without its influence. A demographic variable was coded as being of background importance when major intervening processes appeared to be at work, separating population variables and overt violence through a series of mediating factors.

Fourth: From these specific codings, we then attempted to estimate the importance and role of the four general population factors (size, change, composition, and distribution) and the overall importance of demographic variables in the conflict. For example, if the location of population in relation to resources was coded as being of central importance in the conflict, but, at the same time, no other distribution factors were salient, the importance of population distribution as a general population factor would be discounted and coded as a major irritant. By the same token, if population composition appeared to be the only population factor of any importance, the estimate of the overall importance of population factors in a particular conflict situation would be downgraded. If, however, all the major population variables were viewed as major irritants, the overall ratings assigned to each variable would be regarded as cumulative and interactive, and general factor scores incremented accordingly. Thus, estimating the importance of the general population variables depended on the number of specific population-related factors in each case, and the relative importance of each. On balance, we systematically introduced a downward bias into the codings tending to underestimate to some extent the role of demographic factors as a means of countering any underlying tendency

to overemphasize the role of population variables in local conflicts.

Overall, this four-stage procedure provided an analytical screen through which the demographic, historical, economic, political and sociological data on each of the forty-five local conflicts in developing areas were processed. It must be recognized that this method of analysis, though systematic, is based essentially on the requirements and limitations of both conceptual framework and empirical data. Others might prefer alternative procedures. Nonetheless, any mode of inquiry is equally dependent on both theory and data. The inferences we draw are strictly confined to the data base and mode of analysis, and our conclusions must be viewed accordingly. But, a high degree of internal consistency has been retained across cases, and the analysis has been grounded in a sound theoretical rationale. In these two respects at least, what may appear as an arbitrary procedure is, in fact, in accordance with basic tenets of social science inquiry.

(4) A profile of Population Factors in Local Conflicts

An initial mapping of the demographic profiles of the forty-five conflicts listed in Table I indicates that population variables did play some critical role in thirty-eight. Of these, population variables appear to have been sole determinants of violent conflict in four cases: Ceylon's internal conflict (1971), the Nigeria-Biafra civil war (1967-70), the Palestine war (1947-49), and the Sinai war (1956).

Additionally, population variables appeared to be of central importance in eleven conflicts: the Algerian war of independence (1954-62), Angola's struggle against Portuguese colonialism (1961), the Arab-Israeli

war of 1973, communal conflicts in Cyprus (1963-), the El Salvador-Honduras "soccer war" (1969), the conflict over Indonesia's claim to West Irian (1957-62), domestic conflict in Kenya (1964-), the Malayan Emergency concerning Communist insurgents (1948-60), the Malaysian-Indonesian confrontation (1963-65), the Rhodesian situation (1968-70), and the border conflict among Somalia, Ethiopia, and Kenya (1960-64).

In ten cases population variables appeared to be a major irritant in the conflict situation: the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, the crisis in the Congo (1960-63), the struggle over independence in Cyprus (1954-59), the Kurdish agitations in Iraq (1958-63), the internal political problems in Laos (1959-62), the Morocco-Algeria border conflict (1962-63), the Morocco-Mauritania dispute (1957-70), the conflicts between Tutsi and Hutu tribes in Rwanda and Burundi (1959-72), the conflict between Germans and Italians in South Tyrol (1957-69), and the outbreak of violence between Protestants and Catholics in Ulster (1969-).¹⁴

Population variables appeared to be minor irritants in seven of the thirty-eight conflicts: Aden's national movement which resulted in the creation of the Peoples' Republic of South Yemen (1963-67), the Dominican Republic's conflict with Haiti (1963), the territorial conflict between Guyana and Venezuela (1962-70), internal political conflict in Lebanon (1957-58), the clashes between Morocco and Spain over Spanish-held territories contiguous to Morocco (1956-), colonial conflicts involving the integration of Muscat and Oman (1957-), and the

¹⁴ Although South Tyrol and Ulster are not developing areas, these two conflicts involved issues of national integration and were structurally similar enough to conflicts in developing areas to warrant inclusion in this analysis.

civil war in Yemen (1962-69).

