

Analyzing the Underlying Causes of the Afghan Intrastate Armed Conflict through the Lens of three Insurrection Approaches

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Abstract

This article looks at the question what lies at the root of insurrection under the context of state-in-decline? Three significant explanations emerges from the literature; in unmet human needs and surmounting fears which derive from perception of social and psychological conditions; in lingering grievances which emerge from political actions and prevailing cultural reality; and from uncontrollable greed and the motivations to loot through appropriative activities. Although the underlying theoretical foundations may dictate different conclusion for each of the provided explanations, we argue in a favor of an analytical framework which incorporates all three perspectives into a single paradigm. The logic is simple; engaging larger analytical framework provides safety in diagnosing underlying causes of intrastate armed conflicts in a holistic and precise manner. I have a high opinion of the conclusion of this article as follows: intrastate conflict becomes reality when local political situation fails to resolve highly salient issues of human needs, grievances and greed, whereby local political actors lose the balance of internal power-struggle and the effects of external political interactions on local political atmosphere (constituency). A classic example is the case of communist regime proximity with that of the Soviet Union back in late 1970s amid caught upon in two prone-struggles to resolve silent issues as well as survival of regime in internal political battle which ultimately sparked the intrastate armed conflict in Afghanistan.

I. Introduction

The post-Cold War era has witnessed a renewed scholarly attention into the growing brand of armed conflicts which are occurring in scores mostly but not exclusively, within the boundaries of weak, failing states in developing

world, places like Central Asia, South Asia and wider Africa. This article is concentrating on to construct and develop a unified explanation of intrastate conflicts by bringing together different segments and competitive perspectives of an otherwise merging whole of theoretical approaches in conflict analysis and resolution studies. To be consistent with the main objective, this study concerns with explaining the onset and perpetual dimension of the Afghan intrastate armed conflict, defining precisely the factors associated with them, and specifying which of these factors are of causal significance in sustaining armed violence. To advance our unified understanding of underlying sources of the Afghan armed conflict further, it is of critical importance to outline by trying to delineate the inter-related and inter-actional factors that make the Afghan conflict protracted and prolonged on the one hand, and uniquely complex to be resolved or remove its root causes on the other. We expect some solid answers will emerge out of this exercise of selective literature review and re-organization that will be applicable to the analysis of the Afghan long-lasting armed conflict. By doing so we will try to identify the conditions for peacebuilding in Afghanistan by assuming that the first step toward this end, however, is to identify the causes of conflict accurately.

We intend to mean by intrastate armed conflict to include internal conflicts, violent power struggles, military coups, militarized ideological campaigns, insurgencies, civil wars and revolutions. The task of reviewing theories of underlying causes of intrastate conflict must not be confused with an exercise providing a comprehensive summary of the existing theories and models explaining wars in weak, failing or failed states in its entire aspects. Since the scholarship covering the causes of intrastate conflict is multidisciplinary and voluminous, we reviewed only three most striking aspects of dozen of relevant theories which describe, explain and consist of approaches to study intrastate armed conflicts advanced by political scientists, sociologists, psychologists, political philosophers and biologists about the debate of what lies at the root of intrastate conflict. We argue that intrastate conflict is the outcome of interactions from which a war situation develops. In this context a modest aim is to answer how the present theoretical literature can help us identify and understand the interaction of variety of causes, factors and motivations which most often seen as located beneath insurgency and sustaining intrastate armed conflicts. The focus is on three key factors; need, grievances and greed.

The literature review presented in this article is based primarily upon studies of intrastate wars fought mainly in the aftermath of Cold War. These warfares are known by nickname as “new” (Mary Kaldor, 1998), “small” (Jeremy Harding, 1994), “civil” (Charles King, 1997), “internal” (Michael E. Brown, 1996), “protracted” (Edward E. Azar, 1990; Chester. A. Crocker, 2005), and “ethnic” (I. William Zartman, 2007), and “political insurgencies” (Mats Berdal & David M. Malone, 2000). The scholarly literatures on all these topics are relevant to our objectives. Interestingly, what all of the above accounts could not escape in their analysis is turned to be the concept of “weaken, failing or failed states,” which is a useful subscription in many ways. This rising trend to refer to failing or failed states was reasonably justified given the fact that these wars nonetheless, are typically fought *within* the boundary of a state—governments versus insurgents, center versus periphery, and/or armed forces versus rebellious forces—but rarely draw a clear line between what are superficially viewed internal and external dimension of conflict unlike previous wars which were mainly fought between or among nation states with stated objectives and regular armies of two different nation-states. The most important character of armed violence within weaken, failing or failed states to say so, is not the outcome of insurgents or rebellions only, contrary to the expectations, but awkward mass killings at the hands of those very institutions endowed with the sacred duty of one’s nation’ protection from violence. According to the Jeremy M. Weinstein, national governments and national armies have killed and massacred their own citizens as the world has witnessed the communist regimes homicides in Soviet Union, China and Cambodia, ethnic genocides in Rwanda, and counter-insurgency massive killings of civilians in Afghanistan (Jeremy M. Weinstein, 2007, 06). In the mean-time these wars are not just costly endure but rarely signal a complete closure. They are new because they don’t discriminate between national perimeters and boundaries of sovereign states and while at the same time due to having an equivocal

nature, the distinction between crime and politically motivated violence becomes less relevant since it is less visible (Jacob Bercovitch & Richard Jackson, 2009, 06).

The paramount scope of problems arising out of these types of intrastate wars almost necessitated a demand which has resulted into vast academic examination of central puzzles and questions surrounding wars within failed or failing states. Most of energy and creativity in literature have been used up by efforts to uncover underlying root causes (Brown, 1996, 1-33; Cynthia J. Arnson & I. William Zartman, 2005, 257-276; Charles Webel & Johan Galtung, 2007, 14-26), their intractability (Azar, 1990; Croker, et al., 2005, 33-48; Kelman, 2007, 61-67), termination (Jordan M. Miller, 2008) and consequences (Berdal & Malone, 2000) of these wars.¹

1. Tentative Definitions of the Terms Employed in the Article

Formal theories of armed conflict have tended to emphasize the problem of underlying causes; why the contest of violence in internally-driven armed conflict is so attractive to parties to achieve their goal(s) despite the heavy cost involved while assuming that there are other available alternatives for parties to find solutions without resorting to violence. Intellectual findings and research analysis of wars within failing states, to borrow Johan Galtung favorite term, have concentrated on “nature-structure-culture” trichotomy. Any field is full of its own terminology, encouraging researchers to work with them, but most often they are confusing, the same words give different meaning in different contexts. We offer tentative definitions to only some terms which need clearance. We apply the term, “Intrastate Armed Conflict” simultaneously in our research which deserve definition (though it might be not precise) at the outset. We prefer to define each of these expressions separately in the following order—conflict, intrastate-conflict, intrastate-armed-conflict. To adopt Galtanian concept, we define *conflict* (intrastate) involve *incompatible* goals which correspond to, and involve/consist of basic human *needs* aspired from nature inside individual human and outside us, *values* derived from political and socio-cultural settings that individual human beings is so immersed in it and *interests* emerging from structure that dominating us. It consists of these three elements and other related factors that define, the proposed term, what we repeatedly use in this Article, *the underlying causes* and *sources* of intrastate armed conflicts. Intrastate armed conflicts can only be resolved by removing underlying causes. It has to be crystal clear that conflict *causes* are provisionally referred to *the* initial circumstances, issues and factors which contribute to people’s grievances; which most often become the subject matter of collective use of violence and contest; and can be further illuminated and specified as: structural causes—built-in turbulent factors enforced (beyond the deliberation) through policies, structures and existing architect (building blocks) of a society, and may generate the pre-conditions for violent conflict. Proximate causes—persuasive factors contributing to the emergence of an environment conducive to, and/or escalate violent conflict still further, (sometime indicative of unseen issues and problems). Potential triggers—single vivid events, actions, and/or upshot which merely function to activate and escalate conflict into armed contestation (sometimes triggers may have less analytical significance due to their catalytic nature). Once conflict turns on resistive shield and becomes protracted then it is more than certain to witness the birth of new *causes* (e.g., the availability of large sum of SALW (small arms and light weapons), biting poverty, bustling illicit activities and economy, rule of “gun” replace rule of law, radicalization of various segments and groups, mass displacement and migration and life in camps create perfect conditions for rapid growth of illiteracy rate, drug addiction and turning youth into gangsters, children into manual laborer etc), which breed new rounds of unending conflict.