In six of the thirty-eight cases population factors appeared to be of background significance in the development of the conflict: the Bay of Pigs "invasion" (1961), Che Guevara's agitation in Bolivia (1967), the internal political problems, culminating in U.S. intervention, in the Dominican Republic (1965), the Ecuador-U.S.A. "tuna war" (1963-), the international conflict over Suez (1956), and the Venezuelan revolution (1960-63).

In only seven cases did population variables have no appreciable influence on the development or conduct of the conflict: the dispute over Bahrain's independence (1970), the U.S. supported coup in Guatemala (1954), the conflict between Iraq and Kuwait over the independence of Kuwait (1961-63), the conflict between the political leaders of Nicaragua and Costa Rica (1955-56), the border war between Nicaragua and Honduras (1957-60), the riots over the sovereignty of the Panama Canal Zone (1964), and the conflict between Syria and Turkey involving Cold War rivalries (1956-57).

Despite this cursory mapping, it is surprising to note the extent to which demographic factors were present in the Third World conflicts. A more detailed assessment of key cases is presented in the larger study of which this present paper is a summary, along with a closer look at the demographic structure of political conflicts and the role of alternative population variables. At this point, however, it must be emphasized again that the linkages between population factors on the one hand, and violence on the other are complex, interactive, and mutually reinforcing.

Some additional insights into the importance of population variables in conflict situations can be obtained from a glance at Table II. The number of cases in which demographic factors operate as parameters, multipliers and/or variables, sometimes simultaneously, in Third World conflicts is noted, as is the extent to which these assessments pertain to size, change, distribution or composition. Table II reveals some obvious, but important, facts:

First: It would appear that the current popular emphasis on population size, so fully documented in the survey cited earlier, is largely misplaced. This not to suggest that size is not relevant in conflict situations -- not at all -- but to stress again that size is largely invariant over the time perspective of a specific conflict, and that population composition and distribution, which are generally ignored in popular, academic and official circles, also appear to have been of great importance in many of the conflicts examined. The importance of population size can be summarized as follows: Because the total number of people does not change rapidly over the short run, it can contribute to the contextual arrangement of a conflict by providing an important parameter of the situation (and does so in seventeen cases). This situation can serve to generate internal political instability which may then be displaced externally, transforming an internal conflict into an expansionist one. Less often size provides a multiplier effect upon an ongoing conflict, exacerbating existing strains and stresses (in eight cases).

Second: Population change tends to exacerbate the effects of size. In general, change in numbers was invariant in the cases exam-

Table II

The Role of Population Variables

	Parameter	Multiplier	Variable	Total
Size	17	5	0	22
Change	5	13	1	19
Distribution	7	19	9	35
Composition	18	12	2	32

* Often, more than one general population factor (size, change, distribution, composition) played a role in one case, and sometimes none in others; thus, the final column does not sum to 45.

ined. In only one case (Egypt before the October 1973 war) was a state able to alter its growth rate significantly. Our cases of local conflict stretch back to 1948: It is only recently that consciousness of a population problem has increased and policy measures designed to affect a society's demographic characteristics have become more sophisticated. However, strong sources of resistance still remain. Population change appeared most often (in the thirteen cases) as a multiplier of the conflict, usually exacerbating the effects of size. Less often (in five cases), change alone was sufficient to set the parameters of the conflict.

Third: Population distribution appears to be most susceptible to variation over the course of a conflict (in nine cases). Populations generally move in relation to resource availability, which tends to vary with changes in demands, discoveries, new technologies or with the movement of people as such. These variations can have important impacts on the nature of a conflict. The distribution of population may also be an important multiplier upon a conflict (nineteen cases), generally in the direction of reinforcing segmental differences. But distribution only infrequently sets the stage for a conflict by emerging as an important parameter of the situation (here, in only seven cases).

Fourth: Population composition also frequently appears to set the parameters of conflict situations. The importance of composition as a contextual factor (in eighteen cases) can be attributed largely to the fact that ethnic considerations often tend to provide the parameters of a conflict situation. At the same time, however, composition

also emerges as having a strong multiplier effect upon an ongoing conflict (twelve cases). As with population size, composition displays considerable invariability -- it has changed in only two cases once a conflict has already erupted. In other words, size and composition do not generally emerge as variables in a conflict situation: They set the stage and possibly intensify the hostilities, but they do not generally change the nature of the conflict, nor are they appreciably affected in the course of hostilities.

Population size, change, distribution and composition are all linked in complex ways. An explicit consideration of these linkages may lead to a more comprehensive perspective upon the development of population policies, and possibly strengthen the case for population control generally. But it is important to recall that control over population size has effects in the long term, whereas conflict management generally demands that greater attention be paid to factors which can be manipulated more immediately.

A more detailed assessment of the role of the population factors identified in the queries for the first stage of this analysis is presented in Table III, where the magnitude of the demographic influences is taken into account. Table III therefore not only indicates how often specific population factors come into play, but also provides an assessment of the extent of impact in each case. This table reinforces the general inferences drawn from Table II. Not only do population distribution and composition emerge more frequently as determinants of conflicts in developing areas, but they are also of greater significance.

Table III

The Importance of Demographic Factors in Violent Conflicts*

	1 Back- ground Factor	2 Minor Irritant	3 Major Irritant	4 Central Importance	5 Sole Determinant	Total Cases	Weighted Average Descriptor **
POPULATION SIZE	3 ***	15	1	2	1	23	2.23
Absolute Population Level	8	4	2	2	-	16	1.89
Population Pressure on Resources	1	8	7	2	1	19	2.68
POPULATION CHANGE	8	6	5	-	-	19	1.84
Absolute Rate of Growth	10	10	3	2	-	25	1.88
Different Rates of Growth	3	5	1	-	-	9	1.77
POPULATION DISTRIBUTION	7	10	13	5	-	35	2.46
Rural/Urban Distribution	3	10	3	-	-	16	2.00
Population Density	2	3	2	-	-	7	2.00
Spatial Location in Re- lation to Resources	3	4	8	3	-	18	2.61
Spatial Location in Re- lation to Borders	4	5	4	2	-	15	2.27
Population Movement	11	6	8	5	-	30	2.23
POPULATION COMPOSITION	1	6	11	13	1	32	3.22
Sex Distribution	2	2	-	-	-	4	1.50
Age Structure	3	3	4	-	-	10	2.10
Segmental Divisions	2	1	10	12	6	31	3.61
Level of Knowledge and Skills (Technology)	4	9	10	3	-	26	2.46

Table III (Continued)

*Entries are the number of cases in which the factor listed on the left played a role of the magnitude listed above.

**These numbers are purely descriptive since they treat an ordinal scale as if it were a ratio scale. They indicate the average intensity of each factor's influence. The weighted average descriptor (W.A.) is a function of the frequency of cases times the intensity of influence of demographic factors in a conflict situation, divided by the number of cases in question. Thus $W.A. = \frac{\sum(\text{number of cases of particular intensity} * \text{level of intensity})}{\text{total number of cases}}$. Thus W.A. range = 0.0 - 5.0.

***The number of cases listed for specific variables within each population category does not sum to the number of cases listed for each general factor (SIZE, CHANGE, DISTRIBUTION, COMPOSITION) because general factors may be composed of several specific variables. The decision rule was to obtain a case-specific coding before undertaking a cross national comparison. The alternative procedure, to obtain a general factor coding from the sum of specific variable codes, would have produced an inflationary effect by overemphasizing the role of demographic factors in conflict situations.

Looking more closely at the individual population-related variables in the size category, we find that absolute population level emerges as a low level influence upon conflict behavior, operating in sixteen cases with a weighted average descriptor (WA)¹⁵ of 1.89. But by far the more pronounced effect that size appears to have upon a conflict situation is in terms of pressure on resources. The average magnitude of pressures of numbers on resources (WA = 2.68) was second only to segmental differences (WA = 3.61), and only these two factors accounted for at least one conflict in its entirety.