Defining *intrastate conflict* as a starting point we refer to John A. Vasquez concept of war owing to the advantages in our mind about his concept of war. It is constructed in such a way to explore more about the phenomenon of *war* itself unlike other definitions where they are focusing on the instrumentality of war. Meanwhile his concept of war differentiates between interpersonal conflict and collective conflict. For him war is simply the *contest* through

violence that “war is a group activity, fought between and directed at collectivities” (John A. Vasquez, 2009, 40). Interpretation of Vasquez and several other important accounts of war make it feasible to derive tentative definition of what we call *intrastate armed conflict*: is a contest of political violence involving “agents” of state(s) and “non-state groups” that originally (initially?) search and seek to capture the means to *vitals* through the use of “violent force.” We hypothesize *vitals* as may have several meanings;

- ◇ To re-distribute political and economic power,
- ◇ To re-define the relationship between, among dominant and dominated groups, (One example; Apartheid in South Africa)
- ◇ To capture the means of cultural coding system, or inflow of foreign aid, or extractable resources (Example, Afghanistan)
- ◇ To influence or alter the prevailing policy/strategy of frustrating entity,
- ◇ This is all about to re-dress core grievances that propel people to resort to violent force.

This definition is trying to seize the essence of three mentioned themes; basic human needs, values, and interests which together speak for *goals* involving intrastate armed conflicts which are predominant in emerging countries. We recognize that this definition coincides with other definitions employed in major qualitative studies of conflicts. Furthermore, we admit that the point that needs to be stressed at the beginning is that a clear distinction needs to be maintained between the causes of conflict and the *process* through which the conflict surface. What this illustrates is the need for looking at the causal link and the process by which this occurs.

2. The Organization and Outline of the Article

This Article is comprised of four major themes. In Part I we introduce the topic, presents tentative definitions of the terms used, highlighting the underlying rational, assumption and argument of the article in order to explore the conceptual matters related to the topic. Part II is examining particularly three approaches which we group them under three general categories of: (1) human basic needs and fears are discussed in the first approach to the study of intrastate armed conflict, (2) core values and cultural issues involving armed conflicts are presented in the second approach to study of intrastate armed conflict, and the (3) is about the debate in literature about the self-interested elites who are driven by profit-making and material gain to sustain armed conflict is demonstrated in the third approach of insurrection as competition for resources. Each of the above three types of explanations are deliberately aimed to go beyond the conflicting parties’ stated positions, and reach the underlying issues fueling armed conflicts mostly in failing states as summarized in the following paragraphs.

- *Insurrection as process driven by collective needs and fears*
(The continuation of subsistence fear in the face of threat(s) and/or the deprivation of collective needs are major reasons for going to armed conflict)
- *Insurrection as struggle for redressing grievances*
(The slow but continuous rise of collective and widely shared alienation due to stakes and issues which generate longstanding grievances while fulfilling and redressing those grievances are major reasons for going into armed conflict)
- *Insurrection as competition for resources*
(The resource-gain agendas of elites that make profit out of war are the major reasons for armed conflicts in resource-rich and poverty-ridden societies)

In Part III we depict the Afghan case in brief, and Part IV presents insights and conclusion of the current discussion to develop an analytical framework supported by the evidences from the Afghan intrastate armed conflict.

3. The Rational of the Article

One may wonder *why*, despite so many avenues approaching conflict analysis, we have focused only on three major theoretical approaches to underlying causes of intrastate armed conflicts in the present literature? At the same time it is also conceivable that intellectuals are reluctant to establish well defined boundaries among the approaches that are considered amorphous. Based on logical observation that is deduced from the domain of conflict and conflict resolution field, conflict is best studied from an inter-disciplinary perspective, and so to understand the multi-dimensions of conflict, it is essential to know something about politics, economics, psychology, sociology and mythos etc. We argue that the selected three major theoretical approaches, in relation to the mentioned areas, almost cover the essence of conflict analysis and conflict resolution studies in relevance to our study objectives. Second this separation though abstract but important in that it will serve a scientific function to bring order to the massive scholarly literature on this subject area. Third, the collective human needs approach is attractive because it highlights some concrete and specific aspects of initial conditioning milieu which lower the threshold for armed conflicts to unfold. Forth, we distinguish between two types of grievances: the grievances which are essentially genuine resulting from concrete instances in the real world for example, denying individual human their basic needs such as *security*, *recognition* of reciprocity etc and the grievances with rudimentary understanding and explanation of fluid referential object outside of theoretical boundaries. Like one of the assumptions behind economic stagnation, high economic inequality, poverty and marginalization thesis that indicate the potential sources of relative deprivation. Alternatively, relative deprivation raising the potential for social discontent and alienation which increase the risk for armed conflicts. According to Christopher Blattman and Edward Miguel, the relationship between substantive economic inequality as well as marginalization thesis to the outbreak of armed conflicts in intrastate context can be interpreted in two different ways and reflect the combination of greed and grievance, in spite of the truth that inequality thesis is built upon solid theoretical basing (Patrick M. Regan & Daniel Norton, 2005, 320), but yet lacking the precise interpretation of grievances.

Fifth, the profit-making and material gain aspects of the insurrection also speak loud on its crucial role playing in sustaining the vicious unending cycle of conflicts. The approach is also helpful, besides focusing on predation, in spotlighting besides explaining the birth of war-political economy, and serve as a prerequisite for fully understanding the concept of rentier economy. Sixth, the framework of involving these three important approaches is particularly useful in analyzing armed conflicts in developing countries where fulfilling and satisfying the basic (lower) human needs are still no-joke but real threat and barrier to the meeting of higher human needs for growth. It might be noteworthy to mention here that social exclusion and poverty experts draw on the same notion of basic human needs to define what in their sense is seen as the underlying root of problem leading to extreme level of poverty and social exclusion: “insufficient resources for basic living needs” (Stephen P. Jenkins & John Micklewright, 2007, 147) still preoccupy the minds of poverty intellectuals, which in one way or other have significant link war-prone conditions preceding the ignition of armed conflicts. Seventh, we assume that there is a good advantage of attempting “cross-fertilization” among these three approaches to study of armed conflicts for improved analysis, shifting the competitive paradigm to unifying approach. Finally, we wish to assemble a typology of intrastate wars, while doing research on underlying causes of armed conflicts, typology could be a useful tool in the preliminary as well as latter phases of research with obvious benefits (E. Bennett & A. Neiland, Methodological Appendix 1, 116-117).

4. The Underlying Assumption and Argumentation of the Article

There are a number of reasons and sources that can provide quite reasonable explanations of why civil wars have become so common, but only some of which deal accurately with the problem in the context of how best to address those causes which can ultimately pave the road out of difficult terrain of violence and instability to sustainable peacebuilding. The example would be the situation the international community is facing in post-9/11 Afghanistan. What this study takes for granted is the underlying assumption of weak, failing states as it is highlighted in the introduction of the Article, which is seen almost hard, if not impossible, to escape in the discussion and explanation of intrastate wars. But here we will stick to the most basic reason under the “realists” framework which emphasizes the role of a sovereign nation-state in preventing the recurrence of intrastate wars. The three selected narratives in conflict analysis and conflict resolution studies that are most commonly accepted as the established interpretations of why a passive, latent (intrastate) conflict slide into armed conflict—works well (at least in our opinion) under the prevailing framework of weak, failing states. To say it more precisely about the underlying assumption of the Article, that is, a functioning nation-state is the predominant actor (both domestically and on the world stage) to look after its inhabitants. By providing and guarantying the provision of fundamental needs and services, in conformity with the principles of equity and non-discrimination, it creates the perfect conditions for a state to gain legitimacy in order to get hold on the monopoly over the use of power within its defined territory. Subscribing *in portion* to the basic reason what realists prefer as a better explanation for the increased recurrence of intrastate wars that, when sovereign states—defined by the hegemony (monopoly) on the use of force—fall back on that monopoly virtually means, giving way to an array of agents (be they, for instance tribes, ethnic groups, gender groups, warlords, druglords, or simply gangsters) to play their drums. “When governments lose their monopoly of military force they can no longer control their territory or their people. The domestic environment begins to resemble the ungoverned international system which, as we have seen, is a structural, ‘permissive’ cause of war...[w]e have seen the consequences of this in Bosnia, Kosovo, Chechnya, Afghanistan, Sierra Leone, Somalia, East Timor, Haiti” (John Garnett, 2007, 36). Certainly the argument observed, call attention to the role of domestic “anarchic” environment that is the peculiar characteristic of a non-functioning or failing states which give rise to preconditions for contest of violence from within the state in the form of either greed or grievances. As a matter of fact, aggression, act of violence and crimes tend to be more frequent in a state of anarchy than an ordered system. However, there is a caution to notice that we do not imply in any way, that domestic anarchy, like international anarchy—as Waltz famously argued—is the major root cause of intrastate conflicts (Hidemi Suganami, 1996, 07-09). The absence of order and prevailing perception of injustices among the people, provide a structure that makes war feasible and permissible. But that does not imply that intrastate conflict will erupt simply because there are the so-called preconditions that make war plausible. By definition, war is as an action and activity to which collective actors turn in the presence of certain conditions. The act of war is learned and chosen not a natural tendency. These assumptions guide our thinking and argument about intrastate war and its underlying root causes in Afghanistan. We believe that the case of intrastate armed conflict in Afghanistan provide us a testable perspective in the light of above conceptualization. *We argue that at the core of the Afghan intrastate conflict, of which insurgency is an upshot, are the fundamental human dimensions of the basic human-needs paradigm in all their complexity of ideas, perceptions and emotions.* We base our argument on basic human-needs approach as the most effective tool to remove and resolve the underlying causes of intrastate conflict in Afghanistan.