In terms of population change, the absolute rate of growth of a population is usually more important to the development of a conflict than any differentials between populations. Absolute growth was an important variable in twenty-five conflicts (WA = 1.88) in comparison with nine cases (WA = 1.77) for differentials in rates of growth.

Comparing the results for population level and rate of growth, we find that although both operate at a low level of influence, rate of growth emerges as a significant factor in many more cases (twenty-five cases compared to sixteen). This difference is certainly consistent with the conventional wisdom: Often it is not so much the large number of people that produces tensions, as a high rate of increase occasioning immediate dislocations and instabilities. Neither size nor change is, in itself, a sufficient determinant of conflict behavior; the demands generated by each can be duly accommodated if sufficient resources are available to be marshaled toward that end. It is only when both the level and rate of growth place insurmountable pressures upon resources that

¹⁵The Weighted Average Descriptor (WA) is a measure of the influence of demographic factors in a conflict situation. For an explanation and description see the notes to Table III.

the greatest dislocations are likely to occur.

In sum, size and change factors are seldom of more than background significance, because their effects are long term and indirect; any pressures generated by these two demographic factors are likely to manifest themselves through other population variables. For example, size factors may be the long-term parameters of a conflict, and basic hostilities may be exacerbated by population change, but when the conflict breaks out it is most likely to take the form of hostilities between segmental groups or a dispute over territorial boundaries.

With respect to population distribution variables, the rural/urban distribution appeared to be of only minor significance, functioning in sixteen cases with an average importance (WA = 2.00). Population density appeared to be even less relevant, playing a role in only seven cases (WA = 2.00). This contradiction of the conventional wisdom reinforces the conclusion presented above, that density per se is seldom of importance: it is the concentration and location of population in relation to resources that may be conducive to violence, as it was in eighteen of the cases in this study (Wa = 2.61). The location of population in relation to national borders also appeared to be of slightly greater than average importance, being a factor in fifteen cases. Population movement, although having a comparable importance (WA = 2.23) played a role in thirty cases (second in number only to ethnic differences). This finding is highly significant, for migration may often become a corner-stone of deliberate public policy. The frequency with which population movements have led to, or aggravated, conflict situations indicates the potential pe-

rils of such policies.

With respect to population composition, the numerical balance between males and females had the smallest impact, playing a background role in two cases and acting as a minor irritant in two more. The age structure of the population appeared to be of only slightly greater importance, emerging in ten cases, but never critically. Segmental differences in a society appeared to be the most potentially explosive of the population-related factors, emerging as an important determinant of conflict in thirty-one cases. Further, when it does become salient it is usually at least of major importance; six cases can be explained entirely in terms of such divisions. Finally, a generally low level of knowledge and skills, or differentials in the level between competing parties, appeared to have an important effect on conflict situations, appearing to be of some importance in twenty-six cases. The specific cases in each category of influence as coded in Table III are listed in the Appendix.

It still remains for us to confront further evidence regarding the relationship between rate of population change and its criticality in a conflict situation. We have found a statistically significant, positive correlation between rate of population increase and the magnitude or intensity of its influence upon a conflict situation: The higher the rate of growth, the more salient a factor population increase appears to be in the development of conflict and violence. In view of this largely unequivocal finding, Table IV presents the raw data on rates of growth, on the one hand, and on magnitudes of influence upon a conflict situation, on the other, in addition to the average rate of change

Table IV
Rates of Population Change*

	No Influence 0	Background Factor 1	Minor Irritant 2	Major Irritant 3	Central Importance 4	Sole Determinant 5					
Rate of Change**	0.5	Cyprus	0.5	Cyprus	2.0	Haiti-Dominican Rep (3.6)	3.0	Ceylon	2.4	Indonesia	-
	0.8	Ulster	2.7	Israel-Arab (1973) (2.1)	2.5	Algeria	3.3	Kenya	2.4	Indonesia- (2.7) Malaysia	
	1.6	Iraq	2.7	Malaya	2.5	Nigeria-Biafra	3.4	El Salvador- Honduras			
	1.6	Iraq-Kuwait (5.5)	2.9	Somalia-Ethiopia- Kenya	2.5	Suez (3.5)	3.8	Palestine			
	1.6	Yemen	3.0	Morocco-Algeria (2.5)	3.0	Morocco-Spain (1.6)					
	2.1	Angola	3.0	Morocco-Mauritania (2.2)	3.5	Sinai					
	2.2	Congo	3.4	Ecuador	3.5	Rhodesia					
	2.5	Lebanon	3.4	Nicaragua-Costa Rica (4.1)	3.6	Israel-Arab (1967) (2.8)					
	2.6	Bolivia	3.4	Nicaragua-Honduras (2.5)	3.6	Venezuela					
	2.8	Guatemala	3.5	Venezuela-Guyana (3.1)	3.8	Rwanda-Burundi (2.3)					
	2.9	Laos	3.6	Dominican Republic							
	3.0	Syria-Turkey (3.0)									
	3.2	Aden									
	3.3	Bahrain									
	3.3	Panama									
Average	2.26		2.92		3.05		3.37		2.40		-
Range	0.5-3.3		0.5-3.6		2.0-3.8		3.0-3.8		2.4		-

* These figures refer to the rate of change at the time of the conflict. No data are available for Muscat, Oman and South Tyrol. In all three cases, however, the populations appeared to be stable and the rate of growth factor was coded as having no appreciable influence upon the conflicts in question.

** When two nations are party to a conflict, the rate of growth for the nation in which the effect of population growth was the most salient in the conflict situation is provided; and the rate for the other party is given in parentheses. The values in parentheses are not included in computations of the average rate of growth for each category of influence, or for the Kendall Rank Correlation Coefficient.

Notes on the procedure for determining the correlation between rate of change and magnitude of influence in a conflict situation.

In view of the nature of these data, that the rates of change are interval measures and the category of influence are ordinal measures, it has been necessary to employ a non-parametric statistic, the Kendall Rank Correlation Coefficient, adjusting for ties and transforming the results into a z-score for determining the statistical significance of the correlation coefficient. With the rate of change as the independent variable and the influence upon a conflict situation as the dependent variable, the Kendall Rank Order Correlation Coefficient, $r = 0.43$ (with ties) transformed to a z score = 4.30, statistically significant at the .001 level.

See: Sidney Siegal, Nonparametric Statistics for the Behavioral Sciences (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1956), pp. 213-223 for specification of r and z and the underlying rationale.

It must be noted that this test is not as powerful as test designed for determining the statistical significance relating to interval data. The combination of ordinal and interval measures thus necessitates the use of the weaker statistical test. The resulting inferences must be appropriately guarded. Nonetheless, the level of statistical significance of the relationship between rate of change and influence in a conflict situation is such that association is fairly well established.

and range for each category of influence. We also note the procedures for computing the correlation measure and its level of statistical significance -- all with appropriate caveats and qualifications. These findings support the conventional wisdom regarding a (hypothesized) relationship of rapid population growth to conflict and violence. Even in cases where the rate of increase appears moderate in comparative terms (most notably for the two conflicts in which the rate of growth is coded as being of central importance) the dynamics in question are further exacerbated by the presence of a large population base, any added increment of which simply intensifies the consequence of rapid population growth. While this correlational evidence in no way supports a causal relation, namely that population increase leads to violent conflict, it does make the causal hypothesis with appropriate mediating factors, increasingly plausible.

But there are caveats and qualifications: There are cases in which a high rate of growth did not necessarily contribute to conflict and violence. Indeed, as noted Table IV, the range of the rate of population growth for situations where this factor had no appreciable influence on the conflict included cases with rates of growth as low as 0.5 and as high as 3.3 percent per year. This qualification in no way negates the strong association between high rates of population growth on the one hand, and the criticality of such rates in a conflict situation: The higher the rates of growth, the greater the propensities for conflict and violence.