Since nation-states play a critical role in dispute resolutions in local environment which greatly facilitate the provision of fulfilling basic human needs. Depending on the circumstances, however, human collectives most often exhibits preparedness to fight and rebel over highly sensitive issue than over any other matter—whether it is about the desire for some required end state or the reward value of end state. For instance one of the primary functions of a

nation-state is to protect as well as satisfy the fundamental needs of its inhabitants in a non-discriminative manner.² It is stated that failure on the part of state authority to carry out functions of defending and satisfying fundamental needs of citizens is suggestive of weaknesses which are particularly dangerous since it is pointing to the emergence of a functioning gap. This gap speaks for the evolution of a wedge between government and its citizens. Thus to assume *ceteris paribus* is to assume “disconnect” between ruler and ruled. Given the context of such scenario, we argue that it is vital to notice that it is *not* only the state (governance?) failure that matters to the arrival of certain preconditions for intrastate armed conflict, but could be the issue of neglect, ignorance, incompetent or disqualified government acting in the name of people, which contribute significantly to the grievances of territorial inhabitants over the passage of time. We assume that since conflict results from a long-term process of both inter-state and intra-state interactions, these issues reside on an atmosphere from where people accept and adopt beliefs that provide rationalization for and legitimation of the use of forces and violence. This may in turn lead to a culture of behavior and “collective mind” where a group, tribe, clan of a society perceive by learning that waging armed conflict is *the* way to generate solution to the problem. The most important as intimated by very few scholars is the issue of *how* a country’s political actors (politicians, ruling elites, and leaders) conduct politics and develop relationships through interaction with inside and outside worlds might also affect and contribute significantly to the core of grievances in a society that become a major reason for public unrest in a given country. One of illustration of a good example is the Afghan communist regime in late 1970s. When the communist regime usurps the power in Kabul, they took no time to radically alter the dual structure of domestic political context and inter-state political relationship. In principle, what we intend to mean by dual structure is the domestic policy and foreign policy. It is conceivable that the communist thrived to take hold on the internal political competition and power struggle which created an environment of public unrest and political instability. As a solution to the domestic instability and unrest the communists’ regime was quick to develop proximity with that of the Soviet Union at the time when majority of the Afghan population were politically oppressed and skeptical of that relationship. We assume that this evoked a series of conflictive responses and hostile actions from the aggravated Afghan public, thus—en route to intrastate armed conflict. The example can also be applicable to the present Afghan government (post-9/11) against which insurgents took the battle.

Due to whatever reason, the breakdown of political authority (state/government) virtually provide an opportunity for certain body agents (e.g., national groups, ethnic groups, gender groups, etc) to initiate “self help” appeal to their “representative” communities whilst proclaiming (as usual) grievances against a non-functioning government. At the face of such growing challenge—*ceteris paribus*— the non-state agent(s) may take over the role in the name, of protecting and facilitating the provision of needed materials to their respective communities—a pursuit synonymous to survival. Kelman makes this assumption implicit by stating that “fulfillment of needs takes place to a considerable extent within the context of groups of different sizes. The ethnic groups, the national groups, and nation-states are among the collectivities that serve as important vehicles for fulfilling and protecting fundamental needs” (Kelman, 2007, 65).

What all of this discussion suggests is that the lack of governmental legitimacy and loss of control over the use of force undermine the credibility as well as the ability of states to provide sufficient guarantees that satisfy the demands of people particular those who are driven to the wall by marginalization, profound inequality and objective poverty. As Vasquez argues that it is *not* the government itself that can prevent war, but rather it is an *effective* political system (government is one functioning unit of it) that avoids war by harnessing the lingering issues of social injustices and grievances (Vasquez, 2009, 286-289). It is important to recognize that our approach to understand the social world of intrastate conflicts by looking at their underlying root causes suggestive of resembling with the modern institutionalist and rational-choice approaches that focus on costs and benefits calculus. But that is half of the argument, we contents that other factors such as social psychological accounts, the cultural and learning aspect of collective actors are

supplementary to the better understanding of the phenomenon at hand.

Before discussing each of these theories in detail, we will look at the confusion created by civil war discourses and writings in understanding the underlying root causes of intrastate conflict.

5. Sorting Out Confusion in Literature on the Study of (Intrastate) Wars and Their Underlying Root Causes

There is an overwhelming difficulty in studying (intrastate) wars and their assumed root causes and sources in the field of conflict analysis and conflict resolution studies. Properly speaking, the field is characterized by competitive perspectives, ascriptive claiming, and unresolved rejection directed to each other (different schools of thoughts) on inconclusive ground. That is not surprising at all to researchers and scholars but rather it is seen common to almost every multi-disciplinary field of knowledge and research. Our concern here is to highlight the origins and sources of this obvious mystification as well as the insidious role of exclusionary claims for instance; greed is studied in opposition to grievances or basic human needs in analyzing the causes of conflicts. Whatever that means, our purpose is not to center our focus on this apparent tension and competition among various perspectives that maybe inevitable taking into consideration the vast outgrowth of scientific advances, learning tools and the need for multi-dimensional approach to armed conflicts. Our aim is to approach conflict analysis by moving toward a conjunction where we can study all these competitive perspectives in harmony with each other in order to give a holistic image to conflict analysis. There is a growing efforts and recognized need to carry out an integrated analysis which speaks in support of our attempt to bring a unified approach to the conflict analysis in our study (See Cynthia et al., 2005, 257; Larry C. Bernard et al., 2006, 131-134; Andie L. Knutson, 1961, 1702; Zartman, 2000, 255-258).

However, this part of the Article highlights the troubling sense of, created by the question, why wars occur. No single authoritative solution exists yet to answer the *why* of war, a very old recurring impasse in the entire human history. We cannot offer a solution to this *why* of war question in this Article, but only to explain the debate, since there is no agreement on what causes intrastate conflict in multi-disciplinary field of our research. Great deal of interdisciplinary literature exists and written to elucidate the *diversity* of sources and underlying root causes of intrastate conflicts, collective, organized political violence and, wars—if we could call them in our own expression, of no-boundary. Distinctions have been drawn among several types of causes of war as “immediate” and “underlying” sources of armed conflict; between what is seen by intellectuals as “necessary” and “sufficient” causes; between “permissive” and “efficient” sources; and between “instinctive” and “learned” causes. There is more to it when comes to the explanation of “human nature” and “instinct” in war making processes. The list of causes goes on in the literature to include those theorists who emphasize the role of “misperception” and “frustration” on top of those who believe the causes of civil war may be found in the locus of collective-actors to conflict like gender groups, ethnic groups, tribes, and factions leading and inciting armed conflicts. But there is also another intellectual framework which divides the overall causes of intrastate armed conflict into two general categories of “conscious” and “unconscious” motives responsible for waging war. This separation and distinction has been done to the extent that produces a lot of confusions and distracts ones focus away from the core subject of causes to the apparent philosophical differences of researchers and intellectuals.

It will be misleading to think that the diversity of causes is irrelevant to the study of armed conflicts given the fact that war is seldom an attribute of a single factor (Vasquez, 2009, 52-53). If it is best explained by characterizing war as a phenomena involving a set of several factors, then the scholarly task would be, how best to unlocking the phenomena of intrastate war so that the building blocks of war are illuminated. It prompted scholars and researchers to choose a

way out by utilizing on scientific classification of *the* different types of causes as we have mentioned above. One of the key functions³ of building typology is to disentangle the confusion by bestowing order to the large body of data. Due to the increasing discourse and literature on the phenomenon of underlying sources and root causes of intrastate conflict, researchers and scholars have reservations on how to classify and differentiate correctly the underlying causes and sources of intractable conflicts such as the one in Afghanistan than those of other intrastate conflicts of different nature, scope, disposition, and relative short duration.

Irrespective of what lying at the base that sparks or originates conflict, there are other factors attempting to compound or replace the original conflict over the passage of time which scholars describe as the sources of intractability. One of the sure example would be external intervention (whatever the nature maybe) which can prolong the length of intrastate war since it directly influences the capability-balance between state and insurgents as Nicholas Sambanis and Collier, neatly summarizes it in two words, “contagion” and “diffusion” subsequences of civil war. He describes the mechanisms that may facilitate the external intervention of neighboring state in intrastate wars, are the effect of common ethnic group residing across the national boundaries, the availability of weapons mostly SALW, refugee movements across the borders, all can effectively create green zones and safe haven for insurgents to regroup and mobilize. Thus expanding the war beyond the borders and become internationalized (Collier & Sambanis, 2005, 321-323). The continuation of such intractable conflicts which often involves armed-violence is disturbing in the sense that it creates new issues and agendas which may not be manifested in the initial phases of conflict and continue to take on new shapes, acquiring the space for self-perpetuating mechanism. Doing research on underlying causes and sources of conflict, Zartman raises a useful question on where to begin searching to find an answer that can be qualified as a cause of a particular conflict. Instead one should focus, he argues, on the outbreak of violence and the reason(s) behind that outbreak along with the reason(s) of perceived resentment that would finally set the fire in the form of conflict (Arnson et al., 2005, 264).

Today there are many schools of thoughts about the various causes of contemporary civil wars.⁴ Each has a different theoretical line of argument as to what causes a civil war. It is here to see that scholars and experts do not agree and almost no visible consensus on the direction of the debate over the underlying causes of armed conflict and the factors contributing to conflict intractability. Fresh insights and new exploratory perspectives emanating out of applying improved analytical tools, as well as new findings from cases where less research has been done on prolonged armed conflicts, are heuristic in comprehension yet at the cost of explanations which do not fit into the design of their analysis. Practically it would be misleading to confine the debate of underlying sources and root causes of conflict to a single prototype like paradigm/model thought to be common or match to any conflict analysis with the intention of outright exclusion of others competitive perspectives in the field. The tendency of different school of thoughts to lay mastery claim over others create so much confusion in examining the existing literature as we come across during our study of literature. Uwafiokun Idemudia argues that such conceptual bashing of contenders is both “problematic” and limiting their “analytical strengths” and scope (Uwafiokun Idemudia, 2009, 309-310). It should be less valuable to discredit others but how could others be improved is important (John Wilson, book review, 1995), since each conflict involves characterization of unique elements, combination of internal and external impetus, context and various processes are at interplay in bringing out conflict to a surface.

Based on some emerging understanding in the field, our study suggests that this apparent confusion has resulted into disarray, preventing a unified approach to examine underlying sources of prolonged armed conflicts to emerge. Drawing from multiple fields of study, these scholars may have assumed various conflict analysis approaches that by no means, to say, are wrong or misleading. Also we do not suggest a new paradigm that seeks to obliterate the usefulness of all existing perspectives in the field of conflict analysis and resolutions. Just by pinpointing to the sources of division among them is the use of different philosophies which researchers have been developed and rely on. It is less reflective

of the differences of the subject matter itself. As a result we propose an inclusive approach to examine underlying sources of conflict and where it is appropriate will produce, as expected, some results consistent with the realities on the ground in an empirical manner. At the end of this divided consensus we see some new lights. New debate is emerging out of the confusion in the field.

If the purpose is to seek and filter the inter-disciplinary literature of conflict analysis and conflict resolution for the major causes of intrastate armed conflicts the outcomes are profoundly confusing, the answers are contradictory in their variety of naming and the deliberate use of terminology as pointed out in the opening paragraph of this section. To make this variety manageable, the answers to the causes can be ordered under the three headlines: within human basic needs and fears, within creeds (that produce) alienation and grievances, within greed.

Thus to claim that conflicts [*Intrastate*] are matters of greed, or rights or grievances is profoundly uninteresting. If the claim is exclusionary, it is simply wrong; if the claim is contributory, it is banal. The interesting questions are how these factors relate to each other in causing and sustaining conflict, and how, *not* whether, conflict is related to these three factors (Italic added by the author).

Source :(Arnson et al., 2005, 257)

II. Three Approaches

1. The First Approach to Study Intrastate Armed Conflicts: Insurrection as Process Driven by Collective Shared Needs and Fears

Now turning to the collective needs and fears in the following discussions. The central thesis of this narrative is that conflict whether latent, on the path to violence or already violent involves the deprivation or blockade of human collective needs and fear associated with the denial of such collective needs. Human behavior is affected when the demand for basic human needs goes unmet, what so ever, solution comes only from fulfilling human collective needs in the light of fact that we cannot kill, in what so ever way, the demand for such basic human needs.

The epicenter of this theory is located in its emphasis on the basic shared needs of human beings (Louis Kriesberg, 2007, 39). Conflict is particularly framed as the product of unfulfilled basic needs. Since these basic human needs are fixed and indivisible (Webel & Galtung, 2007, 19), any conflict involving the question of basic needs is not amenable to negotiation, at least by definition. In such a case, Kriesberg and Kelman argue that conflict resolution is geared up to get to the bottom of the issue which has led to the outbreak of conflict; discrimination in fulfilling basic human needs (Zartman, 2000, 256-257), deprivation of collective basic needs and/or the presence of fear in the form of constant threats to the realization of deep-rooted basic human needs (Kelman, 2007, 64).

It is important to remind that the idea of basic human needs per se is acknowledged among vast academia of conflict and conflict resolution scholars as one of the core issues in a conflict and therefore granted a privilege so much as a concept through which issues related to grievances can be analyzed and ultimately resolved. Since conflict analysis and conflict resolution field is widely accepted an inter-disciplinary area of knowledge, sometimes the root of its certain basic ideas for instance, human needs, dwells in other area of knowledge. Capitalizing on the need-based approach, conflict analysts are quick to locate the origins of armed conflict to the unmet needs. In fact, it continues, in many emerging societies basic needs-deprivation is norm rather than exception while Individual behavior is commanded by purposeful strivings and needs. As a consequence, unsatisfied needs are assumed to affecting behavior that lead to spark armed conflicts. Recognizing this connection, the preceding paragraphs are designed to approach basic human needs assumptions from two perspectives in order to better understand its importance and relationship to the armed

conflict. First one that we call general perspective that is of psychology which deals with the determinants of individual human behavior and the overall question on what drives human beings to behave in certain patterns, to acquire, to cope, to defend and satisfy personal needs. Second we are looking at the importance of basic human needs from conflict analysts' point of view whose assumption is closely descended from the above in analyzing human behavior. This section of our literature review is selective in the light of our study's interest and to maintain the focus whilst examining critically the two mentioned academic views on underlying causes of conflict.

Applying Social and Psychological Perspectives of the Approach to Uncover Underlying Root Causes of Conflict Embedded in the Basic Human Needs Paradigm

Before exploring deeply the existing research focusing on various component associated with the idea of basic human needs theory, it is crucial to know exactly what kind of meaning is attributed to basic human needs in conflict analysis. Psychologists in general and other scholars in related fields have produced a very rich literature on individual human "needs," "motives," or "drives" to explain human behavior. The same idea of human motivation is also used extensively in conflict analysis discourse and literatures to identify what motivates an individual human being to participate in insurrections. Abraham Maslow, a "personality" theorist in psychology, proposed a theory of "hierarchy of human needs" in order to explain human motivation as to answer the question of what is it that initiates, "energizes, directs, and sustains human behavior" (William G. Huitt, 2004).