In view of the potential incongruence between the structure of a situation and the way in which it may be perceived by the participants, we have also

noted in the course of our analysis the instances in which each population variable was explicitly and publicly perceived by government officials or opinion leaders as a critical factor in the conflict. Although this investigation was not amenable to rigorous analysis because of its extremely subjective basis, certain clues do emerge. In order of importance the results are as follows: In nineteen of the thirty-one cases in which segmental differences were salient, it was also perceived by the belligerents themselves as a critical variable in the conflict; population pressure, level of technology, and migration were viewed as important in three cases each (of nineteen, twenty-six, and thirty cases respectively); and the absolute level of population was perceived as significant in two of sixteen cases. These patterns continue to suggest the tremendous discrepancies between the later consensus of political analysts and the expressed perceptions of the participants. Clearly, conflicts which are regarded in primarily political terms often have demographic roots: Recognition of these relationships appears crucial to any understanding or prevention of such hostilities.

* * * * *

This initial profile indicates that population factors are indeed critical in, and often determinants of, violent conflict in developing areas. Segmental differences, migration, rapid population growth, differential levels of knowledge and skills, rural/urban differences, population pressure and the spatial location of population in relation to

resources -- in this rough order of importance -- all appear to be important contributors to conflict and violence. The perception of the participants in these conflicts does not reflect these general patterns, although the impact of segmental differences is often recognized as a potential source of tensions and strains. These broad results also reinforce our earlier observation concerning the misplaced emphasis on population size prevalent in both popular and academic circles; the importance of size in the development of a conflict situation pales in comparison with these other population variables.

These inferences and observations, though still largely skeletal, provide some initial insight into the importance of population variables in conflict situations. Elsewhere we look more closely at the demographic structure of political conflicts by focusing on alternative types of conflicts and observing the specific role of population variables in each. In the absence of detailed case studies, the general patterns delineated in this paper remain in the nature of hypotheses. Considerable evidence need yet be put forth before the associations noted above can be viewed as indication of causal linkages.¹⁶

¹⁶The detailed supporting analysis is presented in Part II: "A Cross-National Study," in the book version of Population Dynamics and International Violence: Propositions, Insights and Evidence (Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books, in press).

Appendix

This Appendix identifies the individual cases coded in Table III above noting the influence of specific population variables in the development of local conflicts. The format for this Appendix is identical to that of Table III. For each population factor -- size, composition, distribution and change -- we identify the specific cases within each category of influence -- ranging from no appreciable influence on conflict, on the one hand, to sole determinant, on the other. The ordinal scale ranges from (0) denoting no appreciable influence, to (1) background importance, through (2) minor irritant, (3) major irritant, (4) central importance, and (5) sole determinant. This scale must be viewed as an approximate measure of the influence of demographic factors in leading to propensities for violence. In this regard, it provides some important clues regarding the role of population variables in conflict situations and the relative impact of each specific demographic variable. The caveats and qualifications noted in the text must be taken into account when viewing the results of our analysis.