Despite the fact that personality and motivational theorists are concerned with developing prototype models to explain individual basic human needs and are very intuitive but so far there is little agreement as to what constitute basic human needs, how to identify and how they are arranged in hierarchical order (Huitt, 2004; McClelland, 2009, 42, Zartman, 2000). It is worth mentioning the limits and criticism to establish hierarchy of human needs, as it has less to do with human behavior that deviates from the provided patterns by these otherwise beautiful articulations of theories. Human behavior should be understood as a holistic because individual is capable of extending "self" far beyond in space and time and so intricately intermeshed with his living climate and socio-cultural forces that make him almost difficult to be separated from them (Andie L. Knutson, 1961, 1699-1704).

The Focus of Basic Human Needs in Conflict Analysis and Conflict Resolution Studies

Now moving to a core analysis in the field of conflict resolution, some psychologists, psychiatrists, and etiolgists insist that conflict is primarily the product of "inner side" of human beings. Its root is germinated in the mind of people through a manifestation of emotions, feelings of fear, anger, distrust, resentment, envy and hostility or aggression. Psychological processes are responsible for defining a party's emotions, perceptions and attitudes and thereby behavior and situation leading to a conflict (Mitchell, 1981). This perspective locates sources of conflict principally within the nature of individual(s) and constitutes an internal or expressive view.

Insofar, the idea of individual basic human needs is further expanded into another idea of shared basic needs of collective actors. Acting on the basis of shared human needs principles, asserting that these collective individuals then behave as single or sole body among villages, towns, cities and provinces within the same country (or as a nation or may also be a civilization in the global system). Although, individual human beings participation is essential in undertaking the venture of intrastate conflict, the concept by definition, is a group activity as it is singled out the definition part of this Article. Intrastate war is waged, fundamentally by human collectives, be they tribes, factions, ethnic groups fighting in villages, towns and cities within the same country. Despite the fact that understanding individual human needs is essential to understand collective human needs, nevertheless, the behavior of collectives is not synonymous to that of individual human beings (John Garnett, 2007, 34). The focus of the Article therefore is on the collective mood leading to collective fighting.

The Collective/Group Explanation of Basic Human Needs in the Formation of Intrastate Armed Conflicts

The controversy in the debate revolving around the issue of individual human nature and the nature of collective is quite large and significant to the explanation of underlying root causes of intrastate conflict. We examine only a relevant piece of it. The proposition that wars have their roots in human nature is shifting to the narrative that there is something about human collectives, that we should be concerned, which encourage violence. Also the social structure within which individual human beings live, nurture and owe certain degree allegiance to, is believe to be the seed from where “collective mind” germinates which most often manifested in the avenues leading to civil wars. Gustative Le Bon (the founding father of the idea in early psychology) contends that collective mind is borne as a result of “organized crowd” where individual cease and given in their unique characteristics in favor of collective mood (Gustative Le Bon, 1968, 13-15 [originally published 1896]). He further describes that in the presence of a group (organized crowd), individuals tend to act relative freely, less responsive to their normal restraint, and lose their individualistic rational identity (Le bon, 1896, 17). “When we lose our individual independence in the corporateness of a mass movement, we find a new freedom—freedom to hate, bully, lie, torture, murder and betray without shame or remorse,” (Eric Hoffer, 1952, 118).

By asking what drives basic human needs of individuals into the focus of collective action? It is here to notice the significance of context for collective action provided as a result of living circumstances that permit conflicting parties to take on a crucial role; serving as medium for expression of individuals’ demands, communicating desperations and defending fundamental needs (Kelman, 2007, 65). Zartman emphases “context” in analyzing conflict of needs (Zartman, 2000, 256). It is not sufficient to posit a polarized situation in a conflict-ridden country where to say anything that is necessary but simply lacking is not sufficient to initiate conflict on its own. Lewis A. Coser explicates the argument and saying that where and when, there is no alternative channel for individual actors to articulate demands about their basic necessities and if their basic human needs are deeply offended only then identity groups can become assets of contestation for collectives (Peter Wallenstein, 2007, 36-37). Any barrier which is going to deny or block the achievement of that shared-goal of collective actors will result, at least into polarization, latent conflict (Webel & Galtung, 2007, 15-18) and will promote the escalation and continuation of the conflict (Kelman, 2007, 64-65).

Psychological Factors in Conflict Formation: The Role of Perception-Misperception

Perception of collective actors or conflicting parties (are used interchangeably)⁵ demonstrates a very important element here to understanding the depiction of what is apprehended by collective actors in a situation of strained relationship. This strained relationship can be between government and opposing groups or among various factions. Knowledge attained through perception about certain vital issues can sooner or later be transformed into the formation of a negative concept what would be believed by conflicting parties as an absolute reality. This is how collective beliefs are formed and shared by collective actors. Looking at above example of collective beliefs, the ability of collective actors to learn that their ‘right to basic human needs’ is denied is a matter of subjective and objective forces residing whining collective actors (Zartman, 2007, 65-66). The ability to construct “reality” under certain circumstances of fear and uncertainty and either it is about one self or about others plays a crucial role in providing a “medium” by which conflicting parties⁶ carry on conflict (Sultan Barakat, 2005, 10). More importantly as Barakat posits that underlying sources of armed conflict have to be clearly discriminated between what might be prevailing “objective conditions” on the ground and/or “subjective causes” at a certain point of time (Barakat, 2005, 11). For instance, objective poverty might be one condition, exploitative hurting relationship and unequal distribution of valued goods might be important conditions among many others contributing to resentment and wider grievances among targeted population.

The Role of Objective-Subjective Processes

However, there is always enough reason to believe that political, religious, tribal leaders and elites⁷ may penetrate and distort those objective conditions by providing subjective underpinning and causes, thus bringing in personal goals and aspirations into conflict perpetuation (Zartman, 2000, 258). The personal agenda of individuals particularly those who are in the position of leadership can obscure profoundly the original sources of the conflict. Since leadership in conflicting situations are faced with compelling demand to bring unity, and marshal individuals' loyalties to derive necessary support to operationalize insurrection against the particular body of the government.

At this point, the analysis provided about how the urge of human nature can shape our behavior has little explanatory power. According to Galtung, nature is not enough to condition individual human behavior. Human actors are conditioned by nature and culture together (Webel & Galtung, 2007, 16). Looking at present classical literature one of the questions which has been dragged for so long in the field of conflict analysis that still remains valid and almost every prominent scholar have touched upon. Under what conditions do conflicts erupt? Or to state in other words, what are the conditioning factors in the onset of a violent conflict? Mitchell asserts two elements are central to the question—in which he identifies conflict as a situation where parties can be characterize as having mutually incompatible goals and the pursuit of such “mismatched goals” lead to conflict (Mitchell, 1981, 18-21). He contends that the clash of “social values” and “social structure” generates conflict since social values and social structure exert a powerful influence on human emotive and cognitive qualities that shape mankind behavior. This can be best exemplified in a kind of peasant society generally known for shortage of available resources. In such a society which can be called a “limited goods” society, conditions of scarcity of goods and values associated with them results in incompatibility (Mitchell, 1981).

The Role of Real- Perceptual Scarcity

The problem dwells not in the peasant society itself but in three occasions: first, an overriding perception of scarcity of material and non-material goods. The point here is about the misperception of scarcity both tangible and non-tangible goods by a given party or group and therefore may not be the real case. Meaning paucity can hardly be manifested in a final sense which can be considered as necessary for physical survival as Ted Gurr mentioning Welch and Miewald in his research that “scarcity seldom exists as an absolute fact” (Ted Gurr, 1985, 81-85). The second is about the value systems that consider these goods as precious and worth going after them at any cost because they carry through some tributes like social status, appreciation or respect from the rest of society; and/ or there may be actual limitations of the quantity of certain needful material goods at a given period of time. Two of the above three mentioned characteristics; the *perception* of scarcity and *values* linked with conflict are social constructions mostly determining people's perceptual experience, and the interaction of these three factors lead to conflict in an intra-national context through an inevitable process (Mitchell, 1981).

The Role of Ecological Scarcity

Dearth of natural resources is cited to invoke debate among environmentalists that environmental and ecological degradation is fueling civil strife within many poorest countries. Environmental degradation bring about erosion of fertile land, dwindling supply of water, tight supply of food that ultimately causes the eventual destitution of societies, intensify the internal class or territorially-based ethnic groups struggle for widely-sought resources (Gurr, 1985, 51-53). Material inequality precipitated by human-induced ecological crisis weights heavily on whole society specifically on poor. Inconclusively, perpetuating poverty has been linked to conflict causality and at the same time this link is hard to refuse while owing to the fact that severe scarcity has political dimension and economic consequences—depleting the socio-economic foundation of a nation, forcing population dislocation at the same time eroding the legitimacy of state institutions. In return social cleavages and disruptions give rise to sort of working conditions that prompt acute conflict

inside and within third world countries (Thomas F. Homer-Dixon, 1991, 79-80).

The impact of scarcity whether they are social, economic or political is relative and incremental in effect. Since the scarcity of natural resources is marked by gradual changes through a series of stages we do not know where and when it might cross the threshold and swing into an unusually difficult possibly highly conflictual situation to onset conflict. Homer-Dixon argues about this relationship between environmental change and conflict as sketchy and may not guide us to depth of the supposed link (Homer-Dixon, 1991, 83). He continues to assert that environmental-conflict relationship is hard to analyze because the nature of ecological change is physical and perhaps will be misleading to hook up with conflict what can be assured as intentional social actions. M. Lichbach also touches upon the same line that how economic inequality drives political conflict (Mark Irving, Lichbach, 1989, 431-471). This is particularly true in cases where farming constitutes a main economic activity of majority of the population concerned.

In the following sections we will provide discussion that is expected to cover both aspects of the current debate surrounding the narratives of greed and grievances. There is an emerging consensus to a larger degree than ever before on the compatibility of two otherwise contradictory perspectives as a vehicle for comprehending the core theme of intrastate collective violence. Lately a great number of growing literatures posits that *greed* (which is wrapped up in two dominant perspectives “resources mobilization” and “political opportunity” [John Wilson, book review, 1995]) and *grievances* “as two sides of the same coin”, and for the most part civil war is the product of both. Even the “intellectual fathers” of this once famous dichotomy (greed vs. grievances) now vote in the favor that “We must now move beyond the greed-grievance distinction to explain why civil war occurs” (Collier & Sambanis, 2005). In addition, the anatomy of civil war is “reflective” of the combination (Regan & Nortan, 2005) of both perspectives. It has long been indicated and argued that the contestation of violence in the context of intrastate conflict is not just about grievances or greed alone. The problem with the widespread adaptation of the terminological expressions of greed/grievances reflects, among other things the concern that focusing simply on one perspective misses an important part of the intrastate armed conflict. There is a growing inclination in the current literature, in adopting multi-dimensional approach to the underlying root causes of intrastate armed conflicts as well as an equal emphasis has been placed on the need to incorporate other significant factors relating to culture and values which are playing essential role in the onset and perpetuation of longstanding intrastate armed conflicts around the globe.

The underlying rationale for adopting such a unifying approach is that, intrastate armed conflicts most often portray and exhibit a complex myriad of stakes/issues, actors/players, and contexts/conditions with a vast set of interconnecting relationships. The implication of this view is that no element of armed conflicts can be viewed in isolation given the intrastate environment and is helpful in understanding the causal relationships among them. It is also important to capture the critical role of the culture and values which in reality having a profound impact on the people motivations and emotions to participate and carry on the armed conflicts at huge personal and socio-economic costs.

The Second Approach to Study Intrastate Armed Conflicts: Insurrection as Struggle for Redressing Grievances

Subtle and longstanding lingering grievances cause civil conflicts. In this section we highlight the important discussion pertaining to the debate in political science literature about the widely shared account that economic, social and political grievances cause civil unrest and political turmoil to the extent, that if remain unaddressed can lead to the outbreak of civil armed conflicts.

Applying Political and Cultural Perspectives of the Approach to Uncover Underlying Root Causes of Conflict Embedded in the Identity-based Paradigms

This approach highlights the importance of certain aspects of state-society relationship involving the political authority or power, which formulates rules and policies that codify the nature of governance in accordance to the

cultural context particular to a country's citizens. In essence, the political and economic policies as an outcome of elite decision-making process have repercussions far beyond the prevailing peaceful conditions to the arrival of conflictual relationship between governing and those who are governed.

Frustration-Deprivation Explanation

Deprivation of basic human needs do not directly give birth into the armed conflict in intrastate situation per se, but can result into substantial grievances. Based on Azar theoretical articulation, grievances emerging out of deprivation of basic human needs are often expressed collectively (Azar, 1990, 09). This literature pointing to the classic narrative of interpreting underlying sources of insurrection in that the denial of basic human needs proceeds to frustration and often that frustration is aimed at the alleged "frustrating entity." Frustrating entity can be, for instance, a particular government, state authority, dominant group etc against which violent acts are directed as a means only to communicate the existing (high?) level of frustration of disaffected people and not just to release accumulated "anger" or stress while being in a stressful circumstances. Conceptualizing the initial circumstances of violent and conflictual behavior of collectives, as Wallensteen referred to, "stem from not being accepted in society, a matter of dignity, political access and power," (Wallensteen, 2007, 36-37). This account resembles closely with that of Azar configuration of basic human social needs.

Social Discrimination, Social Exclusion and Marginalization Explanation

Azar was concerning about social conflicts which were, he thought at the time of his writing, dragged for too long time-period and show resilience to any possible solution. He stress the problem of "protracted" nature of conflict which itself could be proxy for something that is not visible immediately in so many analysis at that time. He tries to shape the sources of grievances by maintaining that conflict germinates from micro-level processes such as the denial of recognition which is a function of *acceptance*, participation which is a function of *access*, and security which is a matter of *prevailing* political and economic *policies* (Azar, 1990, 05-13). Two points are needed to explain the above deprivation assumption. First, there are no conditions attached to the three elements of social needs—security, recognition, and participation, to be present simultaneously in order for a conflict to erupt. Azar argues that the deficiency of one part of these human social needs normally result into problems in other areas. Second it should be understood in light of complex inter-relationship among these human social needs for instance, insecurity that arising out of non-acceptance of "diversity," the absence of tolerance for other "culture," and uneven access to institution of state in a given society (Azar, 1990, 10). The identification of these three noted barrier do not constitute a direct link to insecurity of certain individual party but rather show indirect and complimentary linkage from where insecurity flows.

Lack of Means and Political Channels of Communication

Both perspectives of Coser and Azar are raising finger at the lack of means and political channels of communication for the marginalized segments in a society to be heard at upper level in political authority (government) of their grievances. Deprivation that is related to the concept of access, acceptance is crucial in understanding the widely debated notion of grievances. Lack of access to state and social institutions, for instance de-capacitate the ability of marginalized sects of society to fully participate in their societies, which brings in turn the seeds for man-made social exclusion and poverty. It is man made because the root of social exclusion and poverty do not represent the objective conditions on the ground, instead emphasizes the nature of political strategy chosen and implemented by governing political elite as it was the case of former official policy in South Africa under the White domination. These aspects of social deprivation evolve over time in incremental way and may vary considerably across the different regions in any single country facing armed conflicts in the world of emerging countries. Tracking them will be relevant to find where

these privations are acute to generate sufficient grievances which having the potential to ignite conflicts.

3. The Third Approach to Study Intrastate Armed Conflicts: Insurrection as a Competition for Resources

Applying Economic Perspective of the Approach to Uncover Underlying Root Causes of Conflict Embedded in the Resource-based Paradigm

There are other discourses, research and scholarship which are particularly done by economists and leading practitioners mostly from the World Bank and many other transnational organizations largely focusing on the civil conflict in Africa moved the debate of causes of conflict to the context of material resources. Collier and Anke Hoeffler portrayed “economic agendas” of competing belligerents and warring factions as key to understanding causes of a civil conflict. Centering the discussion on the motivation of rebellion and armed conflict during a civil war, Collier highlights three important factors responsible for breeding conflict: first, accessibility of the “lootable” resources in the form of *primary commodities* that are greatly desirable for opportunists and greed-motivated rebels and who would thrive to seize them with teeth. Second component of “economic agenda” is the *bulk of young men* in a society who have spare time and enlist themselves in the rebellious militias what makes armed conflict more feasible. In addition to it, less income opportunities and perpetuating poverty push them to fall into the elite trap whose job is to hire fighters. Third element is the level of *education* especially of young men in a society that significantly affect their decision and willingness to join rebellious militias. Low literacy rate increases the risk of conflict and it is considerably more important than the bulk of young men in a society (Berdal & Malone, 2000, 93-94).