The Role of Population Variables in Local Conflicts

	Background Factor	Minor Irritant	Major Irritant	Central Importance	Sole Deter- minant
	1	2	3	4	5
SIZE					
Absolute Population Level	Algeria Angola Cyprus (Communal) Guyana-Venezuela Malayan Emergency Morocco-Mauritania Morocco-Spain Ulster	Arab-Israeli (1967) Nigeria-Biafra Rwanda-Burundi Sinai	Palestine Rhodesia	West Irian Malaysia-Indonesia	
Pressure of numbers on Resources	Nicaragua-Costa Rica	Algeria Dominican Republic Ecuador-U.S.A. Guyana-Venezuela Morocco-Algeria Morocco-Mauritania Morocco-Spain Rwanda-Burundi	Arab-Israeli (1967) D.R.-Haiti El Salvador-Honduras Kenya Nigeria-Biafra Sinai Suez	West Irian Malaysia-Indonesia	Ceylon
CHANGE					
Absolute Rate of Growth	Algeria Arab-Israeli (1973) Dominican Republic Ecuador-U.S.A. Morocco-Algeria Morocco-Mauritania Morocco-Spain Nicaragua-Costa Rica Nicaragua-Honduras Somalia-Ethiopia-Kenya	Arab-Israeli (1967) Dominican Republic-Haiti Guyana-Venezuela Kenya Nigeria-Biafra Rhodesia Rwanda-Burundi Sinai Suez Venezuela	Ceylon El Salvador-Honduras Palestine	Indonesia(W. Irian) Malaysia-Indonesia	
Differential Rates of Growth	Cyprus (Communal) Malayan Emergency Morocco-Spain	Algeria Arab-Israeli (1967) Guyana-Venezuela Kenya Sinai	Palestine		
DISTRIBUTION					
Rural/Urban Distribution	Dominican Republic Nicaragua-Costa Rica Rwanda-Burundi	Algeria Angola Congo Cyprus (Communal) West Irian Nigeria-Biafra Somalia-Ethiopia-Kenya South Tyrol Ulster Venezuela	Cyprus Malayan Emergency Rhodesia		
Population Density	Bolivia Kenya	Dominican Republic-Haiti West Irian Rwanda-Burundi	El Salvador-Honduras Laos		
Location in Relation to Resources	Aden Guyana-Venezuela Somalia-Ethiopia-Kenya	Iraq Malayan Emergency Malaysia-Indonesia Muscat and Oman	Algeria Arab-Israeli (1967) West Irian Morocco-Algeria Morocco-Mauritania Morocco-Spain Rhodesia South Tyrol	Congo Nigeria-Biafra Sinai	
Location in Relation to Borders	Angola Bolivia Guyana-Venezuela Iraq	Laos Malaysia-Indonesia Morocco-Mauritania Morocco-Spain Rhodesia	Arab-Israeli (1967) Morocco-Algeria South Tyrol	Arab-Israeli (1973) Som.-Ethiopia-Kenya	
Population Movement	Arab-Israeli (1973) Congo Dominican Republic Guyana-Venezuela Laos Malayan Emergency Malaysia-Indonesia Morocco-Spain Muscat and Oman Panama South Tyrol	Aden Bay of Pigs Cyprus (Enosis) West Irian Rwanda-Burundi Yemen	Arab-Israeli (1967) Cyprus (Communal) D.R. - Haiti Kenya Morocco-Algeria Rhodesia Sinai Som.-Ethiopia-Kenya	Algeria Angola El Salv.-Honduras Nigeria-Biafra Palestine	
COMPOSITION					
Sex Distribution	Congo Kenya	Morocco-Spain Rhodesia			
Age Structure	Dominican Republic Guyana-Venezuela Ulster	Algeria Cyprus (Enosis) Sinai	Arab-Israeli (1967) Arab-Israeli (1973) Ceylon Palestine		
Segmental Divisions	Arab-Israeli (1973) Guyana-Venezuela	Morocco-Spain	Aden Dom. Rep.-Haiti West Irian Laos Malaysia-Indonesia Morocco-Algeria Morocco-Mauritania Muscat and Oman Som.-Ethiopia-Kenya Yemen	Algeria Angola Arab-Israeli (1967) Ceylon Congo Kenya Lebanon Malayan Emergency Rwanda-Burundi Sinai South Tyrol Ulster	Cyprus Cyprus (Communal) Iraq Nigeria-Biafra Palestine Rhodesia
Level of Knowledge and Skills (Technology)	Guyana-Venezuela Laos Nicaragua-Costa Rica Nicaragua-Honduras	Aden Angola Cyprus (Communal) Dom. Rep. - Haiti West Irian Malayan Emergency Morocco-Mauritania Muscat and Oman South Tyrol	Algeria Arab-Israeli (1967) Arab-Israeli (1973) Ceylon El Salvador-Honduras Kenya Nigeria-Biafra Rwanda-Burundi Sinai Ulster	Congo Palestine Rhodesia	

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