The Use of Violence as a Mean to Accomplish Material Resources Driven by the Personal Profit-Making Agendas of Elites

David Keen modifies the Collier observation and argumentation about the feasibility of the rebellion by looking at rebels “recruiting process” and the question, why and how civilians are mobilized to participate in insurgent armies. Despite the fact these rebellious armies are most often severely underpaid or voluntary, they are able to attract large swath of young men to escalate the conflict. Keen affirms that one has to investigate a blend of several ingredients that coming out as a result of conflict such as “fear, need and greed” and hence lays the ground for people to enroll in insurrections (Berdal & Malone, 2000, 23-24). During conflict it might be considered safer to be part of the rebellious army since most of the victims of the assaults are civilians. Or war may be calculated as a route shorter than the usual one to desirable wealth profit and changing misfortune of poverty and hardship. Besides, through making membership in the armed groups some would regard as a chance to revenge, or to meet desire for reckless mischief and similar wicked aspirations.

Collier and Hoeffler understanding of the root causes of civil conflict in terms of economic factors are fundamentally corrective to those who contend the narrative of grievance-based root causes of conflict. They have statistically provided evidence in support of their argument. They also dismiss the view where conflict has been watched as “breakdown” in normalcy or any particular system. Rather their inquiry put an equal emphasis on internal dynamics of rebels as well as on the function of conflict to understand the profit-making aspect of the violence. This resource-accomplish perspective, imparting a great deal of emphasis to the instrumentally of violence, that the use of violence stems from its utility as a profit-making instrument rather than explaining the phenomenon of violence per se. Thus greed-based scholarship had got attention as much as it had got criticism from broad range of academics and political commentators. To conclude in short, the amalgam of greed-based motivation is insufficiently explored to explain why civilians are mobilized to be part of an insurrection despite the heavy costs involved in such a resource-accomplish

competition.

The Function of War-Born Political Economy in Sustaining Armed Conflicts

David Keen asserts the argument in the way the “political economies” emerge and function in a conflict-ridden situation. His enthusiasm appears to point to a greater extent upon a growing literature that rationalizing conflict more with respect to economics and greed motivated-violence. No matter what ever the original orientation of violence is, David Keen notes— fear, need, security, psychological, or to take over the government, it soon undergo changes to serve the immediate functions and objectives of the violence mostly outstandingly the economic agendas (Berdal & Malone, 2000, 24-25).

Political economy holds key to understanding much of the circulated research on the relationship between economics and contemporary conflict. Other theorists of “rentier state” are extensively employed the term of “political economy” to construct their famous concept of “rentier economy” like Hossein Mahdavy and following scholars Hazim Beblawi and Giacomo Luciani (Douglas A. Yates, 1996, 12-15). According to Collier, “rentier” refers to a state unable to sustain on its own economic resources and recipient of large foreign aid inflow that falls into the possession of a recognized government (Collier, 2003, 63-64). Economically, these large sums of money in the form of foreign aid represent non-earned income for government to budget and finance public sectors that are crucial to the existence and operation of government itself. But in the real world scenario, the available amount of money supplied into public sectors means creating opportunities and new jobs which are often allocated politically and dominated by certain groups at the expense of other marginalized groups.

The Emergence of Rentier State

Thus the aids end up propping the government and its ability to finance and control public sector which is largely contested politically in conflict or post-conflict environment (Collier, 2003, 64). Since public sector jobs, posts and contracts are not based on fairly equitable distribution policy that reflects principles of merits, standard and primarily allocated politically along ethnic and other lines, it leads to the emergence of rentier economy vulnerable to ill-conceived influences of bad guys unlike formal economy which enjoys transparency and tight oversight. According to Conrad Schetter et al., rentier economy provides opportunity and wide settings for conflict-born mighty warlords, landlords and druglords to become effective spoilers by pursuing personal gain and strengthen their niche as opposed to the collective efforts to strengthen state institutions as a common good (Conrad Schetter et al., 2007, 146). Specific cases of rentier state-building such as recurring in Afghanistan since the start of political instability and several other conflict-ragged societies render support to the noted claim above. Experts are warning about the outcomes of such insidious strategy of building rentier nation-states. A rentier state most often becomes the prime cause in sponsoring war economies which pays off few elites, government officials and warlords at the expense of common people, further destitute weak and poor segments of societies.

III. The Afghan Case

Now we look at the Afghan case briefly whether the unified framework—which slowly but incrementally emerged out of the detail description in the previous pages, *is* supported by the evidence from Afghan context. The argument which is built on the foundation of our unified approach emphasize that (socio-economic, cultural and political) grievances, needs and greed are *the* factors to understand the onset and perpetuation of the Afghan conflict. By looking at the historical context and the history of the armed conflict back from the late 1970s, there is solid evidence that people were driven by the lingering perceived grievances. We are talking about the early stages of conflict, where

there was widespread local recognition of the grievances that were articulated by the various the-then Mujahedeen insurgent groups. Then these Mujahedeen groups become the leading party to the intrastate armed conflict. Our concern is the post-9/11 (2001) context with the aim to see whether there exist observable indicators of grievances and greed which demonstrate analytical strength in explaining the underlying root causes of the Afghan armed conflict.

Before to shed light on the specific details, it is necessary to recognize that in the context of Afghanistan, the people needs, identities and grievances vary from town to town and from village to village, we are only looking at the general and broad patterns due to the scope of study.

Socio-Economic Grievances

It is a recognized truth that Afghanistan remains one of the poorest countries in the world⁸ and exhibits almost all the factors which are the characteristics of failing/failed states.⁹ Economic stagnation, biting poverty, high income inequality, and lowest rate of illiteracy indicate the potential sources of relative deprivation. If these simple facts have any implications, it is the proposal that hints at the vulnerability of Afghanistan to violent conflict and overall societal malfunctioning. Demographic shift and movement become constant features in such society, the revealing demographic fact is that numbers matter. Afghanistan is a classic example where bulk of (radicalized) youth in the face of highly unemployment and soaring birth rates exert mounting pressure on the already limited means of earning and livings. Individuals as well as collectives are seen to be struggling and engaging in competition for the means of existence. This is a scenario of socio-economic fragility where violence breakout is so frequent and unavoidable phenomenon. The perception of such scarcity may explain the process how group of men become alienated and disaffected. Since disenchanted youth in the absence of law and order breed potential recruits to be mobilized by, what Brown calls “bad leaders” (Brown, 1996, 578-580) to be enlisted in insurgent movements. In Afghanistan one thing is for sure that the majority in the insurgents’ boat are, in reality a minority in a sense that they are not ideologically committed to the object of rebellion itself but are exploited by their harsh socio-economic conditions.¹⁰

Moreover during the time of king Zahir Shah, and the following era of political instability, few elites at the capital, Kabul made huge gains from rent seeking, since most of the revenues were from foreign donation and the strategic aid of the Cold War time. Objective poverty increased substantially nationwide over the course of time, wealth concentrated in the hands of few which were the potential for social discontent and widespread alienation among Afghans. With the exception of few areas, most of the periphery suffer from sever poverty, severe under-investment in infrastructure, lack of basic services, like hospitals and educational institutions.¹¹ Ruling elite concentrated on regime survival and increasing wealth, virtually ignoring the concept of public responsibility and welfare further exacerbate socio-economic grievances. Elite caught up in the struggle for regime and political survival has no interests to pursue the policies for developments and wellbeing of its people. This will not be exaggeration to state that it is not the failure of developmental policies but the development was really never took place to the degree to uplift the hardship and harness the socio-economic grievances of the Afghans population for several decades. These and other factors have profoundly contributed to the social insecurity and economic disempowerment and further affecting the social and economic stability.

All these factors may not be causally linked to the outbreak of violence and conflict but they have a big say in the emergence of fertile ground for disaffections. The harsh reality of the Afghan three decades of war cannot be ignored and the consequences that followed afterward. Mass refugee movements, human rights violation, political mass killings at the hand of the Afghan communist regime, and assassinations, have deeply interrupted the fabrics of the Afghan society and pushed the development and recovery of that nation to the far future. The current predicament of youth insurgency dates back to the refugee camp life and the exposure to radical elements and educational institutions. The repercussions of which is much greater than what is currently understood in the post-9/11 era both by international

community as well as the Afghan government. The insurgents operating under whatever banner and the fact that rebels who have had strong influence over the rural parts of Afghanistan, clearly have access to the lingering grievances which are deeply embedded in the inherited past and present and apparently directed against its own government.

Political and Cultural Grievances

A cure to socio-economic factors and harnessing those grievances closely associated with them would certainly have a positive effect, as many would argue is a public good, and has to be on top agenda of the Afghan government. But that entirely misses the point, which argue that economic deprivation precede political dispossession and marginalization. In effect, the post-9/11 power sharing arrangements and politics has never reflected on the past political failures and mistakes which in effect undercut the way to address the underlying root of the Afghan problem. Political exclusion of the so-called Taliban as well as ex-Mujahedeen commander, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar and other influential Afghan combatants is a key issue in the complexity of the Afghan predicament. This is because denying the right to participate in political system and by shutting down the door to have access to channel of political communication is a matter of political and cultural grievances. Then there are those insane power-brokers and proxies who thrive on widespread perceived political and cultural grievances of the Afghans but are completely disengaged from the plight and devastations of the common people. Certain Pashtun groups who felt that they were dropped out in the post-Bonn political arrangements and processes are now acting as spoilers. They derive their strength from the bulk of alienated Pashtuns tribes and clans that are politically underrepresented and feel excluded.¹²

The problem is further exacerbated by painfully weak Afghan state institutions; harmful actions of power-brokers and warlords, widespread abuse of power by the Afghan officials and security forces, and the endemic corruption have, given the ordinary Afghan little, if any reason to support the present government against the insurgents. There is an evolving perception among Afghan people that the current government is in league with all these mischief and crafts, and that the government lack transparency and accountability, thus significantly altered the balance of trust between the disaffected groups and tribes and that of Afghan government. Population make deliberate choices and if they think their government is not work in their best interests, and that their government fall short on the provision of fundamental needs and social justice, and that it is not capable to defend their core values, simply give ample reasons for aggravated populace to switch sides and back insurgents.

The Curse of Greed

Intrastate conflict is not all about understanding (objective-subjective) grievances or unrealized basic human needs; it is effectively about learning how a layman turns into wealthy warlord, druglord, and smuggler in the course of armed conflict, human calamity and national plight. Afghanistan witnessed how few resistance leaders change the misfortune of the infighting and misery of conflict into big boom of wealth, power and influence at the cost of poor Afghans. Warlordism and criminal behavior has a history stretched in the past three decades of violence after violence and now back to the present. Their power and wealth have been sprouted from the spoils¹³ of prolonged intrastate armed conflict and exploitation of the opportunities under the cover of conflict and impunity.

IV. Conclusion and Contribution of the Three Approaches to Our Argument

Implications of the Three Approaches to Our Argument

Whereas the above-mentioned studies constitutes the core work of research and scholarship on the underlying causes of civil conflict, a review of these analyses unveil a number of conceptual, analytical and empirical strength as well as difficulties in one way or another. We try to summarize them in the following pages.

The resulting explanations, for what lies at the root of insurrection, are reflected fundamentally in three competitive accounts of basic human needs, identity-based grievances and greed in the current literature. Basic needs discourse emphasize the nature of stakes and interests involved that lead to intrastate conflict while the identity/creed based discourse focuses on the role of values and culture that give rise to the intrastate conflict. In short both of the discourses conclude on the importance of (objective and subjective) grievances as a result of deprivation of basic human needs, or lack of access to social and political institutions which bring to bear the misfortune of marginalization and discrimination. On the other side economic agendas of self-interested actors and greed can motivate intrastate conflict but has less explanatory power when it is mentioned alone as major factor in conflict.

It is important to note that we do not underestimate or oversimplify the existing legitimate shortcomings and critiques of these three discourses. They raise useful questions and hints at some of the critical juncture in explaining insurrection. Whatever that means, we argue, that when these three approaches are unified into a single paradigm, will usefully serve the function of “enabler” to the better understanding of insurrection. The importance of other factors is supplementary in analyzing insurrections, like social-psychological, and political-cultural perspectives as they questions the validity of the realist assumptions about conceptualization of intrastate armed conflict. we also admits that phenomenon of collective needs should not be understood in absolute terms; since needs have the ability to float and can thereby easily lower the threshold even in a time when collective basic needs are prevented to be acquired by deprived parties. Collective needs and fear may be felt differently at different levels and could well fluctuate in relation to the change in parties’ position, and hence can be satisfied at various points in the course of time. We also believe that human actors have a resilient capacity to adapt and acquire new ways to meet their basic needs particularly when confronted with harsh circumstances without resort to violence.

However, what our analysis highlights is that, understanding core grievances alone are not potent to understand the complexity of insurrection nor to say that focusing solely on the motivation to accomplish resources as an outcome of greed is sufficient to study insurrection. We contends that it is important to focus on (need, grievances and greed) collectively to analyze underlying root causes of intrastate conflict because concentrating on one miss the entire picture as Collier and Hoeffler pointed out that the rebels who claim to seek social justice or redress grievances, are “substantially disconnected from the large social concerns of inequality, political rights, and ethnic or religious identity” (Collier & Sambanis, 2005, 18) as rebels continue to intermeshed in intractable conflict.

To elaborate our argument further, in the context of Afghanistan, we contend that a variety of factors and causes may have brought about the intrastate armed conflict through multiple avenues. Our article shows only *three* such important causes or routes. At the same time these three causes become the conclusion that emerged from this analysis. The Afghan intrastate armed conflict is seen as a function of and the interaction of three key factors. These are (1) the silent issues under contention—unfulfilled human needs, lack of access to socio-political institutions and economic opportunities, deprivation, and political marginalization etc, (2) the dynamics of interstate (between states) and intrastate (state-society) interactions and (3) the nature and capacity of the Afghan institutional context (weak, ineffective, incompetent government for instance) provide an atmosphere in which certain collective groups like the present day insurgents, deliberately choose and project their autonomous (unilateral) decision-making (that the insurgents are unwilling to accept any outcome other than the military and then political overthrow of President Karzai regime, supported by coalition forces). In short, we conclude that such situation where human basic needs are denied, while at the same time the dynamics of state interactions (the domestic policy and foreign policy of a government) affect the collective actors negatively, and where the state institutional context is failing to satisfy by providing political channels to redress the lingering grievances, we believe that it will lead to a political deadlock or stalemate that is mostly likely to be handled by resorting to violence and use of force.

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Endnotes

- ¹ See, Oliver Ramsbotham et al., 2005 for details as well as Jordan M. Miller where he cited comprehensive information regarding discourses on civil wars.
- ² See Kelman, 2007, for details.
- ³ Building typology serves variety of functions, and it is not relevant to discuss them here. For detail please see E. Bennett et al., and Vasquez.
- ⁴ Refer to Zartman, 2000; Crocker et al., 2005.
- ⁵ Collective actors under certain sufficient circumstances may become conflicting parties who would supposedly play an active critical role in generating intentional violence in particular place or area.
- ⁶ We use conflict parties by assuming both side parties to a conflict; part A against party B or government versus rebel conflict. For instance, conflict between government of Afghanistan and insurgents.
- ⁷ It is not realistic to state that political, religious leaders or other elites are all time selfish leading societies during difficult times of conflict. Sometimes they represent the very affected groups or classes caught up in protracted conflict.
- ⁸ See Human Development Report 2009 by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) where Afghanistan human development index ranking (HDI) in the bottom 4th.
- ⁹ See Lester R. Brown, Plan B 4.0: mobilizing to save civilization.
- ¹⁰ On Afghan economy and related issues please visit the World Bank report on Afghanistan statebuilding, sustainable growth, and reducing poverty: A country economic report, 2004.
- ¹¹ On existing lack of, and poor infrastructure, see poverty reduction strategy paper, Islamic republic of Afghanistan, IMF country report 2008.
- ¹² See, David Miliband article, How to end the war in Afghanistan.
- ¹³ Find out the whole discourse of the Afghan turbulent past and present in Amalendu, Misra, in Chapter.